Exploring the experience for young people of the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) intervention: case studies in secondary schools

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Abstract

Background

Whilst research has focused on young people’s (YP’s) experience and understanding of the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) phenomenon (Begley, 2015), the ELSA intervention (Barker, 2017) and YP’s perception of the effectiveness of the intervention (Hills, 2016), it has not yet considered the experience or ‘journey’ through the intervention from the YP’s perspective.

Aims

This study therefore aims to gain an understanding of how the YP experiences the ELSA intervention.

Sample

Four YP in years seven and eight and three ELSAs were interviewed. Eight ELSAs also took part in a focus group.

Methods

The research was conducted using a qualitative, in-depth multiple case study design and involved semi-structured interviews, drawing tasks, diaries and a focus group.

Findings

YP reported that the qualities of their ELSAs and the relationship they develop are important to their experience of the intervention and help them to meet their targets. They said that the relationship grew stronger over time and made them
feel happier, more trusting and less alone. YP also appreciated their ELSA being available for them.

The YP who had not had ELSA support before described experiencing confusion which led to an initial reluctance to engage. YP who had had ELSA support in their primary school reported differences in the secondary school ELSA experience.

At the end of the intervention, YP expressed sadness that their sessions were ending but were reassured that they could seek out their ELSA or that they would check-in on them. ELSAs described difficulties ending the intervention.

Barriers to fidelity in the school systems, school environment and relating to the YP were discussed.

**Conclusions**

The research has provided an in-depth understanding of YP’s experiences of the ELSA intervention and produced practice guidance regarding the importance of the ELSA-YP relationship, managing the beginning and ending of the intervention and ensuring fidelity to the programme.
# Contents

Acknowledgements........................................................................................................... 2

Abstract.............................................................................................................................. 3

Contents ............................................................................................................................. 5

List of Appendices................................................................................................................ 10

List of Tables....................................................................................................................... 13

List of Figures ..................................................................................................................... 15

Part 1 Introduction............................................................................................................... 17

1 Introduction to the Subject of the Thesis and Purpose of the Research 17

2 Organisation of the Thesis.............................................................................................. 19

3 Research Questions ......................................................................................................... 20

Part 2 Literature Review ..................................................................................................... 21

1 Introduction to the Subject of the Literature Review .................................................... 21

2 Purpose and the Need for the Review ............................................................................. 22

3 Introduction to the Area of Study .................................................................................... 24

   3.1 Context for Support .................................................................................................... 24

   3.2 Concepts .................................................................................................................... 28

   3.3 Controversies ............................................................................................................ 32

   3.4 Definitions ................................................................................................................ 34

   3.5 Review Questions .................................................................................................... 35

4 Methods Used to Carry out the Literature Search.......................................................... 37

   4.1 Approach to the Review: appropriateness of the review methods and relevance to the review questions .................................................................................. 37

   4.2 Theoretical Model Identified .................................................................................... 40

5 Review of the Literature .................................................................................................. 41
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Therapeutic Relationships</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Therapeutic Journeys</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>Beginning a Therapeutic Journey or Therapeutic Relationship</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>Ending of a Therapeutic Journey or Therapeutic Relationship</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Children’s Perspectives of an Intervention and the Importance of Listening to Pupil Views</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>Using PCP Techniques to Elicit Children’s Views</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Recommendations for Future Research</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 3</td>
<td>Empirical Report</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction to the Empirical Report</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>A Multiple Case Study</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>Semi-Structured Interviews</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>Diaries</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>Word Clouds</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) Activities</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Ethical Issues</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>Ethical Sensitivity</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>Ethical Reasoning</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>Ethical Motivation</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>Ethical Implementation</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.5 Participants ...........................................................................................................93
2.6 Sampling Considerations and Inclusion Criteria .............................................96
2.7 Data Collection and Measures..........................................................................99
2.8 Data Analysis ......................................................................................................101

3  Findings and Discussion .....................................................................................106

3.1 Thematic Analysis ............................................................................................106
3.11 Definition and Description of the Overarching Themes, Themes and Sub-
Themes......................................................................................................................106

3.12 The Therapeutic Relationship ..........................................................................111

3.13 The Therapeutic Journey ..................................................................................118
  • Beginnings and expectations ..............................................................................120
  • The middle, the intervention and the support ..................................................130
  • Ending or not ending ..........................................................................................136

3.14 The Impact of the Intervention ........................................................................143

3.15 Barriers and Help Needed ...............................................................................150

3.2 Interviews, diaries and drawings......................................................................157
3.21 Amy ..................................................................................................................157
3.22 Adam ................................................................................................................161
3.23 Annabel ............................................................................................................165
3.24 Katie .................................................................................................................169

3.3 Word Clouds ......................................................................................................173
3.31 Amy ..................................................................................................................173
3.32 Adam ................................................................................................................175
3.33 Annabel ............................................................................................................177
3.34 Katie .................................................................................................................179

3.4 Ideal ELSA Drawings .......................................................................................181
3.41 Adam ................................................................................................................181
3.42 Annabel ............................................................................................................184
3.43 Katie .................................................................................................................187
3.44 Mrs Salmon........................................................................................................191
3.45 Mrs Gulliver........................................................................................................197

3.5 Triangulation of Case Study Information for each Case (Dyad)....................203
  3.51 Dyad 1 (Amy and Mrs Greenway) .................................................................203
  3.52 Dyad 2 (Adam and Mrs Salmon) ....................................................................203
  3.53 Dyad 3 (Annabel and Mrs Salmon) ...............................................................204
  3.54 Dyad 4 (Katie and Mrs Gulliver) ...................................................................205

3.6 Cross-Case Analysis..........................................................................................206

3.7 Constraints and Limitations.............................................................................208

3.8 Summary of Findings.......................................................................................209

4 Conclusion of the Empirical Report .................................................................212

Part 4 – Critical Appraisal ...................................................................................213

  1 Introduction to the Critical Appraisal ...............................................................213

  2 Epistemological Position and Theoretical Position .........................................214

  3 Rationale for the Research Design, Measures of Analysis and Critical
    Appraisal of Alternatives .................................................................................215

    3.1 Research Design............................................................................................215

    3.2 Measures .....................................................................................................217
      3.21 Semi-Structured Interviews ......................................................................217

      3.22 Diaries .....................................................................................................220

      3.23 Word Clouds ...........................................................................................220

      3.24 Drawing ....................................................................................................221

      3.25 PCP Activities .........................................................................................221

      3.26 Focus Group ............................................................................................222

    3.3 Analysis ........................................................................................................223

    3.4 Alternative Methods, Design or Analysis ..................................................226

  4 Strengths and Limitations of the Research ....................................................227
4.1 Strengths................................................................................................................. 227
4.2 Limitations ............................................................................................................... 227
5 Reflections on Unanticipated Ethical Dilemmas.............................................. 230
6 Implications for the Understanding and Knowledge of the Topic in
Psychology.................................................................................................................... 233
7 Implications for Professional Practice ................................................................. 235
8 Implications for Future Research ......................................................................... 239
9 What is the Distinct Contribution? ....................................................................... 240
10 Self Appraisal ........................................................................................................... 241
11 Overall Concluding Remarks ............................................................................... 243
References..................................................................................................................... 246
Appendices .................................................................................................................. 259
List of Appendices

Appendix 1 - Search Strategy ................................................................. 259
Appendix 2 - Inclusion Criteria ............................................................... 260
Appendix 3 – Quality Indicators Used to Assign WoE Ratings ............... 261
Appendix 4 - Flow Diagram of Study Selection ........................................ 266
Appendix 5 – Mapping the Field: a summary of studies included in the literature review ................................................................. 267
Appendix 6 – Qualitative Synthesis: a thematic summary of all papers reviewed ................................................................. 292
Appendix 7 - Guidance for Developing the ELSA - Child Relationship ...... 302
Appendix 8 - Guidance for Beginning the ELSA Intervention ................. 303
Appendix 9 – ELSA Intervention Preparation Checklist ......................... 305
Appendix 10 – Example of ELSA Flowchart ........................................... 309
Appendix 11 – Example of an Invitation to ELSA Sessions ..................... 310
Appendix 12 – Example of a Pupil Feedback Form, Pre-Intervention ...... 311
Appendix 13 - Contract for ELSA Work .................................................. 312
Appendix 14 - Example Contract and Confidentiality Agreement ............ 315
Appendix 15 – Example Contract and Review Record ............................ 317
Appendix 16 – Example of a Pre-Therapeutic Letter of Introduction ....... 318
Appendix 17 – Example of an ELSA Information Leaflet ....................... 319
Appendix 18 – Guidance for Ending the ELSA Intervention .................... 320
Appendix 19 – Example of a Pupil Feedback Form, Post-Intervention ...... 322
Appendix 20 – Example of a Review Session Record Form ...................... 323
Appendix 21 – Post – Intervention Therapeutic Documents .................. 324
Appendix 22 - Examples of Separation Cards ........................................ 328
Appendix 23 – Countdown to the End of the Intervention Prompts .......... 329
Appendix 24 - Activities to Support Therapeutic Endings ...................... 330
Appendix 25 – Reflective Questions to Support the Adult at the end of an
Intervention ........................................................................................................ 334
Appendix 26 - Guidance for Head Teachers and Line Managers ............. 335
Appendix 27 - Participants and Interview Information ............................... 336
Appendix 28 - School Information ................................................................. 337
Appendix 29 - Information Letters and Consent Forms ............................. 338
Appendix 30 – Ethics Approval Letter Dated 13/06/2017 .......................... 346
Appendix 31 – Ethics Approval Email Dated 13/06/2017 .......................... 348
Appendix 32 - Response to Observations from UCL REC ....................... 349
Appendix 33 – Confirmation of an Extension of Ethical Approval Email Dated
15/10/2018 ........................................................................................................... 350
Appendix 34 - Semi-Structured Interview Guides ...................................... 351
Appendix 35 - Ideal ELSA and Drawing task .............................................. 355
Appendix 36 - Visual Prompts ................................................................. 358
Appendix 37 - Rating Scales ........................................................................ 359
Appendix 38 - Diary ...................................................................................... 360
Appendix 39 - Focus Group Discussion Prompts ....................................... 361
Appendix 40 - Examples of Interview Transcriptions ............................... 363
Appendix 41 - Initial Codes ........................................................................... 388
Appendix 42 - Revised Codes with Similarities Reduced and Grouped ..... 391
Appendix 43 - Codes Categorised into Themes .......................................... 393
Appendix 44 - Examples of Extracts to Illustrate the Therapeutic Relationship
................................................................................................................................. 395
Appendix 45 - Examples of Extracts to Illustrate the Therapeutic Journey .403
Appendix 46 - Examples of Extracts to Illustrate the Impact of the Intervention
........................................................................................................................................424
Appendix 47 - Examples of Extracts to Illustrate the Barriers and Help Needed
........................................................................................................................................432
Appendix 48 - Theoretical Stance to the Research ........................................437
List of Tables

Table 1 – Three Types of Contract in Therapy ........................................ 53
Table 2 - The Characteristics of my Focus Group .................................... 86
Table 3 – The Case Study: Data Collection, Analysis and Findings ........... 87
Table 4 – Consideration of Ethical Implications .................................... 89
Table 5 - YP Participants ....................................................................... 95
Table 6 - ELSA Participants ................................................................... 96
Table 7 – Focus Group Participants ....................................................... 96
Table 8 – Organisation of Overarching Themes, Themes and Sub-Themes ......................................................................................... 109
Table 9 - Quotes from theme ‘relationships’ .......................................... 113
Table 10 - Quotes from theme ‘characteristics and needs of the young people’ ...................................................................................... 115
Table 11 - Quotes from theme ‘feelings’ ................................................ 115
Table 12 - Quotes from theme ‘ELSA characteristics and qualities’ ......... 116
Table 13 - Quotes from theme ‘ELSA feelings’ ....................................... 118
Table 14 - Quotes from theme ‘Hopes and expectations’ ....................... 122
Table 15 - Quotes from theme ‘Set up’ .................................................. 123
Table 16 - Quotes from theme ‘Information gathering’ ............................ 125
Table 17 - Quotes from theme ‘Information sharing’ ............................... 127
Table 18 - Quotes from theme ‘the ELSA role’ ....................................... 128
Table 19 - Quotes from theme ‘ELSA support’ ....................................... 132
Table 20 - Quotes from theme ‘ELSA activities’ ..................................... 133
Table 21 - Quotes from theme ‘ELSA room’ .......................................... 134
Table 22 - Quotes from theme ‘Informal ELSA support’ ....................... 135
Table 23 - Quotes from theme ‘reduction of support’ .......................... 138
Table 24 - Quotes from theme ‘use strategies learnt’ .......................... 139
Table 25 - Quotes from theme ‘moving on’ ..................................... 140
Table 26 - Quotes from theme ‘pressure to end the intervention’ ......... 141
Table 27 - Quotes from theme ‘there doesn’t seem to be an ending’ ...... 142
Table 28 - Quotes from theme ‘learnt strategies’ ............................... 146
Table 29 - Quotes from theme ‘made a difference’ .............................. 147
Table 30 - Quotes from theme ‘demonstrating impact’ ....................... 149
Table 31 - Quotes from theme ‘ELSA feedback’ ................................. 149
Table 32 - Quotes from theme ‘advice for other YP’ ........................... 150
Table 33 - Quotes from theme ‘barriers’ ........................................ 154
Table 34 - Quotes from theme ‘help needed’ .................................... 156
Table 35 - Guidelines for Critical Review in Quantitative Studies (adapted from Law et al., 1998) .......................................................... 261
Table 36 - Credibility Measures within Qualitative Research (Brantlinger et al., 2005) .................................................................. 262
Table 37 – Quality Indicators within Qualitative Research (Adapted from Brantlinger et al., 2005) .............................................................. 263
Table 38 – Typology of Evidence (Petticrew & Roberts, 2003) .............. 264
Table 39 – Relevance to my Review Questions .................................... 264
List of Figures

Figure 1 – The Features of a Case Study ...................................................... 79
Figure 2 – The Case Study Research Process .................................................. 79
Figure 3 – Overall Thematic Map .................................................................. 108
Figure 4 – Four Overarching Themes .............................................................. 110
Figure 5 – Overarching Theme 1: the therapeutic relationship ..................... 112
Figure 6 – Overarching Theme 2: the therapeutic journey ......................... 119
Figure 7 – Theme: Beginnings and expectations ......................................... 121
Figure 8 - Theme: The middle, the intervention and the support ............... 131
Figure 9 – Theme: Ending or not ending ..................................................... 137
Figure 10 - Overarching Theme 3: the impact of the intervention .......... 145
Figure 11 - Overarching Theme 4: barriers and help needed ..................... 152
Figure 12 – Map of Amy’s Journey ................................................................. 159
Figure 13 – Me and My ELSA – Amy ............................................................. 160
Figure 14 – Map of Adam’s Journey .............................................................. 163
Figure 15 – Me and My ELSA – Adam .......................................................... 164
Figure 16 – Map of Annabel’s Journey .......................................................... 167
Figure 17 – Me and My ELSA – Annabel ....................................................... 168
  Figure 18 – Map of Katie’s Journey .............................................................. 171
Figure 19 – Me and My ELSA – Katie ............................................................ 172
Figure 20 – Visual impression of Amy’s pre-intervention interview .......... 174
Figure 21 - Visual impression of Amy’s post-intervention interview .......... 174
Figure 22 - Visual impression of Adam’s pre-intervention interview ........ 176
Figure 23 - Visual impression of Adam’s post-intervention interview ....... 176
Figure 24 - Visual impression of Annabel’s pre-intervention interview ...... 178
Figure 25 - Visual impression of Annabel’s post-intervention interview ......178
Figure 26 - Visual impression of Katie’s pre-intervention interview.........:180
Figure 27 - Visual impression of Katie’s post-intervention interview.......180
Figure 28 – Adam’s Non-Ideal ELSA.................................................................182
Figure 29 – Adam’s Ideal ELSA..................................................................183
Figure 30 – Annabel’s Non-Ideal ELSA.........................................................185
Figure 31 – Annabel’s Ideal ELSA..................................................................186
Figure 32 – Katie’s Non-Ideal ELSA..............................................................188
Figure 33 – Katie’s Ideal ELSA......................................................................189
Figure 34 - Visual impression of Adam, Annabel and Katie’s Non-Ideal ELSA
drawing task .................................................................................................190
Figure 35 - Visual impression of Adam, Annabel and Katie’s Ideal ELSA
drawing task .................................................................................................191
Figure 36 – Mrs Salmon’s Non-Ideal ELSA....................................................192
Figure 37 – Mrs Salmon’s Ideal ELSA..........................................................193
Figure 38 – Mrs Salmon’s Ideal ELSA scaling activity.................................195
Figure 39 - Further comments from Mrs Salmon relating to the Ideal ELSA
scaling activity ...............................................................................................196
Figure 40 – Mrs Gulliver’s Non-Ideal ELSA..................................................198
Figure 41 – Mrs Gulliver’s Ideal ELSA..........................................................199
Figure 42 – Mrs Gulliver’s Ideal ELSA scaling activity.................................201
Figure 43 - Further comments from Mrs Gulliver relating to the Ideal ELSA
scaling activity ...............................................................................................202
Part 1 Introduction

1 Introduction to the Subject of the Thesis and Purpose of the Research

This thesis builds upon my interest and experience with the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) programme in two local authorities over the last 15 years.

The research base for the ELSA intervention is small but growing. In addition to the published research, there are several unpublished doctoral theses and service-based evaluations which provide information on the impact and effectiveness of the ELSA intervention. For example, unpublished research by Bravery and Harris (2009) has highlighted the positive impact that ELSA has had on individual children and therefore on schools in improving emotional wellbeing, behaviour and relationships.

Also in 2009, research from Burton et al. found an increase in emotional literacy scores on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) post intervention on teacher ratings but no significant improvements for child ratings.

Doctoral research has indicated that children can find the beginning of the ELSA intervention difficult as they do not always know what to expect and that ELSAs themselves can find the endings difficult as they can struggle to ‘let go’ (Ball, 2014 and Begley, 2015). Whilst research has focused on young people’s (YP’s) experience and understanding of the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) phenomenon (Begley, 2015), the ELSA intervention (Barker, 2017) and YP’s perception of the effectiveness of the intervention (Hills, 2016), it has not
yet considered the experience or ‘journey’ through the intervention from the YP’s perspective.

In her work, Hills (2016) reported that the therapeutic relationship with the ELSA was one factor that contributed to the effectiveness of the intervention. She also reported that children commented that feeling prepared before starting ELSA and understanding what happens when ELSA support ends could be improved. Likewise, Ball (2014) recommended ‘further research exploring the impact of ELSA and the ELSA child relationship from the child’s perspective’ (Ball, 2014, p212).

This thesis therefore aims to add to the evidence base, understanding and knowledge of the ELSA intervention (with particular emphasis on how the child experiences the beginning and ending of the programme and the importance of the ELSA – child relationship) and so make a distinct contribution to educational psychology practice. It is intended that this review and the research will help to update the training for ELSAs; providing them with guidance and resources regarding managing beginnings and endings; and supporting them to consider the importance of their relationship and the pupil experience.

As an educational psychologist, I believe in and use social constructionist approaches in my everyday work and so have adopted this epistemological position for my research. Using a case study approach with semi-structured interviews, a focus group, diaries and drawings will allow me to explore the constructs the young people (YP) and ELSAs have formed about their journey through the intervention and their relationship.
2 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into four sections. Part one is this introduction. Part two contains the full literature review, starting in the broad areas of social and emotional support in schools, exploring therapeutic relationships, the idea of a therapeutic journey, the use of contracts to set up interventions and support to manage the ending of an intervention. It also considers the importance of seeking pupil views and explores methods for doing this which informs the research project described in part three.

Part three contains the empirical report of a qualitative case study and draws upon the findings of the literature review as it aims to explore the child’s experience of the ELSA intervention. The section will describe the research design and methods employed to answer the research questions and the ethical issues considered. It will then describe the methods of analysis and present the findings.

Finally, part four contains a critical analysis of the study and personal reflections of the research process (including learning points and challenges). It details the epistemological stance I have taken, explains the rationale for the research design, sample, measures and analysis chosen and critically evaluates why an alternative methodology was not utilised. The chapter also critically appraises the strengths and weaknesses of the study, highlights implications for future research, makes recommendations for educational psychology practice and outlines the distinct contribution the research has made.
3 Research Questions

The research sets out to answer the following questions:

- Research Question 1 - How does the relationship with the individual ELSA and the qualities of the ELSA impact upon the child’s experience of the ELSA intervention?
- Research Question – 2 How does the child experience the therapeutic journey of the ELSA intervention? How is the beginning and ending of the intervention experienced?
- Research Question 3 - What are the barriers to programme fidelity?
Part 2 Literature Review

1 Introduction to the Subject of the Literature Review

According to Public Health England (2016), the emotional health and wellbeing of children is just as important as their physical health and wellbeing. The report notes that ‘mental health illnesses are a leading cause of health-related disabilities in YP and can have adverse and long-lasting effects’ (p.4), with an increased likelihood of alcohol misuse, drug misuse and smoking and decreased physical health, educational attainment, employment prospects and social relationships. It also states that a positive school climate that enhances belonging and connectedness, positive relationships with caring adults and a whole-school approach to promoting good mental health are protective factors within the school system which can build resilience.

Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) are defined as ‘teaching assistants who have had special training from educational psychologists to support the development of children and young people in their school, by helping them learn to understand emotions, as well as respect the feelings of others around them’, (Osborne & Burton, 2014, p140). Following the training, in most local authorities using ELSAs, they receive regular and ongoing supervision from an EP to maintain their role and ensure quality, safe practice.

The published research base for the ELSA intervention is small but growing.
2 Purpose and the Need for the Review

Alongside the small body of published research, there are several unpublished doctoral theses and service-based evaluations which provide information on the scope, impact and effectiveness of the ELSA intervention and indicate that the ELSA intervention is received by teachers, parents and children positively (Burton, 2008). However, according to Pickering et al. (2019), there is a lack of peer-reviewed studies, conflicting results and some difficulties with the research (including a lack of sensitive-enough measures, a lack of control groups, a lack of pre/post measures, the possibility of the Hawthorne Effect and a reliance on self-report). Pickering et al. (2019, p.19) suggest that the conflicting results may be attributed to ‘inconsistencies in the intensity and duration of the intervention delivered as well as differences in the measures used’ as the ELSA programme is designed to be implemented flexibly and tailored according to the individual pupil’s needs. They suggest that future research should focus on looking at whether the emotional literacy skills children learn are generalisable and should elicit children’s views so that the value of this work for children can be understood. McEwen (2019) agrees but argues that qualitative research into the benefits of the ELSA programme may be more meaningful than quantitative measures of effectiveness or impact.

Existing research indicates that children can find beginning the ELSA intervention difficult as they do not know what to expect and the ELSAs themselves can find the endings difficult as they think that they are abandoning their student when they need continuing support (Ball, 2014 and Begley, 2015).

This review will start in the broad areas of social and emotional support in schools, exploring therapeutic relationships, the concept of a therapeutic
journey, the use of contracts to set up interventions and support to manage the ending of an intervention. In doing so, it will relate the importance of a therapeutic relationship and the experience of a therapeutic journey to the ELSA intervention and will suggest ways that ELSAs can support children and young people to manage the beginning and end of the intervention. It will also review the literature which considers the importance of seeking pupil views and will explore methods for doing this in order to inform the subsequent research. It is intended that this review and the research will contribute to the growing evidence base, will help to update the training and provide resources to help ELSAs to manage beginnings and endings and support them to consider the pupil experience and their relationship.
3 Introduction to the Area of Study

3.1 Context for Support

The Green Paper for ‘Transforming Children and Young People’s Mental Health’ (DoH & DfE, 2017, p.6) states that ‘mental health problems affect a significant number of children and young people’. It quotes recent data from the Office for National Statistics which suggest that one in ten children and young people have some form of ‘clinically diagnosable mental health disorder’ and say that this equates to 850 000 children and young people in the UK today. The Institute for Public Policy (IPPR) report ‘Education, Education, Mental Health’ (Thorley, 2016, p3) describe this as a ‘crisis’ for schools with three children in every classroom experiencing a clinically diagnosable condition.

The Green Paper (DoH & DfE, 2017, p.8) also describes that children and young people with mental health problems are more likely to experience increased disruption to their education and problems with their future employment. It goes on to cite ‘strong evidence that adult mental health problems begin in childhood or adolescence’.

The NHS are reported to receive around 460 000 referrals a year for mental health support to children and offer treatment to 200 000 a year (DoH & DfE, 2017, p.9). Demand for access to CAMHS services is reported to have risen since 2010 and the IPPR reports that ‘the number of hospital admissions of 0-17 year olds who had self-harmed increased by more than 50% between 2009/10 and 2014/15’ (Thorley, 2016, p3). Despite the growing number of children and young people with mental health difficulties, cuts to funding of NHS and Local Authority early intervention services are meaning that less children can access
the services they need and that the quality of services they receive can be variable with long waiting times.

The Green Paper cites a review by the Care Quality Commission (DoH & DfE, 2017) which found evidence of ‘poor quality care where the different organisations that support young people are not joined up resulting in long waits for support and unclear messages for parents and carers’ with the average waiting time for treatment being around 12 weeks.

Cuts to services and increased waiting times alongside the increased prevalence of mental health difficulties has meant that schools are having to support a greater number of students from within their own resources. The IPPR describe that secondary schools are ‘increasingly struggling to cope with the effects of mental ill-health among their pupils (Thorley, 2016, p20). The Mental Health and Behaviour report (DfE, 2018) describes that ‘schools have a central role to play in enabling their pupils to be resilient and to support good mental health and wellbeing’ (p.4). It goes on to emphasise the role of schools in promoting the resilience of pupils with ‘less supportive home lives, who may not have a trusted adult they can talk to’ and state that schools should be ‘a safe and affirming place for children where they can develop a sense of belonging and feel able to trust and talk openly with adults about their problems’ (p.13). As such, school staff can be well placed to deliver mental health support to children and EPs can be well placed to provide training and support to school staff, e.g. to ELSAs.

Where there is a whole-school ethos committed to improving mental health and emotional wellbeing for all members of the school community, there are benefits in ‘subjective perceptions of school ethos and socio-emotional adjustment’ as well as in ‘pupils’ achievement results and attendance’ (Banerjee et al., 2014, p.737). The Green Paper (DoH and DfE, 2017) detailed proposals to transform
and expand access to mental health provision for young people. The proposals included establishing Mental Health Support teams (MHSTs) and incentivising schools and colleges to identify and train a senior mental health lead who will facilitate a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing.

The core functions of MHSTs are described as:

- ‘delivering evidence-based interventions for children and young people with mild-moderate mental health problems
- supporting the senior mental health lead in each education setting to introduce or develop their whole school / college approach
- giving timely advice to school and college staff, and liaising with external specialist services, to help children and young people to get the right support and stay in education’ (NHS England, 2019, p.18)

MHSTs will build on support already in place from ‘educational psychologists, school nurses and counsellors, local authority troubled families teams, social services, peer networks, service user forums, and voluntary and community sector organisations… putting the new teams at the heart of collaborative approaches with these professionals’ (DoH and DfE, 2017, p.22).

Each MHST will consist of 4 Education Mental Health Practitioners (EMHPs) who will work across 10 to 20 education and healthcare settings to provide evidence-based interventions (The British Psychological Society, 2019, p.3). EMHPs will first receive a 12-month training programme of academic learning and supervised practice across mental health services and educational settings. Once trained EMHPs will provide a range of interventions such as
‘individual face to face work such as brief, low-intensity interventions for children, young people and families experiencing anxiety, low mood, friendship or behavioural difficulties

• Group work for pupils or parents, such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for young people with conditions such as self-harm and/or anxiety and

• Group parenting classes to include issues like conduct disorder and communication difficulties’ (The British Psychological Society, 2019, p.5)

The first MHSTs were established in 25 trailblazer areas in December 2018 and will be fully operational by December 2019. A further 57 sites will start developing 123 MHSTs during 2020 (The British Psychological Society, 2019, p.3).

As these are new roles and new teams and there is a clear overlap in the types of work ELSAs and EMHPs can do, careful consideration needs to be given to how the EMHPs will work alongside those in established mental health support roles in education settings, such as ELSAs. Senior mental health leads in schools should be encouraged to see ELSA support and support from Educational Psychologists as part of their whole-school approach and in addition to what the MHSTs can offer. In some local authorities EPs are part of the training programmes and are offering supervision to EMHPs. Further guidance is needed and learning should be taken from the trailblazer sites where ELSAs also exist.

The role of the EP in delivering therapeutic interventions is highlighted by Atkinson et al. (2013). They conducted a survey into the role of UK EPs in delivering therapeutic interventions to children and young people. They then
followed up four services who identified effective practice with site visits, interviews and focus groups. Through the identification of themes relating to contracting, leadership, practice, supervision, time, resources and training, they report that EPs can be well-placed to support the mental health and wellbeing of young people. However, service capacity or the demand for statutory work can make this less likely in practice. Educational Psychologists can, however, be effective in this area through training and supervising school staff to deliver therapeutic interventions.

3.2 Concepts

According to the Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools report (DfE, 2016b, p.34) children who are ‘mentally healthy’ are able to:

- ‘Develop psychologically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually
- Initiate, develop and sustain mutually satisfying personal relationships
- Use and enjoy solitude
- Become aware of others and empathise with them
- Play and learn
- Develop a sense of right and wrong
- Resolve (face) problems and setbacks and learn from them’

The report also describes that children and young people with mental health problems or disorders may experience:

- Emotional disorders, e.g. phobias, anxiety states and depression
- Conduct disorders, e.g. stealing, defiance, fire-setting, aggression and anti-social behaviour
- Hyperkinetic disorders, e.g. disturbance of activity and attention
• Developmental disorders, e.g. a delay in acquiring certain skills such as speech, social ability or bladder control
• Attachment disorders, e.g. children who are markedly distressed or socially impaired as a result of an extremely abnormal pattern of attachment to parents or major caregivers
• Other mental health problems include eating disorders, habit disorders, traumatic stress syndromes, somatic disorders and psychotic disorders

Whilst these descriptions are within child and through the terminology of treatment and disorder indicate a medical model, EPs and others working in schools would understand mental health difficulties in a broader context and consider the interaction between the child and their environment. Societal or familial factors such as a poverty, family break-up or a bereavement may affect a child’s wellbeing and rather than treatment, they may need support to develop coping strategies and resilience. This support could be delivered at an individual level or to a group, but evidence (Weare & Gray, 2003) suggests that a whole school approach which also considers teacher wellbeing is an effective way of promoting positive mental health for all. Educational psychologists are well placed to deliver whole school training, group work, individual interventions or to support staff to deliver interventions, such as to ELSAs. Burton (2008, p.49) describes that ‘the ELSA initiative provides individualised and small group support to those pupils who need more intensive input to overcome the emotional challenges before them’.

Burton, as a practising EP developed the ELSA intervention in Southampton in 2001. Initially, several peripatetic ELSAs were employed by the local authority. These first ELSAs visited individual children in primary schools who had been
referred by school staff and delivered bespoke programmes of support. This approach was popular with schools who then wanted to train their own school based ELSAs. When she moved to Hampshire, a model of training school based ELSAs was rolled out and included secondary and some special schools. There is now an established national ELSA network [www.elsanetwork.org](http://www.elsanetwork.org) and it is known to be operating in almost 150 other English, Welsh or Scottish local authorities or private educational psychology services as well as in Jersey, Hong Kong, Argentina and some Ministry of Defence schools overseas.

In order to explore the scope and nature of the work of ELSAs, questionnaires were sent to 525 Emotional Literacy Support Assistants in Hampshire during 2009-2010. It was found that ‘on average ELSAs worked with 13 children on an individual basis, providing 14 sessions each lasting approximately 30 minutes’ (Bradley, 2010, p4). A wide variation in the number of sessions provided was noted as was the focus of the sessions but the most commonly cited areas of intervention were self-esteem, social skills and anger management. In addition to individual work, ELSAs also worked with an average of three groups and mainly focused on social skills, friendship skills and self-esteem (Bradley, 2010, p4). Doctoral research undertaken by Nicholson-Roberts (2019, p.103), in which she explored how the ELSA intervention operates in secondary schools, found that interventions ‘often ran far longer’ than the recommended six to eight weeks. She reports that explanations for the extended length of the intervention included pupil absence, the time taken to build a relationship, pupil readiness to end the intervention, further needs being identified and more time needed to support YP with complex needs.

Unpublished research by Bravery and Harris (2009) highlighted the positive impact that the ELSA intervention has on individual children and therefore on
schools. They interviewed 21 ELSAs and received online questionnaires back from 17 headteachers in Bournemouth. Results indicated that the majority of ELSAs and headteachers consider ELSA work to have a positive impact on children in terms of their behaviour, emotional wellbeing and improving relationships. Just under half of the headteachers also reported a positive impact upon attendance, reduced bullying and improved academic achievement for individual children.

In an unpublished service evaluation, Burton et al. (2009) gave the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) to parents and teachers of children before and after their ELSA intervention. Whilst issues of potential bias should be borne in mind because this research was conducted by the programme’s founder, they found that parents and teachers’ perceptions of emotional problems, peer problems, conduct disorder and hyperactivity had decreased and that their perceptions of prosocial behaviour had improved post-intervention. However, the difference in teacher ratings was more marked than in the parent ratings. The authors hypothesise that this difference might be accounted for by the differences in the home and school context and suggest the possibility that the ‘ELSA interventions were most evident within school and had not generalised to the home’ (p.25).

In questionnaires sent to 22 schools by Burton (2008), pupils were asked to rate how working with their ELSA made them feel. 85% of primary pupils and 60% of secondary pupils said that this made them feel happy. Likewise, 83% of primary pupils and 50% of secondary pupils thought that they were making progress towards their targets for ELSA work (p.45). Comments from primary teachers highlighted improved emotional understanding, improved social and friendship skills, increased self-esteem and confidence and improved behaviour, whereas
secondary teachers highlighted the benefit for pupils of having time to talk about feelings, relationships and coping strategies (p.46).

3.3 Controversies

It is well known that children are less able to learn when they are unhappy or their mind is focused on their worries or negative thoughts and that this can have a detrimental effect on academic achievement, for example Zins et al. (2007, p.191) state that social and emotional learning plays ‘a critical role in improving children’s academic performance and lifelong learning’. Likewise, Public Health England (2014, p.4) report that ‘pupils with better health and wellbeing are likely to achieve better academically’.

In recent years, educational policy has narrowed its focus on academic achievement rather than taking a holistic view of child development. For school staff, there can be a tension between their role in furthering academic achievement whilst also promoting emotional wellbeing. Roffey (2016, p.34) describes that ‘children who are anxious, angry, confused, despairing or depressed are not in the best psychological state to focus on directed learning tasks at school and their behaviour is likely to reflect this wide range of negative emotions’. She describes that school staff who are under pressure for pupils to perform well and attain high academic standards may find this behaviour hard to manage and resent the time and energy it takes up. It is recognised in the White Paper ‘Educational Excellence Everywhere’ that ‘while teachers are not mental health professionals, schools can play an important role in promoting wellbeing as well as helping to prevent and identify mental health issues’ (DfE, 2016, p.97). The ‘Supporting Mental Health in Schools and Colleges’ report (NatCen & NCB, 2017, p.6) found that schools and colleges felt that they were in a unique
position because of the time children spent in their care, and the opportunities that this afforded them to build relationships, and offer support to both children and their families’. Likewise, Burton (2008) found several benefits of providing support within schools including greater accessibility to support for pupils, the ability to support pupils to generalise the skills learnt in individual sessions to the classroom or playground environments and the option to provide ‘informal support beyond the duration of the intervention’ (p.48).

Following a period of focusing on academic achievements and ‘results’, there is now a growing recognition of the importance of development of the ‘whole child’ and that a broader range of skills and knowledge are needed to support a child’s emotional health and wellbeing. Alongside this is a need for a whole-school ethos of emotional literacy, rather than a narrow focus on academic achievement. Schools and colleges surveyed for the ‘Supporting Mental Health in Schools and Colleges report (NatCen & NCB, 2017, p.6) described their role as including some or all of the following:

- ‘Promoting mental wellbeing by creating an environment where children and young people feel safe and happy
- Identifying pupils’ specific mental health needs
- Providing mental health support for pupils with particular needs
- Referring to and/or delivering specialist therapeutic provision’

The ‘What Works in Promoting Social and Emotional Well-being and Responding to Mental Health Problems in Schools?’ report (Weare, 2015, p.4) provides advice for schools in adopting whole-school thinking. This includes adopting a whole-school approach (engaging the whole community, prioritising professional learning and staff development and developing policy),
implementing targeted programmes and interventions and identifying specialist pathways. It would therefore seem that a universal preventative approach is needed to support all children’s emotional health and wellbeing and to develop their resilience with a targeted offer to those who need some extra support.

3.4 Definitions

Weare and Gray (2003, p14-19) note that there are a wide range of terms used and that the development of a common language would help to further awareness and understanding. They suggest that ‘emotional and social competence’ and ‘emotional and social wellbeing’ are considered the most straightforward and use this terminology in their ‘what works in developing children’s social and emotional competence and wellbeing’ report. They quote Stewart-Brown’s definition of emotional and social wellbeing as ‘a holistic, subjective state which is present when a range of feelings, among them energy, confidence, openness, enjoyment, happiness, calm and caring are combined and balanced’ (Stewart-Brown, 2000 cited by Weare & Gray). Likewise, they cite Elias et al.’s (1997) definition of emotional and social competence as ‘the ability to understand, manage and express the social and emotional aspects of one’s life in ways that enable the successful management of life tasks such as learning, forming relationships, solving everyday problems and adapting to the complex demands of growth and development’ (Elias et al., 1997 cited by Weare & Gray).

According to Weare and Gray (2003), the term ‘emotional literacy’ is often attributed to Rudolf Steiner and was popularised by Antidote, the Campaign for Emotional Literacy in the UK. Sharp (2001) defines emotional literacy as ‘the ability to recognise, understand, handle and appropriately express emotions’.
Weare and Gray (2003, p16) point out that the term is meaningful in an educational context and popular with EPs, school staff and local authorities.

In the original ELSA training materials (Burton, 1999), Mayer and Salovey’s 1997 definition of emotional intelligence is presented to ELSAs and is described by Weare and Gray (2003) as being most popular in the USA. Weare and Gray (2003) also state that the work of Mayer and Salovey on emotional intelligence coincided with the work of Gardiner (1995) on multiple intelligences and was then further popularised by Goleman. Mayer and Salovey described emotional intelligence as ‘the ability to perceive accurately, appraise and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings which facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth’ (Weare & Gray, 2003, p.15).

According to Weare and Gray (2003), ‘mental health’ is a term more often used by health services and is often used as a pseudonym for mental illness or to describe a negative state.

Throughout this study, I have used the term ‘ELSA’ to describe the person delivering the intervention and ‘ELSA support’ or ‘ELSA intervention’ to describe the intervention. I have used the term ‘child’, ‘children’ or ‘pupil’ in the literature review and during the planning of the empirical report to encompass the whole age range of children from 0-18 years. However, when I am describing the specifics of my research and findings with older children aged 11-13, I have tended to use the term ‘young people’ or ‘YP’ to better represent their age.

3.5 Review Questions

The introduction to the literature review has outlined the importance of emotional wellbeing and highlighted the rise in mental health difficulties. Mental health
difficulties in childhood have been shown to have wide-ranging and long-lasting effects into adulthood. Alongside this, cuts in mental health services and increased waiting times have exacerbated the difficulties in accessing appropriate and timely support and school staff are needing to find ways to support pupils with more complex needs from within their own resources. Having a positive whole-school climate, which focuses on wellbeing for all and the importance of connectedness, relationships and belonging is helping to promote resilience. The EP’s role within this, e.g. training and supervising Emotional Literacy Support Assistants has been outlined and the difficulties with the current limited research evidence pointed out.

The review therefore sets out to answer the following questions:

- What is a therapeutic relationship? How important is the therapeutic relationship?
- What is a therapeutic journey?
  - How is the beginning of an intervention experienced? What can be done to prepare for the beginning of an intervention?
  - How is the ending of an intervention experienced? What can be done to manage the ending of an intervention?
- How can we ensure that we listen and respond to children’s views so that we can enhance the therapeutic relationship and the therapeutic journey?
4 Methods Used to Carry out the Literature Search

To address the above questions, a literature search of psycINFO was carried out. PsycINFO was searched using the search terms outlined in appendix 1. Manual and ancestral searches were also conducted. The search was restricted to papers written in English, full text articles and articles published after 2000. Studies were undertaken worldwide and articles were not disregarded based on location. The majority of research was taken from peer reviewed journals, although a few reports, theses, unpublished service evaluations and government papers were accessed through Google, Google Scholar, the Ethos database or ELSA network website (www.elsanetwork.org). Articles relating to therapy in clinical settings were also included in the review, as were articles focusing on general adult-child relationships in education settings as aspects of the therapeutic relationship or journey were thought to be generalisable to the ELSA intervention. Similarly, articles relating to therapy with adults or duplicate articles were disregarded (see appendices 1-4 for details of the inclusion and exclusion criteria and the process of study selection).

4.1 Approach to the Review: appropriateness of the review methods and relevance to the review questions

This section will explain the selected review methods and discuss their relevance to the review questions above.

According to Gough et al. (2013, p.20), ‘there are many different approaches to the systematic review of research. The approach chosen will be dictated by the review questions, assumptions, methods, and answers’. They suggest that ‘reviews can either configure findings to create and develop ideas or theories or aggregate findings to test a theory’, and that most reviews have elements of
both. As my review questions aim to explore the phenomenon of a therapeutic relationship and a therapeutic journey and aim to explore how children’s views can be sought, a configurative approach has been selected.

Gough et al. (2013, p.20) further explain that ‘configurative approaches to primary research and research reviews are concerned with meaning and interpretation. They are used to develop ideas and theories. They tend to use exploratory and iterative approaches that emerge through the process of the research – they are ‘inductive’ rather than ‘deductive’. Research that is predominantly configuring often relies on a small number of detailed cases to develop an understanding of processes and mechanisms and meanings. Heterogeneity is more useful than homogeneity. A spread of different and unusual cases may provide greater insights than a representative sample that reveals more about typical cases’.

After searching, each paper was reviewed by scanning the abstract, conclusion or discussion section to ascertain its relevance to the research questions. Following this, papers were organised into different subsections for further review and in line with the emerging structure of the literature review.

Key information from the studies reviewed was mapped under headings such as ‘study aim’, ‘sample’, ‘geographical distribution’, ‘research design’, ‘measures’, ‘outcomes’ and ‘limitations’ (see appendix 4).

Gough’s Weight of Evidence Framework (2007) was used to critique all studies and articles for methodological quality (WoE A), relevance of methodology (WoE B) and relevance of focus to the research questions (WoE C), see appendix 3. ‘Less ‘weight’ was given to the studies judged to be of low methodological quality or with low relevance of methodology. Those articles judged to have low
relevance to the review questions were excluded from the review (see appendix 3). WoE A ratings were assigned to quantitative studies using the criteria developed by Law et al. (1998) and to qualitative studies using credibility measures and quality indicators (Brantlinger et al., 2005). These indicators highlighted several issues with the size of the samples and difficulties generalising the findings. Brantlinger et al. (2005, p.200-201) ‘caution against using credibility measures as a checklist in a rigid or unreflective way’, instead suggesting that authors should refer to the research measures in the context of the research design and report reliability through clarifying methods and the rationale for using them. Similarly, they state that ‘quality indicator guidelines should always relate to the research questions and conceptual frameworks of particular studies’ (2005, p.202). Petticrew and Roberts’ (2003) typologies of methodological appropriateness were used to assign WoE B ratings and WoE C ratings were allocated based upon the relevance of the article to my review questions, in terms of topic, context and sample. WoE D ratings are an average of the WoE A-C ratings and can be seen as an overall judgement about the three dimensions combined.

‘Mapping can also inform the selection of studies for the synthesis of study findings’ (Gough et al., 2013). During the qualitative synthesis of findings, themes were identified and extracted from the papers reviewed according to conceptual headings relevant to the focus of the assignment. These themes include the quality and the importance of the therapeutic relationship and the therapeutic journey, the beginning of interventions (information sharing, use of contracts and clear expectations), the ending of interventions (the potential for loss and trauma), the use of PCP and the importance of eliciting pupil views (see appendix 6).
Both qualitative and quantitative papers were critiqued with consideration given to the weight of evidence framework, credibility measures and quality indicators. Typologies of methodological appropriateness were taken into account and themes were synthesised. Where limitations or ethical questions were found these are highlighted in appendices 4 and 5, discussed within the review and interpreted with caution.

4.2 Theoretical Model Identified

The ideology or theory underpinning the review is social constructionism. Due to the nature of the review questions, in appraising articles and extracting themes, I have used my own process of knowledge construction which has been shaped by my own experiences and values.
5 Review of the Literature

As part of the searching, coding, mapping and appraising stages, the following themes were identified in order to answer the review questions.

- Definitions and the significance of a therapeutic relationship
- Therapeutic journeys
- Beginnings and expectations
- endings
- Importance of seeking pupil views
- Methods for eliciting pupil views

These themes will now be synthesised.

5.1 Therapeutic Relationships

Many studies report that the elements which contribute to a therapeutic relationship are hard to define, but a therapeutic relationship is commonly referred to as 'an emotional bond that exists between a client and the therapist' (Fourie et al., 2011, p.310).

The concept of a ‘therapeutic alliance’ refers to the type and quality of a relationship between a ‘therapist’ and a ‘client’. According to Dunsmuir and Hardy (2016, p.16) ‘the therapeutic alliance will be enhanced if therapy centres on the child or young person's interests, is engaging and includes the possibility of fun’.

Creed and Kendall (2005, p.498) cite Luborsky (1994) when they state that ‘the therapeutic relationship is part of a therapeutic alliance, which also encompasses such facets as agreement on the goals of therapy, the tasks of
therapy undertaken to meet those goals, and the bond between client and therapist’.

Nuttall (2002, p. 505) asserts that the ‘theoretical approach has little to do with the effectiveness of psychotherapy; it is the quality of the therapeutic relationship’.

According to the ‘Future In Mind’ report, children’s relationships with others are ‘at the heart of health and wellbeing’ (DoH & NHS, 2015, p.21). Therapeutic relationships are arguably even more important for children and young people who need support with their emotional literacy skills. Some of these children may have experienced traumatic experiences or felt ‘unsafe’ or ‘uncertain’ in their early attachment relationships. This may lead them to think that they are less able to trust the adults in schools and yet they may have more of a need for a ‘safe’ relationship with a key adult. Similarly, secure early attachments have been found to predict academic outcomes. Greig et al. (2008) studied a group of 17 looked after children in foster care (aged 4-19 years), which they compared to a control group of 17 children who were not looked after or in foster care. Despite the small sample, they used Story Stems and other verbal measures and found that the children in foster care were outperformed by those not in foster care on measures of narrative coherence, intentionality and avoidance. They therefore state that ‘attachment security status has been found to be nearly as good a predictor of scholastic achievement outcomes as IQ’ (p.23).

There are a number of studies that highlight the benefits of establishing a strong therapeutic alliance to ensure the child and young person’s engagement and good outcomes. In particular, Kazdin et al. (2005) studied 185 children (75% male) aged 3-14 years who were referred for oppositional, aggressive and
antisocial behaviour. The children, their parents and therapists completed measures before, during and after the therapy and it was found that ‘the greater the alliance, the greater the therapeutic change’ (p.728).

Karver et al. (2006) conducted a meta-analysis of 49 studies to review the link between therapeutic relationships and treatment outcomes. Whilst 25% of these studies were unpublished or not peer reviewed, they report that the best predictors of positive outcomes were counsellor interpersonal skills, therapist direct influence skills, youth and parent willingness to participate in treatment and youth and parent participation in treatment. They also suggest that certain therapist behaviours, e.g. empathy and warmth predicted positive outcomes.

Another meta-analysis highlights the complexity of reviewing the effectiveness of therapeutic interventions for children compared to the literature in the adult field and provides implications for schools. Zirkelback and Reese (2010, p.1095) state that ‘there is compelling evidence to suggest that psychotherapy is effective for children and adolescents’ and that as all children are required to attend school, the school setting is the perfect location to site therapeutic services. They go on to recommend that school-based mental health professionals should establish a strong therapeutic alliance and that the therapeutic alliance is more important for children than it is for adults. They describe that this is because adults have to work harder to establish and maintain this bond as children may not know why they are having therapy, have not sought it themselves or may disagree with their parents or staff about the goals of therapy.

Following her case study research with children in ‘Support Groups’ in Scottish schools, Mowat (2010, p.176) suggests that ‘key adults can play a crucial role in
determining outcomes for young people’ and ‘the extent to which teachers affirm (or not) young people and the extent to which young people are listened to and are enabled to communicate within a safe environment and trust is established are all key to success’.

Dunsmuir and Hardy (2016) discuss the seminal work of Traux and Carkhuff in 1976, in their guidance to schools and colleges on delivering psychological therapies and state that the ‘centrality of the therapeutic relationship in determining outcomes remains undiminished’. They cite the original research, which ‘proposed that warmth, empathy and genuine positive regard are key therapist qualities’ and that ‘the beneficial effects of any human interchange are enhanced by such qualities as the other person’s feelings, deep concern for her/his welfare without attempts to dominate her/him, and openness about one’s own reactions’ (Traux & Carkhuff, 1976 in Dunsmuir & Hardy, 2016, p.16).

Creed and Kendall (2005) looked at the link between specific therapist behaviours and the therapeutic alliance reported by 56 children aged 7-13 who were referred for Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) for anxiety. Using the Therapeutic Alliance Scale for Children, they found that ratings of ‘collaboration’ within the CBT sessions predicted a stronger alliance and ‘being overly formal’ or ‘pushing the child to talk’ predicted a weaker alliance. They also found that the children’s ratings of ‘being playful’, ‘providing hope and encouragement’ and ‘general conversations’ did not predict child ratings of a strong alliance.

In their exploration of the therapeutic relationship between six children (aged 5-12 years old) and their speech and language therapist, Fourie et al. used semi-structured interviews and an interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA) to identify several themes including ‘play and fun’, ‘power differentials’, ‘trust',
‘routines and rituals’, ‘role confusion’ and ‘physical characteristics of the clinician’. They also propose that it is the quality of the therapeutic relationship which leads to positive outcomes stating that ‘it appears that the bonds of therapy provide the catalytic context for the achievement of therapeutic goals’ (p. 311). Whilst not all the children in their study were able to provide their views, Fourie et al. (2011, p.310) also noted the importance of explicitly discussing roles and the purpose of the support so that children can achieve ‘a therapeutic bond through which the goals and tasks of therapy can be achieved’.

The importance of attachment and counter-transference to the therapeutic relationship are described by Lowe (2016, p.65). She describes that the adult should be aware of their own attachment experiences and the impact of their previous personal experiences on the therapeutic relationship. She argues that counter-transference can be a positive experience and states that ‘awareness of our own vulnerabilities can assist us to be truly genuine, authentic and empathetic’. She therefore maintains that ‘what the professional brings to the therapeutic relationship is just as relevant as what the child brings’.

Having discussed the centrality of therapeutic relationships across a wide range of contexts, the importance of the therapeutic relationship can also be seen in the research relating specifically to the ELSA intervention. In describing what it takes to be an effective ELSA, Burton (2018, p.5) highlights ‘the ability to build a strong positive relationship with troubled children’. She emphasises that in counselling work, ‘the single most important determining factor is the quality of relationship between counsellor and client’ and likens this to ELSA work where it is ‘the quality of relationship the ELSA offers that is most highly valued by children’. 
Burton (2008) emphasised the importance of the relationship that ELSAs develop with the children they support. Questionnaires were sent out to 22 schools in Hampshire for the ELSAs, line managers, pupils and teachers to complete. All the ELSAs stated that the training and supervision they received were empowering and helped them to support vulnerable children (p.45). Pupils receiving ELSA support emphasised the ‘importance of being able to share their feelings safely and confidentially with adults who have time to listen to them’ (p.48). They also reported that ongoing support led to the development of trusting relationships.

In her exploration of the ELSA-pupil relationship from the ELSA’s perspective, Miles (2014) utilised semi-structured interviews with 12 ELSAs working with pupils in key stage two. Her thematic analysis uncovered themes that were important to the relationship: giving time to pupils, having a two-way relationship, respecting and understanding the child as an individual, trust, flexibility and confidentiality. As part of this work for her thesis, she notes that there were only a small number of participants, that they all worked for one local authority and questions whether the findings would also apply to ELSAs working with older or younger children. She also recommends that pupils’ views of this relationship are sought in future research.

Ball (2014, p.201) found that ELSAs perceive that their relationships with different children developed at different rates, with most relationships evolving to ‘become closer and more trusting’ over time. This was based on the children receiving an average of 7.87 ELSA sessions of an average of 41.84 minutes (p.140). The ELSAs stated that this was often due to the level of the child investment in the relationship and that some relationships needed more time or that some children ‘held back’ and did not ever become fully invested.
Pickering et al. (2019, p.20) suggest that the ‘nature of the relationship children have with an ELSA is qualitatively different from that which they have with other members of school staff’ but highlight the difficulty in separating out qualities of the ELSA themselves on the impact of the programme from other variables such as the intensity and frequency of the intervention.

In her doctoral research with two primary school children and their parents, Barker (2017, p.59) highlights the value of the therapeutic relationship which develops between pupils and ELSAs. She extracted a number of themes from semi-structured interviews with the participants. She found that the ‘process of talking and problem-solving with the ELSA’ meant that a ‘positive and trusting relationship’ developed and ‘a safe space whereby pupils felt comfortable talking through their problems or worries’ was created (p.50).

Similarly, Hills (2016) found that the therapeutic relationship with the ELSA was one factor that contributed to the effectiveness of the intervention. She employed a mixed-methods design; 53 children aged six to eleven years completed quantitative questionnaires and nine children took part in semi-structured interviews. When asked what they liked about the ELSA intervention, ‘many of the children immediately referred to their ELSA teacher’ and spoke about the ELSA’s characteristics, particularly ‘the importance of them being kind and showing unconditional positive regard’ (p.58).

In addition to the unique characteristics of ELSAs, Nicholson-Roberts (2019, p.105), describes that the ELSA’s unique approach also supports the development of the therapeutic relationship. In her doctoral thesis exploring how the ELSA Project operates in secondary schools, thematic analysis found that ‘a more relaxed way of being with pupils’, ‘attuned ELSA-pupil interactions’ and ‘the
communication of unconditional positive regard’ supported the ELSA-child relationship.

In her unpublished thesis, Begley (2015) examined how young people and teachers in secondary settings experienced the ELSA intervention. She interviewed three young people aged 14 to 15 years and three ELSAs. Her analysis of the transcripts indicated that all participants experienced the relationship as ‘fundamental’, with young people valuing the relationship they had with their ELSA, for example, commenting on ‘appreciating the attention of an adult, having someone who was available and someone they could trust’ (p.118).

Bowerman and Davies (2018) examined the specific impact of the ELSA intervention on children in care in their local authority. They received completed questionnaires back from ELSAs in 19 primary and 6 secondary schools and completed questionnaires back from senior leaders in 12 primary schools, 2 secondary schools and 2 specialist schools. They also interviewed three children in care and two ELSAs. They report that to build trusting relationships between the ELSA and the child in care, the availability of support and time are crucial. They also note that the nature of the therapeutic activities and the ability to be flexible and child-led in ELSA sessions seem to further enhance the relationship and stress the importance of creativity, flexibility, playfulness as key to the ELSA – child relationship.

In ‘The Boy who was Raised as a Dog’, Perry and Szalavitz outline case studies of children affected by childhood trauma. They describe the idea of ‘therapeutic encounters’ and discuss the timing, frequency and content of therapy to support healing from trauma (2017, p.308). In their accounts of working with traumatised
children, they state that even short experiences can have a big impact: ‘long-term and enduring changes to neural networks can be created by an intense period of stimulation that lasts less than a minute. Synaptic splitting, which is one way these connections can change, can occur in mere seconds of intense stimulation – and if the intense experience is repeated four times within an hour, the change will be maintained long term’. I would suggest that ELSAs working in schools with children who have experienced trauma are able to create such ‘therapeutic encounters’ through the relationships they are able to form and by being present, attuned, kind and responsive to the young person.

Whilst therapeutic relationships are described as being difficult to define, the studies reviewed have shown the centrality of the emotional bond, therapist qualities (empathy and warmth), a sense of security and a sense of fun to the child-adult relationship. The evidence reviewed also emphasises the importance of this relationship to achieving goals and outcomes. Research specifically looking at the importance of the ELSA-child relationship has found similar findings with the relationship being highly valued by children (Burton, 2018), developing in closeness over time (Ball, 2014) and being described as ‘fundamental’ (Begley, 2015).

5.2 Therapeutic Journeys

In addition to the importance of the therapeutic relationship, the importance of the therapeutic journey will now be reviewed. As well as exploring the journey, there will be a focus on the way that the beginning and ending of the therapeutic journey are managed by the adult and experienced by the child and how these impact upon the relationship.
Mok (2015) describes a long-term therapeutic journey with a Taiwanese ‘Parachute Kid’ over a six-year period. She defines a parachute kid as a young child who arrives in the USA to seek educational opportunities, often with limited parental supervision. In this paper, she describes the beginning, middle and end stages of their therapeutic journey including identity development, initiating and maintaining the relationship and experiencing and expressing emotions. She notes feeling ‘a great deal of compassion and caring for her client’ (p.284). She also emphasises the ‘essential humanness of the psycho-therapeutic interaction’ and thanks her client for his investment in their therapeutic relationship (p.287).

Children can be affected by change (beginnings and endings) in diverse ways. Some are resilient and can easily cope with changes to their routines, but many children receiving ELSA support are already emotionally vulnerable. Some may have previously experienced some degree of trauma relating to separation and loss and therefore can find this difficult to understand and manage. Treisman (2018, p.387) describes that ‘endings, changes, goodbyes and new beginnings can evoke a range of feelings including resurfacing and re-triggering past experiences of rejection, sadness, being disposed of, being let down, being insecure, deprivation, abandonment, pain, grief and/or the loss of a meaningful relationship’. According to Burton (2018, p.76), how change is managed can have a ‘significant influence on future beginnings and especially the resilience and courage to build new relationships’.

According to Burton (2008, p.44), ‘it is recommended that ELSAs become involved over a minimum of half a term, generally offering weekly sessions, although the length and frequency of these sessions depends upon the age and individual circumstances’. She comments that interventions may continue for a longer period but that if clear and achievable targets are set at the outset, this
guides ELSAs to know when to finish an intervention. ELSAs have a clear role to support the child they are working with to prepare for the start of the intervention, to know what to expect and to help them manage the ending. However, according to Bowerman and Davies (2018) the majority of ELSAs that responded to their service evaluation stated that their involvement with a child was ongoing. The adaptability of the ELSA intervention is seen as a strength (Burton, 2008), however variations in the intensity, duration and content of the individual pupil experience of the ELSA intervention can make it difficult to compare 'like for like' (Pickering et al., 2019, p.20).

Doctoral research has indicated that children can find the beginning of the ELSA intervention difficult as they do not always know what to expect. At the same time, ELSAs can find the endings difficult as they can struggle to ‘end sessions when they could see the benefit of continuing’ (Ball, 2014, p.187). Whilst research has focused on young people’s (YP’s) experience and understanding of the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) phenomenon (Begley, 2015), the ELSA intervention (Barker, 2017) and YP’s perception of the effectiveness of the intervention (Hills, 2016), it has not yet considered the experience or ‘journey’ through the intervention from the YP’s perspective and so this is the gap in the evidence which my research will seek to address.

5.21 Beginning a Therapeutic Journey or Therapeutic Relationship

The way in which an intervention is set up and expectations managed can impact upon the experience of the intervention and the therapeutic relationship and will be explored in the following section.

Hills (2016) explored primary school children’s perspectives of the ELSA intervention and defines ‘beginnings’ as a subtheme that emerged through her
thematic analysis. She states that some of the children told her that they needed clearer information before they started the ELSA intervention; particularly relating to the reason they were having it, the targets they would work on and when this support would take place. She comments that for some children this lack of clarity had made them feel ‘worried or scared’ (p.56).

Likewise McEwen (2019, p. 296) reports that ‘some children felt uncertain about attending ELSA sessions and wondered if they were in some kind of trouble’.

Similarly Barker (2017), stresses that the nature of the ELSA intervention should be explained to pupils and that the likely content of the sessions should be discussed so that they know what to expect. It is important that pupils are not ‘passive recipients of programmes of intervention’ and that they are fully consulted about their involvement as ‘without their active engagement, interventions will fail’ (Mowat, 2010, p.179).

Wilding and Claridge (2016) explored parental perceptions of the ELSA intervention. They report that parents of children beginning an ELSA intervention may also benefit from an initial meeting with school staff to receive ‘information regarding the wider context of the programme, including its core values and philosophy’ (p.193) and to agree targets and outcomes.

Several studies report using contracts in order to be explicit about the goals of therapy and to establish clear shared expectations prior to an intervention beginning. Research into the use of contracts or contracting in an educational setting is scarce; however, there is research relating to the use of contracts in psychotherapy, contracts in the world of work and behaviour contracts in schools.
• Contracts in psychotherapy

‘A contract is an agreement made between two or more people concerning the type of activity or relationship they will have with each other’ (Sills, 2015, p.3). In adult psychotherapy or counselling a contract can be used as an agreement between the therapist and client which outlines their work together and the therapeutic relationship they are entering into. Sills (2015, p.9) cites Berne (1966), who she describes as the ‘originator of transactional analysis’ and one of the earliest therapists to write about contracting and the identification of three types of contract in therapy: administrative, professional and psychological.

*Table 1 – Three Types of Contract in Therapy*

(adapted from Sills, 2015, p.9-21)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Contracting in Therapy</th>
<th>What it includes</th>
<th>Why this is important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>A business contract: ‘practical arrangements such as time, place, duration, fees (if any), agreements with referring bodies or agencies, confidentiality and its limits’ (p. 9), changes to the contract and how they will be negotiated</td>
<td>‘clarity about administrative agreements ethical and respectful necessity’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contributes to a safe space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>‘defines the purpose and focus of the counselling /psychotherapy and how it will proceed’, e.g. the client and therapist agree on what the problem is and what the sessions will focus on (p.12)</td>
<td>Clearly defines the goals, tasks and bond which are important for developing a therapeutic relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>‘the unspoken and often unconscious expectations’ (p.21) of both client and therapist</td>
<td>At best leads to ‘empathetic connections’, at worst leads to enmeshed transference or counter transference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Atkinson et al. (2013) conducted a survey into the role of EPs in the UK in delivering therapeutic interventions to children. Following thematic analysis, they found that contracting and promoting therapeutic work was essential, particularly the need to provide ‘clear information to both recipients of therapeutic support and their parents’ (p. 59).

Sills (2015) describes a type of ‘three handed’ or ‘three cornered’ contract developed by English in 1975 to explain the increased complexity of a relationship between more than two people. In the context of ELSA work, this could be a contract between the child, the ELSA and the parent or between the child, the ELSA and the organisation (school) and according to the type of triangle drawn, can represent different relationships and power dynamics.

The BPS booklet on delivering psychological therapies (Dunsmuir & Hardy, 2016) describes the importance of establishing a contract and emphasises the value of returning to this at various points during the work. The booklet states that the contract needs to be ethical and practical and contain information on the rationale for the work, roles, expectations, aims and goals. It should also detail the process for information sharing between agencies and between parent and child, confidentiality, the storage of data and the process for review so that informed consent can be given.

The importance of confidentiality and the need for parents and pupils to be fully informed at the outset of the intervention has been highlighted by Barker (2017). She found that pupils and parents may have been initially unclear about the role of the ELSA and emphasises the need for ELSAs or indeed EPs to be clear about their role and the nature of the work about to be undertaken in order to increase the likelihood of engagement and success.
According to Dunsmuir & Hardy (2016, p.10), when working with children or young people, the following questions would inform ethical therapeutic practice and ensure that young people are able to give informed consent:

- ‘What consent has the child or young person given to the involvement of the practitioner?'
- How does the child or young person withdraw consent?
- What knowledge and understanding does the child or young person have about the therapeutic approach offered?
- What has been discussed and agreed about the information shared through therapy?
- How does the therapeutic practice acknowledge and respect the culture, community and context of the child or young person?
- How is the therapeutic practice supported and supervised?’

The guidance describes that the therapeutic contract ‘would be dynamic, requiring renegotiation through the therapeutic process in light of the continuing monitoring of session-by-session outcomes and contingent revision in the formulation and overall intervention plan, alongside renegotiation of consent at each stage of the therapeutic process’ (Dunsmuir & Hardy, 2016, p.23).

According to Dunsmuir and Hardy (2016, p.26) procedures for record keeping and feedback will need to be agreed between children and young people and their parent or carer as part of the initial discussion and contracting of therapy. They describe the use of ‘therapeutic documents’ which they describe as ‘a therapeutic tool intended to strengthen sessional work with children and young people’. These could include
• pictures and drawings
• photographs
• diagrams
• letters
• cards
• certificates
• emails
• books
• sound and video recordings

Therapeutic documents can be produced by the young person, co-produced or created on behalf of the young person by the adult and aim to:

• Encourage the engagement of the young person and rapport with the adult to strengthen the therapeutic alliance
• Give young people a voice and to demonstrate that young people are listened to and taken seriously
• Provide a permanent record of progress which celebrates success and change and values their views

In addition, therapeutic documents could be used to record discussions, recognise the young person’s characteristics or strengths, communicate these to other staff members or the young person’s parents, reinforce homework activities, record strategies or skills and reinforce the commitment to the therapeutic process.

In using such documents, Dunsmuir and Hardy (2016, p.27-28) suggest that the following are considered:

56
• The purpose of the document is clear
• Whether the YP wants to receive such a document and if so in what form and where it should be sent
• Factors such as the format the document takes, readability, style, accuracy and content should have regard to the YP’s age, developmental stage, strengths and needs

According to Dunsmuir and Hardy (2016, p.28) ‘pre-therapeutic intervention letters are a good way for the practitioner to introduce themselves, set a friendly inviting tone and explain what the intervention will and will not involve (allowing the child or young person to conceptualise the intervention)’ before it starts. Likewise, the ELSA Support website (www.elsa-support.co.uk) has an example of an invitation that can be given to a child prior to starting an ELSA intervention (see appendix 11).

• Contracts in the world of work

Whilst not related specifically to work in schools, Collins et al. (2013, p.211) state that psychological contracts encompass reciprocal obligations and expectations and can be subjective due to the nature of individual perceptions.

Collins et. al. (2013) describe a study of 13 female homeworkers and their supervisors in the UK in which a case study approach was used to explore their employment relationships and the use of psychological contracts within this. Their findings showed that interpretations of job flexibility very much depended on who they negotiated with and the importance of it meeting the needs of both parties.
As this study focused on adults within one organisation and in employment context, it is unclear whether these themes would generalise to children or to education settings. However, similarities can be noted between this type of psychological contract and the contracts that could be used in a school setting which would also focus on reciprocal relationships and clear expectations for both parties.

• Behaviour Contracts

Bowman-Perrott et al. (2015, p. 248) describe the features of ‘behaviour contracting’ within an applied behaviour analysis (ABA) model as clearly stating the expectations for behavioural change, including rewards for keeping to the contract and consequences for not meeting the expectations. They go on to describe that behaviour contracts can be flexibly used, individualised, provide a structure, contain clear expectations and can be used across settings. Although they report that there is a lack of recent studies and that study quality was not part of their inclusion criteria, their meta-analysis of single-case research found that behaviour contracts were ‘beneficial for students regardless of grade level, gender or disability status’, positively affected academic outcomes but were ‘more effective in reducing inappropriate behaviour than increasing appropriate behaviours’ (p.247).

Although not explicitly using contracts, Fourie et al. (2011, p.321) explored the therapeutic relationship between six children receiving speech and language therapy and their therapist and highlight the importance of clearly and explicitly describing the role of each stakeholder in therapy in order to ‘achieve a therapeutic bond through which the goals and tasks of therapy can be achieved’.
Likewise, Karver et al. (2006, p.59) found the best outcomes were found when therapists presented information regarding their work together clearly and where there was a clear rationale.

In the author’s local authority, the ELSAs, their line managers in school and their EP supervisor already all sign a supervision contract and schools sign a training contract so that the expectations of training and supervision are made explicit. The literature that I have reviewed on contracting has led me to design a pre-therapeutic letter of introduction and a contract template that could be used between the ELSA and young person at the outset of the intervention. This contract draws on the work of Sills (2015), as it clearly states the relevant administrative, professional and psychological information, and seeks consent from the young person (see appendices 13 and 16).

The literature reviewed for this thesis has highlighted the importance of ensuring that the intervention is set up in the right way, with clear expectations of roles, purpose, duration, relationships and tasks.

5.22 Ending of a Therapeutic Journey or Therapeutic Relationship

Just as the way in which an intervention is set up can impact upon the experience of the intervention and the therapeutic relationship, the way that the ending of an intervention is managed can be difficult for the adult and have a lasting impact for children and young people. In this section, I will review the literature in relation to ending interventions; firstly, within the ELSA research and then within other settings such as child protection work, social work and wider therapeutic contexts.

ELSAs report that they find ending the ELSA intervention difficult because it can be hard to ‘let go’ or they think that they are ‘abandoning’ the students they have
spent time building a relationship with, particularly when the student also wants to continue seeing them (Ball, 2014). Ball conducted a mixed methods design (quasi-experimental design and semi-structured interviews) to explore the impact of the ELSA intervention and the qualities, development and impact of the ELSA-child relationship. Following her analysis, she states that ELSAs sensed they were ‘forced to end the sessions when they could see the benefit of continuing’ and sometimes thought ‘they needed more time to enable children to make progress’ (Ball, 2014, p.187). Specifically, the ELSAs reported that having a prescribed ending time did not take account of the needs of individual children; particularly as it took some children longer to build the initial relationship.

However, she described that ELSAs became more confident to manage the end of the intervention when they ‘built preparation for endings into their sessions and they made efforts to continue their relationship with the children after the sessions had finished’ (Ball, 2014, p.188).

The reasons cited by ELSAs tend to focus on their interpretation of the child's needs. However, the ELSA training or guidelines for ELSA practice do not provide any specific direction regarding the extent to which an ELSA might also need to guard against what they offer a child becoming more about their needs than the child’s.

Cripps et al. (2017) report that some children can also find the ending of the ELSA intervention difficult. Participants described ‘feeling upset or worried by the prospect of ELSA support finishing’ (p2). They state that there is ‘a need to ensure that children understand the purpose of ELSA support, when this support will finish and what will happen after this’ and note that some children will benefit from a phased ending where support is gradually decreased over time. Likewise, Begley, (2015, p.106) describes that endings are a ‘potential site for a disruption
of a stable, relational bond’ and recommends that the beginning and ending of the ELSA intervention are ‘carefully constructed’ so that the attachment relationship is ‘sensitively managed’ (p.120).

Similarly, Burton (2018, p.76) highlights the need for pupils to ‘be prepared for the withdrawal of the regular support they have valued and to which they have looked forward’. She describes the need for the ELSA to establish the best time to end the sessions through looking at the clear programme aims set before the intervention and in liaison with teaching staff, assessing whether these have been achieved. She also describes the need to give the young people warnings of the number of remaining sessions, celebrate pupil achievements at the end of the intervention, the need to give specific feedback on progress to pupils and recommends a gradual reduction in contact with the ELSA rather than a complete termination of contact.

In her research with ELSAs and primary school children, McEwen, (2019, p.299) comments that ‘it seems that for both ELSAs and children, the importance and value of the ELSA-child relationship is enduring’. She describes that this relationship ‘has in itself become a coping mechanism that children draw on if and when required, long after formal sessions have finished’. Discussions between ELSAs in the supervision sessions I facilitate have often focused on the need for a reduction in support rather than a sudden or final ending. ELSAs describe reducing the number or length of sessions or changing the contact from frequent and regular to more of an informal ‘touching base’ or monitoring role.

In the wider therapeutic context, Dunsmuir and Hardy (2016, p. 28) describe the use of therapeutic documents to help manage the end of an intervention, to celebrate or emphasise achievements, to share this information with the child or
young person and others and to clarify what they can do if they need support in the future.

To further support the ending, Dunsmuir and Hardy, (2016, p.24) outline that the criteria for ending therapy should be made clear to the child or young person and their family and that a clear after-care plan should be agreed to ensure progress is maintained and to avoid relapse. This might include referral or signposting to other services and/or systemic work to strengthen support within the home, school or other key systems for the child.

Examples of separation cards, countdown to the end of the intervention prompts, activities and therapeutic documents to support the end of the intervention are included in appendices 21-24.

Many (2009 p.23) describes that ending therapy with children who have endured trauma and loss, provides a ‘unique opportunity for the clinician to provide the traumatised child and his or her caregiver with a new experience of loss, one that is controlled, predictable and paced.’

The importance of discussing the end of the support explicitly before the end of the intervention is discussed by Mok (2015, p.285) in her case study of a long term therapeutic journey: ‘termination was an issue to be discussed explicitly and at length… at various points earlier on in the therapy process … and what it might be like when we terminated therapy.’

Kim has studied the ‘trauma of parting’ for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) ending music therapy and has written clinical vignettes to enhance therapists’ understanding of endings. She describes that children with ASD can find it difficult to manage changes such as those relating to school
holidays or the ending of their music therapy sessions and that this can be exacerbated when the child has a strong bond with the therapist and has ‘a precarious awareness of what ending means but yet lacks the capacity for emotional self-regulation’ (Kim, 2014, p.263). She highlights the importance of planning for the ending and communicating this with the child when she states that if the ending to the intervention is outside of the child’s control, is announced suddenly or if the child thinks it is too early, children can feel ‘abandoned’ (Kim, 2014, p.268). Similarly, Kim acknowledges that ‘the child’s experience of being abandoned by the very person who has been an idealised figure might be acutely stressful and traumatic’ and recommends that this is carefully managed by the therapist in advance of the ending (Kim, 2014, p.268).

In the context of safeguarding and child protection, Rose, (2009, p.272) emphasises the need for adults to be aware of the implications of transition and loss for vulnerable children as ‘handling constant changes and interventions can have an immobilising and overwhelming effect’ on them. She therefore states that ending work with children and families should mark ‘the achievement of objectives set out in the child protection plan’ (p.267) and be ‘conducted in a manner which recognises the meaning of change, transitions and loss, and the impact of endings in relationships on children, parents and practitioners’ (p.253). She also highlights the importance of opportunities to evaluate what has taken place during therapy, time to consolidate achievements and an acknowledgement that there may be ‘real sadness on both sides’ (p.271) at the ending.

Likewise, Huntley (2002, p.61) describes how ending relationships in social work can impact upon a vulnerable child. He highlights that ending an intervention can ‘reactivate past traumatic experiences’ and can become ‘equivalent to a new
trauma’. As such, given the link to earlier experiences of loss or separation, the possible significance of the relationship with the practitioner and potential dependence on that adult; both can feel great sadness when the intervention ends. Treisman (2018, p.388) acknowledges that endings may also trigger similar feelings for the adult in the therapeutic relationship and has provided some useful reflective questions that the adult may want to consider (see appendix 25).

It is therefore clear that the ending of a therapeutic journey or relationship needs some careful consideration as there are a range of factors which need to be borne in mind. Adults themselves can find it difficult to end the intervention, particularly if the child wants it to continue, if they can also see the benefit of continuing or if they feel ‘forced’ to stop. The need to consider individual needs, for the ending to be planned and discussed with the child from the beginning and for there to be a phasing out of support rather than a prescribed and sudden ending has also been highlighted. Young people have reported feeling upset or worried at the ending and the ending has been flagged as having potential to disrupt a stable bond. As such, the importance of secure attachment relationships should be recognised and adults should explore the ending as an opportunity for a new and positive experience of an ending rather than risk reactivating past traumas. Likewise, adults should listen to the views of children about how they have experienced the intervention, how they would like feedback, how they would like information about them conveyed and to whom and what support they would like to maintain their progress.
5.3 Children’s Perspectives of an Intervention and the Importance of Listening to Pupil Views

The 1980’s were a decade of growing partnership and rights for parents with educational professionals often relying on parents’ and teachers' knowledge of a child and assumptions that their views and wishes were the same as the child’s or that they knew what was best for them. In 1989, Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-uncrc-how-legislation-underpins-implementation-in-england) stated that children have a right to an opinion and to have that opinion taken into account in any matters affecting them. In the same year, The Children’s Act, 1989 (http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents) made changes to UK law stating that ‘when reaching decisions about children, the ascertainable wishes and feelings of the child must be taken into account, with consideration being given to the child’s age and understanding’. The Every Child Matters report, 2003 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/every-child-matters) followed putting children and families at the heart of education policy.

More recently, the revised Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (Department for Education and Department of Health, 2015) mandates that pupil views on their educational experience should be sought and used to inform practice. The code also recognises that pupils need information and support to be able to make informed choices and recommends person-centred planning.

According to Todd (2003), pupils have a unique knowledge of themselves as learners and their own individual circumstances and if they can be supported to provide their opinions and be involved in planning their support, it is thought
more likely that they will succeed. Likewise, Roller (1998, p.267-8) suggests that there are clear advantages to involving pupils in their educational support: improved pupil motivation and a greater sense of control, confidence, autonomy and empowerment. She says that if pupils can understand the reasons for their involvement and are given some responsibility for their own progress it can lead to positive change.

Despite the benefits of eliciting pupil views, Griffiths et al. (2014, p.125) highlight the lack of research seeking the views of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs despite them being able to ‘convey valid, challenging and valuable messages’. They used a focus group to elicit pupils’ constructions of their experiences of being in a Nurture Group. They used paired questions (tell your partner three things…), a post-it activity (write down what you think is the same and what you think is different between the Nurture Group and your usual class at school) and a circle time (tell me how you feel about being in the Nurture Group, whilst passing a teddy around the circle). The data gained was transcribed and thematic analysis conducted to produce a map of themes. Maxwell (2006, p.20) cite Davie (2003) who considers that ‘listening to children embodies the central issues of efficacy and equity… and that being central to the process of education, their views of their experiences in that process are important and should be sought and asked for’.

Hills (2016) evaluated the ELSA intervention from the perspective of primary-aged children. She used a mixed-methods design with 53 children aged between 6 and 11 to explore the effectiveness of the intervention and to identify the factors that contributed to that perceived effectiveness. She found that all the children rated the ELSA intervention as effective, with responses focusing on ‘talking’, ‘friendships’ and ‘improving confidence’ being identified through content
analysis (p.54). Thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews also revealed that the children thought that the therapeutic relationship, dealing with feelings and building resilience were the main factors contributing to the effectiveness of the ELSA intervention.

Barker’s (2017) thesis aimed to explore perspectives of young people and their parents experiencing the ELSA intervention. She used semi-structured interviews and visual resources underpinned by personal construct psychology (The Blob People) to elicit pupil’s thoughts, feelings and emotions and reports that the ‘intervention impacted positively on aspects of pupils’ emotional literacy development including increased confidence, coping strategies and skills in managing and expressing their emotions’ (p.iii).

McEwen (2019) used semi-structured interviews, a Q-sort activity, a comic strip activity and a poster activity to elicit the perceptions of the ELSA programme from seven primary aged children and their ELSAs. Whilst McEwen highlights potential limitations with the Q-sort activity, she reports that ‘the qualities of the ELSA, confidentiality, sessions being perceived as fun and enjoyable and the ongoing support offered by the ELSA were important aspects of their experience and could cultivate or undermine the ELSA-child relationship’ (p.297).

In 2016, four trainee EPs from the University of Southampton interviewed 12 children, aged between 7 and 11 years (Cripps et al., 2017). They asked the children questions about their ELSA support; the role of the ELSA, what activities they completed and whether they thought the support had helped them and why. Whilst this is small-scale unpublished research carried out by trainee EPs and commissioned by a local authority which delivers the ELSA intervention, they described four key themes: positive relationships, the unique
qualities of the ELSAs, new skills developed and a positive impact on the children. Consequently, they highlighted several implications for practice and underlined the importance of involving children and young people in discussions about their support.

5.31 Using PCP Techniques to Elicit Children’s Views

There are various methods EPs can use to elicit the views of children. In this section, I will be reviewing the use of Personal Construct Psychology (PCP).

Personal Construct theory and its accompanying psychology was first introduced by George Kelly in the 1950’s and influenced the subsequent work of Tom Ravenette and Phillida Salmon. In particular, Ravenette (1997) drew on Kelly’s work to develop techniques that can be used with children and young people to elicit their constructs.

Constructs are ‘the dimensions which we use to construct meaning from our experience’ (Beaver, 1996, p.41). By eliciting ‘core’ or preferred constructs and their opposites, we can get an insight into what is important in a child’s world. According to Burnham (2008, p.7), constructs are ‘an either / or verbal tool that helps us make sense of the world’. Burnham, citing Kelly states that ‘much of our perception of objects and experiences fall into relatively simple dichotomies: good / bad, right / wrong, light / dark, happy / unhappy and so on’ (p.7).

Examples of this approach might include ‘a drawing and it’s opposite’ task (such as the ideal self-drawing task), ‘the portrait gallery’ drawing task, the ‘three-comment question’, ‘school situations’ cards, ‘salmon line’, ‘laddering’ or ‘pyramiding’, ‘self-description’ grids and the ‘blob people’ cards (Beaver, 1996).

Harding and Atkinson (2009) explored how EPs in one local authority
recorded the voice of the child. They used content analysis to look at the themes recorded in reports and also conducted a focus group. The focus group revealed that EPs reported using a wide range of techniques based upon the child’s needs, the nature of the work and the time available and found that the most commonly used method was direct questioning, followed by PCP and Solution Focused Brief Therapy approaches.

Burr et al. (2014, p.352) describe PCP techniques as ‘engaging and interesting’ and discuss the benefits of using PCP in qualitative research. They argue that PCP can enable participants to quickly focus on key issues through the use of concrete or visual examples, reflect on their experience and on their own responses. As such, they suggest that PCP emphasises the ‘relational nature of selfhood’ and can produce ‘richer’ research findings than typical interviews (p.353). Burnham, (2008, p.34) notes that encouraging children to draw ‘is a good way of supporting construct elicitation and exploration’. He stresses the benefits of drawing for younger children, less articulate or shyer children who may find it easier to express themselves through drawing.

Likewise, Maxwell (2006) used drawings based upon PCP techniques and a case study approach to elicit the views of children with special educational needs about their school. Their participants were asked to draw a picture and then to draw the opposite. The rationale for this is that a child’s drawing of themselves in context ‘will point to aspects of knowing which exist at lower levels of awareness than that of verbal articulation’ (p.21). Whilst they acknowledge the downside of using case studies and within-child research (a lack of generalisability to other children or settings), they report that a ‘child-centred approach to research can be valuable’ (p.25).
The ‘Drawing the Ideal Self’ (Moran, 2012, p.2) technique is also based upon PCP and is described as a tool for ‘all who may need to understand more about the way an individual child sees him or herself’. In this task, the ‘child’s construction of ‘the kind of person they would not want to be like’ and ‘the kind of person they would want to be’ are explored through drawing and questioning techniques.

Recently, adaptations have been made to the approach and it has been used to elicit pupil’s views on the ‘ideal classroom’ (Morgan-Rose, 2015) and the ‘ideal school’ (Williams, 2014).

The review of the literature has outlined the importance of seeking pupil’s views. There is limited research evidence, so far, on the experience of the ELSA intervention from the perspective of the child. Personal construct approaches are one way to elicit pupil views and so I will be using these approaches for my empirical research, alongside my pupil interviews to find out how pupils experience the ELSA intervention. To do this I have further adapted the ‘Ideal Self’ task to explore the ‘Ideal ELSA’ (see appendix 35).
6 Conclusions

Within the context of increased social, mental and emotional health difficulties and a reduction in local authority and health authority services, the review has provided an overview of the importance of whole-school approaches and specific targeted therapeutic interventions to meet children’s social, emotional and mental health needs. This review set out to answer the following questions:

- What is a therapeutic relationship? How important is the therapeutic relationship?
- What is a therapeutic journey?
  - How is the beginning of an intervention experienced? What can be done to prepare for the beginning of an intervention?
  - How is the ending of an intervention experienced? What can be done to manage the ending of an intervention?
- How can we ensure that we listen and respond to children’s views so that we can enhance the therapeutic relationship and the therapeutic journey?

The centrality of therapeutic relationships to the outcome of any intervention and the nature of a therapeutic journey have been emphasised. The review has particularly highlighted the importance of carefully setting up an intervention, with clearly stated rationale, roles and type of work so that informed consent can be given. It has also emphasised the importance of carefully managing the end of an intervention, with an understanding that an ending may be understood as a further separation or loss and be difficult for both parties.

The review has shown that EPs are well placed to support schools to provide social and emotional support by training and supervising ELSAs and that EPs can support ELSAs in understanding the importance of listening and responding
to the pupil experience so that the therapeutic relationship and therapeutic journey can be enhanced.

Whilst there has been a lack of published research relating specifically to the ELSA intervention, papers relating to social work, child protection, music therapy, counselling, psychotherapy and speech and language therapy have been reviewed alongside the unpublished service evaluations and theses. Limitations of the current evidence base have been highlighted, particularly the lack of peer-reviewed research, the use of small samples and use of case studies which do not allow for generalisability. The flexibility of the ELSA intervention in responding to individual pupil’s needs has been highlighted as a strength. Alongside this, it needs to be noted that ‘without consistent programme content and comparable pre-post measures… it is difficult to ascertain what components of the intervention are effective’ (Pickering et al., 2019, p.20). The issue of the programme providers or the programme founder conducting the research has also highlighted potential issues of bias.

The government is now showing an awareness of the need to develop the whole child and are placing more emphasis on mental health support within schools (DfE, 2016a, 2018). This led me to review relevant government reports and recommendations.

In reviewing the current evidence-base, I have begun to develop practice guidance for ELSAs regarding the importance of their ELSA-child relationship, setting up the ELSA intervention and managing the endings which can be incorporated into future ELSA training. The findings from my research will be added to the guidance documents in due course. In addition, I have been able to develop or gather examples of contracts, pre-intervention letters of introduction,
post-therapeutic documents and separation cards for ELSAs to use (see appendices).
7 Recommendations for Future Research

Whilst research has focused on young people's (YP's) experience and understanding of the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) phenomenon (Begley, 2015), the ELSA intervention (Barker, 2017) and YP’s perception of the effectiveness of the intervention (Hills, 2016), it has not yet considered the experience or ‘journey’ through the intervention from the YP’s perspective.

Ball (2014) and Miles (2014) have also recommended further research exploring the child’s perspective of the ELSA - child relationship.

My empirical study, therefore, aims to explore the child’s experience of the ELSA intervention; the importance of the ELSA - child relationship and the nature of the therapeutic journey; how the beginning and end of the intervention are experienced.
Part 3 – Empirical Report

1 Introduction to the Empirical Report

The review paper has highlighted the importance of the therapeutic relationship to the outcome of the intervention and recommended that ELSAs carefully consider the child’s experience of the therapeutic journey; specifically, how the beginning and ending of the intervention are managed.

This section will build on the conclusions of the literature review to provide a clear rationale and justification for the current research. It will outline the research questions, detail the methodology, research design, methods and consider the relevant ethical issues. The methods and steps taken to analyse the data will be presented and the results will then be reported and discussed.

This empirical study aims to explore the child’s experience of the ELSA intervention and specifically, the importance of the ELSA-child relationship and the nature of the therapeutic journey. It will explore how children experience the beginning and ending of the intervention and how the relationship impacts upon the journey. It will also look at the different perceptions of this journey as experienced by different children with different ELSAs.

Specifically, the research sets out to answer the following questions:

- Research Question 1 - How does the relationship with the individual ELSA and the qualities of the ELSA impact upon the child’s experience of the ELSA intervention?
• Research Question 2 - How does the child experience the therapeutic journey of the ELSA intervention? How is the beginning and ending of the intervention experienced?

• Research Question 3 - What are the barriers to programme fidelity?
2 Methodology

This section will provide an account of the research design decisions taken and the methods employed to address the research questions outlined above. It will also outline the ethical issues considered. The recruitment process, participant details, sampling considerations and data collection and data analysis methods employed will be described.

2.1 Research Design

According to Willig (2013, p.20), ‘every qualitative research project is informed by a research question which is itself based upon some assumptions of the world and about people. These assumptions can be described as ontological. Every research question also makes assumptions about knowledge, about what can be known and how. These are epistemological assumptions’. Once I had ascertained the questions I wanted to research, I was able to determine a suitable epistemological stance (social constructionist) and the appropriate methods of data collection and analysis to answer the questions.

Petticrew and Roberts (2003) emphasise the need to match the type of research question to the type of research, highlighting the need for methodological appropriateness. I therefore determined that a qualitative research methodology using an in-depth multiple case study design would be the most appropriate way to gain the rich and deep information which would allow me to examine the experiences of young people of the ELSA intervention and answer the research questions stated above. Within the multiple case study design, semi-structured interviews, drawings, diaries and a focus group would generate the rich and deep qualitative data I needed and would enable me to view the same phenomenon from different angles.
To analyse the data, an inductive approach which was driven by the data (rather than a deductive approach driven by theory and literature) was chosen. As such, interpretative inquiry and constant comparative methods could be used to conduct thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I determined that this would elicit themes and allow for the exploration of the relationship between themes. Maps of individual children’s journeys, children’s drawings and word clouds would be presented to further illustrate their experiences of the ELSA intervention.

2.11 A Multiple Case Study

As described above, this methodology was felt to be particularly appropriate to the research questions as it allowed for a rich and deep exploration of the nature and quality of the child’s experience of the intervention rather than assessing its quantitative impact.

- What is a case study?

Simons (2009, p.21) describes a case study as ‘an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a ‘real life’ context. It is research-based, inclusive of different methods and is evidence-led. The primary purpose is to generate in-depth understanding of a specific topic (as in a thesis), programme, policy, institution or system to generate knowledge and / or inform policy development, professional practice and civil or community action.’

A case could be the phenomena of an individual, a role, a small group, an organisation, a community or a nation.

The particular features of a case study are described by Thomas (2016, p.10) and represented in the diagram below.
Case Study Design

Yin (2014, p.1) describes case study research as ‘linear but iterative’ and proposes the following process for case study design.

Figure 2 – The Case Study Research Process
Plan

According to (Yin, 2014), this stage should involve identifying whether and when to use the case study as a research method when compared to other methods.

He advises that these decisions should be determined by the nature of the research questions. Due to the nature of the research questions aiming to explore ‘how’ the relationships and journey of the ELSA intervention are experienced by children, in a real-world setting (a school), I judged that a case study methodology would be appropriate as I wanted to collect rich, in-depth data.

Design

As part of the design stage, Yin (2014) recommends defining the ‘case’, identifying the specific case study design to be employed and developing theories or propositions to be tested.

For my research, I established four dyads (each including one pupil and one ELSA) and defined each dyad as ‘a case’.

As the ‘case study is not a method in itself’ (Thomas, 2016, p.9), I also needed to select methods of data collection and analysis that would produce data suitable for a case study. I therefore planned to use semi-structured interviews, drawings, PCP techniques, diaries and a focus group.

The literature review has informed my approach to the research and helped me develop theoretical propositions to test out through my study (Yin, 2014). As such, I propose that the case study will show that the relationships YP have with their ELSAs can be seen throughout the intervention and make a difference to
what they take away from it. My study will also show what ELSA is not and how ELSA can be time-limited rather than ongoing.

- Prepare

This stage refers to the process of gaining ethical approval, the recruitment of participants and the pilot interviews (see sections 2.3 -2.7). Likewise, the ‘collect’, ‘analyse’ and ‘share’ stages will be discussed in subsequent sections of the empirical report.

2.2 Methods

The methods utilised as part of the multiple case study methodology are described below with reference to the literature on these approaches.

2.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

When planning to use semi-structured interviews, Willig (2013, p.29) highlights the importance of considering ‘who to interview (and why), how to recruit participants, how to record and transcribe the interview, what style of interview to use and what to ask participants’.

I designed, piloted and carried out in-depth interviews with children and ELSAs pre and post intervention (see the sections on recruitment, participants and sampling for further information).

As part of the initial interview, ELSAs were also asked several questions to capture process information (e.g. frequency of sessions, number of sessions, attendance, information on student’s needs, why the child was referred to an ELSA and how many years of experience as an ELSA they had).
The interview for both children and ELSAs was divided into two parts, one focusing on the ELSA / child relationship and the other focusing on the nature of the support and quality of the experience through the course of the intervention. The interview schedule was semi-structured with the questions designed to be open-ended.

There were visual prompts: a visual scale and a selection of feelings emojis to support the children’s answers if needed.

The interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder and transcribed verbatim by the researcher.

2.22 Diaries

Braun and Clarke (2013, p.147) describe that researcher-directed diaries require ‘participants to record their thoughts, feelings, experiences and/or practices over a specified period of time’. They can take many different forms (e.g. handwritten, using drawings or symbols, using photos, completed online, word-processed, video-recorded, audio-recorded or using creative methods such as making a scrapbook), be highly structured or unstructured and can be used to answer a range of qualitative research questions.

I designed a simple emotions diary to be completed by the pupil at the end of each ELSA session and left this with the ELSA. The ELSA returned the diary to me at the end of the intervention. The instructions at the top of the diary sheet were clear and the diary was easy to complete (just requiring the appropriate emotion to be ticked). I researched the most commonly experienced emotions and included ‘any other’ and used well-known emojis to represent these (see appendix 38).
2.23 Word Clouds

Felix et al. (2018, p.657) describe word clouds as ‘collections of words organised in space optimised compact layouts in which font size encodes the frequency (or other relevance) value’. Despite cautioning against using word clouds ‘indiscriminately’, for their aesthetically pleasing presentation or as more of ‘an emotional experience than an analytical tool’, Felix et al. (2018, p.657) emphasise that keyword summaries can be helpful in producing ‘visual representations of a set of keywords and their frequency’ to help ‘generate questions, hypotheses and insights’.

Word clouds were produced from the transcripts of the YP’s interviews and ideal ELSA drawing task to create a visual impression of the data and to provide further insights into the YP’s experience of the ELSA intervention.

Pro-Word Cloud software was used to create the word clouds. Common words were excluded automatically. In addition, I also removed frequently used but unnecessary ‘filler words’ such as ‘like’, ‘probably’, ‘really’, ‘just’, ‘well’, ‘actually’, ‘quite’ and ‘cos’.

2.24 Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) Activities

An Ideal ELSA drawing activity was carried out by the young people at their initial interview and by the ELSAs at their final interview. I adapted this task from the Ideal Self drawing activity (Moran, 2012) as I considered that using PCP techniques would be a good way of eliciting pupils’ feelings about their ELSA and a good way of eliciting constructs from the ELSAs about their ideal ELSA, their relationships and their approach to supporting YP.

The ELSAs were also asked to place their ideal and non-ideal ELSA drawings at two ends of a scale and were asked to rate themselves at various time points.
They were also asked where others would rate them, asked to comment on the differences in ratings, and asked how they could move closer to their ideal. Moran (2012, p.20) describes that this would allow the ELSAs to reflect upon their development, ambitions for their development and their experience of moving nearer to and further away from the ideal self over time.

In terms of an epistemological position, PCP is often understood to be based on social constructionism or a ‘constructive alternativism’; this position asserts that how we understand our own reality is constructed through our individual interpretation of events as ‘every person has their own particular ‘lens’ or viewpoint through which they see their world’ (Maxwell, 2006, p.21). As such, individuals ‘construe’ or ‘reconstrue’ their own range of perspectives based on their own particular experiences and thus see their world in their own unique way and therefore ‘one account of reality can thus be regarded as no more ‘accurate’ than another’ (Burr et al., 2014, p.342).

2.25 Drawing
During the pilot interview, the YP was asked to draw a picture of their ELSA. In the subsequent interviews, the pupils were asked to draw a picture of themselves and their ELSA completing an ELSA activity. The rationale for this was to elicit further information about their experience, what they had valued and their relationship.

2.26 Focus Group
According to Willig (2013, p.34), a focus group is a ‘group interview that uses the interaction among participants as a source of data’. Rather than asking direct questions, they involve a ‘relatively unstructured, but guided discussion focused around a topic of interest’ (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The way that each members’
contributions are developed, expanded, challenged or explained can help the researcher to explore how participants have jointly constructed meaning. A focus group is commonly used as part of a case study design (Thomas, 2016, p.188). I chose to facilitate a focus group as part of my case study design to further inform the research questions and to elaborate on the information elicited from the ELSAs during the interviews.

Willig (2013) explains that the role of the researcher is to introduce the group members to each other, to introduce the focus of the group and to 'steer' the discussion. The researcher needs to bear group dynamics in mind as they facilitate the group and should begin with clear ground rules such as stating the importance of confidentiality, respecting and listening to each other and being explicit about the timings for the session and the limits of discussion.

According to Willig (2013, p,35), the group should contain six to eight participants and they ‘should interact with one another in the same way that they would interact with peers outside of the research context’. This is more likely to take place if the group members already know each other. I sought verbal consent to participate from the eight ELSAs in my existing ELSA supervision group and conducted the focus group within an ELSA supervision session. This was helpful as the ELSAs already knew each other and me and were used to having similar ground rules within the supervision group as were established for a focus group.

The characteristics of focus groups are represented in the table below. The characteristics of my focus group are distinguished by the shading and written in bold according to the distinctions raised by Willig, 2013, p.35).
Table 2 - The Characteristics of my Focus Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homogenous – participants share key characteristics, e.g. they are all ELSAs</th>
<th>Or</th>
<th>Heterogenous – participants have different characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-existing – e.g. they are all members of the same ELSA supervision group</td>
<td>Or</td>
<td>New – participants have not met before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerned – participants have an interest in the subject matter, e.g. beginnings, endings and relationships are frequently discussed topics in supervision</td>
<td>Or</td>
<td>Naïve – participants do not have any stake in the subject matter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The focus group lasted one hour and covered the same topic areas as the semi-structured interviews (the support and quality of the intervention; including the beginning and the ending of the intervention and the ELSA-child relationship, see appendix 39).

As with the semi-structured interviews, the focus group was recorded and transcribed, taking care to ensure that the participants could not be identified. ELSA and school pseudonyms were generated to ensure anonymity. My choice of analysis will be matched to the research questions and the epistemological orientation of the study, i.e. thematic analysis.

According to Thomas (2016, p. 239), ‘a case study is not about finding facts but gathering evidence’. The following table outlines the type of evidence gathered, the type of analysis undertaken and the findings that will be presented and discussed in relation to the research questions.
Table 3 – The Case Study: Data Collection, Analysis and Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection - Evidence Gathered</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
<th>Findings presented and discussed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Interview transcripts</td>
<td>Thematic Analysis</td>
<td>See section 3.1:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Focus group transcripts</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Definition and discussion of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>overarching themes, themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and subthemes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Quotations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Thematic maps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interview transcripts –</td>
<td>Mapping of</td>
<td>See section 3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>including context and</td>
<td>information</td>
<td>• Maps of the YP’s journeys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pupil information</td>
<td></td>
<td>• YP’s drawings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Initial referral forms and</td>
<td>Visual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre/post assessments</td>
<td>impressions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feelings diaries</td>
<td>of the data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ‘You and your ELSA’ drawing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>task</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interview transcripts</td>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>See section 3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transcripts of the Ideal ELSA</td>
<td>constructs of</td>
<td>• YP’s drawings of the ideal /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drawing task</td>
<td>the ELSAs and</td>
<td>non-ideal ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YP (PCP)</td>
<td>• ELSAs drawings of the ideal /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>non-ideal ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• ELSA ratings of themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>on a scale of non-ideal to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ideal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 Ethical Issues

In planning the study, a variety of ethical principles, values and sensitivities needed to be considered.

The British Psychological Society’s (BPS) Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009) outlines the following four principles:

- Respect
- Competence
- Responsibility
- Integrity
Whilst this code of conduct provides these overarching principles, it acknowledges that the principles cannot describe or fit every circumstance and that the psychologist will need to make their own 'professional and ethical judgement' (p.4).

In addition, Rest (1982), describes four components of ethical practice:

- Ethical sensitivity, interpreting the situation and recognising ethical implications
- Ethical reasoning, identifying the morally ideal course of action
- Ethical motivation, how wishes and intentions affect actions
- Ethical implementation – taking action

I also considered the researcher values as described by MacFarlane (2009, as cited in the Professional Briefings by the Academy Social Sciences, 2013, p.4). In this model, Macfarlane shifts the focus from the ethics of the research to the ethics of the researcher. He outlines the research phases of framing, negotiating, generating, creating, disseminating and reflecting and then considers the virtues and vices of each phase. As such, the following virtues can be seen as guiding principles for the ‘virtuous researcher’ (p.5):

- Courage
- Respectfulness
- Resoluteness
- Sincerity
- Humility
- Reflexivity
This is important as it emphasises the link between the researcher’s own values and their practice.

The University College London (UCL), BPS (2009, 2014), Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC, 2016) and Department of Health (DoH, 2001) guidelines on ethical practice and consent were consulted alongside Rest’s (1982) four components and MacFarlane’s (2013) virtues throughout the planning and implementation of this research project.

2.31 Ethical Sensitivity

Ethical Approval was obtained from UCL Research Ethics Committee (see appendices 30-33). In gaining this approval, I recognised and considered the following ethical implications:

*Table 4 – Consideration of Ethical Implications*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical Considerations</th>
<th>Steps Taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Levels of Understanding</td>
<td>The study will be explained clearly to the YP; their age, developmental stage and linguistic abilities will be taken into account. They will be provided with an information sheet (see appendix 29) which explains the purpose and nature of the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring the child’s voice is heard</td>
<td>Visuals will be used throughout the interviews to help reinforce the questions they are asked and to help YP to verbalise their responses. I will use drawings and techniques based on PCP (Moran, 2012) to help elicit the YP’s views and ensure their access and full engagement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suitability of the child to take part</td>
<td>YP receiving ELSA support may be emotionally vulnerable. ELSAs approached to take part, will decide on the suitability of a YP for the study based on their knowledge of them. They will be from school years 7-8 and about to begin ELSA support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to withdraw</td>
<td>The voluntary nature of the study and the right of any participant to withdraw at any point will be highlighted to them in writing and reinforced verbally at the beginning of the interview in clear language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent</td>
<td>I anticipate that the YP will be able to make an informed decision as to whether they would like to take part based on the information they receive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of parents</td>
<td>Parents will receive an information sheet containing details of the study. Parental consent will be sought and they will also be given the opportunity of opting their child out of the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality</td>
<td>Responses will be confidential and anonymised and neither individuals nor schools will be identifiable in the findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage of data</td>
<td>Data will be stored on a password-protected laptop and locked filling cabinet and destroyed after analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of the interviews</td>
<td>Visits to schools will be conducted during school hours. The ELSA or familiar school staff will be available to sit in on the interview or be close by. The room that the interview takes place in will be quiet yet familiar to the YP. The YP will be asked to sit at a table alongside the researcher to reduce the need for direct eye contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up support</td>
<td>YP receiving the ELSA intervention will have some needs in the area of social, emotional and mental health. The interview will explore feelings and relationships. If a YP needs any further support following the interviews, it will be explained that they can talk to their ELSA, teachers or speak to someone or an organisation in confidence such as Childline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits to children and young people</td>
<td>Participation in the ELSA intervention itself is of benefit to participants and by participating they are likely to receive additional support. There are unlikely to be direct benefits to the participants themselves of the research although aggregated information (not individualised data) on contracting beginnings and managing endings and building relationships will be fed back into the training and will benefit children receiving the ELSA intervention in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits to ELSAs, schools and EPs</td>
<td>There will be direct benefits for ELSAs, schools and EPs as the model for practice is refined and information disseminated on the importance of developing the ELSA-child relationship and ways to manage the beginnings and endings of interventions effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential harm</td>
<td>Participants will not be stigmatised by being part of an ELSA intervention. The ELSA intervention is a well-established intervention in the local authority that they would have received even if the research was not taking place. Research has found that young people feel happy about</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
coming to the sessions (Burton, 2008) and there have not been reports of any feelings of stigmatisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Opting out of the intervention</strong></th>
<th>In addition to the right to withdraw from the study, the YP does not have to engage with the ELSA intervention if they do not want to. ELSA is just one of a range of interventions that YP are withdrawn for in schools. How YP are prepared for ELSA sessions and the information they are given beforehand is one aspect that will be explored in this study.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recognition and thanks</strong></td>
<td>All participants will receive a card thanking them for their involvement and a poster summarising the findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dissemination of findings</strong></td>
<td>An annual newsletter sent out to ELSAs in the LA will disseminate the findings of the research. The training materials will be updated to reflect the findings and will include practice guidance and example resources. The findings will also be disseminated in supervision groups, by a workshop at the local bi-annual ELSA conference, the national ELSA network and an article in a professional journal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.32 Ethical Reasoning

According to Rest (1982, p.31), ‘in seeking the morally ideal course of action, the person tries to integrate the various considerations’

The potential vulnerability of the child participant needed to be considered against the need for research which focuses on gaining children’s views. Contributing to their vulnerability is ‘their absence of legal power, their required respect for adults, including parents and researchers and their status in society that may be worsened by their socioeconomic status’ (Matutina, 2009, p.44).

Matutina, (2009, p.43) recommends that the researcher takes measures to ‘safeguard and protect children in research’. He describes that these actions might include giving the child age-appropriate information regarding the study so that they understand what is involved and are able to verbalise their right to withdraw. He also endorses ensuring privacy and respect for the individual and
involving the child in the research process when possible. I was aware of the potential vulnerability of my participants and was able to consider these recommendations in order to minimise risk and maximise benefits.

2.33 Ethical Motivation

I considered the ethical sensitivities of conducting research with children in order to minimise any potential risks and to maximise benefits as I elicited their views. The child’s perspective is missing from much of the ELSA evidence base and so I believed that this research would add further understanding.

The duration of the intervention, workload and timing during the school year was considered during the recruitment of participants as they may affect the participant’s wishes and intentions. Due to interviewing pre and post intervention, I considered the risk that staff may leave their roles before the end of the research period. I also reflected that ELSAs might be less likely to agree to participate at busy times of the year, e.g. in September when they are supporting a new year group to transition into their school or during the exam period at the end of the summer term.

2.34 Ethical Implementation

Reflections on the ethical implementation and any unanticipated ethical dilemmas arising will be discussed in part four, section five.

2.4 Recruitment

Twenty trained ELSAs from eleven schools were approached over fifteen months (from October 2017 until January 2019) to take part in the research. All ELSAs were members of two secondary ELSA supervision groups facilitated by the author. They all worked in mainstream secondary schools which were local
authority maintained or part of an academy chain and had been trained as an ELSA for a minimum of a year.

Once the ELSA and school had agreed to take part, the ELSA identified a YP in year seven or eight that they were just about to begin an ELSA intervention with to take part in the study. The ELSA gave the parents and YP the information letters, explained what was involved and sought their consent (see information letters and consent forms in appendix 29). One YP declined to take part.

2.5 Participants

A pilot study with one secondary aged student and one ELSA was undertaken between March and May 2018. As a result, questions on the semi-structured interview schedule were revised and the drawing task extended to include a drawing of the YP with their ELSA instead of a drawing of just the ELSA. As the changes made following the pilot were minimal, the YP and ELSA who participated in the pilot are included in the analysis of the main study.

Four secondary aged students in years seven to eight, and three secondary ELSAs from three different schools (in a supervision group I facilitate) were interviewed and formed an ELSA-YP dyad, (for information about the participants and participating schools, see appendices 27-28). Two of the dyads contained the same ELSA.

Three of the four young people were female; one was male. Three were in year seven, one was in year eight. The youngest YP taking part in the study was 11 years old and the oldest was aged 13. All four were of a white-British ethnic group. They were all referred to ELSA for different social and emotional reasons identified variously as: anger, anxiety, friendship difficulties and difficulties within the family. One of them had special educational needs and was undergoing an
assessment for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and one was deemed to be a 'Child in Need'. Three of them had had ELSA support at their primary school (although the recency of this previous ELSA support and the duration of the intervention is unknown). Participant details are noted in the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code name</th>
<th>YP1</th>
<th>YP2</th>
<th>YP3</th>
<th>YP4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pseudonym</td>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>Annabel</td>
<td>Katie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year group</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>White British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason for referral</td>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Anxiety and low confidence</td>
<td>Friendships</td>
<td>Family difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referred by</td>
<td>House team</td>
<td>Liaison with junior school ELSA</td>
<td>Liaison with junior school ELSA</td>
<td>ELSA herself following her involvement in CiN / TAF meetings with the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEN</td>
<td>Yes- literacy difficulties. Undergoing EHCP assessment</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child in Need</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had ELSA at primary school or before</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with ELSA before ELSA support</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, Mrs Salmon helped with a homework issue at the start of year 7</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, Mrs Gulliver attended CiN / TAF meetings and Katie attended a Nurture Group with Mrs Gulliver at the start of year 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELSA Code name and Pseudonym</td>
<td>ELSA 1 Mrs Greenway</td>
<td>ELSA 2.1 Mrs Salmon</td>
<td>ELSA 2.2 Mrs Salmon</td>
<td>ELSA4 Mrs Gulliver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Pseudonym</td>
<td>Oxford Road</td>
<td>Oak Tree</td>
<td>Oak Tree</td>
<td>Threefields</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All three of the ELSAs that I interviewed were female and were from three different secondary schools in the same local authority. They had been trained as ELSAs for between two and six years. Each of the schools involved has two
ELSAs. One has since left the school and is no longer working as an ELSA.

Participant details are noted in the table below.

**Table 6 - ELSA Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ELSA1</th>
<th>ELSA 2</th>
<th>ELSA 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>White British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years as an ELSA</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of ELSAs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly attends supervision</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Has since left the school and is no longer working as an ELSA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudonym</td>
<td>Mrs Greenway</td>
<td>Mrs Salmon</td>
<td>Mrs Gulliver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Code</td>
<td>Oxford Road</td>
<td>Oak Tree</td>
<td>Threefields</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The focus group took place in March 2019. It consisted of eight ELSAs from the ELSA supervision group that the author currently facilitates, two of these ELSAs had been interviewed (Mrs Salmon and Mrs Gulliver). These eight ELSAs (all female) come from seven different schools and have been trained for between six months and five and a half years.

**Table 7 – Focus Group Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELSA Pseudonym</th>
<th>School Pseudonym</th>
<th>Years as an ELSA (as at Spring 2019)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Salmon</td>
<td>Oak Tree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Longfield</td>
<td>Oak Tree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Gulliver</td>
<td>Threefields</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Johns</td>
<td>The Pines</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Wilks</td>
<td>Ashbridge</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Buncombe</td>
<td>Oxford Road</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs White</td>
<td>Redwood</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Winter</td>
<td>Hillside</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.6 Sampling Considerations and Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criteria and a number of sampling considerations were contemplated and are detailed below.
• Why secondary schools?

Participants aged 11-13 were chosen over younger children due to the current lack of ELSA research with secondary-aged students. In addition, secondary-aged young people were felt to be more likely to articulate their thoughts and feelings relating to their experience of the ELSA intervention due to their increased age and developmental stage (Horowitz et al., 2003).

• Why this number of participants?

Whilst it is acknowledged that this is a small sample, research literature states that when exploring experiences through a case study approach; conducting interviews, focus groups and using thematic analysis, a small sample size is suitable (Braun & Clarke, 2013. p.45). In fact, Thomas (2016, p. 63), states that ‘a ‘sample’ is not what is wanted in a case study’ at all, as ‘the point of a case study is not to find a portion that shows the quality of the whole’. Yin (2014, p.61) concurs with this view stating that decisions around the number of cases should be discretionary rather than formulaic and argues that the ‘typical criteria regarding the use of a power analysis to determine the desired sample size are irrelevant’. Baker and Edwards, (2012, p.2) maintain that the number of participants or cases will depend on a number of factors including epistemological, methodological and practical issues within the individual research project and Emmel (2013, p.154) asserts that ‘it is not the number of cases that matters, it is what you do with them that counts.’ As such, due to the rich and deep qualitative research design and small number of cases, it is acknowledged that these findings should not be considered representative or generalisable to a wider population.
• Why a minimum of one year of experience?

ELSAs were selected for interview if they had at least one year in the role since their training. This was in response to Bravery and Harris's (2009) observation that after one year, the majority of head teachers described the programme as at the “establishing” or “enhancing” stage. However, one ELSA in the focus group was within one year since training, but as this was part of a focus group discussion, I decided that this would add to the wider experience of the group. Also, as the focus group took part in an arranged ELSA supervision session (of which she was a member), it would have been inappropriate to exclude her.

• How were ELSAs selected?

Convenience sampling was used, with the author approaching ELSAs in her supervision groups. Convenience sampling describes when a sample is selected because it is ‘accessible to the researcher’ (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.57). This was due to the realities of ‘real world research’ and the difficulties experienced with recruitment. Cohen et al. (2003, p.102) point out that as the convenience sample ‘does not represent any group apart from itself’, the findings will not be generalisable to the wider population. I also considered the timing of data collection within the school year when asking ELSAs to participate to minimise the risk of staff turnover as much as possible. Within the group of ELSAs that were asked to take part, the ELSAs were able to determine whether they wanted to take part and whether they had an appropriate young person that they were about to start working with.
• Why these YP?

Once the ELSAs had agreed to participate in the research, they selected the young people to take part. Decisions regarding who to choose for the research were based upon:

- the young people they (or school staff) had already highlighted as potentially able to benefit from ELSA support and they were about to start working with
- The likelihood of the young person and parent to consent
- the nature of the young person’s needs (not too complex or beyond the ELSA remit)
- the ELSA’s perception of the young person’s willingness and likely levels of engagement with the ELSA intervention and the research

2.7 Data Collection and Measures

A semi-structured interview schedule was used with each student and ELSA. These were scheduled before the intervention was due to start and after it had finished (around six to eight weeks later). The interview lasted between 30-45 minutes. Interview questions were derived from the findings of the literature review and developed to answer the propositions. All participants were interviewed in a quiet room in their own school. Prior to each interview, the participants were reminded that they could withdraw from the research at any point. The interview schedule focused on the ELSA-YP relationship, the support and the quality of the experience (including the beginning and the ending). Drawing activities (draw you and your ELSA doing an activity and an Ideal ELSA activity) were used as were scaling and PCP techniques to elicit student’s views. Visual prompts were used to support the elicitation of student’s feelings. A diary
for student/young people to complete following each session (six to eight
sessions) was left with the young people to complete and was collected at the
end of the intervention (see appendices 34-37 for copies of the interview
schedule, visual supports and PCP activities).

After the interview, participants were reminded of the purpose of the research,
that their response would be anonymised so that they were not identifiable and
given the opportunity to ask questions.

Questions were asked prior to the interview to gather process information. These
included questions on frequency of sessions, attendance, information on
student’s needs, why a student was referred to an ELSA and length of
experience as an ELSA.

A focus group of eight ELSAs from the same schools (and in the author’s
supervision group) also took place to draw out the issues gained from the semi-
structured interviews.

The semi-structured interviews and focus group were recorded, using a digital
voice recorder. Audio recordings were transferred to and stored confidentially on
a password-protected computer.

The interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed verbatim by the
author. Identifying information (names of participants and schools) were
removed and replaced with code names or pseudonyms. Hesitations, fillers and
repetition were removed during the process of “cleaning up” the data (Braun &
Clarke, 2013).

Transcribing the interviews and focus group helped the author to become
familiar with the data.
2.8 Data Analysis

Once the data had been collected, thematic analysis was employed.

As ‘Thematic analysis is a method for recognising and organising patterns in content and meaning’ (Willig, 2013, p.57), I used Braun and Clarke’s (2013) structured approach to examine themes and the relationship between them which led to the development of thematic maps (see section 3.1).

Although I used an inductive approach to data analysis and was open to the possibility of new themes emerging from the data, the themes that developed largely matched themes identified in the literature review.

Braun and Clarke (2013, p.201) warn against viewing guidelines for analysis as ‘recipes that have to be precisely followed’. Whilst they recommend a systematic approach, they describe that good qualitative analysis is instead the ‘product of analytic sensibility’. The six phases of thematic analysis and fifteen-point checklist for good thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.87 and p.96) were followed (with analytic sensibility):

- Reading and familiarisation

Transcribing the interviews and focus group myself helped me to become immersed in the data and familiar with the content. Reading and re-reading of transcripts, listening to recordings led to further noticing and recording of impressions and ideas which all helped me when I came to coding.

- Generate initial codes

Complete coding was undertaken with codes derived from scratch using Atlas.ti. Atlas.ti is one form of CAQDAS (computer assisted qualitative data analysis
software. Whilst this software is described as ‘a tool for supporting the process of qualitative data analysis’ (Friese, 2014, p.1), it is only assistive and it’s use depends on the nature of the research and the researcher.

I worked systematically through my dataset, searching line by line for data that would address my broad research question. I began by coding anything and everything of interest and with relevance to my research questions (with the intention of being more selective later). This included words and phrases as well as bigger chunks of data. Some of these units of data could be coded in more than one way. According to Braun and Clarke (2013, p.210), ‘what is important is that coding is inclusive, thorough and systematic, working through each data item in full before proceeding to the next’. They also highlight the need for each code to be distinct and that irrelevant codes need not be coded. I was aware that by its very nature, qualitative research can be subjective, but I took time to critically reflect upon the knowledge being produced and my role within this.

According to Braun and Clarke, (2013, p.211), ‘coding is an organic and evolving process’. I found that once all the transcripts were coded, it was necessary to go through them again since further codes had evolved during the process. Existing codes were modified and merged to encapsulate similar concepts (see initial codes and revised codes in appendices 41-42). Friese (2014, p.140) recommends continuing ‘coding until you have a feeling that no new themes emerge’. She also notes that researchers using qualitative analysis software are more likely to review their codes than researchers using manual methods.

As described by Braun and Clarke (2013, p.207), codes can reflect either:

- Semantic content of the data, that is, what is literally said
Conceptual and theoretical interpretation of the data by the researcher with often implicit meanings

Whilst semantic codes are easier to identify, I found that more conceptual codes were uncovered during the process.

It is important to note that due to the researcher-derived interpretation of these type of codes, no two analysts will code in exactly the same way. Whilst I was unable to employ ‘inter-rater reliability’ or check my analysis with my participants, I continually reflected upon the subjective nature of the research and how I might be influencing the coding process.

Braun and Clarke (2013, p.211) state that there are not a prescribed minimum or maximum number of codes. They recommend that there should be enough to capture patterns and differences within the data and suggest that codes should be evident in more than one data set, with some being evident in many or most.

The final stage of complete coding is collating the coded data. Atlas.ti assists with this process as it collects together quotations for every code.

• Searching for themes

After coding was completed, I began to look for patterns, ideas and themes (see appendix 43). As well as the frequency of ideas, I also investigated which patterns seemed relevant, meaningful and important to my research questions. I also excluded some codes which didn't fit into the themes I was forming.

Braun and Clarke (2006, p.82) describe that a theme 'captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set'.
As such, as I went through my data looking for similarities and overlap between codes and I combined codes to form themes. Braun and Clarke (2013, p.225) emphasise that this is an active process and that themes do not just ‘emerge from the data’.

Good themes ‘are distinctive and need to make sense on their own; at the same time, good themes need to fit together to form the overall analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.231).

Provisional or candidate themes were initially developed but as I went through the process, it was possible to refine and develop themes, which captured the rich story of the data and the three levels of themes as described by Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 231):

- Overarching themes – organise and structure the analysis
- Themes
- Sub-themes

The thematic analysis led to the identification of four overarching themes, fifteen themes and twenty-three sub-themes which helped to answer my research questions and theoretical propositions. For clarity, I used visual, thematic maps (see section 3.1) to explore the relationships between the overarching themes, themes, sub-themes and codes.

I used word clouds (see section 3.3) to ‘represent the verbal data’ from the interviews and focus groups and to illustrate further the experience of the young people of the ELSA intervention (Thomas, 2016, p.212).
I constructed case studies using the diaries, process information and interview data and used quotes from the interviews and PCP task to illustrate the YP’s drawings.
3  Findings and Discussion

This section will present the study findings. Each stage of the analysis will be presented and discussed below in reference to the research questions, the published literature and the wider theoretical context. Alternative explanations, reasons for any unexpected findings, and any methodological weaknesses will be considered and discussed.

3.1 Thematic Analysis

As discussed in section 2.8, Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phases of thematic analysis and fifteen point checklist for a credible thematic analysis were followed in order to analyse the eight interviews and focus group.

Subsequently, four overarching themes, further themes and sub-themes were categorised and are represented in the following overall thematic map (see figure 3) and table (see table 8).

3.11 Definition and Description of the Overarching Themes, Themes and Sub-Themes

Whilst an inductive approach to the thematic analysis was taken, with the codes taken from the data rather than being pre-determined from the literature, the themes that were extracted from the data generally match those described in the literature and will be discussed further below.

In order to define and discuss the themes, thematic maps and selected extracts (see appendices 44-47) are provided to support the analysis of the data. In doing this, both data derived (semantic) and researcher-derived (latent) codes (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.207) are combined so that the extracts illustrate both
the content and meaning of the data, as well as provide an interpretation of the more implicit meanings.

Thematic Analysis led to the development of four overarching themes (figure 4):

1. The Therapeutic Relationship
2. The Therapeutic Journey
   - Beginnings and expectations
   - The middle, the intervention, the support
   - Ending, not ending
3. The Impact of the Intervention
4. Barriers and Help Needed
Figure 3 – Overall Thematic Map
### Table 8 – Organisation of Overarching Themes, Themes and Sub-Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overarching Theme</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
<th>Sources of Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Therapeutic Relationship</td>
<td>ELSA feelings</td>
<td></td>
<td>ELSAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ELSA qualities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YP feelings</td>
<td></td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YP qualities</td>
<td>YP needs</td>
<td>ELSAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Always there</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Relationship gets stronger and lasts</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Safe space</td>
<td>YP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Therapeutic Journey</td>
<td>Beginnings and Expectations</td>
<td>Hopes and Expectations</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Set up</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Information gathering</td>
<td>ELSAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Information sharing</td>
<td>ELSAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ELSA role</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The middle, the intervention, the support</td>
<td>Informal ELSA/It’s not really ELSA</td>
<td>ELSAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The ELSA room</td>
<td>ELSAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ending or not ending</td>
<td>Reduction of support</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moving on</td>
<td>ELSAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Use strategies learnt</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pressure to end</td>
<td>ELSAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Doesn’t seem to be an ending</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Impact of the Intervention</td>
<td>Made a difference</td>
<td></td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learnt strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advice for other YP</td>
<td></td>
<td>YP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td>ELSAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrating Impact</td>
<td>Record keeping</td>
<td>ELSAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers and Help Needed</td>
<td>Barriers</td>
<td>School processes</td>
<td>ELSAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YP</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help needed</td>
<td></td>
<td>ELSAs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4 – Four Overarching Themes
The findings in each overarching theme will now be presented and discussed.

3.12 The Therapeutic Relationship

This is an overarching theme that explains the nature of the therapeutic relationship between the ELSA and young person (YP). This theme encompasses the feelings and qualities of the ELSA and the YP and the features of the relationship.

The theme of Therapeutic Relationships can be used to answer research question one, how does the relationship with the individual ELSA and the qualities of the ELSA impact upon the YP’s experience of the ELSA intervention?
Figure 5 – Overarching Theme 1: the therapeutic relationship
This overarching theme can be subdivided into the following themes and sub-themes:

- Relationships

This theme describes the factors which contribute to the nature of the therapeutic relationship as described by the YP and the ELSAs. It included the ELSA ‘always being there’ for them, as they had time for them, they were someone to talk to and both ELSAs and YP likened this to a comfort blanket. Both ELSAs and YP stated that the relationship develops over the course of the intervention, becoming stronger and more trusting and lasting beyond the ELSA intervention (often for the duration of the YP’s time at the school). The YP also discussed that they thought their ELSA sessions were a safe space where they could be themselves and show their feelings.

Table 9 - Quotes from theme ‘relationships’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘When I feel down or if I am worrying about something, I can always go to her’. Annabel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘They’ll always have time for you’. Katie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The most important thing is time for these kids’. Mrs Greenway</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They see us round the school and it’s ‘Miss, can I talk to you?’... they can rely on us to have a little chat’ FG ELSA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘She makes me happy, when she’s like... she’s like comforting. She’s just... she’s like a friend, she’ll be there for you’. Adam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I’ve got ones in year 11 now, that I’ve seen since year 7. Not continuously, but it’s like a comfort blanket almost and to see them through the troughs’. FG ELSA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Well it is different, cos at first it was like, quite quiet, but then now cos I know her more and we’re more chatty as well, so it’s quite fun’. Annabel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘and it (the relationship) tends to last the whole time they are here. It’s really nice and they will always speak to you, they’ll see you in the corridor and it’s ‘hello Miss’. It’s a real positive I would say’. FG ELSA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘She’s very nice, I can trust her and she’s always there if I need to talk to her and I can say stuff to her that I wouldn’t normally say to my friends. She can keep secrets; she’s really good’. Adam

‘it was a session where I could be like myself and when I could show all my feelings to someone’. Annabel

‘She does make me laugh when I’m worried and stuff. I can just be myself’. Amy

‘She’s got to have space and time to speak and knowing that she had that helped her become a bit more open with me generally’. Mrs Greenway

Analysis of the interview data suggests that both the ELSA’s and YP’s qualities and feelings contribute to the nature of the therapeutic relationship. These findings concur with findings from the literature review which state that the ELSA relationship is ‘fundamental’ to the success of the intervention (Begley, 2015) and ‘central’ to the ELSA and child’s experience of the ELSA programme (McEwen, 2019). Other findings show that relationships develop at different rates but become more trusting over time (Ball, 2014) and that young people value always having someone there for them who has time for them (Bowerman & Davies, 2018), someone they can trust and the sense of security that the relationship brings (Barker, 2017).

- Qualities, characteristics and needs of the young people

This includes the qualities, characteristics and needs of the YP as described by the ELSAs. Some of the characteristics were positive and related to the YP being open to change, honest, kind and caring and aware of their own needs. Other characteristics related to the reason the YP were referred for ELSA such as being anxious, argumentative, vulnerable, having low self-esteem or family difficulties. Some of these more negative characteristics were thought to be
barriers to developing a positive relationship rather than indicating rival explanations and are discussed further in the theme of ‘barriers’.

Table 10 - Quotes from theme ‘characteristics and needs of the young people’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘I do feel he can come and talk to me because he has spoken to me about a couple of delicate issues and yeh.. he’s been able to open up’. Mrs Salmon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘She will listen and she’s very perceptive to changing and changing mindset as well’. Mrs Gulliver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘She was very relaxed and quite open in our relationship’. Mrs Greenway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘It’s about the social skills with her, her health issues, (she’s) suffering from anxiety ... purely vulnerable’. Mrs Salmon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘She can be extremely argumentative’. Mrs Greenway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Feelings

This includes the YP’s feelings about the relationship as reported by the YP themselves or the ELSA. The YP revealed that the relationship with the ELSA made them feel happier, that it led to them feeling less alone and more secure. Young people reported that you did not need to worry about seeing an ELSA and that they enjoyed it. ELSAs reported that some YP experience sad feelings when the intervention ended. This will be discussed further within the theme of endings.

Table 11 - Quotes from theme ‘feelings’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Well, like, it makes me feel like I have someone to talk to and it makes me feel a bit more like happier and comfortable in school cos I know there’s someone there’. Katie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I feel that he’s happier cos he can talk to me and he knows I can support him and resolve issues’. Mrs Salmon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘It makes me feel quite happy, cos then you know that someone’s there to always help you and if you are in a situation, you know that you are not alone’. Annabel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Quite excited because I actually enjoy working with her’. Amy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘She makes me feel happy’. Adam

‘You don’t need to be afraid to talk about your feelings as that is what the group is about and you don’t need to worry anything anymore’. Annabel

‘So, I said to him, you know... we need to finish and his little face dropped’. FG ELSA

‘A pupil was almost in tears and said that he didn’t want it to end, he wanted to carry on coming’. FG ELSA

- ELSA characteristics and qualities

This includes the qualities of the ELSAs as described by the YP or the ELSAs themselves. The ELSAs described themselves as investing in the relationship and giving a piece of themselves because of ‘the kind of people they are’. They also suggested that their unique role as neither a teacher or a parent helped the YP to feel at ease with them. The YP described their ELSAs as fun, friendly, kind and someone who listens, understands and explains.

Table 12 - Quotes from theme ‘ELSA characteristics and qualities’

‘I will be giving of myself’. FG ELSA

‘We’re hoping to do so much more for them cos that’s the kind of people we are’. FG ELSA

‘(You are) quite independent, you’re not the family member, you’re not a teacher’. FG ELSA

‘She is very comfortable with me’. Mrs Greenway

‘She’s really like bubbly, so like if I come in here angry like, she just makes me leave with a smile’. Amy

‘Mrs Salmon is quite friendly, um she’s kind and she always helps people when they need to be helped’. Annabel

‘So she helps me, she always makes sure that everyone is happy and she’s like really kind and she helps everyone’. Katie
Thematic analysis of the interview data and findings from the literature review both highlight the importance of the key adult’s qualities and behaviours to the development of the relationship. The papers reviewed emphasised the importance of ‘warmth, empathy and genuine positive regard’ (Traux and Carkhuff, 1976 in Dunsmuir & Hardy, 2016) and the importance of the key adult to affirm, to listen, to enable communication and to trust (Mowat, 2010).

Likewise, specifically in relation to ELSA support, Hills (2016) emphasises the importance of the ELSA’s qualities; being kind and showing unconditional positive regard. Nicholson-Roberts (2019) also highlights the importance of the ELSA’s unique approach to the development of the ELSA-child relationship. As far as I am aware, there is not yet any research exploring why teaching assistants become ELSAs, what their entry level skills are or should be and what qualities would be desirable in the role. Similarly, it would be interesting to further explore the qualities of the ‘unideal’ ELSA and if such ELSAs exist, the reasons for this, for example poor recruitment, a lack of communication skills, poor mental health or working in a school that does not support whole-school wellbeing. This could form part of a future research project.
• ELSA feelings

This theme incorporates the feelings of the ELSAs themselves and included looking forward to working with the YP, feeling happy they had been able to help and feeling rewarded as well as feelings of sadness when the intervention ended.

Table 13 - Quotes from theme ‘ELSA feelings’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘I’d always look forward to seeing her. She’s always smiling, always cheery, yup… lovely child to work with… absolutely’.</td>
<td>Mrs Gulliver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Happy, because we’ve talked through issues at home and issues at school and it has helped him and he has said that it feels better’.</td>
<td>Mrs Salmon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I think if you know they’ve gone back in (to the classroom) and they seem much calmer and happier and in the right place, then yeah, it’s great!’</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The time we spent together was positive’.</td>
<td>Mrs Greenway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I love ELSA and I love the students. I always see that they come out with something… and it’s good’.</td>
<td>Mrs Salmon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘but in a way it’s (the ending) a bit like cutting ties as well for ourselves because we have given of ourselves a little bit to them and it can be quite sad’.</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.13 The Therapeutic Journey

This is an overarching theme, which explains the YP’s experience of the intervention; from the beginning, to the middle and at the end of the intervention.

This theme can be used to answer research question two:

how does the YP experience the therapeutic journey of the ELSA intervention?

How is the beginning and ending of the intervention experienced?

and research question 3:

what are the barriers to programme fidelity?
Figure 6 – Overarching Theme 2: the therapeutic journey
This overarching theme can be broken down into the beginning, middle and ending of the intervention and then subdivided into further sub-themes:

- **Beginnings and expectations**

This theme describes the beginning of the intervention and the expectations of the YP and the ELSAs. It contains subthemes relating to hopes and expectations, the set-up, the ELSA role, information gathering and information sharing (see figure 7). This theme can be subdivided into:
Figure 7 – Theme: Beginnings and expectations
This subtheme describes the hopes and expectations of both the YP and ELSAs at the beginning of the ELSA intervention. The ELSAs expressed hope that they could help the YP and the YP expressed hopes that the intervention would help them, that it would be fun and that they would have someone to talk to. Inevitably, some of the YP’s expectations prior to the ELSA intervention were based on their previous experience of receiving ELSA support (see participant details in section 2.5). Within this theme and linking to the subtheme of the ELSA role was a subtheme relating to ‘what ELSA is all about’ with focus group ELSAs reporting that YP had said that they weren’t sure ‘who that lady is’ or why they were having ELSA support (see the relevant subtheme for further discussion).

Table 14 - Quotes from theme ‘Hopes and expectations’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘I think I could really help her’. Mrs Gulliver</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘It will give me more chances to speak out, so I can share and the more I speak out, the more I can get confidenter.’</td>
<td>Adam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I’m expecting to have nice things to do and have lots of activities like making things and drawing and I’m also hoping for lots… well not lots, but most teachers to help me and support me as well.’</td>
<td>Annabel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I think it’s going to be fine… fun’. Adam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I’m looking forward to feeling a bit more comfortable and happier and feeling that if I have a problem, I have someone to talk to’.</td>
<td>Katie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The review has shown how contracts can be used to clarify hopes and expectations for the ELSA work as well as clarify the purpose of the intervention and roles (Dunsmuir & Hardy, 2016 and Karver et al., 2006).
This subtheme contained practical decisions to be considered by the ELSA at the beginning of the intervention such as deciding on the frequency and duration of the intervention, the use of waiting lists (which led to a sense of being on a merry-go-round), form-filling, the involvement of parents, confidentiality, target setting and planning. It also included how much the YP understood about the intervention they were about to receive. Target setting and planning were discussed in depth at the focus group with the ELSAs describing a wide range of different practice. Some ELSAs set targets with the YPs on their first meeting, others set them at the end or middle of the intervention or the targets were set by the year heads. Likewise, the ELSAs stated that they began their planning from the baseline assessment but acknowledged that they would be likely to deviate from their original plan as other issues came to light.

Table 15 - Quotes from theme ‘Set up’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘I’ll plan it for 6 weeks and then review at the end of the 6 weeks and that’s how I begin, but it very rarely, occasionally I can do it in 6 weeks but normally I’m looking at half a year to be honest’. FG ELSA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘we do say it’s 6 weeks and generally we can fit it in’. FG ELSA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I know how often we will meet... twice a week or... once a week? Amy’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘She did say it will be about half an hour long, it will finish in about 6 weeks, just before Christmas’. Adam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(There is a) ‘lot more of a waiting list now as ... it’s almost become a bit more of a merry-go-round really’. FG ELSA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘We have a database and forms to fill in and go through... we’ve got loads of paperwork’. FG ELSA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘We contact home, explain what ELSA is .... parents are always on board, I don’t think we’ve had any that have been ‘no, I don’t want it’’. FG ELSA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘whatever we talk about stays with us and it won’t be shared around with anyone’. Annabel

‘Amy identified anger management herself as something she wanted to work towards and control and other issues have come up along the way’. Mrs Greenway

‘We normally set a target at our first meeting’. Mrs Salmon

‘At the beginning I used to do all the target setting myself... and some of the kids that I saw I knew really well, but with all the year 7’s I don’t know them so I’ve now put it onto the heads of year... and they will set the targets and they will say what they want to achieve by the end of the ELSA sessions’. FG ELSA

‘I do my targets weekly’. FG ELSA

‘I tend to do mine (target setting) at the end of the six weeks, rather than at the start as you don’t know the student. At the end of the six weeks I have got to know them, this is what you need help with. So I tend to do my ones at the end of six weeks which really helps’. FG ELSA

‘We do the targets halfway through’. FG ELSA

‘When I will sit down with him and work out where he is and see what comes out of the assessment that we’ll start on, that will give me a good steer if there’s anything else I should include’. Mrs Salmon

‘You do go off on a tangent or something else will come up, definitely. You have a plan, looking at the targets, you know... so I base it on the target, the target is more resilience, could be friendships, so I base it around that but normally you find a root cause of something else and you’re going off on a tangent a bit, but it is important and it is what they need, so....’. FG ELSA

The findings from the data analysis concur with many of the findings in the literature about the practical arrangements needed to ensure the beginning of the intervention is well managed and that this is communicated to YP and their parents. My findings suggest that the information given to YP is largely based on the information expected in an ‘administrative’ contract (practical information) rather the information expected in a professional contract (purpose, goals) or a psychological contract (relationship, expectations), as Sills (2015) described. McEwen (2019) reported that the primary-aged children in her study felt
uncertain about attending ELSA sessions and worried that they were in trouble. Likewise, Hills (2016) pointed out that YP could feel scared or worried by a lack of information and needed clearer information before they started the ELSA intervention, particularly on why they were having it, the targets they would work on as well as when the support would take place.

- Information gathering

This subtheme covered the type of information gathering that an ELSA might do as he or she set up the beginning of the ELSA intervention, such as finding out the individual needs and interests of the YP, considering the referral information received, collecting baseline information, meeting with the YP and discussing with the YP which lesson to withdraw them from. Which lesson to withdraw YP from was a widely debated topic in the focus group with ELSAs highlighting different practice in their schools, from not being able to withdraw a YP from a core subject, to the decision being taken based on practical timetabling considerations and some schools choosing to prioritise mental health support over learning.

Table 16 - Quotes from theme ‘Information gathering’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘I try and find out what sort of things they are interested in and have a range I had a girl who was really into horses and so I had a book that she could draw horses in if that was what she wanted, just doing something that they enjoy and then they start to talk’. FG ELSA</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘There is a long drawn out referral process through the Head of Year or Head of Department and it’s quite stretched’. FG ELSA</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘We do it (baseline assessment) at the start and at the end and hopefully you would have seen some improvement’. FG ELSA</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘They do know the reasons why they’ve been referred, so you talk about that in your first initial meeting and say ‘we’re going to talk a lot about anxiety or friendships and we have a booklet that we work through’ and obviously anything that comes out, we will support and get through in the 6 weeks’. FG ELSA</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘so a getting to know you session is the first session and then I’ll plan it for 6 weeks and then review at the end of the 6 weeks’ FG ELSA

‘So the referral comes and I’ll go and meet with them and chat with them and say, you know, you’ve been referred, when we are going to meet and work out which lessons are appropriate for them to miss’. FG ELSA

‘I try and take them out of things like optional PE or something like that, but again if it’s their favourite subject it’s very difficult. My head teacher is quite anti-taking them out of PE as it might be their only means of exercise, so it’s quite tricky. Lower down the school it’s much easier. I tend to take them out of RE... FG ELSA

‘We can’t take them out really of maths, English or science’. FG ELSA

‘It’s interesting about not taking them out of certain lessons, if they are struggling that much, then where is the argument for that? You know, if they are really struggling, then surely it’s more productive to take them out of science or English or maths’. FG ELSA

‘I take them out of any lesson and I don’t get any opposition from the senior leadership team, they are very supportive of that... I am less likely to take them out of things like food tech or PE, DT and things that they really do enjoy. I can’t always marry it up with my timetable. If it has to come out of English, it comes out of English, if their mental health is not where it is supposed to be, they’re not going to be able to do the English’. FG ELSA

‘It’s a practical thing, if period 3 and 4 are free then that’s when you have to do it’. FG ELSA

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- **Information sharing**

This subtheme included the liaison with other school staff that might take place prior to the ELSA intervention starting (including with junior school staff if the YP was joining the school). It also considered how the ELSA might share information about their role and the work they do with staff, parents or YP, e.g. through the use of information leaflets.
Table 17 - Quotes from theme ‘Information sharing’

‘We set targets... and we put them on what we call a support pastoral plan and that goes out to all the teachers’ FG ELSA

‘That’s why I’m quite keen and I will do once the exams are over, is to arrange to go into the junior school and have a chat to the ELSA and see what they are doing and I think that would help me in my role, particularly with year 7’s’. Mrs Gulliver

‘We pick up the ones from the junior schools, so for us they are the ones we really start with’. FG ELSA

‘We were alerted from the junior school where she’d had a few issues’. Mrs Gulliver

It was surprising that there was not more discussion in the interviews or focus group about sharing information with parents, perhaps as they do not often do it or find it difficult. In my search of the literature, I found that Wilding and Claridge (2016) suggest that parents of children beginning an ELSA intervention may benefit from an initial meeting with school staff to receive information about the purpose of the support and to agree targets and outcomes. In addition, Barker (2017, p.58) found that ‘parents would have valued more communication with school about and during the process of their child’s participation in the (ELSA) intervention’. Involving parents will therefore form part of the practice guidance I have developed for ELSAs.

- The ELSA role

In this subtheme, the ELSAs and YP explained their understanding (or lack of understanding) of the ELSA role (also see Hopes and Expectations), it included discussions around whether the YP knew what to expect and how much they were told about ELSA support before receiving it. It also involved an ELSA questioning what the role is all about in response to feeling pressure to keep seeing more and more YP.
This subtheme also discussed the difficulty of getting inappropriate referrals due to poor understanding of the role by senior school staff, or the use of ELSA to fill a gap in CAMHS provision.

The differences in the ELSA role between junior school and secondary school ELSAs was also widely discussed in the focus group. ELSAs said that the YP enjoyed their ELSA support at junior school but that they perceived it to be very different to the support they offered. They said that they would like to become more familiar with the role of the primary school ELSA so that they could better support pupils with their expectations. When describing their ELSA experience at primary school, the YP focused on the availability of toys, games, stationery, practical activities and craft materials. The guidance I have developed will recommend more liaison between primary and secondary school ELSAs. It will also highlight the value of joint planning for pupils who have received ELSA support at primary school when they transition to secondary school.

Table 18 - Quotes from theme ‘the ELSA role’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Well I know that they are a group of people or a person who would like talk to you and help you with your emotions. I think they are there for people who sometimes struggle’</td>
<td>Katie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘At the beginning, I didn’t really understand it... I didn’t want to come here’.</td>
<td>Amy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I was told that it was going to help in lessons and stuff cos like before I used to get really angry and stuff and I’d have no one to talk to ...so it would like help and guide things and I’d have someone to talk to’.</td>
<td>Amy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Do they know why they are coming to see me... most of the time they don’t’</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I’ve had a couple of the boys... and I just sit down and talk ... so they don’t actually know what I do, but they then ask to see me and that sometimes starts ELSA work because they want to engage with me then ...and they turn round and say I don’t know who that lady was’.</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I’m feeling a bit more pressure to keep churning them out and so I think ‘well what is ELSA about actually?’’</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘What we’re finding now is that because there’s such a long waiting list for CAMHS, we’re getting more referred to ELSA, to tide them over a little bit’. FG ELSA

‘I also think the people higher up need to realise, that although we are ELSA support, sometimes ‘oh, we’ll just give them that’ and they don’t always need that, it could be something else. You have to be a bit careful that they are not just dumping people on you, and you know that the kids won’t engage with it’. FG ELSA

‘It might be the size of the school but I am getting more referrals that are just behaviour... to a certain extent we are a tick box in this situation which is a shame... because I get more and more of the bolshy individuals’. Mrs Greenway

‘Some of the referrals I’ve got haven’t been appropriate for ELSA and I think that’s possibly why I find it difficult to end it because it takes you ages to find out what the nature of the beast is really’. FG ELSA

‘At my old school, there was this really small room and this teacher called Mrs ELSA and I used to go in there and there were toys and craft things’. Katie

‘I asked him if he done it in junior school which I know is completely different to how we work here, so I said it’s on similar lines but it may be at a higher level’. Mrs Salmon

‘I think sometimes the children that have seen ELSAs at junior school it’s a bit of a shock to them... the difference... and they come and see us, we haven’t got all those nice games. There are some games and things but it’s not predominantly about that’. FG ELSA

‘Lots of the kids love the ELSA from the junior school, but I think it will be very very different. I expect they have their own expectations ... but I don’t know what junior ELSAs do really’. Mrs Gulliver

As with the ‘hopes and expectations’ subtheme, the importance of understanding the ELSA role was highlighted in my research and in the literature. According to Fourie et al. (2011, p.321), each of the stakeholders need to have a clear understanding of their roles in therapy in order to ‘achieve a therapeutic bond through which the goals and tasks of therapy can be achieved’.
•  *The middle, the intervention and the support*

This theme describes the middle of the intervention and contains subthemes relating to the support, activities, the room and the informal nature of ELSA. As papers specifically describing the middle of the therapeutic journey were not found, I have no literature to concur with my findings. Most papers describing a therapeutic journey focused on the beginning or ending.
Figure 8 - Theme: The middle, the intervention and the support
In this subtheme the ELSAs and YP discussed the support given during the ELSA intervention. There was a focus on talking about feelings, looking for positives, problem-solving and discussing triggers and strategies. There were also discussions about being led by the YP or following a more structured programme of work.

Table 19 - Quotes from theme ‘ELSA support’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘The older ones like my worry eater, they put all their worries in and he eats them. The older ones will sit and fiddle with it and occasionally put things in its mouth’. FG ELSA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I’ve learnt that there’s always something positive about your life that you can reflect on if there’s something bad going on’. Annabel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘We’ve done some problem solving, we’ve spoken about... you have an issue, you’ve got a reaction and a stimulus but you always have a choice, so we’ve done some work on choice and consequences’. Mrs Gulliver</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I learnt how to put my anger on a leash so I can calm it down. I learnt screwing up stuff and chucking it at a wall or stamping on it doesn’t change it. So, there’s no point starting it if it doesn’t change’. Amy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘She’s very good at practicing the breathing, she doesn’t feel silly doing it which some students do and she’s quite happy to sit in here with me and just do a couple of minutes of breathing, either before she starts talking to me or at the end of the session’. Mrs Greenway</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘You need to take a lead from the individual I think’. FG ELSA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Amy tends to lead the sessions on this one. I think it’s very important to her, that she has some control’. Mrs Greenway</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I’m going to go through our booklet. I’m not going obviously to go through the anger parts of our booklet, but I’m certainly going through self-esteem, confidence, friendships...’. Mrs Salmon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Our booklet is self-esteem, anger and friendships, that’s how our booklet works... we’re not normally given specifics with our ELSAs (students), we just work through the booklet from start to finish’. FG ELSA</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Activities

Linked to the subtheme of ‘support’, the subtheme ‘activities’ considered the specific type of activities the ELSA or YP might be doing during the intervention. This included active or practical activities or activities the YP could do whilst talking or do without talking. It also considered the use of snacks.

Table 20 - Quotes from theme ‘ELSA activities’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘We did this Jenga thing and we would pile it up on all the problems…we scrunched it up (pipe cleaners) into a ball and then we threw it at the wall to see if it would do anything and stamped on it to see if it would change. It just wouldn’t change. Getting angry and shouting… it doesn’t do anything. I realise that it just makes me get told off over it, it still doesn’t change’. Amy</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I did do… with a year 9 boy, he was getting quite angry so we did make a cornflour balloon / stress ball and he really enjoyed that’. FG ELSA</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Colouring makes her nice and relaxed… she can concentrate on the colouring and we can just talk’. Mrs Gulliver</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I always put out fiddly bits, some theraputty, I’ve got this… snake thing which is tentacle-y, they sit there pulling the tentacles and they like having something to fiddle with. A bag with squeezy things in … I just leave it there and they can pick it up’. FG ELSA</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘We always bring fruit in, they love it. Some children just don’t have fruit.’ FG ELSA</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘We can make ours a hot chocolate or a cup of tea, just a nice ending to a session’. FG ELSA</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ELSA room

In this subtheme, the ELSAs considered the importance of the ELSA room as a safe space for the YP to express their feelings. ELSAs also considered the need to use other parts of the school or grounds if a room was unavailable or when the YP needed some space outside of a room.
In my view, it is surprising that more was not mentioned about the nurturing aspects of the room and that it was not mentioned at all by the YP in their interviews. However, the YP’s constructs of the non-ideal and ideal ELSA (which included drawing and talking about the ELSA room) were elicited in the Ideal ELSA task (see section 3.4 for further discussion).

Table 21 - Quotes from theme ‘ELSA room’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘A space where they feel able to talk...’ FG ELSA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘If they are in a real state, then behind the door of the office is where the language comes out, but they’re not going to get reprimanded for it (within reason), but they just need a safe space to vent sometimes and that time’. FG ELSA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Sometimes it’s appropriate to be in a room, other times we’ve taken people to the canteen cos there’s a big area there, you can get a hot chocolate or something if you need to’. FG ELSA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Sometimes we go for a walk, we’ve got big playing fields behind the school and as long as we get parental permission, then we are allowed to go outside of the school gates, we use the playing fields anyway, we literally walk round in a big loop, I know they just need to get out of the boundary line and then when you go back in, they can breathe a little bit more’. FG ELSA</td>
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</table>

- Informal ‘ELSA’ Support

This subtheme considered when the ELSA support given was not in line with ELSA practice guidance and the support being delivered was more informal or flexible. ELSAs described some YP as receiving ELSA support ‘without realising’ or without knowing why they were seeing an ELSA so as to relieve the perceived pressure on the YP. It was also discussed during the focus groups (contrary to ELSA guidelines), that ELSA sessions can be adhoc, just chatting, not working towards targets or be ‘never-ending’.
It was noticeable that the ELSAs who were interviewed were more likely to be offering ELSA support in the way it is intended and the ELSAs in the focus group were more likely to discuss a less structured, less formal approach to the intervention. This may go some way to explain the difficulties experienced with recruitment as these ELSAs were aware that they were not running the ELSA intervention in the way it was meant to be delivered.

It is likely that this type of ‘informal ELSA intervention’ links to the lack of clarity in initiating the ELSA role (not being clear about what it is, who will support them, what the focus will be and how long it will go on for). Likewise, this lack of structure and lack of targeted intervention leads on to difficulties with the ending as ELSAs cannot measure progress if they do not have targets and therefore do not know when to finish. It is therefore clear that good practice guidelines for ELSAs to follow and to share with SLT would support ELSAs to set up and implement ELSA sessions in the way that ELSA support is intended to be run.

Table 22 - Quotes from theme ‘Informal ELSA support’

‘He’s not actually down for ELSA, he’s down for speech and language but he needs ELSA... on the way to the room for the speech and language he chats... by the time we’ve got to the room it’s all off-loaded and that helps him.... he has a bit of ELSA without realising’ FG ELSA

‘Most of the time they don’t (know why they are having ELSA), they’re happy to come and talk and chat, they want someone to talk to, they’ve asked for someone to talk to’. FG ELSA

‘You don’t want to put too much pressure on them. They’ve already got all that pressure, so to have another target sometimes...’ FG ELSA

‘Some of the year 11’s, it may be that they just need a couple of sessions, to give them some strategies, to get them through the exams so I’ll say ‘I’ll be seeing you for a couple of sessions, if you feel that you need more, we can talk about that’ FG ELSA

‘Some students know what they want to repair or feel better about. Other students have not a clue... you don’t set any targets, the targets just kind of come along... ‘FG ELSA
Whilst I was not able to find anything in the literature specifically about informal ELSA support, Nicholson-Roberts, (2019, p.131) describes that a flexible intervention ‘within the structured boundaries of the ELSA project’ can be beneficial. She found that ‘the freedom of ELSAs to adapt both their approach and the intervention length enabled the intervention to be as pupil-centred as possible’. However, this flexibility and individualised nature can lead to difficulties ensuring fidelity to the programme and in measuring its effectiveness using quantitative measures. Pickering et al. (2019, p.19) suggest that inconsistencies in the intensity and duration of the intervention and differences in experiences, strategies and activities can lead to different outcomes.

- **Ending or not ending**

This theme describes the ending (or not) of the intervention. It contains subthemes relating to a reduction of support, feeling pressure to end, not seeming to be an ending, moving on and using learnt strategies. This theme can be subdivided into:
Figure 9 – Theme: Ending or not ending
Reduction of support

This subtheme involved reducing the number of ELSA sessions at the end of the intervention, rather than just suddenly ending it. ELSAs and the YP themselves commented that ongoing reassurance and clear warnings of the endings were important to prepare the YP for the end. They also commented that they tended to continue with quick check-ins after the intervention had finished and told the YP that they could always seek them out.

Table 23 - Quotes from theme ‘reduction of support’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘She sort of went ‘aaawww’ when I said this is our last one but I said it’s not the end and we will still catch up so that was quite reassuring for her’. Mrs Salmon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘It makes me feel good knowing that I can still speak to her’. Adam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Oh yeh... because you only get, well you get 6 weeks and if you still haven’t improved or nothing’s changed you can get a few more weeks, but mine was working and so that’s why I stopped’. Amy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘We work through our booklet that we have got and you say next week will be our last of the six weeks, we let them know’. FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I’ll drop to once a fortnight but I will probably leave it as an open invitation if there’s any problems to pop in one tutor a week, it would just be a 10 minutes in the afternoon. I’ll say the door is open. You don’t have to come if you are feeling fine... If you just want to tell me that you are doing really well, then do come’. Mrs Gulliver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘What I’ve done with a few of mine is, in the six weeks you see them every week and then for a couple of weeks afterwards you see them every other week, just for a ten-minute drop in and then they go’. FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘just give me thumbs up at the window if you are ok and then... they have a check in rather than coming in to talk to you’. FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘She can always come and find me’. Mrs Greenway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I said to Annabel on our last session last week that I would see her in the new year. It won’t be in a weekly session like an ELSA but it will be a catch up how are you and obviously she can come and talk to me if she wants to’. Mrs Salmon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I say to mine, although it’s ending, if you do feel you need to come and talk to me, you can at any time’. FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The findings, here, concur with the literature reviewed on ending therapeutic journeys and relationships in relation to ELSA interventions, therapeutic contexts, child protection and social work. They indicate that YP can benefit when the end of their sessions are phased out gradually (Cripps et al., 2017), when they are given warnings or prepared for the ending and when ELSAs continue their relationship with the YP after the sessions have finished (Ball, 2014).

These recommendations for gradually reducing support have been included in the good practice guidelines I have developed (see appendix 18).

- Use strategies learnt

This subtheme detailed that the YP used the strategies they had learnt during the ELSA intervention and will also be discussed in the ‘impact of the intervention’ theme. ELSAs and YP stated that the ELSA support had given them things to reflect on, they were able to generalise some strategies they had learnt to other settings and they received rewards for using them.

Table 24 - Quotes from theme ‘use strategies learnt’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
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<tr>
<td>‘I have a self-evaluation script really and I ask them to reflect on what we have done and how it has helped’. Mrs Greenway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I feel like I’ve learnt that if there’s a problem, I can always go to someone and I’ve learnt that there’s always something positive about your life that you can reflect on if there’s something bad going on’. Annabel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘So a couple of times, he has said that he has stuttered (in the classroom) because he hasn’t known what to say, but we went through a breathing exercise to make sure he is calm, if he’s in the lesson... he uses the breathing exercise and he says that has helped’. Mrs Salmon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Towards the end of ELSA we have a page in there (the booklet) that we photocopy, a certificate and they all like this and I get them laminated, so they can see ‘oh, yes, I completed ELSA’... and they take them home. FG ELSA’</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Moving on

This subtheme involved discussions in the focus group about referring onto other interventions after the ELSA support and that other staff could also support the YP.

Table 25 - Quotes from theme ‘moving on’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘You also list who else they can go to if they need to, i.e. their year team or their tutor’. FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Have they achieved their targets, are they still working towards it, have they not achieved it, in which case what further support can you introduce after 6 weeks of the ELSA? You leave it 6 weeks and then think, this person would really benefit from learning space or whatever... and then we’d put in a referral for the next stage of support if we feel they need it’. FG ELSA</td>
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</table>

The theme of moving on after ELSA support or therapeutic support was also found in the literature review. Burton (2018) describes the need for the ELSA to liaise with teaching staff at the end to look at the programme aims, assess whether these have achieved and to discuss what (if any) support the pupil might need going forward. Likewise, developing an after-care plan detailing how progress should be maintained and whether any ongoing signposted or referral is required is suggested by Dunsmuir and Hardy (2016).

Pressure to end the intervention

During the focus group, one ELSA talked extensively about feeling pressure to end the ELSA intervention, she described feeling as if she were on a ‘merry-go-round’ of seeing endless YP. She also described that the pressure of waiting lists led to her thinking that she had to ‘churn’ YP out and that she felt pressure to end the intervention when she did not think that she had reached an ending or thought that the YP needed more time.
Table 26 - Quotes from theme ‘pressure to end the intervention’

‘If the child still wants to come and still wants to talk, then you’re sort of you know... you feel you ought to give them a bit of justice and let them stay, but not when there’s pressure with waiting lists...’ FG ELSA

‘So my boss who is charge of ELSA is putting more pressure on us to finish them as ... it’s almost become a bit more of a merry-go-round really’ FG ELSA

‘We don’t always get that much time to think do we? And you know the next one’s there’. FG ELSA

‘I’m feeling a bit more pressure to keep churning them out’. FG ELSA

Similar to these findings, (Ball (2014) described that ELSAs in her study found it hard to end the intervention when they were ‘forced’ to end the sessions when they thought that they needed more time as they could see the benefit of continuing or when they could see that the YP wanted more involvement.

- There doesn’t seem to be an ending

This subtheme emerged mainly from discussion in the focus group but also includes YP’s thoughts about the ending. In this subtheme, the ELSAs described thinking that they should carry on the ELSA intervention, particularly if the YP wanted to or they thought the YP needed to carry it on. They described difficulties ending the intervention, difficulty cutting ties, difficulties knowing when or where to end it and difficulties if the YP did not know it was going to end. The YP also expressed sadness at the ending saying that they would miss the ELSA and their time together. The ELSAs thought that more time was often needed, particularly if new issues had emerged or if they were called away by school events. Several ELSAs described that support could be ongoing throughout a YP’s time in the school. As discussed earlier, it would seem that a lack of focus and target setting prior to the intervention beginning, may lead to difficulties
knowing when to end the intervention. Guidance that advocates a focus on relationship building and a flexible approach to the timing of the ending (as long as this in informed by clear targets and review of progress) has been produced as a result of this research (see appendices 7 and 18).

Table 27 - Quotes from theme ‘there doesn’t seem to be an ending’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘If the child still wants to come and still wants to talk, then you’re sort of you know... you feel you ought to give them a bit of justice and let them stay...’</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I just can’t finish with that child cos he wants to carry on’</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘A pupil was almost in tears and said that he didn’t want it to end, he wanted to carry on coming’</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘After 6/7 weeks I thought, well it’s time to finish and so I said to him, you know... we need to finish and his little face dropped and I thought well, ok and so I went back to my boss and said I need to carry on and I still don’t know when I’m going to finish, so...’</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘It kinda made me sad cos I always wanted to carry it on, cos it was a session where I could be like myself and when I could show all my feelings to someone’</td>
<td>Annabel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite sad, because I do actually like talking to Miss, she’s a nice teacher. To have a teacher like that, that you can get on with so well... yeh, it’s sad'</td>
<td>Amy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘It made me feel a bit sad, cos knowing that I don’t do it anymore is a bit weird as normally I can go there on Tuesdays and talk to Mrs Salmon about some things’</td>
<td>Adam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘It’s a bit like cutting ties as well for ourselves because we have given of ourselves a little bit to them and it can be quite sad’</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I’m thinking of one girl at the moment who I really don’t know what I can do to help her, her Dad is in prison, she wants to see him and I don’t really know what I can do, so what do you do... keep talking about it constantly with her and I can see that it’s either going to end with it being quite short or it could go on forever. I don’t know where to end it’</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The student I’ve got now and I am still seeing weeks after...one problem is solved and the next problem comes along and there doesn’t seem to be an ending with this student, because we keep going and we do one thing and then...something else is now the bigger issue as that one has been resolved’</td>
<td>FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘She has achieved what I’d hoped for but as part of the sessions other things have opened up, so I am going to do another six sessions with her’</td>
<td>Mrs Gulliver</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
‘Yes, you do go off on a tangent or something else will come up, definitely. You have a plan... so I base it on the target.. and you’re going off on a tangent a bit, but it is important and it is what they need, so.... And that’s why it probably takes me longer’. 
FG ELSA

‘The only frustrating thing from my perspective is that there’s been a couple of weeks where I should have seen her and haven’t, when things have happened elsewhere’.
Mrs Gulliver

‘It (ELSA) tends to last the whole time they are here. It’s really nice and they will always speak to you, they’ll see you in the corridor and it’s ‘hello Miss’. It’s a real positive I would say’. FG ELSA

The available literature appears to concur with my findings that ELSAs can find it hard to ‘let go’ and think that they are ‘abandoning’ the YP they have spent time building a relationship with (Ball, 2014). In addition, Nicholson-Roberts (2019, p.124) reports that the length of ELSA interventions in secondary schools ‘usually far exceeded’ the recommendations for intervention length in the ELSA guidance. Based on my findings, it is reasonable to suggest that prescribing the length of the intervention (six to eight weeks) does not take into account the YP’s individual needs and the time it takes some YP to build relationships.

Taking a flexible approach based upon clear programme aims and monitoring of progress towards these (as part of a contract at the outset and with explicit discussions about ending) has been added to my recommendations for future practice (see appendix 18).

3.14 The Impact of the Intervention

This is an overarching theme, which explains the qualitative impact of the ELSA intervention. This theme was a surprising one in that it was not the intention to explore the impact of the intervention and it does not relate to a research question. Ideas are present in the data which link perceptions of the impact of the intervention with the therapeutic relationship and the therapeutic journey.
Whilst the impact of the intervention was not part of the literature review there is evidence to suggest that the relationship is one factor that contributes to the effectiveness (Hills, 2016).
Figure 10 - Overarching Theme 3: the impact of the intervention
This theme can be subdivided into the following themes and sub-themes.

- Learnt strategies

Similar to the learnt strategies subtheme in the theme of endings, this subtheme is related to the impact of the intervention and what YP could take away from their sessions. It covered ELSAs helping YP to talk through ‘what if?’ scenarios, to use breathing or calming exercises. The YP commented that ELSA support had helped them to focus on the positives, ‘let people in’ more and to be able to solve more of their own difficulties. Similarly, they said it had given them more time to reflect and think before acting. ELSAs said that they collated strategies for the YP to take away and that the YP had retained a lot of the strategies they had worked on.

Table 28 - Quotes from theme ‘learnt strategies’

<table>
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<th>Quote</th>
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<tr>
<td>‘I think it was just literally talking through the ‘what if’ scenarios or if you had done this differently and then just thinking of the big picture…’. Mrs Gulliver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The things she reacted best to was definitely the breathing’. Mrs Greenway</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘If I get picked on and I don’t really know the answer, I just breath in for a couple of seconds and breath out a couple of times until eventually I think of an answer, I could say that might be right and so I say it and if I get it wrong, it’s fine’. Adam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I’m probably better now at calming myself down if something happens or coping with stuff like if I’m alone or worried and stuff’. Annabel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I feel like I’ve learnt that if there’s a problem, I can always go to someone and I’ve learnt that there’s always something positive about your life that you can reflect on if there’s something bad going on’. Annabel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Well, I can let people in and stop putting a big guard up. Cos that’s what I used to do, but that got me in more trouble’. Amy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I can solve a lot more of my home issues. I can get my family in and we’d have a talk’. Adam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I think about stuff now’. Amy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘Even getting them to remember the strategies is often a big plus... because once you have remembered them, you can say ‘oh yeh, I remember how we did that and what it meant’... she was really good at picking it all up, so I know that what we have shared has sunk in and hopefully that will stay with her, so I think it is important to have a fairly set format to guide the students through remembering what you have done and how to apply it’. Mrs Greenway

‘She’s retained a lot of the things I’ve taught her’. Mrs Greenway

‘I’ve had an anxiety group for girls and because of the sort of girls they were, at the end of it I did put all the strategies that were going to help them together... so I put them on a little keyring for them and quite often I see them in the lesson and they have their little cards out... just to keep them going’. FG ELSA

- Made a difference

This subtheme contained factors that ELSAs and YP thought had made a difference. ELSAs commented that ELSA support made a difference to the YP they worked with. The YP said that they had made more friends, felt happier, felt more confident and said that it helped knowing they had someone who has the time for them. The ELSAs and YP acknowledged that talking helped, that the YP was calmer and had learnt to trust them. They also commented that the YP was empowered, better equipped to deal with their feelings, had learnt more about themselves and had settled more into school.

Table 29 - Quotes from theme ‘made a difference’

‘I love ELSA and I love the students. I always see that they come out with something... and it’s good’. Mrs Salmon

‘She’s one of my ticks’. Mrs Greenway

‘...I’ve made more friends and I chat with them a lot more as well’. Annabel

‘Happy, happier than I was when I first came in’. Katie

‘Well at the beginning, I was a bit shy but then I kind of got my confidence up.’ Katie

‘I think it’s helped me cos if there situations that I don’t want to talk about at home or
if something has happened at home, then I can always come to her or even if it’s at school as well and I don’t feel like right and like I’m worrying about something, I can always come to her and it’s helped’. Annabel

‘I think she’s able to talk to me more now’. Mrs Salmon

‘Well... if I’m rowing with someone, I can get it off my chest rather than building it up, so like I don’t have anything I’ve built up, I can just talk to people about stuff, which isn’t an easy thing. It’s helped...’. Amy

‘I’m probably better now at calming myself down if something happens or coping with stuff like if I’m alone or worried and stuff’. Annabel

‘I think she’s been able to trust me and know that I’m someone she can come to’. Mrs Salmon

‘I think she felt empowered... So I think she feels really pleased with herself... I would say it’s been really successful and what we set out to achieve has been achieved, which is great’. Mrs Gulliver

‘I think she’s better equipped to deal with her own feelings and situations’. Mrs Greenway

‘The ELSA (support) has opened her mind to that there’s other ways of doing things to get the result you want and to be happy, so I think that that has really helped her learn a bit more about herself I would say’. Mrs Gulliver

‘I feel a lot more happier in school now. I actually know where I’m going and I sit down places with my friends, we’ve found our own spaces and nobody’s trying to take us away from them’. Katie

- Demonstrating impact

In the focus group, ELSAs discussed ways of demonstrating impact such as feelings diaries, self-evaluation of targets, pre and post measures, self-esteem questionnaires and the SDQ. They also discussed that what might seem like small steps of progress can actually be big steps for an individual YP. One ELSA in the focus group acknowledged that she did not know how to demonstrate the impact of the intervention (this will be discussed further in the ‘barriers and help’ theme) and has formed part of the recommendations to schools.
Table 30 - Quotes from theme ‘demonstrating impact’

‘And the targets can seem to us really small can’t they? We’re hoping to do so much more for them cos that’s the kind of people we are, but that’s not always going to happen. Sometimes small steps are big steps. Remembering to bring a pen in every day, which we think is small... but for some...’. FG ELSA

‘One of my personal targets is about ELSA and measuring its effectiveness and I was saying, I don’t really know, how can you?’ FG ELSA

○ Feedback

ELSAs discussed receiving feedback from parents, from ex-pupils years later and giving the YP a certificate of completion as feedback for them. Interestingly, feedback from school staff was not discussed in the interviews or focus group. This may imply that ELSAs are not receiving feedback from school staff following an intervention and this would seem an important omission as feedback would potentially contribute towards maintaining an ELSA’s self-efficacy. Rees (2016, p.52) emphasises the importance of mastery experiences to support the maintenance of self-efficacy following the ELSA training and highlights the finding from her doctoral research that ELSAs can experience feelings of low self–efficacy and reduced confidence in their ability to apply their future role as an ELSA. The need for ELSAs to receive feedback on the impact of their work has been added to guidance for school staff.

Table 31 - Quotes from theme ‘ELSA feedback’

‘I’ve had feedback from parents, she fed back and said how much her son had appreciated the support’. FG ELSA

‘As you know, I’ve had the lovely gentleman who’s now about 21 and he had two years after leaving school where he just went off the rails and then he said he remembered what we had done and now he’s got his little business and now he’s happy and feeling good. So, you know, whatever point it kicks back in, it’s nice to know that it has’. Mrs Greenway
‘A certificate of completion and I put their name in the middle, get them laminated and they take them home’. FG ELSA

- Advice for other YP

YP were asked whether they would recommend the ELSA intervention to other YP. Their advice to other YP included reassurance that they could trust the ELSA, that the ELSA is nice and friendly, that the support really helps, that they’ll always have time for you and that any YP would enjoy it. They also said they would not have to worry anymore and that they should not be afraid to talk about their feelings to them.

Table 32 - Quotes from theme ‘advice for other YP’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>YP Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘I would tell them to trust Mrs Salmon and I’d tell them that you will be doing a booklet and it will be very good. You will enjoy it and it’s a good way to help you share stuff with Mrs Salmon cos you can trust her’. Adam</td>
<td>Adam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘cos it helped me... if it’s going to help them, then just be calm and actually talk to them, don’t be aggressive to Miss or anything’. Amy</td>
<td>Amy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I’d would probably give them advice that you don’t need to be afraid to talk about your feelings as that is what the group is about, and you don’t need to worry about anything anymore’. Annabel</td>
<td>Annabel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I’d tell them that they will always be able to help you and they are really friendly. They’ll always have time for you’. Katie</td>
<td>Katie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.15 Barriers and Help Needed

This is an overarching theme which outlines the barriers within the environment, school processes or relating to the individual YP to the experience of the ELSA intervention and the help that ELSAs would benefit from in order to improve that experience. The theme of barriers and help needed was also found to relate to
all the other overarching themes and can be used to help answer research question 3: what are the barriers to programme fidelity?
Figure 11 - Overarching Theme 4: barriers and help needed
This theme can be further subdivided into

- Barriers

Within this subtheme, school processes, the environment and the YP themselves were described as barriers by the ELSAs. One YP also recognised that her early behaviour may have been a barrier to ELSA support. Barriers caused by school processes included a lack of planning time, long waiting lists, not having clear targets or an outline of work and inappropriate referrals. The ELSAs also discussed having to be reactive and support other pupils or being called away to cover lessons or exams, which impinged on ELSA time and meant that ELSA sessions could not take place on consecutive weeks. Resources were mentioned as a barrier; either a lack of resources or too many resources, which led to feelings of being overwhelmed. Lack of opportunities for generalisation and feeling pressure to see YP and churn them out were also mentioned as potential barriers.

Environmental barriers such as a lack of space, having to share a room, the ELSA room not being finished or being more of an office were also discussed by the ELSAs. The characteristics of the ELSA room were often discussed by the YP as a comparison to the junior school ELSA room, which was viewed more positively due to the availability of toys, games and stationery (see the Ideal ELSA activity for more discussion about the ELSA room).

In terms of the YP themselves, the ELSAs thought that having had too many interventions (e.g. previous ELSA support, support from a school counsellor and other school-based interventions which involved them being withdrawn from lessons), not wanting to be seen as different, the YP being reluctant to engage, or the impact of their other needs could be barriers to ELSA support. One YP
also discussed her lack of initial understanding of the support which led to a reluctance to engage.

Table 33 - Quotes from theme ‘barriers’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Processes:</th>
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<tr>
<td>‘I think from my perspective, it is the lack of time for planning that is the biggest thing’. Mrs Gulliver</td>
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<td>‘We’ve got a long (waiting) list... hundreds of them for different reasons’. Mrs Greenway</td>
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<td>‘He comes and chats, but I didn’t feel that we were doing very much, in terms of... I didn’t really have a set theme with him...’. FG ELSA</td>
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<td>‘I am getting more referrals that are just behaviour, for example a student that has a huge chunk of behaviour points on their record but no SEN... we are a tick box in this situation which is a shame...’. Mrs Greenway</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Some of the referrals I’ve got haven’t been appropriate for ELSA and I think that’s possibly why I find it difficult to end it...’. FG ELSA</td>
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<td>‘There was one session where I was doing the ELSA and it got quite busy in the wellbeing room... Adam was absolutely fine, I think he could see the student was upset... we just carried on talking about what we were going to do at the weekend rather than ELSA. So it stopped it that time ...’. Mrs Salmon</td>
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<td>‘I’m called off for other things, it will be 6 sessions, I hope that they will be six consecutive sessions, but it doesn’t always work like that unfortunately, it’s out of my control’. Mrs Gulliver</td>
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<td>‘Occasionally I can do it in 6 weeks but normally I’m looking at half a year to be honest... because unfortunately there are gaps in between, when we have the exams, other things going on.... trips, so I very rarely get to do 6 consecutive weeks and that is a problem, I think it would be better if I could, but most of the things are out of my control...’. FG ELSA</td>
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<td>‘The only frustrating thing from my perspective is that there’s been a couple of weeks where I should have seen her and haven’t, when things have happened elsewhere, but I’ve always gone and found her afterwards and said sorry, last week we missed our session as I had to deal with another child...’. Mrs Gulliver</td>
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<td>‘I would like more resources on-hand to be able to think, not necessarily to plan in advance, but if the sessions goes slightly different to how you originally though, you could call upon more things.’. Mrs Gulliver</td>
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<td>‘Because I’m new to it, I feel that there’s so much information out there and I’m not quite sure what to do, where to go. So, even at the beginning, for me, having a bit of</td>
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155

structure. I do feel quite overwhelmed by it all. We do have resources, but there are so many’. FG ELSA

‘Amy might benefit from some group work so she can work on her relationships. We spent time on a 1:1 on her personal situation, just to see how it transferred out of a 1:1 and into a group setting. But that’s not always possible because of the amount of students you’d have to pull from a lesson’. Mrs Greenway

‘s my boss who is charge of ELSA is putting more pressure on us to finish them as … it’s almost become a bit more of a merry-go-round really’. FG ELSA

Environmental:
‘I was doing the ELSA and it got quite busy in the wellbeing room’. Mrs Salmon

‘The room, we haven’t finished… we’re up and running but things like the carpet, the pictures on the wall, the nicer things, we’ve not been able to do that’. Mrs Salmon

‘It is more like an office. She has pens but she doesn’t have huge shelves of toys like Mrs Junior ELSA had’. Katie

Young people:
‘Some children have had so much intervention, that they don’t want to be different’. FG ELSA

‘I find it’s the boys that can be more reluctant, they don’t want to be seen to be coming out (of the classroom) …’. FG ELSA

‘At the beginning, I didn’t really understand it, still I was really like… quite… not so nice, but I didn’t want to come here. Cos, I just didn’t want to give stuff a go…’. Amy

‘I think the biggest challenge for Amy is that she has other issues surrounding her learning, she has problems reading and writing…. And she is sometimes sucked into the wrong friendship groups, so she can be quite reactive if she spends too much time with the wrong people’. Mrs Greenway

According to Roffey (2017, p.59) ‘issues related to implementation for social and emotional learning (SEL) have largely focused on fidelity to the programme, dosage, clarity of guidance and the characteristics of the facilitator’. Likewise, she notes that factors within the wider school system are also vital and states that these factors affecting implementation are ‘critical to outcomes’. Whilst the ELSA programme is designed to be flexible and meet the needs of the individual
child, there is guidance as to the optimum duration and frequency of support (Burton, 2018). In this study, the interviews with ELSAs produced themes relating to barriers within school systems, the school environment and relating to the individual YP which showed that ELSAs were sometimes unable to follow the guidelines for ELSA support. Previous research has shown the importance of the facilitator characteristics (Hills, 2016) and this research has highlighted the importance of considering factors relating to the school context, leadership and processes that are crucial in providing good outcomes. This has led to the development of guidance that EPs can use to support senior managers to consider and overcome these implementation difficulties (see appendix 26).

- Help needed

This subtheme encapsulated areas that the ELSAs expressed they needed further help with during the focus group discussions. This included knowing when and where to end an intervention, how to demonstrate impact, being a new ELSA and knowing where to start and believing that more structure would help. Support and guidance to manage these areas has been incorporated into the guidance documents (appendix 26).

Table 34 - Quotes from theme ‘help needed’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘I would like more advice on endings, that would be very useful’. FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘It’s the endings I struggle with’. FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘I don’t really know what I can do, so what do you keep talking about it constantly with her and I can see that it’s either going to end with it being quite short or it could go on forever. I don’t know where to end it’. FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘One of my personal targets is about ELSA and measuring its effectiveness and I was saying, I don’t really know, how can you?’ FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Because I’m new to it, I feel that there’s so much information out there and I’m not quite sure what to do, where to go’. FG ELSA</td>
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3.2 Interviews, diaries and drawings

In addition to the thematic analysis and the production of themes, case study information, maps of journeys for individual students and drawings were presented to illustrate the YP’s experience of the ELSA intervention and the relationship with their ELSA. Verbal data from the pre and post-intervention pupil interviews, pre and post-intervention ELSA interviews, feelings diaries and referral information received from the school were used to form these maps and case study information. Please note, Amy’s diary was not returned and so the feelings depicted at the end of the intervention were taken from her interview.

In the pre and post pilot interview, the YP was asked to draw a picture of her ELSA. The other YP were asked to draw a picture of themselves with their ELSA doing an ELSA activity at the interview following the ELSA intervention. Due to difficulties interpreting drawings, the drawings are included below with quotes relating to the YP’s perceptions of their ELSA’s qualities and their relationship with them.

The case study information for each YP and maps of each individual YP’s journey through the intervention and their drawings are presented below.

3.21 Amy

Verbal data from the pre and post-intervention pupil interviews, pre and post-intervention ELSA interviews, feelings diaries and referral information received from the school were used to form these maps and case study information.
Amy is in Year 8 and described as having difficulties with anger management, low self-esteem and literacy needs. Amy receives SEN support and an EHCP application had been submitted when I saw Amy. She was referred for ELSA support by her house team. She did not know Mrs Greenway before ELSA support began and she had not received any ELSA support before (either at junior school or her current school). She received six sessions of ELSA support for an hour a week. She admits that at the beginning of the intervention, she didn’t really understand the purpose of it and was quite reluctant to engage with it. She later said that she enjoyed working with Mrs Greenway, she liked getting situations off her chest, she realised it was helping and said that she was more able to let people in. Amy thought that ELSA support had helped reduce her anger but that she would always be ‘a little bit angry sometimes’. Mrs Greenway also commented that Amy had responded well to the breathing exercises and described that Amy was receptive to many of the strategies they had worked on. Mrs Greenway told me that working with Amy was rewarding and that she was ‘one of her ticks’. Amy said that she was ‘quite sad’ when the intervention ended and wished she could have had more sessions each week, see figure 12 for the map of her journey through the intervention.

Amy drew a picture of her ELSA when we first met (see figure 13). The ELSA appeared to be smiling and was wearing the necklace Mrs Greenway wears. After the ELSA intervention, Amy drew herself with Mrs Greenway. Quotes from Amy’s interviews regarding the ELSA qualities she values and the nature of the ELSA-YP relationship are around the drawings.
Figure 12 – Map of Amy’s Journey

Amy (YP1) Year 8, Oxford Road School
Referred for anger difficulties
ELSA – Mrs Greenway

- Pre-ELSA support
- Receives SEN support
- For literacy application
- Referred on ELSA, in February 2018, by her
- No previous experience
- Mrs Greenway before
- ELSA

6 sessions of ELSA
- Support 1:1 for 1 hour
- Once a week
- Between 26 February and April 2018

Week 1

"I really understand now, I didn’t want to come"

Week 2

"I like getting situations off my chest and doing the activity things"

Week 3

"Then I started getting used to it and then realized it was actually helping"

Week 4

"I feel quite sad because I do actually like knowing it。“I would do it a bit more probably, maybe 2 lessons in a week"

Week 5

"Well, I can let people in and stop what’s going on and just feel me in more trouble, so I think about stuff now"

Week 6

"Post-ELSA posted ELSA finished, can seek her out as needed"
I feel quite excited because I actually enjoy working with her.

She makes me laugh when I'm worried and stuff. I can just be myself.

I get excited coming to the lessons. Cos I get to talk about my problems and stuff. It helps to talk about my problems.

She's really like bubbly, so she'll come in here angry, then she just makes me leave with a smile.

She's really nice. It's really helpful talking to her cos if I'm like angry and I come into a session really angry, then she like understands and it's not like oh you go into a classroom angry and they tell you off. She won't tell me off, she explains to me what's up and stuff, like why are you being like this?
3.22 Adam

Verbal data from the pre and post-intervention pupil interviews, pre and post-intervention ELSA interviews, feelings diaries and referral information received from the school were used to form these maps and case study information.

Adam is in Year 7; he is described by his ELSA as being quiet and showing anxiety and low levels of confidence. He was identified for ELSA support when he arrived at Oaktree School and had ELSA support at junior school. He knew Mrs Salmon before ELSA support began as she had helped him with a homework issue when he first started at the school. He received six sessions of ELSA support for 30 minutes a week. Before the intervention began, he said that his confidence was ‘pretty low right now’ and that he was looking forward to having ‘someone that can be there for me… there to listen and somebody I can trust’. Throughout the intervention, he recorded in his diary that ELSA sessions made him feel happy, trusting, interested, ok and tired. At the end of the intervention, he said that the ELSA support had helped him to feel happier about ‘stuff at home’, made him feel that he could trust more people and that he felt more confident about speaking up in class. Adam thought that ELSA support had helped increase his confidence and that he had learnt useful breathing strategies that he could use in lessons. Adam described Mrs Salmon as ‘very nice’ and said that he could trust her: ‘she’s always there if I need to talk to her and I can say stuff to her that I wouldn’t normally say to my friends’. Mrs Salmon told me that working with Adam, seeing him meet his targets and seeing his confidence increase had made her feel happy. Adam said that he felt ‘a bit sad’ when the intervention ended but that it made him ‘feel good’ to know that he could still speak to her and that Mrs Salmon would check in on him (see figure 14 for a map of Adam’s journey through the intervention).
After the ELSA intervention had finished, Adam drew a picture of himself with Mrs Salmon (see figure 15). He drew them sitting together at a table and working together on ‘the ELSA booklet and all the other activities’. He drew speech bubbles to show that they are talking to each other. Quotes from Adam’s interviews regarding the ELSA qualities he values and his perception of the ELSA-YP relationship are around the drawings.
Adam (YP2)
Year 7, Oaktree School
Referred for low confidence and anxiety
ELSA – Mrs Salmon

Pre-ELSA
• Had ELSA at Junior School.
• Doesn’t have SEN
• Referred for ELSA October 2018
• Mrs Salmon helped out with a homework issue before ELSA so knew her a little

Week 1 – 30/10/18
How did you feel after your ELSA session today?

Week 2 – 06/11/18
How did you feel after your ELSA session today? something else - ill

Week 3 – 14/11/18
How did you feel after your ELSA session today?

Week 4 – 20/11/18
How did you feel after your ELSA session today?

Week 5 – 27/11/18
How did you feel after your ELSA session today?

Week 6 – 04/12/18
How did you feel after your ELSA session today?

Post – ELSA
• Met targets
• ELSA finished, can seek her out as needed
• Ongoing ELSA target and check-in arranged in February
• ‘It makes me feel good knowing I can still speak to her’

‘I wasn’t that confident, but now I feel like, if I know the answer, I can speak up and I can give the answer and feel more confident about it’
She's friendly and she's someone you want to be around. She makes me happy, when she's like... she's like comforting. She's just... she's like a friend, she'll be there for you.

I have become more confident speaking to her.

She's very nice, I can trust her and she's always there if I need to talk to her and I can say stuff to her that I wouldn't normally say to my friends. She can keep secrets; she's really good.

She said that I can trust her and I've told her some stuff about home and yeah... she hasn't told... She can say some stuff to me. She can tell me what to do about this and yeah... it's nice advice.

She makes me feel trusting, she makes me feel happy and yeah...

It makes me feel good cos I know there's someone there that can help me.

So I've drawn me and Mrs Salmon with the booklet and all the other activities and we're having a chat about it and getting through it... most likely the board of the emotions cards.
3.23 Annabel

Verbal data from the pre and post-intervention pupil interviews, pre and post-intervention ELSA interviews, feelings diaries and referral information received from the school were used to form these maps and case study information.

Annabel is also in Year 7. She was described by Mrs Salmon as struggling socially and as having low self-esteem. She was identified for ELSA support when she arrived at Oaktree School and had ELSA support at junior school. She did not know Mrs Salmon before ELSA support began. She received six sessions of ELSA support for 30 minutes a week. Before the intervention began, she told me that she had had lots of friends at primary school but they could be mean and leave her out; she thought that ELSA support would help her ‘settle in properly’. She said that the thought of ELSA support was making her happy and that she was looking forward to having someone there for her, ‘supporting her wherever she goes’. Throughout the sessions, she recorded that ELSA sessions made her feel happy and trusting. At the end of the intervention, she remarked that the ELSA support had helped her to calm herself down and to cope with ‘stuff if I’m alone or worried’ and said ‘it’s helped me to build my confidence of dealing with situations and to build friendships as well’ (see figure 16 for a map of her journey through the intervention). Annabel described Mrs Salmon as kind and friendly and was reassured by having a trusted adult that she could talk to. Mrs Salmon told me that working with Annabel, seeing her meet her targets and seeing her out on the playground with more friends and settling into secondary school had made her feel happy. Annabel expressed a view that the sessions could be improved if they could do ‘more active sessions’. Annabel said that she felt sad when the intervention ended as ‘I always wanted to carry it on, ‘cos it
was a session where I could only be me like myself and when I could show my all feelings to someone’.

At the post-intervention interview Annabel drew herself and Mrs Salmon sitting side by side at a table doing some ‘positive talk feelings’ and commented that ‘they’re quite happy because they are talking about something good and fun’. As previously mentioned, other comments Annabel made relating to the ELSA qualities she values and the ELSA – YP relationship are presented around the drawing in figure 17.
Figure 16 – Map of Annabel’s Journey

Annabel (YP3)
Year 7, Oaktree School
Referred for friendship difficulties

ELSA – Mrs Salmon

Week 6 - 07/12/18
How did you feel after your ELSA session today?

Post-ELSA
Post-ELSA
Post-ELSA
Post-ELSA
Post-ELSA
Post-ELSA

Week 5 - 28/11/18
How did you feel after your ELSA session today?

The ending kinda ruined me.

Week 4 - 21/11/18
How did you feel after your ELSA session today?

Week 3 - 14/11/18
How did you feel after your ELSA session today?

Week 2 - 07/11/18
How did you feel after your ELSA session today?

Week 1 - 31/10/18
How did you feel after your ELSA session today?

6 sessions of ELSA support 1:1 for 30 mins, once a week between October and December 2018

Mrs Salmon before ELSA

November 2018
Overflew for ELSA
Don’t know what SEN School.
Hard with ELSA at Junior School.

It’s helped me to build my confidence and to handle situations of feeling like a stranger in my friendships as well.

The ending kinda ruined me.

It was a session where I could show all my feelings to someone.
It's been quite nice cos if there's situations, either at home or at school and you don't want to talk about it, she's the person to talk to about it with and you can like... you can trust her.

It makes me feel quite happy, cos then you know that someone's there to always help you and if you are in a situation, you know that you are not alone.

So, we were like thinking about friendships and if there's something bad going on, what you could do to make it better and positive talk of how friends should be and what would make a good friend.

Um, so Mrs Salmon is quite friendly, she's kind and she always helps people when they need to be helped.

I feel like I've learnt that if there's a problem, I can always go to someone and I've learnt that there's always something positive about your life that you can reflect on if there's something bad going on.

Well it is different, cos at first it was like, quite quiet, but then now cos I know her more and we're more chatty as well, so it's quite fun.

It's made me feel trusting cos I now know that someone's here to help and support me.

I think it's helped me cos if there situations that I don't want to talk about at home or if something has happened at home, then I can always come to her or even if it's at school as well and I don't feel right and like I'm worrying about something, I can always come to her and it's helped.

So on the left is me and on the right is Mrs Salmon, and we are doing some, like positive talk feelings about ourselves on some sheets of paper in our booklet.

Um, so, we're quite happy because we are talking about something good and fun so it's like there's nothing to be sad about in this group.
3.24 Katie

Verbal data from the pre and post-intervention pupil interviews, pre and post-intervention ELSA interviews, feelings diaries and referral information received from the school were used to form these maps and case study information.

Katie is in Year 7. She had ELSA support at junior school. Katie and her family were on a Child in Need Plan and Mrs Gulliver (ELSA) was involved in supporting the family as part of this plan (in her other role as a safeguarding officer). Mrs Gulliver also initially supported Katie in a Nurture Group (in her wider Teaching Assistant role) and then referred her for ELSA support, so Katie was familiar with her before beginning ELSA support. Katie was initially described as finding it hard to cope with her parent’s separation and her younger brother’s diagnosis of ADHD and associated behaviour. She received five sessions of ELSA support for 30 minutes a week over four months. The sessions were not held on consecutive weeks due to Mrs Gulliver being called away to support other pupils or school events. Before the intervention began, Katie said that she wanted ELSA support to help her to feel more confident and to feel more comfortable in school. Throughout the sessions, she recorded that ELSA sessions made her feel happy. Mrs Gulliver also asked Katie to rate how she was feeling about school after each session; with ratings moving from a seven to a nine over the course of the support. At the end of the intervention, Katie said that the ELSA support ‘made me feel happy and trusting’. Mrs Gulliver told me that their relationship had got stronger, that Katie was very receptive and that she looked forward to their sessions together. She also said that Katie had been helped to ‘make better choices’ and that she was a pleasure to work with. As new issues had emerged during their discussions, Mrs Gulliver had decided to extend Katie’s sessions with new targets to focus on building up
resilience in friendships. Mrs Gulliver expressed some frustration about a lack of planning time and that she was not able to see Katie on consecutive weeks. Likewise, Katie thought that the support could be improved by consistently meeting weekly as ‘in certain weeks certain things happen and after that week it doesn’t really matter anymore’. Katie said that she would like the intervention to carry on but would feel ok when it did end if she could seek Mrs Gulliver out if needed (see figure 18 for a map of Katie’s journey).

Katie drew a picture of her and Mrs Gulliver talking whilst she coloured in. She commented that ‘usually when we talk she has all these bits of paper and I colour in’. Further comments made by Katie in the interviews which relate to the ELSA-YP relationship and ELSA qualities are shown around the drawing, see figure 19.
Figure 18 – Map of Katie’s Journey
If she sees you around the school she’ll always like greet you and see how you are.

Oh, she’s really like nice and friendly. If you need help, she’ll be there. I’d say that she is really friendly and she knows really well what she’s doing to help.

She helps me, she always makes sure that everyone is happy and she’s like really kind and she helps everyone.

She makes me feel happy, happier than I was when I first came in.

Usually when we talk she has all these bits of paper and I colour in.

I could really explain more how I was feeling.

I feel like I have someone there so if I’m not feeling very happy and I can go over and talk to her.

It’s made me feel like happy and trusting. So I can really trust her, if I’m not feeling very happy I can tell her what’s happening.

I became a lot more happier in school and I felt a lot more confident.
3.3 Word Clouds

In order to further illustrate the YP’s experience and journey through the ELSA intervention, I produced word clouds using the verbal data from the YP’s interviews. Word clouds were also produced to represent the narrative of the ideal and non-ideal ELSA drawing task completed by the YP. The content of the pre-intervention interview was also compared with the content of the post intervention interview to see if there were any interesting differences.

According to Thomas, (2016, p.212) using a word cloud can give a ‘visual impression of an interview’. Felix et al. (2018) also highlight the use of word clouds in helping to generate questions, hypotheses and insights.

3.3.1 Amy

Prominent words from Amy’s pre-intervention interview were ‘talk’, ‘know’, ‘angry’, ‘change’, ‘help’ and ‘problems’. Whereas in the post-intervention interview, the following words were more prominent: ‘helped’, ‘improved’, ‘learnt’, ‘working’, ‘nice’, ‘change’. Noticeably ‘angry’ is still present but Amy did comment that although her anger had reduced, she would always be a bit angry.
Figure 20 – Visual impression of Amy’s pre-intervention interview

Figure 21 - Visual impression of Amy’s post-intervention interview
3.32 Adam

There were significantly fewer words highlighted in the pre-intervention interview, with the frequency that Adam used the words ‘know’, ‘like’, ‘speak’, ‘someone’, ‘makes’, ‘confidence’, ‘share’, ‘try’ and ‘help’ being emphasised.

In the post-intervention interview, the following words were prominent: ‘trust’, ‘surprised’, ‘friends’, ‘good’, ‘feel’, ‘makes’, ‘say’ and ‘answer’. Being able to trust Mrs Salmon was a key theme in Adam’s interview and again highlights the importance of the attachment relationship in the ELSA intervention.
Figure 22 - Visual impression of Adam’s pre-intervention interview

Figure 23 - Visual impression of Adam’s post-intervention interview
3.33 Annabel

The prominent words in Annabel’s pre-intervention interview were general such as ‘lots’, ‘feel’, ‘can’, ‘know’, ‘someone’ and ‘things’. However, the visual impression of her post-intervention interview is more positive and contained the words: ‘helped’, ‘positive’, ‘learnt’, ‘feel’, ‘talk’, ‘good’ and ‘feelings’. The word ‘bad’ is used quite often in this interview but this is related what she had learnt if faced with ‘something bad’, for example she said, ‘so we were thinking about friendships and if there’s something bad going on, what you could do to make it better and (using) positive talk’.
Figure 24 - Visual impression of Annabel’s pre-intervention interview

Figure 25 - Visual impression of Annabel’s post-intervention interview
3.34 Katie

Like Annabel’s word cloud, the visual impression of Katie’s pre-intervention interview contains general words such as ‘feel’, ‘makes’, ‘things’, ‘lots’ and ‘can’. However, the impression of her post-intervention interview is more positive containing words such as ‘happier’, ‘confident’, ‘friends’, ‘talk’, ‘help’, ‘know’, ‘happy’, ‘feel’ and ‘say’.
Figure 26 - Visual impression of Katie’s pre-intervention interview

Figure 27 - Visual impression of Katie’s post-intervention interview
3.4 Ideal ELSA Drawings

The Ideal ELSA drawing task was adapted from the Ideal Self task (Moran, 2012). It was completed with Adam, Annabel and Katie at their initial interview and with Mrs Salmon and Mrs Gulliver at their final interview. Please note that as it was added in after the pilot, this activity was not carried out with Amy or Mrs Greenway. In addition, Mrs Salmon worked with two pupils but only completed the activity once. All three of the YP who completed the activity had received ELSA support at junior school so had some understanding of the ELSA role.

This task was thought to add to the understanding of the ELSA–YP relationship and to explain the qualities and behaviours of the ELSA, which are valued by the pupil.

3.41 Adam

Adam described the non-ideal ELSA as grumpy and angry and someone who does not really want to be there, see figure 28. He thought that they would have marking and detention slips in their bag and that their room would reflect their anger. He said that students would be doing work and that they would feel anxious, scared or worried about being there. He also said that the non-ideal ELSA would get on well with adults but be the opposite with the children as soon as the adult had left the room.

Adam described the ideal ELSA as nice, happy, laid-back and always smiling, see figure 29. He thought that there would be treats and toys in her bag as well as some marking things and said that the ideal ELSA would be complimenting the students telling them how well they are doing and making them ‘feel like just the best thing’. He described that the room would be bright and happy and that the YP would want to be in there all the time.
The ELSA
What are they like?
Someone who has a horrible expression, doesn't really like to be there. They're all grumpy.
What do they look like? An angry person with their hands up, trying to like single eyeball.

The Bag
What kind of bag do they have?
bag with big handles.
What is inside it? Obviously some marking things, maybe some detention slips.

With Students
What kind work are they doing? Probably doing more work that they are supposed to, they would probably give them more homework than regularly set. Sometimes she might keep them in for doing their homework but not good enough and it is good.
What do the students in the room look like? What are they feeling? They feel anxious to go there, they feel scared and they just feel really worried and they can't trust this ELSA.
What do they say to the students? Stuff that's not really appropriate for a school, maybe calling them something like idiots most of the time and just harassing them when they haven't done anything.

The Room
What is their room like? Maybe there would be something that shows their anger, maybe lots of red stuff on their desk, or some different coloured things to show how this ELSA person is feeling, to show if they want to be there or not.
What's in the room? A little bobble head with demon horns maybe
Rules of the room? Don't be late, sit down as soon as you come in, don't touch anything, as soon as you are given your paper. Start and silence and some other rules like that.

With Other Adults
How do they get on with adults? I think she tries to hide it and if there is someone else in the room, she will act like a normal person until they leave.
How do they make the adults feel? They probably might be all friendly and make the adults happy, but the children... it's the opposite.
The ELSA
They are happy, they give thumbs up to everyone and they are really nice.
What do they look like? They are tall, they would be a lot different to some other teachers. They might be a bit like laid back than most teachers and they might always smile.

The Bag
They have a really big bag to store stuff like their marking things, maybe some treats for the students, maybe some toys they could bring into ELSA... so the students can also do their work but if they feel a bit stressed they can use these toys to make them feel a bit better.

The ELSA Room
There would be lots of happy things, bright colours, the walls and everything would be like really bright to show that this room is a happy room and only happy people can be in it. Maybe they could have some tables with like couches around, little couches.
What is the best thing in the room? Probably the couches, 'cos they'd be soft while you work.
When you walk in the room, how does it make you feel? Happy, amazing, makes you want to... just be there all the time.
Rules of the room? They would have... not too much talking, but you can speak, and... there wouldn’t be too many rules, because it would be a classroom, for... to make it your own space, you can be free.

With Students
What kind of work are the students in the room doing?
The first one is drawing as he is allowed to, cos he's free and then the other student would probably be writing his imagination.
What does the ELSA say to them? The ELSA compliments them, tells them how good they are doing and just makes them feel like just the best thing.

With Other Adults
How does the ELSA get on with any other adults coming into the room?
They get on really good, they are always friendly to each other. Some people stop by to say hi and get the nice feeling of being greeted.
How do the other adults feel? They feel good and amazing after they walk by and say hi.
Annabel drew two non-ideal ELSAs and described them as strict, quite loud, grumpy and said that they would spread ‘secrets’ around the school. She thought their bag would contain work and said that the room would be quite cramped, full of paperwork and would make the YP feel scared of what was going to happen. Annabel thought the YP would have to do a lot of writing instead of ‘fun stuff’ and that they would feel quite sad. Annabel described that these non-ideal ELSAs would feel threatened and not get on well with other adults either, see figure 30.

Annabel said that the ideal ELSAs (see figure 31) would be fun, happy and always laughing. She thought that their bags would contain some toys to aid concentration as well as some paper for drawing and colouring. She described that the room would have some comfy seating and that it would be bright, roomy, with fun stuff to do and that it would make you happy when you walked in. She thought that the YP would be doing activities like baking and drawing and that the ELSAs would be encouraging and saying ‘stuff to make them feel more comforting and happier’.
The ELSA
So, there's 2 ELSAs, they're basically like strict and umm they are quite loud... So like when there's one person and they say they keep stuff a secret, when there's two people one might not say that and they might spread it around the school.
What do they look like? So, they don't really look quite nice, cos they look quite tatty as well. They're always grumpy and they don't really like happy things.

The Bag
It's kind of like a zip up bag which states ELSA so people know it's for a certain group.
What is inside it? - maybe some school equipment, lots of paper, like work you have to do.

The Room
They might have some posters about like 'try your hardest' and 'always focus about you not other people'. Maybe lots of shelves with paperwork and booklets.
So, there's lots of paperwork to be done and folders with it and there's also lots of shelves with equipment and paper.
What's the most important thing in the room? - Probably a small table and chairs
How does it make you feel when you walk in? Well, it makes me feel quite cramped and scared of what's going to happen.
Rules of the room? ‘no talking when you are not asked to’, probably ‘don't touch things’, ‘listen’ and ‘always focus on what you're supposed to be doing’.

With Students
What kind work are they doing? So they basically have to write lots of pages of how they are feeling, what their attitude is supposed to be like, what help they would want to have and how they can make their life better. They have to do lots of writing and like essays to complete of how they like ELSA to go and what they have been doing.
How are the students feeling? They make them feel quite sad cos they are always shouting and strict, and they don’t really do lots of fun things.
What do the ELSAs say to the students? They say that they don’t focus, that they don’t focus on things that are fun, they should always focus on paper work and stuff that will be important in your life.

With Other Adults
What do they say to adults? Probably like ‘why are you in this room?’, ‘you shouldn’t be in here’, ‘get out, it's personal’.
How do they make the adults feel? - They probably feel quite threatened, because they might only wanted to ask something and now they're getting shouted at and told to get out of the room.
The ELSA
What are they like? They are fun, happy and always like to have a laugh.
What do they look like? They dress up in nice clothes and then they are kind of like pretty and they look like they are going to be like nice people.

The Bag
It’s like a rucksack, they’ve got toys, like special helping toys that can make people concentrate more. There is a few sheets of paper but that’s for lots of drawing and lots of colouring things as well.

The ELSA room
There would be like a nice round table with comfy chairs. There would be a shelf but not much paperwork, but they’d be lots of fun stuff to do, like activities.
Best thing in the room? Probably the seating, cos there’s also lots of like beanbags and cushions, so it’s all quite comfy.
When you walk in the room, how does it make you feel? It makes you feel quite happy as it’s bright, it’s colourful and it’s quite roomy, so there’s lots of things you can do in there.
Rules of the room? ‘always focus on the task still’, ‘always have fun’ and ‘try to so do at least 2 activities that are going to make you confident’ and ‘always talk if you need to’.

With Students
What kind of work are the students in the room doing? They’ll be doing lots of fun activities like baking and doing lots of drawing.
How do these ELSAs get on with the students? Get on really well because she’s never shouting or bossy and she always nice to the students.
What do they say to them? She encourages them with nice comments and she always says stuff to make them feel more comforting and happier.

With Other Adults
How does the ELSA get on with any other adults coming into the room? Well sometimes they don’t mind. If there’s more than two adults, they might think what’s going on cos normally there’s only supposed to be at least two adults. If there’s only one, she wouldn’t shout, she would be polite and say hello and why are you here and they’d probably say their answer.
Katie described the non-ideal ELSA as frowning, closed, mean, unhappy and frightening (see figure 32). She thought that the room would be dark and that it would make the YP feel ‘quite scared and nervous’ when they walked in. Like Annabel, she thought that the non-ideal ELSA work would consist of paperwork and writing. She also said that the non-ideal ELSA would make the YP feel sad and that rather than offering reassurance, they would just tell them to ‘deal with it’. Like Adam, she thought that the non-ideal ELSA would tell lies and be different with adults; pretending that they are actually a happy, kind person.

Katie drew a happy, bright, cheerful ideal ELSA who is always smiling. Katie thought that the ELSA room would be bright and that there would be toys, stationery and displays in there which would make the YP feel ‘really happy and excited to go in there’. She said that the ideal ELSA would make the YP feel happy, would be available for them and that they would get on well (see figure 33).
The ELSA
What do they look like? I’ve drawn someone who has a frown on their face and they’re really like closed up (arms crossed), so they don’t want to make anyone happy.
What are they like?
She’s like mean and she’s always unhappy... she’s frightening.

The Bag
What kind of bag do they have? A rucksack
What is inside it?
I’d say, probably her phone... and tissues and... I don’t know what else.

The Room
What’s in the room? So there’s like a few chairs and it’s quite dark colours and the curtains are always shut and there’s really dim lights.
Are there any displays on the wall? No
Is there any equipment or stationery in the room? No
What’s the worst thing in the room? - Ummm, I’m not sure
How does it make you feel when you walk in? It makes you feel... like quite scared and nervous
Rules of the room? Probably like ‘no shouting’, ‘no smiling’ and ‘no laughing’

With Students
What kind work are they doing? I’d say they just have paperwork and they have to write and that’s it
How do they get on with students? Not very well
How do they make them feel? She makes everyone feel sad
What do they say to the students? Well, when they ask for comfort, she doesn’t. She just listens and goes ‘deal with it’

With Other Adults
What do they say to adults? That she’s made everyone really happy and they’re lies
How do they get on with the other adults? She gets on with the other adults by pretending that she’s a really happy and kind person and then with the children she isn’t
How do they make the other adults feel?
She makes the other adults feel like ok and just happy because she doesn’t really show how she is
The ELSA
What are they like? She hasn’t got her arms crossed, she’s like really happy and she’s open for anyone to ask for comfort. She’s really bright. She’s quite cheerful and she always has a smile on her face.

The Bag
It would be like a rucksack again, but it would be a bright one. She’s probably got her phone and she’s got toys for the kids and some things to fidget with.

The ELSA room
There’s tables and chairs and the windows are really open and the lights are bright, there’s pictures on displays... to make the children happy and the room’s really bright. They’d be some toys on the floor so anyone can take them and just play with them.

What’s on the display? Things to make children happy. In the c-block there’s this thing and it’s like all these blob people and you can see them on trees and how they feel.

Any equipment or stationery in this room? Yeh, on the table, there’d be like rubbers and pencils and pens and they’d also be some paper if people want to draw and stuff.

Best thing in the room? I’d say the toys and stationery, because they’ll make the children feel that they are good with children and they’ll let the children draw and feel comfortable.

When you walk in the room, how does it make them feel? It makes them feel really happy and excited to go in there.

Rules of the room? ‘No shouting’ and ‘express your emotions’ and ‘don’t be afraid to ask for help’

Figure 33 – Katie’s Ideal ELSA

With Students
What kind of work are the students in the room doing? They do like... some paper work and there might be some writing but there won’t be loads and after they’ve done some of it, they will let them just talk and have a bit of a play and then carry on.

How does this ELSA get on with the students? She gets on with them really nicely, she always tries to make them happy.

What do they say to them? She greets them and then when she sees them around, she’ll always ask if they would like to see her.

How do they make the students feel? The students feel really happy and they feel that they are quite free with her.

With Other Adults
How does the ELSA get on with any other adults coming into the room? The ELSA gets on well with them as long as they are happy and if they are not happy, she’ll make them happier.

What do they say to the other adults? She just says... talks to them and makes them laugh and makes them happy.
To supplement the information presented above, I used word clouds to summarise the information provided by Adam, Annabel and Katie and to provide an overall visual impression of the non-ideal and ideal ELSA.

The words used most frequently in the non-ideal ELSA part of the task were ‘feel’, ‘person’, ‘paper’, ‘focus’, ‘paperwork’ and ‘supposed’. The negative qualities or behaviours ‘sad’, ‘strict’, ‘shouting’, ‘scared’, ‘grumpy’, ‘idiot’ and ‘demon’ were also used but less frequently. The word ‘happy’ was used seven times across the non-ideal ELSA drawing task. It was mainly used to describe that the non-ideal ELSA acted differently with adults than with children or in the opposite sense, such as ‘they don’t look happy’ or ‘they don’t want to make anyone happy’.

*Figure 34 - Visual impression of Adam, Annabel and Katie’s Non-Ideal ELSA drawing task*

The words ‘happy’, ‘bright’, ‘toys’, ‘feel’, ‘nice’, ‘make’, ‘can’, ‘always’, ‘fun’ and ‘good’ are emphasised as the YP described the qualities and relationship with their ideal ELSA.
3.44 Mrs Salmon

Mrs Salmon said that the non-ideal ELSA would not be very approachable and would be quite flustered. She said that they would be sat at a desk and that their phone was always ringing. She thought that the ELSA room would be almost empty and unwelcoming. Mrs Salmon described that the non-ideal ELSA would make the YP feel like they had done something wrong rather than enable them to open up (see figure 36).

In contrast, Mrs Salmon described the ideal ELSA as happy, approachable, funny, trusting, reassuring and someone who will help to find solutions. She said that the room would be calming and have sofas, beanbags, games, books, a kettle to make drinks and brightly coloured cups. Mrs Salmon reflected that the welcoming room and the qualities of the ELSA would help the YP to feel relaxed and to talk (see figure 37).
The ELSA
Isn't very approachable, probably not smiling, she has red cheeks, a bit flustered, a bit sort of like... a bit stretched, working hard, not enough time. I don't know why I'm drawing these arms like this... maybe because she's trying to reach out... ha ha... and she'll be sat at a desk. Uum and then obviously the student will sit here, which isn't ideal. She'll have the phone going... uum ringing all the time and she'd have her door here and there'll be students turning up frequently, so that I'd say... I haven't done very nice hair either... she hasn't got time to wash it ha ha.

The Bag
She would have a big brown briefcase, very large. Inside it would be notebooks, pencils, pens, mobile, manuals.

With Students? What kind of work are they doing? They would be doing worksheets, a bit of colouring, but not much.
How do they get on together? I'd say they talk, they get on, but it wouldn't be the right relationship.
What does she say to the students she's working with? Umm, things like what's going on, what's wrong, what's happening at home?
How does she make them feel? Not really wanting to talk much, like they have done something wrong rather than opening up and trying to confide and trust the person you're talking to.

The Room
It would be empty, just a desk, a door and a phone. And a chair for the student to sit on.
What is the worst thing in the room? I think the ELSA.
When you walk in, how does it make you feel? Not wanting to talk I'd say, not wanting to relax, talk, too busy, not a welcoming room at all.
If the room has rules, what would they be? Only speak when spoken to.

With other adults? Just working relationships, not really friendships.
How does she make the other adults feel? Not on edge, but not wanting to get to know them either.
The ELSA
This ideal ELSA has a very happy face, very approachable, smiley, nicely spoken, wanting to get to know her, to talk to her, she’s got a lovely room, sofas to sit on, kettle on the side so we can make hot chocolates if we want to, a few cups. The cups would be brightly coloured red, blue, yellow, nice colours. She wouldn’t be sat at a desk, she’ll be sat on the sofa where the students can join her too. She’s happy, approachable, funny, trusting, reassuring, someone you can definitely talk to and find solutions.

The Bag
She’s have a tiny little bag, a glitzy bag with not a lot in it actually cos all her work is left at work so she’s just have maybe a purse and a mobile and keys.

With Students?
Firstly, I think we’d be talking about how starting school is, how home life is, get to know each other, finding out about brothers and sisters; who lives at home. The first session would be all about getting to know each other.

How does she make them feel?
I think they’d feel relaxed because of the room and because of the ELSA and they’d want to talk.

How does the ELSA get on with other adults?
Very well, has lots of friends, goes out after school.

How does she make the other adults feel?
A good friend to have really.

The Room
There’s bean bags, there’s loads of fidget toys in a little drawer... there’s games and there’s books. Fidget spinners and fidget toys. Pictures on the wall, nice pictures... also there would be a wall where the students can decorate and show their feelings on the wall. If they wanted to paint or draw, they could do that with their emotions, their feelings, starting off with a face and they can spider diagram.

What is the most important thing in the ELSA room?
Somewhere you can relax and can talk and not feel on edge.

When you walk in, how does it make you feel?
Calming, we’d have scents, the colour scheme would be really nice, there’d be beanbags so somewhere you can sit and talk.

If the room has rules, what would they be?
Not sure we would have any rules actually as the way you come in and sit down, you’d feel at ease maybe not to have any rules.
I presented Mrs Salmon with her ideal and non-ideal ELSA drawings, positioned them at opposite poles of the scale and placed a blank horizontal line in the middle. Using the drawings at the extreme ends of the scale, Mrs Salmon was asked to rate herself as an ELSA now (8-8.5), before the training (6), after the training (9-9.5) and where she would like to be (10). Mrs Salmon chose to ascribe numerical values to her ratings as well as marking the points along the blank line. Mrs Salmon said that the training, working with the school’s other ELSA to develop resources and attending supervision have helped her to be the ELSA she is. She talked about the importance of finishing the ELSA room and reflected upon whether she could get to know the YP more before starting the six-week intervention. She also considered the difference in role of the primary school ELSA and the scheduling of ELSA sessions within the school day and week as she thought these would help her to move nearer to the ideal ELSA.
Figure 38 – Mrs Salmon’s Ideal ELSA scaling activity
Where do you rate yourself now?
I think I'd put myself around an 8, 81/2

Before the ELSA training?
I think I'd probably be around a 6

After the ELSA training?
I think I could put myself up to a 9, 91/2

Where would you like to be?
A 10!

How did you get to where you are now?
After the ELSA training, the course we went on and obviously putting together the booklet, which helps as a very good resource, working alongside Mrs Other ELSA, learning from her and Mrs Other ELSA learning from me and also our supervision sessions we've been having and talking to the other ELSAs from other schools, again resources, how they're feeling, what they are doing. Ummm, yes, very good sessions.

Where would the students you have just worked with rate you?
Around an 8

How could you move nearer to the ideal?
The room definitely, we've got to finish that and make it more welcoming.
I think, being more prepared for my first session, maybe getting to know the student a bit before we actually start and we could have more time.
Maybe make the sessions at the start of the day rather than sometimes towards the end of the day. As the day goes on, some students get a little tired. I'd also like to do my ELSAs at the start of the week as I find that if they are tired, they're not going to talk too much.

Where would the other ELSA in the school rate you?
I think... knowing how we work together, she would rate me as a 9

Where would your line manager rate you?
I think my new manager, from what she's heard and my old manager through knowing ELSA would both rate me as a 9-10.

What is the difference between your own rating and your line managers' ratings?
Maybe... because... we did talk round the junior school ELSA role and the secondary school ELSA role. We probably didn't do things like cooking, well, we haven't got the resources. We weren't doing anything around making things as much. And I know we did talk about that at the beginning and I thought... aww... I haven't got anything like... we do colouring, but not making things and so maybe that's why.
3.45 Mrs Gulliver

Mrs Gulliver described the non-ideal ELSA as someone angry, lacking empathy, judgemental and expressionless who would sit at a desk rather than interacting with a YP. She said that the room would not be particularly inviting and that it would be bare with too many rules displayed on the walls. She reported that the pupils would not want to be there and would probably rather be in lessons. Mrs Gulliver thought that the relationship between the ELSA and the YP would not develop as the YP would not be comfortable to share their feelings and there would be more of a focus on academic work, see figure 40.

Conversely, Mrs Gulliver drew a friendly, smiling, ideal ELSA (see figure 41) and said that this ELSA was welcoming, could listen to the YP and that there would not be any barriers in front of them. She described a light room with beanbags, stationery, games, fiddle toys and acknowledged that having a dedicated ELSA room was key to helping the YP feeling safe and being able to open up, although she noted that it is the qualities of the ELSA that make the most difference.

When discussing how the ideal ELSA would work with students, Mrs Gulliver misunderstood the question and initially described how she works with students.
The ELSA

Someone who is very angry or no expressions at all. Sitting in front of the desk so you feel that there’s a barrier there, maybe concentrating on the laptop rather than concentrating on the person... A person with not a lot of empathy, not very sympathetic towards a situation, not very open, not prepared to listen. They’ve already decided, it may be that they’ve read the information about this child and they’ve already made a decision about them, rather than be totally open and find out about the child themselves... They are probably making judgements without knowing the true picture.

The Bag

I think it would be more of your solid briefcase type of bag. I don’t think they’d be a lot of fun things in there. I think it would be very analytical, I think they’d be some surveys and too much paperwork which the kids really don’t like. Not enough fun things.

The Room

I think the room would be fairly bare, I don’t think there would be lots of colours, I don’t think there’d be pictures on the walls, I don’t think that it would look like an inviting room. I think they probably have notices on the wall, nothing to do with ELSA, rules and regulations, I think... you mustn’t do this... you mustn’t do that... which I think would be a barrier... too many school rules. I don’t think it’s the right place to have all those rules... your normal ones, so only speak when you are spoken to, that kind of thing. When you walk in a room like that, you feel I really don’t want to be here, so you would not feel I can sit down and talk to this person about my problems, because the empathy would not be oozing out... you’d probably be thinking why am I here? I don’t like this. I’d rather be in lessons.

The Students

I think they’d be doing more academic work, which is obviously not what it is about. I think they’d get them doing surveys of how they are feeling (which you need to do to a certain degree), but then I think they’d base it on more academic studies which a lot of kids do struggle with, it’s part of the reasons they come and see us... the stresses of dealing with classroom activities. I don’t think the young person would warm to them, so the relationship wouldn’t develop. I don’t think the YP would share their feelings of what’s worrying them and what’s bothering them.

I think they’d say things like, ‘well, you have to go to school, you’ve just got to get on with it’, ‘everyone’s got problems, I’ve got problems, so you’re not the only one’, but not pitched in a sympathetic way. I think they’d feel an awful lot worse than when they first went in there, they’d feel unsupported, they’d feel that maybe there was something wrong with them and I think it would also create a huge barrier if they then saw a nice ELSA... to break that down and then work with someone that wanted to work with the young person and wanted to help. I think they’d find it extremely difficult to engage after an experience like that.

With Other Adults

I would feel a bit anxious about going in and asking.... I think it would put people off from wanting to go in and have a conversation, most definitely.
The ELSA
Friendly, smiley, welcoming. No barriers in front of them... so as the person comes in they are directly in front of you... Just very welcoming... open. Not with the laptop directly in front of them. It’s important that you’ve got someone who is friendly and is prepared to help and is prepared to listen, that is the most important thing, sometimes the kids just needs someone to listen to them.

The Bag
More of an open bag and in the bag there would be some paperwork still, but more fun things, they’d be fun activities, some games in there, a few of the different workbooks which could be used at some point, maybe the ELSA book for reference to certain things. The bag is not all closed in, the briefcase one was very closed... and saying this is mine. The child can see the bag is open and there are fun things in there for them to do in there.

The Room
They’d definitely be some stationery, they’d be some posters on the wall, there’d be some games. Hopefully a room with windows, with lots of light in there would be good... it would be nice to have some beanbags, definitely bright coloured beanbags, so they can be a bit more comfortable and relaxed, some stress toys or things to fiddle with, some cubes, sand... they like the sand timers, just to make them feel relaxed. Things they can actually pick up and look at... so they don’t have to directly look at the ELSA when they don’t particularly know them, so they can feel a bit more...they can get to know the room as well as the person. I think the room is key, having a room you can go into, that they know where it is, they feel safe in there, feel comfortable, feel that they can open up.

It is the person that’s in there that is the most important. If there were rules they would be nice rules, to share the information, the rules are whatever is said within the room stays in the room, unless something is said that would worry me safeguarding-wise, trust – that we trust each other, which is very important. There wouldn’t be a whole list of rules, they’d be very simplistic.

With Students
They have a good relationship, in most cases, the kids... even if they are reluctant at first to come, they really want to. She makes it clear that it is confidential, that she is there to listen, that they are going to come up with the solutions to their problems but the ELSA will help them find those solutions which I think is important, rather than an adult saying this is what you have to do to change your life. Give them ideas, you could do this, you could do this but they have got to come up with what is best for them. I hope the ELSA makes them feel a lot better about themselves, I think it will help them get to know themselves better, by asking the right questions and suggesting different ways of looking at things and hopefully it would make them feel that there always is a solution to the problem, some are easier to find than others, but to have trust in people, that they are not alone, that they have people that will fight their corner and will help them.

With other adults
They get on really well, they have a chat about their own family lives. They’re relaxed, they are happy to come in a speak to the ELSA, they have a good relationship with all the staff.
I presented Mrs Gulliver with her ideal and non-ideal ELSA drawings, positioned them at opposite poles of the scale and placed a blank horizontal line in the middle. Using the drawings at the extreme ends of the scale, Mrs Gulliver was asked to rate herself as an ELSA now, before the training, after the training and where she would like to be marking the points along the blank line. Mrs Gulliver said that implementing the training, doing the role, gathering resources and speaking to colleagues has helped her to be the ELSA she is. She reflected upon the difficulties within her role: seeing too many pupils and not having enough thinking time or time to plan and commented that she would like to improve and update her resources as she thought these would help her to move nearer to the ideal ELSA.
Figure 42 – Mrs Gulliver’s Ideal ELSA scaling activity
Where would YP4 rate you?
I think she'd say that she likes me, that I listen to her, that we come up with solutions together, supportive and if things go wrong, I'll go and see people and try to problem solve for them and put things right and make them feel better about the situation.

What has made the difference, how have you got from where you were after training to where you are now?
It is then implementing what was learnt in the training. Loads and loads of new resources, new ideas, speaking to other people, just thinking I want to implement all these. Some were restricted because of budgets... then the roles changed a bit and I had to teach numeracy, my colleague had to teach literacy and we went away from it... just the way the school went... then they were totally back on board with it, so you felt more supported, there was a little bit of money here and there to buy a few bits of resources and things. Delivery-wise, I'm quite happy with how I deliver the ELSA.

Where you would like to be?
As good as possible.... Up here!

Where would the other ELSA at your school rate you?
Oh, I think she'd rate me about the same as YP4, that I'm good at listening. I hate anything that is not fair. So if I feel .... even if the kids have been a little bit cheeky, but if I think they are being discriminated against because of something that happened before, she knows I'd be straight on the case and very defensive of the children.

Where would your line manager rate you?
I think she'd put me further up... and say similar... that I always fight the cause and I get a little bit cross if I don't feel those kids are getting the support and help that they need. She knows I always want to give 110% and would always put myself out

Anything else you'd like to improve to get to that ideal point?
My biggest thing is that I see too many students and there's not enough time. Most days it's 2 per hour. Sometimes one leaves the room and the next one walks in, there's very little time to reflect and then plan ... thinking time. I make notes as I'm going along, I used to then type them up, but I haven't done that for a couple of years, it's impossible, so do have my rough notes, because I think, one of the worst things when you are meeting a student that you've not met before and you are asking them about their family situation and who do they live with, brothers and sisters and then you've seen them a second time and you haven't remembered that information, then they're not going to feel that you are getting to know them and they are going to feel upset that they have told you that and that you haven't remembered.

I think the big thing is... we would like to improve the workbooks, make them less wordy, make them more colour and drawing-based, where you can get something out of them, so you can get what you want to know without having to write lots of things down. Definitely the resources need to be improved, we both feel that. A few more posters and things on the wall.
3.5 Triangulation of Case Study Information for each Case (Dyad)

Thomas (2016, p.67) describes that ‘viewing from several points is better than viewing from one’ and calls for the researcher to ‘think small, but drill deep, using different methods and drilling from different directions’. As described previously, each case in this study is a dyad consisting of a YP and an ELSA (although Mrs Salmon was the ELSA for both Adam and Annabel). The following section triangulates the findings across each dyad.

3.51 Dyad 1 (Amy and Mrs Greenway)

Both Mrs Greenway and Amy commented on the relationship they were able to build. Amy described that she did not know what ELSA was at the beginning and that she was initially reluctant to engage with it. She said that Mrs Greenway helped her to understand her anger by giving her analogies and giving her strategies to take away. Mrs Greenway described the creative and practical activities she uses in ELSA sessions. Amy said that she appreciated being able to talk about her problems and be herself. She thought that the ELSA support had helped to reduce her anger although she commented that she’d probably always be a bit angry. She told me that she was sad when ELSA support ended and her word cloud highlighted words such as ‘helped’, ‘improved’ and ‘learnt’ following ELSA support. Mrs Greenway also described that her school tended to use her to support the children with behavioural difficulties and that this meant it was often hard to build relationships and get to the point of being able to make a difference within the 6 weeks.

3.52 Dyad 2 (Adam and Mrs Salmon)

Mrs Salmon’s school has a clear and structured approach to supporting children’s emotional needs and helps the new year 7’s transition into the school.
Within her school, ELSA is seen as a short-term early intervention and many children are signposted on to further support afterwards. The ELSAs in the school have produced a booklet for ELSA support over the six weeks and so most children get similar support. Adam knew Mrs Salmon before his sessions began and had had ELSA support in his junior school. Adam described Mrs Salmon as friendly, comforting and he appreciated being able to talk to her and to trust her. They both valued the relationship they were able to build, with Adam being reassured that Mrs Salmon was there for him. He recorded in his diary that ELSA support made him feel happy, trusting, interested and ok and he reported that he felt happier at home, that he could trust more and had developed in confidence after his sessions. Trust appeared to be important to Adam and was particularly highlighted in the word cloud post-intervention. Adam said that he felt a bit sad when ELSA support ended but that it felt good to know that he could still speak to Mrs Salmon and that she would check in on him. Both Adam and Mrs Salmon described the Ideal ELSA as happy and said that the qualities of the ELSA would help YP to feel happier, more relaxed and able to talk.

3.53 Dyad 3 (Annabel and Mrs Salmon)
Annabel had had ELSA support at junior school. She recorded in her diary after each session that ELSA support made her feel happy and trusting and she said at the end of the intervention that ELSA support had helped her to build her confidence, friendships and to feel less alone. She described that the relationship had grown as she had got to know Mrs Salmon and Mrs Salmon reported that Annabel found it easier to talk to her as their relationship developed. Her word cloud post-intervention highlighted positive words such as ‘helped’, ‘talk’, ‘feelings’ and ‘learnt’. She described Mrs Salmon as kind and friendly and she was reassured by having a trusted adult to talk to and someone
that she could go to. Annabel was sad when the sessions ended as she said she would have liked more support; she described the sessions as where she could be herself and where she could show her feelings. Mrs Salmon commented that she loves ELSA and the students and loves seeing how it helps them; she said that seeing Annabel on the playground with friends made her happy. Both Mrs Salmon and Annabel described their ideal ELSA as fun and said that the ELSA room should be comfortable and bright.

3.54 Dyad 4 (Katie and Mrs Gulliver)

Mrs Gulliver has a range of roles within her school and was already known to Katie through her safeguarding role. Katie had also had support from Mrs Gulliver within a nurture group and had experienced ELSA support at junior school. Mrs Gulliver took a very flexible approach to ELSA support using colouring and calming techniques and was adaptable to supporting new presenting needs. Within her school, Mrs Gulliver told me that ELSA support often takes longer than the six weeks as she is frequently called away to support other school events; as such Katie’s sessions were not able to take place on consecutive weeks. Both Katie and Mrs Gulliver mentioned this. Katie said that she would have preferred to meet on consecutive weeks and Mrs Gulliver said that this caused her some frustration. She also told me that she is not given planning time. Katie told me that ELSA support made her feel happy and trusting and she described Mrs Gulliver as kind and friendly. Katie’s diary showed that she felt happy after every ELSA session and her ratings about her feelings about school moved from a seven to a nine over the course of her ELSA support. Katie’s word cloud post-intervention highlighted more positive words such as ‘happier’, ‘confident’ ‘friends’, ‘talk’, ‘help’ and ‘know’. Mrs Gulliver described Katie as a pleasure to work with and spoke about how their
relationship had grown over time. Katie said that she was happier and whilst she would like the ELSA intervention to carry on, she was reassured that she could seek out Mrs Gulliver if needed. Both Katie and Mrs Gulliver drew a friendly, smiling ideal ELSA and described the importance of the availability of stationery and toys in the ELSA room.

3.6 Cross-Case Analysis

Thomas (2016, p.172) emphasises the importance of cross-case analysis, or the ‘comparison between the cases’. Themes from across all four dyads show the importance of the ELSA relationship, that it develops over time and that the YP appreciate the ELSA having time for them. All four of the YP described their ELSA as kind and friendly and emphasise the importance of trust in the relationship. These qualities were also frequently mentioned in the ideal ELSA task. Similarly, there were consistent views across the dyads regarding the impact of the intervention. All of the YP talked about how ELSA support had helped them; it had lessened their anger, given them confidence, helped them to worry less and they felt happier. Likewise the ELSAs commented that the YP always seem to come out with something, described their YP as ‘one of their ticks’ and said that they left more empowered or better equipped to deal with difficult feelings. All four dyads discussed the endings with all four YP feeling sad that their ELSA support was ending but being reassured that they could still see their ELSA. The ELSAs reinforced the importance of checking in or that the YP could come and find them after ELSA had finished. Findings from all of the word clouds showed that the post-intervention interviews with the YP consisted of more positive words.
The barriers within the school environment or within school processes appeared to be individual to each school context. Mrs Gulliver discussed not receiving planning time and being called away to support other children or cover other school events, meaning that she was unable to offer sessions on consecutive weeks. Mrs Greenway talked about receiving inappropriate referrals and having long waiting lists. Mrs Salmon described not having a finished or dedicated ELSA room, with other children needing time out and being sent to the wellbeing room when she was in the middle of an ELSA session. There were apparent individual differences in each ELSA’s style and preferred way of working. Mrs Greenway preferred practical activities and using analogies, Mrs Gulliver used a lot of calming colouring activities and Mrs Salmon used a pre-prepared ELSA workbook.

Unique to the dyads containing Mrs Salmon was the conception of ELSA as an early intervention and the use of a pre-prepared ELSA booklet containing six sessions of general emotional literacy programme. Most children receiving ELSA at this school receive the same or a similar programme with some then being referred on to more specific anger or anxiety support from a school counsellor or other provider.

Whilst there are many similarities between dyads, there are less differences. More differences were seen in practice between the focus group participants. This may be due to the guidelines that exist around ELSA practice and that the ELSAs who self-selected to be part of the study were following these more closely.
3.7 Constraints and Limitations

Some constraints and limitations have been considered as part of the findings and discussion section above. They are also discussed in greater depth in part four, along with the strengths of the research. The qualitative nature of this case-study has meant that generalisations are not able to be made. However, I do not consider this to be a limitation as the research was not designed to be representative and instead has provided a rich and deep exploration of the YP’s experience of the ELSA intervention.

In order to facilitate this rich and deep exploration, I was only able to explore the experiences of four dyads (each containing one ELSA and one secondary-aged YP) in one local authority. Due to the ‘real-world’ context of research in schools and difficulties with the recruitment of participants, two of these dyads contained the same ELSA. In addition, one diary was not returned. It was felt that the YP’s feelings about the intervention were expressed to some degree in her interviews and that due to the depth of information gained, this incomplete measure had less of an impact.

It has been discussed that the most enthusiastic ELSAs, or those who knew they were delivering the ELSA intervention according to practice guidelines self-selected to be interviewed. However, the focus group captured discussion regarding a wider range of practice by different ELSAs in different schools. Knowing the ELSAs who were interviewed and who took part in the focus group was felt to be a strength as it was not felt that the ELSAs said what they thought I wanted to hear.
3.8 Summary of Findings

In-depth data gained from thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews and focus group, mapping of individual journeys, visual impressions gained from the word clouds, drawings, diaries and the ideal ELSA task have been presented above. This information has allowed for a rich and deep exploration of the nature and quality of the YP’s experience of the intervention and to answer the research questions below.

- Research Question 1 - How does the relationship with the individual ELSA and the qualities of the ELSA impact upon the YP’s experience of the ELSA intervention?

YP reported that the qualities of their ELSA and the relationship they have with them are important to their experience of the journey through the intervention. In particular, YP highlighted that the ELSAs supported them by listening, understanding and explaining. They also appreciated their ELSA always being there and having time for them. YP and ELSAs both discussed that the relationship develops and becomes stronger over the course of the intervention and that this relationship makes the YP feel happier, able to trust, less alone and more secure. The ELSAs talked about the unique nature of the role, how rewarding they found ELSA support and the investment they make in it. The YP talked about how their ELSA’s qualities and their relationship enable them to meet their targets and to take useful strategies away with them.

- Research Question – 2 How does the YP experience the therapeutic journey of the ELSA intervention? How is the beginning and ending of the intervention experienced?
ELSAs talked at length about setting up ELSA and how the ending is managed. Likewise, YP shared their experiences of beginning and ending ELSA support. Several of the YP had received ELSA support in their primary schools and so had experience of the intervention, despite there being some discussion about the differences in the role in primary and secondary settings. At the beginning of the intervention, YP and ELSAs spoke about their hopes. The YP who had received ELSA support before emphasised the importance of having someone there for them, but the YP who had not had ELSA support before experienced some confusion and said that she was initially reluctant to engage. The ELSAs also discussed practical logistics such as making sure the referrals they received were appropriate and that they received the information they needed so that they could set clear targets and knew what to work towards; thereby offering the best experience to the YP.

In terms of the end of the intervention, the YP expressed sadness that their sessions were ending but were reassured that they could seek out their ELSA or that she would continue to check-in on them. For the ELSAs, there were difficulties in ending the intervention; for some it never seemed to end with sessions ongoing over the course of a YP’s time in school. For others, there was sadness at cutting ties or the sense that more time would be beneficial for the pupil. One ELSA in particular experienced pressure to end the support so that more YP could be supported and described a sense of ‘churning’ the pupils out or being on a ‘merry-go-round’.

- Research Question 3 - What are the barriers to programme fidelity?

Focus group discussion in particular revealed practice, which does not follow the guidelines for ELSA support. This included informal ELSA sessions for YP not
meant to be receiving ELSA support, ‘ELSA chats’ on the way to other sessions, adhoc sessions with ongoing targets or sessions where there was no clear plan or set targets.

The ELSAs that volunteered to be interviewed were following the guidelines more closely and were generally offering interventions of around six sessions. One ELSA discussed the nature of ELSA in her school as being part of an early intervention strategy and that if YP needed more they would be referred on for further support. Another ELSA described that new issues had emerged during her sessions and that she would offer another six-week intervention to focus on the new area.

Barriers to fidelity in the school systems, the school environment and also relating to the YP were discussed. ELSAs outlined what they would like more help with to ensure greater fidelity. Mainly, this concerned where and when to end an ELSA intervention and how to demonstrate impact. One of the ELSAs in the focus group was newly trained and felt overwhelmed by the resources and the lack of prescribed structure; she said that she would benefit from more structure whilst she was getting established in her role.

In addition, themes about the qualitative perceptions of impact have been highlighted by the thematic analysis and included the strategies that YP had learnt and that they perceived had made a difference to them.
4 Conclusion of the Empirical Report

The empirical paper has built upon the findings of the literature review and provided a clear rationale and justification for the research. It has outlined the research questions, detailed the methodology, research design, methods and considered ethical issues. The methods and steps taken to analyse the data have been presented and the findings reported and discussed.

This empirical study has explored in detail the YP’s experience of the ELSA intervention and specifically, the importance of the ELSA-YP relationship and the nature of the therapeutic journey. It has detailed how YP can experience the beginning and ending of the intervention and how the relationship impacts upon the journey. It has also presented different perceptions of this journey as experienced by different YP with different ELSAs as well as considered the barriers to fidelity. In doing so, resources and guidance have been presented to support ELSAs in their work (see appendices).

The findings have been interpreted and discussed in relation to the literature reviewed and the wider theoretical context. Alternative or unexpected findings have been explored and the constraints and limitations discussed.
Part 4 – Critical Appraisal

1 Introduction to the Critical Appraisal

As part of the critical appraisal, this section will outline the epistemological position taken and provide an overview of the methodological decisions taken in order to answer the research questions. These decisions regarding the design, sample, measures and analysis are critically appraised against available alternatives. Reflections will be made regarding the strengths and limitations of the study and any unexpected ethical considerations arising. Implications for the understanding and knowledge of psychology, professional practice and the distinct contribution of the research will be discussed.
2 Epistemological Position and Theoretical Position

‘The theory of knowledge is known as epistemology; it is the area of philosophy devoted to describing how we come to know things or believe them to be true or real’ (Barker et al., 2002, p.11). Our epistemological stance, or the way that we achieve knowledge, leads us to engage in psychological research in different ways and will influence the decisions we make about our research design, which according to Barker et al. (2002, p.7) requires psychological flexibility and open-mindedness. I kept a reflective journal to capture some of these decisions and thoughts.

Within epistemology, there are three principle positions – constructionism, objectivism and subjectivism. Constructionism questions whether knowledge is ‘an objective reflection of reality’ (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.30) and argues that knowledge is constructed through language and meaning. ‘Social constructionists emphasise the social construction of reality and see the research setting as a specialised form of social interaction. They argue that researchers are not detached observers, but actively play a part in what they are studying and how they make sense of it. Thus, the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data involve processes of active construction’ (Barker et al., 2002, p.12).

As a psychologist, I believe in and use social constructionist approaches in my everyday work and so adopted this epistemological position for my research. This was a useful position as it allowed me to explore the constructs the YP and ELSAs had formed about their journey through the intervention and their relationship. As such, I was able to explore individual YP’s and ELSA’s experiences and perceptions, whilst accounting for my own constructions.
3 Rationale for the Research Design, Measures of Analysis and Critical Appraisal of Alternatives

3.1 Research Design

As described in part 3, it was determined that a qualitative research methodology using an in-depth multiple case study design would be the most appropriate method to gain the rich and deep information which would allow me to examine the experiences of young people of the ELSA intervention and answer the research questions stated above.

In choosing to use a case study approach, I considered the advantages and disadvantages of case studies and Thomas’s (2016, p.76) assertion that the ‘quality of a case study depends less on ideas of sample, validity and reliability and more on the conception, construction and conduct of the study’. As the aim was not to collect quantifiable data, the research questions did not seek to ascertain the impact or effectiveness of the intervention and I accepted that I would be unable to generalise the findings to a wider population, I considered that the advantages of the approach for my research questions, outweighed any perceived shortcomings.

The theoretical propositions (Yin, 2014) which emerged from the literature review, were considered during the research design stage and shaped the subsequent data collection. At the outset of the research I proposed that the case study would show that the relationship YP have with their ELSA can be seen throughout the intervention and can make a difference to what they take away from it. I also proposed that the research would show ELSA practice that does not always follow practice guidance and how ELSA support should be time-limited rather than ongoing. I was able to bear these propositions in mind.
during the data collection stage, but as I used an inductive strategy grounded in the data to analyse the data, I was not driven by these propositions and I was open to the emergence of alternative theories.

The findings have backed up the proposition relating to the ELSA-YP relationship and has indeed shown that the relationship gets stronger and can be maintained for the whole of the YP’s time at the school. Specifically the study found that this relationship contributes to YP feeling better, more secure and less alone.

Findings also emerged regarding the length of the intervention and showed that at times, ELSA support can be ongoing if the ELSAs think that the YP need more time (especially if new issues have emerged or they frequently get called away for other school events), if they think that they should carry on or because the YP wants to carry on. A rival explanation that emerged was that ELSAs can feel pressure from their school leadership team to end the intervention so that they can support more YP.

Despite not setting out to explore the impact of the intervention, themes were extracted from the data relating to the strategies YP had learnt during their sessions and how they felt their ELSA support had made a difference to them. The findings also showed ELSA practice that can be at conflict with how it was designed to be implemented and the difficulties ELSAs can encounter in setting up the intervention or managing the ending have been emphasised. Barriers within the school environment, school processes or relating to the YP have also been shown to impact upon the programme fidelity.

This methodology and the chosen methods (semi-structured interviews, drawings, diaries and focus group) produced the rich and deep information
about the nature and quality of the YP’s experience and relationship that I intended and enabled me to view the same phenomenon (ELSA support) according to the individual’s constructs of their experience. A critical reflection of the chosen methods is provided below.

3.2 Measures

Reflections on the use of the measures are outlined below.

3.21 Semi-Structured Interviews

The recruitment of participants for the semi-structured interviews was more challenging and time-consuming than anticipated. Twenty trained ELSAs from eleven schools (who were members of supervision groups I facilitate) were approached over fifteen months to take part and, eventually, three ELSAs and four YP took part. Difficulties with recruitment were encountered with schools citing ELSA or school workload, pre-existing commitments within the school, staffing pressures, unsuitability of young people (too complex, the wrong age or perceived as unlikely to agree to take part) or timing (having to focus on year seven transition during the summer and autumn terms or not being ready to take on a new pupil as they had not finished ELSA interventions with existing students). One ELSA agreed to take part but the pupil she had identified did not give their consent and she was unable to find another YP within the timeframe. Several ELSAs left their role or school or were going on maternity leave during this period and so were unable to take part.

The recruitment period also coincided with the local authority delivering ‘statutory only’ work and EPs being in schools less often, introducing charges for ELSA supervision and a private provider offering ELSA supervision in direct competition. Introducing charges for supervision resulted in five ELSAs leaving
their supervision group and their two schools not fulfilling the requirements of the ELSA role (accessing regular supervision). An extension to ethical approval was requested due to the additional time needed for recruitment and data collection.

The timing and duration of the ELSA intervention seemed to act as a barrier for the ELSAs in agreeing to take part. This was especially apparent if they were not keeping to the fidelity of the programme and were not planning short term interventions with a clear ending point. For example, a number of ELSAs were not planning to start with a new YP as their previous ELSA interventions were still ongoing and they were unable to predict when they might end. In addition, in some cases, it was a challenge to go to the school to complete the initial interview in the time between the ELSA knowing that they were starting work with a new YP and actually starting the work. In my pilot interview with Amy and Mrs Greenway, the intervention had already started, however in all the others, I was able to complete the pre-intervention interview before the intervention started. Likewise, Katie’s post intervention interview took place at the end of her initial five-week intervention, but this was not actually the end as new issues had emerged over the course of the intervention and Mrs Gulliver decided to extend the programme and to move the focus onto friendships.

I was mindful of the current pressures in schools relating to budgets, staffing and workload and was careful not to add to the ELSA’s workload. I was able to give the ELSAs the information about the study by email but then follow this up with discussions in supervision to emphasise that taking part in the study would not add to their workload. I realised in these discussions that some of them had assumed that taking part would be a more onerous task than it actually was.
As noted in the empirical study, I hypothesised that the ELSAs and schools that agreed to take part were more likely to be using their ELSA appropriately with fidelity to the programme, for example giving their ELSA time for planning and reflection and allowing them to undertake planned, proactive work. Likewise, the ELSAs were more likely to be delivering short-term and well-planned interventions with a clear ending point. Facilitating a focus group during a planned supervision session allowed me to hear a wider range of practice and views.

I also reflected upon whether knowing the ELSAs made a difference. I expected participant recruitment would be easier since I knew the ELSAs and was their supervisor, but this did not seem to be the case.

Fortunately, apart from one YP not wanting to take part, gaining consent was not a difficulty.

As one of the factors ELSAs used to select the young people for the research was their willingness and potential to engage, the sample may have been more positive than a randomly selected sample.

A YP and an ELSA agreed to take part in the pilot interviews, which led to minor changes to the questions and drawing tasks for the other interviews. The interviews themselves went well, with each lasting approximately 45 minutes. The YP were able to consider and answer all the questions, in my judgement, honestly and thoughtfully.

Due to the timing of the interviews in the school year and the short-term nature of the intervention, it was possible to complete post-intervention interviews before any ELSAs or YP left the school.
3.22 Diaries

Three completed diaries were received from the YP; however, Mrs Greenway did not return Amy’s and she has since left her post as an ELSA at Oxford Road School.

The diaries are a useful visual way of seeing how the YP were feeling from week to week after their ELSA support. A range of emotions were recorded including feeling happy, trusting, interested, ok, tired and sadness at the ending. The YP were able to select a range of emotions across the course of the intervention, except Katie who said she felt ‘happy’ after every session.

3.23 Word Clouds

Word clouds were produced from the verbal data from the YP’s interviews and ideal ELSA drawing task. The content of the pre-intervention interview was also compared with the content of the post intervention interview to see if there were any interesting differences.

The word clouds were found to present a clear visual impression of the data and led to some reflections on the differences between the pre and post intervention time periods. For Amy, the frequency of the word ‘anger’ was visibly less post intervention, for Adam the importance of trust was clearly highlighted and for Anabel and Katie the words in their post-intervention interview were generally more positive than the words in their pre-intervention interview. Similarly, the visual impression of the ideal ELSA drawing task was more positive than the visual impression of the non-ideal ELSA.

I reflected that the visual impressions created added to the understanding of YP’s experience of the ELSA intervention. I did not consider that this technique
was used ‘indiscriminately’, solely as ‘an ‘emotional experience’ and was more than just ‘aesthetically pleasing’ (Felix et al., 2018, p.657-8).

I was concerned that the word clouds might not show enough of a difference between the pre and post interviews, but once I removed the unnecessary words or fillers, the differences became more apparent.

The decision was taken not to produce word clouds from the ELSA interviews or focus group as the focus was primarily on exploring the YP’s experience of the intervention, not the ELSA’s experience.

3.24 Drawing
In the pre and post pilot interview, the YP was asked to draw a picture of her ELSA. This did not give me the rich and deep information I was looking for and seemed to be more focused on the ELSA’s appearance.

Following the pilot, the task was clarified so that the other YP were asked to draw a picture of themselves with their ELSA doing an ELSA activity at the post-ELSA intervention interview. Due to difficulties interpreting drawings, the drawings are presented in part 3 with quotes from the interviews, which relate to the YP’s perceptions of their ELSA’s qualities and their relationship with them.

3.25 PCP Activities
Following the pilot study, when I found that the drawing task did not add deep and rich information, I added an ‘Ideal Self’ drawing task to the remaining interviews. This fitted well with the social constructionist approach I was taking, as the structure of the task encouraged participants to think about their constructs of the ideal and non-ideal ELSA and explored their perceptions of each ELSA and their relationships.
The drawing was carried out by the young people at their initial interview and by the ELSAs at their final interview and provided substantial information about the YP’s and ELSA’s constructs about their role, relationships, and wider factors, such as the ELSA room or what might be in the ELSA’s bag. As it was added in after the pilot, I did not do this activity with Amy or Mrs Greenway. In addition, as Mrs Salmon worked with two pupils, she only completed the activity once. Although they completed the task prior to their current ELSA involvement, all three of the YP who completed the activity had been told what their ELSA involvement might entail and had received ELSA support at junior school.

The ELSAs also completed a scaling activity after the drawings, where they had to rate themselves on a line between the ideal ELSA and the non-ideal ELSA. All the ELSAs engaged well with this and were able to explore their own constructs around their role as well as the perceptions of others.

3.26 Focus Group

I was pleased that I had chosen to facilitate a focus group in addition to the interviews with individual ELSAs. It was helpful to be able to expand and explore ideas and potential themes discussed in the interview, to hear a wider range of views and to include ELSAs with a range of practice and experiences. This was especially useful as less ELSAs were interviewed than originally planned and especially as one ELSA was part of two ELSA-YP dyads.

In addition, and as already noted, the ELSAs that had volunteered to be interviewed were more likely to be offering ELSA support in the way it was intended. By facilitating the focus group, it was possible to hear more from the ELSAs who were not following guidelines as closely (for example in relation to
the duration of ELSA support, the setting of targets or demonstrating impact) and were asking for help with managing these aspects.

The ELSAs in the focus group were established members of a supervision group I facilitate. This was beneficial as it meant that the group were already familiar with each other and me. The group was easy to manage as there were established ground rules and knowing the characteristics of the ELSAs in the group already, I was able to ensure that all group members had an opportunity to speak and be heard. It also meant that I could follow up any questions they raised in subsequent sessions. I was aware that this familiarity with me could lead the ELSAs to say what they thought I would want to hear. However, given my knowledge of them, their contexts and the issues they had previously bought to supervision, I was able to ascertain that they did not do this.

3.3 Analysis

As this was a qualitative study and I transcribed my own interviews, I found that this led to immersion in and familiarity with the data.

The Thematic Analysis stage of the research was enjoyable. I found that Braun and Clarke (2013) had laid out the process for this very clearly and I liked having a structure to follow.

As I went through the data finding initial codes, it became clear that there were too many codes (see appendix 41). Friese, (2014) describes this as a 'code swamp'. I had to go through and group similar ones and reduce repetition several times to get out of the swamp.

The time needed for coding and analysis took longer than anticipated due to my unfamiliarity with Atlas.ti. I found that it was not intuitive, and much time was
spent reading how to do Thematic Analysis using Atlas.ti or watching instructional videos rather than doing it.

I used an inductive approach to data analysis and found that the themes in the analysis were generally in line with the themes in my literature review. As research is a subjective process to which researchers bring their 'own histories, values, assumptions, perspectives, politics and mannerisms' (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.36), I was aware of the potential bias that I could inadvertently bring to the process. I was open to and indeed searched for rival themes, for example the impact of the ELSA intervention was unexpected but came through as a theme.

As a result of the themes found in the data, I modified my research questions. According to Thomas (2016, p.29), ‘your question does not need to be fixed in concrete right from the beginning… it proceeds from a prima facie question to one that is a more refined, final question…’ and which ‘will nearly always change in the course of your enquiry’.

Based on the themes that developed from the data, I reworded RQ one and two, replacing ELSA ‘skills and experience’ with ELSA ‘qualities’ and emphasised that I would be looking at the YP’s experience of the relationship and the journey. In addition, I decided to merge the three similar yet separate questions in RQ3 into one question and to leave out RQ four. RQ4 asked ‘is the experience of the journey different depending on the reason that the YP has for seeing the ELSA?’. I decided that it would not be possible to answer this question as all the YP were referred for different reasons and there are many factors that would make each YP’s journey unique, e.g. the YP’s needs, purpose
and focus of the ELSA support, and the ELSA’s qualities. In addition, the methods I had chosen to use would not allow for generalisations to be made.

I also considered whether to add anything on the impact of the intervention as some themes developed about ELSA support ‘making a difference’. However, as it was not a major theme, I had not set out to investigate the impact and had not used appropriate methods for investigating this, I decided against it.

The original questions were:

- Research Question 1 - How does the relationship with the individual ELSA and the skills / experience of the ELSA impact upon the journey?
- Research Question 2 - What is a therapeutic journey? Does contracting beginnings and managing loss / endings impact upon the experience?
- Research Question 3 - Do ELSAs follow the guidelines about beginning and ending ELSA support? How does this impact on the journey for the YP? What are the barriers to fidelity?
- Research Question 4 - Is the experience of the journey different depending on the reason that the YP has for seeing the ELSA?

The revised questions are:

- Research Question 1 - How does the relationship with the individual ELSA and the qualities of the ELSA impact upon the YP’s experience of the ELSA intervention?
- Research Question 2 - How does the YP experience the therapeutic journey of the ELSA intervention? How is the beginning and ending of the intervention experienced?
- Research Question 3 - What are the barriers to programme fidelity?
3.4 Alternative Methods, Design or Analysis

Whilst I have provided a rationale for the design, methods and analysis selected and utilised, I also appraised possible alternative approaches to the research.

Although I elected to include participants in year 7-8 due to their level of understanding and ability to express their opinions, it leaves a question about whether the relationship or experience of the journey is the same for older or younger children. Will younger children, in particular, experience the relationship differently and thus will the journey be experienced differently? Three out of my four participants had experienced ELSA support at primary school, which also raises a question about how much their prior experiences or expectations influenced their secondary school experience.

Whilst I interviewed my participants prior to starting the ELSA intervention and once it had finished, I have wondered whether interviewing the participants mid-intervention would add further rich and deep information, or whether the diaries were enough to capture this.

Whilst Braun and Clarke (2013, p.36) describe that ‘subjectivity is positively valued within the research paradigm’ and note that factors relating to the researcher’s past, values, assumptions and perspectives can influence the study findings, I took time to reflect upon the codes I was finding and the knowledge being produced and my influence within this. Recording my reflections about the process in a research journal helped me to be reflexive and to address potential subjectivity.
4 **Strengths and Limitations of the Research**

4.1 **Strengths**

As far as I am aware, my research is the first to explore the pupil’s perception of their relationship with the ELSA and their journey through the ELSA intervention. Equally, as far as I know, this research is unique in interviewing young people before and after the ELSA intervention. In addition, by collating information from the pupil diaries throughout the intervention, it has provided further insight into the pupil’s experience of the whole journey. The case study methodology chosen and the interviews, diaries, word clouds, drawings and maps have contributed to a rich and deep understanding of YP’s experiences of the journey through the intervention and the ELSA-YP relationship. By also interviewing the ELSAs and completing the PCP drawing tasks with them, this has also contributed understanding of the ELSAs’ perceptions of the experience for the pupils.

4.2 **Limitations**

The data I have gathered is qualitative and as such relates to the perceptions of a small number of secondary aged pupils and ELSAs working in a small number of schools within one LA. Whilst the sample was not designed to be representative of gender, ethnicity, special educational needs or social class or to produce generalisable results, further research could explore whether the same results could be found in a different local authority, with different ages of young people or with a larger sample.

In addition to the small sample, one ELSA was the ELSA for two YP, meaning that I only interviewed three ELSAs and four YP. With fewer practical constraints, my intention was to recruit more dyads of ELSAs and YP.
It could be hypothesised that as the ELSAs self-selected to take part, only the most enthusiastic ELSAs who knew that they were following the guidelines for beginning and ending the ELSA intervention volunteered to be interviewed, and those that knew that their ELSA interventions tended to be ‘never-ending’ did not volunteer. This may have impacted upon the findings, although including more ELSAs with a range of practice through the focus group went some way to representing the views of at least some of the ELSAs who did not volunteer for the main study.

A possible limitation could be that the ELSA participants were known to the researcher. This may have led to the ELSAs wanting to please and saying what they thought I wanted to hear. However, I decided that the risk of this occurring was minimal compared to the advantage to recruitment of knowing the participants.

Whilst there were difficulties recruiting participants, the iterative and dynamic nature of the qualitative research design meant that I could begin the transcription and data analysis whilst still collecting the data.

The changes made between the pilot study and main study and not getting all the diaries returned meant that there are some incomplete measures. However, the depth of data gathered means that this has less of an impact.

I was able to show the participants the transcript of their first interview when I went back to interview them on the second occasion. I would have liked to have been able to return to the school to show them their final interview transcript, but this was not possible due to time constraints. I reflected that by showing them the one transcript and checking it for accuracy with them, that this built their trust that the subsequent interview would also be recorded accurately.
These limitations and difficulties encountered in conducting the research serve to highlight the difficulties of real-world research in the setting of a busy secondary school. It indicates that no matter how worthwhile the research and careful the planning, practical circumstances can come to dictate the conduct of a project.
Reflections on Unanticipated Ethical Dilemmas

As an educational psychologist, my own ethical principles include inclusion, respect, transparency, integrity and being evidence-based. As such, I continually considered my own ethical position and how this related to my study. In conducting research with young people, I anticipated their potential vulnerabilities and took steps to maximise the benefits to taking part and reduce any risks.

Throughout the project, I used a research notebook to record ethical issues as they arose and the decisions I took in response. The BPS ethics guidance emphasises that ‘psychologists are likely to need to make decisions in difficult, changing and unclear situations’ and that the principles in the code of ethics are ‘taken into account in the process of making decisions, together with the needs of the client and the individual circumstances of the case’ (The British Psychological Society, 2009, p.4). However, I noted that as an ethical EP, much of this problem-solving was unconscious.

One of the unanticipated ethical dilemmas I did face was during the recruitment of the adult participants and the nature of our ethical responsibilities to each other. In particular, several participants promised to take part in my research but then were difficult to contact or put barriers in the way, for example saying, ‘I can’t do it this term, maybe next term’. Initially, I waited for them to contact me or I waited for a more convenient time for them, but then found that new barriers to participation were raised. In the course of the research, I reflected upon the reciprocal nature of the relationship with the adult participants. I judged that principally my primary responsibility was to them as a potential participant, but I wondered whether they should have any moral responsibility towards me as
they had initially agreed to take part and then did not follow this up. However, ‘research (and common sense) have clearly demonstrated that what people think they ought to do for moral reasons is not necessarily what they decide to do’ (Rest, 1982, p.33).

Linked to this was a dilemma regarding how long I should wait for someone to get back in touch and whether or how much I should ‘chase’ them as this did not seem ethically sound. In considering this, I reflected upon the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics and the need to respect participants’ autonomy, self-determination and to recognise their ‘agency and capacity’ (The British Psychological Society, 2014, p.9).

I also considered how to reward and recognise my participants for their contributions to my research. I gave all my participants a ‘thank you’ card following the last interview and plan to write to the young people, their parents and ELSAs with a poster summarising the key findings of the study. Due to the difficulties with the recruitment of the adult participants, I offered them a professional incentive (a place at a professional development event) in order to encourage their participation and to thank them for their involvement in the study. Matutina (2009, p.39) discusses the use of monetary compensation and describes that whilst ‘effort should be made to compensate the participant… for any inconveniences, mental or physical incurred during the research participation’, the researcher needs to avoid monetary reimbursement as incentives as these might be perceived as coercion. In offering this incentive, I reflected upon the time demands I was placing upon the participants within the context of a busy secondary school. I also took care to ensure that the professional incentive would benefit the participants in their role (and therefore
indirectly benefit the young people), would not cause harm to the young people and could not be interpreted in any way as exploitation or coercion.

During the focus group discussion, some ELSAs raised questions or shared examples of difficulties they were experiencing, for example they asked for help to know when to end the intervention or how to demonstrate impact. Whilst these questions or requests for help were not specifically anticipated, how to answer these questions has been reflected upon. In order to discharge my responsibility as a researcher, the issues raised will be discussed in a subsequent supervision session with the focus group members and specific written guidance will be provided to the ELSAs.

I reflected upon the issues of fidelity that were raised, that the ELSAs have training and receive guidelines about delivering the intervention in a certain way, but then some ELSAs find that they are delivering it another way and they are not following the guidelines given. These ELSAs are not held to account for these decisions, but yet this ‘adaptability may also impact negatively on the effectiveness of the intervention delivered’ (Pickering et al., 2019, p.20). Furthermore, I considered that this lack of fidelity may be due to the understanding school leaders have of the ELSA role or the nature of the systems within which the ELSAs work. It is hoped that the guidance I have produced for Headteachers will help to further this understanding and allow for greater programme fidelity.
6 Implications for the Understanding and Knowledge of the Topic in Psychology

The research has contributed to the growing evidence base for the ELSA intervention.

The research has provided an in-depth understanding of the experience of the ELSA intervention from the pupil’s perspective. It has led to further guidance for ELSAs who are training on how young people experience the intervention. It has also led to the production of guidance and resources for ELSAs and school leaders about the importance of the ELSA-YP relationship and the best ways to manage the beginnings and endings of the ELSA intervention.

Specifically, this study has added to the theory and knowledge about the importance of the therapeutic relationship to the YP’s experience of the ELSA intervention. As with attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969), the study has highlighted the therapeutic nature of the ELSA-child relationship and the importance of the key adult to support the mental health and emotional wellbeing of vulnerable children who may have experienced traumatic events or felt unsafe or uncertain in their early relationships. In this study YP reported that the qualities of their ELSA and the relationship with the ELSA are important to their experience of the journey through the intervention. This concurs with research highlighting the ELSA relationship as a ‘fundamental’ component of the intervention (Begley, 2015).

ELSAs said that the ELSA relationship is unique; they talked about how rewarding they find it and how much they invest of themselves in it. Nicholson-Roberts (2019) also found that ELSAs use their unique qualities to build attuned and genuine relationships with pupils. YP in my study stated that they
appreciated the ELSAs being there and having time for them and that the ELSAs supported them by listening, understanding and explaining. They said that the ELSA’s qualities and the relationship they have with them helps them meet their targets and take useful strategies away with them. This is important as the greater the therapeutic relationship, the more likely therapeutic change is to occur (Kazdin et al., 2005).

Ball (2014) found that the ELSA-YP relationship develops and becomes stronger over time. My research produced a similar finding, with YP commenting that the relationship with their ELSA makes them feel happier, more able to trust and less alone. The ELSAs also commented that the relationship could last the whole time the YP is at their school and so I would suggest that there is a need to consider the individual needs of YP when deciding the length of the intervention. It will be important to consider those YP who may take longer to build a relationship or those for whom the ending may feel like another loss and ensure that if the intervention is longer than prescribed that clear targets are set. It is also important to highlight that how the beginning of the intervention is set up and how the ending is managed will have an impact upon the relationship and therefore on the experience of the YP.
7 Implications for Professional Practice

Educational psychologists are ideally placed to use the findings to improve practice through disseminating them through training and supervision.

The resultant guidance and resources (see below and appendices 7-26) could be added to supplement the ELSA training locally and nationally. In addition, the materials could be disseminated locally at ELSA conferences, through the ELSA newsletter, and nationally through the ELSA network website, journal articles or through conference presentations. They could also be provided to EP supervisors for dissemination to current ELSAs in supervision.

The research has led to the production of guidance and resources for ELSAs and their line managers in schools. In particular it has highlighted the following key points and recommendations:

- The importance of preparing young people to begin an ELSA intervention, giving them information about the intervention and contracting involvement. Providing examples of information sheets, pre-intervention letters of introduction, invitations and contracts.
- The need for improved liaison and joint planning at transition between primary and secondary school ELSAs so that each is aware of the differences in roles and expectations and can support YP to have realistic expectations.
- The need for guidance on how best to manage the end of the intervention. Recommendations on the length of the intervention, when to be flexible and continue, when to refer on to another agency or for other support, how to reduce or end sessions sensitively with awareness that the ending can be experienced as a loss for the young person and the
ELSA themselves. Provide models of post-therapeutic documents and separation cards.

- The need for guidance on the importance of the ELSA-YP relationship, including the features of a successful relationship.

- The need for insights into how the ELSA intervention is experienced by YP.

- The need for guidance on involving parents.

- The need to support ELSAs to be able to demonstrate the impact of the intervention.

- The importance of school staff providing explicit feedback to ELSAs on the impact of their work in order to maintain their self-efficacy.

Consideration will need to be given to when and where this best fits within the training model. Currently the training is offered over five days in some local authorities or six days in others. One option locally is to consider extending the training model to six days to include this extra important information.

In addition to the implications and recommendations for practice, consideration should also be given to how the ELSA intervention will sit alongside the new Mental Health Support teams (MHSTs) and the Education Mental Health Practitioner (EMHP) role. The MHSTs are very new and not in all areas yet and so it remains to be seen how the roles will complement each other. MHSTs will build on support already in place rather than replacing it and so the teams would need to work alongside existing school-based ELSA support. Both ELSAs and EMHPs would support YP with mild to moderate mental health problems, would develop a therapeutic relationship and would hope to be seen as part of a whole-school approach to mental health support, coordinated by a senior mental
health lead. Given its health background, the MHST Manual (NHS England, 2019) describes mental health difficulties in terms of disorders and diagnoses. However, the focus of the ELSA training is more holistic; looking at the child in the context of their environment and covering a wide range of emotional or social difficulties.

I am aware that some ELSAs are applying for EMHP roles as they see this as valuable additional training and as expanding their remit to work across settings and health contexts. This may have an impact upon the availability of trained ELSAs to work in schools and a cost implication for schools to replace and train new ELSAs.

Each EMHP will support between 10 to 20 schools and colleges, whereas the ELSAs will be based in one school. By having their own ELSA or ELSAs, the school will be able to direct support according to their own needs and capacity. When the ELSA programme was being developed in Southampton, ELSAs were initially peripatetic and travelled to schools to see YP who had been referred by schools for support. As the schools valued the support so highly, many decided that they preferred to have their own school-based ELSA.

Whilst having their own ELSA or ELSAs available will be an advantage for schools, the schools pay for their own ELSAs to be trained and to receive supervision. As far as I’m aware there will not be a financial implication for accessing EMHP support, but that the support will be shared with other settings and it is not yet known how responsive to need the EMHPs will be able to be. It is also not yet clear who will supervise EMHPs and whether there will be a cost implication for this.
Schools will also have their own established relationships and mechanisms for making referrals, information sharing and feeding back to other staff or parents. This will be an initial advantage over EMHPs who will have to establish their own relationships and systems.

Given the reported rise in mental health difficulties amongst children and the difficulties accessing local authority and health services, I would suggest that EMHPs and ELSAs could work alongside each other and that there will be enough work for both, although who does what, when and how will need to be coordinated as part of a whole-school approach.
8 Implications for Future Research

This study highlights the difficulties that can be encountered when conducting research in a real-life setting such as a school.

It has also drawn attention to some perceived differences between the role of the primary school ELSA and the role of the secondary school ELSA. Future research could focus on exploring the experiences of younger children of the ELSA intervention and the relationship they form.

The research has also raised questions regarding the prerequisite skills of ELSAs, what attracts them to the role, what their entry level skills are and what qualities are desirable to develop an effective ELSA-YP relationship. Similarly, it would be interesting to further explore the qualities of the ‘unideal’ ELSA and if such ELSAs exist, the reasons for this.

It would also be useful to explore the wider impact of relationships in schools, particularly the importance of the YP-teacher relationship.

Future research could consider the involvement of parents at the beginning and end of the ELSA intervention, specifically their involvement in the use of contracts, and how pre-intervention information and their child’s progress after the intervention is shared with them.

The use of contracts with YP in other school-based interventions could also be another future area of study.
9 What is the Distinct Contribution?

My research has filled a gap in the evidence-base and recommended further research. It has explored how YP experience the intervention, it has enabled them to give their views, respected their voices and has used their perspectives in order to inform practice.

It has provided improvements to the training and supervision of ELSAs, it has led to the production of specific guidance on the importance of the relationship, setting up the intervention and managing the ending of the intervention and resources have been developed or collected to support these crucial stages of the intervention.
10 Self Appraisal

- Personal Reflections on the research process

I kept a reflective diary throughout the research process to record my reflections, ideas, questions and thoughts. I found this a useful task as it helped me to reflect as well as to remember the rationale for decisions I made.

As a wife, mother to two young children and Area Senior Educational Psychologist, balancing course work with work and family life has been a challenge throughout. I have had to consider real life events such as my own and family member’s illnesses, family commitments and the needs of my children with the requirements of the course. Working as an Area Senior EP, tasks such as organising a large ELSA conference took up energy and thinking time whilst I was analysing my data.

I found that working part time for three days a week helped and enabled me to work on my research on the other two days a week, but the time in between school drop offs and pickups were short and even shorter factoring in appointments, concerts, sports events and so on. I also found that I was only able to work on my research in term-time and whereas other students used the school holidays to good effect, I was unable to.

As organisational skills are a strength of mine, I found that I responded well to the structure provided on the DEdPsy course and this supported me to plan out my work every week. I also benefited from plotting out the key points at each stage of my research on a one-page template as this helped me to maintain a coherent narrative and to keep in mind a sense of the whole thesis.
Due to difficulties with recruitment and the time taken to interview my participants, it was possible to start my transcription and thematic analysis whilst still conducting interviews. Whilst this spread out my workload and helped to keep it manageable, I found this difficult, preferring one stage to be completed before beginning another.

Another major difficulty for me was the frequent stopping and starting, which at times led to slower progress as it took time to remember where I was up to and to ‘get back into it’. Towards the end, I wanted to disappear into a ‘thesis bubble’ and become absorbed in my work, but this was impossible with my family life and work, and I found that I was frequently stopping and starting.

I underestimated the time needed and difficulties in recruiting participants and found that the thematic analysis took more time than I expected. In particular, it took time to get to know Atlas.ti. For me, the software was not intuitive. I read articles, a book and watched several YouTube videos and I thought that Atlas.ti could have done a lot more for me, but I did not have enough time to invest in finding out about its full functionality. However, Atlas.ti was helpful for going through themes multiple times and I am sure was more thorough or reliable than conducting the task manually.

I was pleased that the themes that I extracted from the data largely matched the themes in the literature, that I was able to extract such rich and deep information and that I have been able to contribute to the knowledge base. I am now keen to disseminate the findings.
11 Overall Concluding Remarks

The literature review highlighted the importance of whole-school approaches and specifically targeted therapeutic interventions to meet children’s SMEH needs. In doing this, it emphasised the centrality of the therapeutic relationship to the outcome of any intervention and the importance of the therapeutic journey (where interventions are carefully set up with the rationale, roles and type of work clearly stated and the end of the intervention is carefully managed and understood as a potential loss for both parties). The literature review also described the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant programme and outlined the small evidence base for the intervention.

My empirical study, therefore set out to explore the YP’s experience of the ELSA intervention; the importance of the ELSA-YP relationship and the nature of the therapeutic journey; how the beginning and end of the intervention are experienced. These experiences were elicited using a multiple case study design which consisted of semi-structured interviews, a focus group, diaries, drawing tasks using PCP approaches and word clouds.

In-depth data gained from thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews and focus group, mapping of individual journeys, visual impressions gained from the word clouds, drawings, diaries and the ideal ELSA task have been presented. This rich and deep information has allowed for a greater understanding of the nature and quality of the YP’s experience of the intervention.

In particular, the YP reported that the qualities of their ELSAs and the relationship they develop are important to their experience of the intervention
and help them to meet their targets. They said that the relationship grew stronger over time and made them feel happier, more trusting and less alone. YP also appreciated their ELSA being available for them.

The YP who had not had ELSA support before described experiencing confusion which led to an initial reluctance to engage. YP who had had ELSA support in their primary school reported differences in the secondary school ELSA experience.

At the end of the intervention, YP expressed sadness that their sessions were ending but were reassured that they could seek out their ELSA or that they would check-in on them. ELSAs described difficulties ending the intervention; for some it never seemed to end with the sessions continuing the whole time the pupil was at the school. Other ELSAs experienced a sadness when cutting ties or because they thought that more time would be beneficial for the pupil.

Barriers to fidelity in the school systems, school environment and relating to the YP were discussed, with some ELSAs discussing practice which does not follow guidelines for ELSA support. This included informal ELSA sessions for YP not meant to be receiving ELSA support, ELSA ‘chats’, ‘adhoc’ sessions, ongoing targets or interventions without a clear plan or targets. ELSAs also asked for further guidance on how and when to end an intervention and how to demonstrate impact.

As part of the critical appraisal, the epistemological position taken, the research design, measures and analysis chosen, unanticipated ethical dilemmas and the strengths and limitations of the study were reflected upon and alternatives considered.
In addition to strengthening the understanding of the YP’s experience of ELSA support, the research has led to the production of practice guidance for ELSAs and school staff regarding the importance of the ELSA-YP relationship, managing the beginning and ending of the intervention and ensuring fidelity to the programme. This information will be added to the training materials, discussed in supervision and disseminated locally as well as more widely through the ELSA network and will support EPs in supporting ELSAs. This research has also contributed to the limited research base regarding the ELSA intervention; particularly furthering the understanding of the YP’s perspective.
References


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Williams, J. (2014) *Developing the ideal school drawing technique to gather the views of children with an autism spectrum disorder*. University College London.


### Appendices

#### Appendix 1 - Search Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Topic</th>
<th>The child’s experience of the therapeutic journey and relationships during ELSA support or other interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Key concepts   | Mental health and wellbeing  
|                | Emotional literacy in schools  
|                | Therapeutic Relationships and interactions, children and teaching assistants  
|                | Therapeutic journeys:  
|                | • contracting and preparing for beginnings  
|                | • loss and managing endings  
|                | The importance of seeking children’s views  
|                | Using Personal Construct Psychology to gather this insight |
| Synonyms, Abbreviations, acronyms, variant spelling etc | • Emotional literacy, emotional intelligence, Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA), social and emotional learning (SEL), emotional wellbeing, mental health, Social emotional and mental health (SMEH), Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing (MHEW)  
| | • Therapeutic relationships, relationships, counselling, therapeutic alliance  
| | • Journey, therapeutic journey, beginnings, endings  
| | • Therapeutic encounters  
| | • Contracting beginnings, managing endings  
| | • Loss, attachment  
| | • Interventions, fidelity of interventions, implementation science  
| | • Children, students, pupils, young people, YP  
| | • Children’s views, voice of the child  
| | • Teaching Assistants, TAs, Emotional Literacy Support Assistants, ELSAs, Learning Support Assistants, LSAs, keyworkers  
| | • Schools, secondary schools, classrooms |
| Truncations and Wildcards | • Therap* (therapeutic / therapy)  
| Separate search for each concept, Combine with ‘or’ | • Emotional Literacy or Social and Emotional Learning or Mental Health  
| | • Therapeutic alliance or therapeutic relationship  
| | • Teaching Assistants or Support Assistants |
| Combine the search result for each concept using ‘and’ | • Emotional Literacy and TAs / children / schools  
| | • Therapeutic alliance and TAs / children / schools  
| | • Therapeutic relationships and TAs/ children/ schools  
| | • Contracting beginnings and TAs / children  
| | • Managing endings and TAs / children |
| Limits | • In English  
| | • After 2000  
| | • Based on human studies  
| | • Full texts, All Journals |
| Exclusions | • Adults  
| | • Un-therapeutic relationships  
| | • Lack of relevance |
## Appendix 2 - Inclusion Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inclusion Criteria</th>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>As the review seeks to explore children’s views and experiences and the child-adult relationship, adults receiving therapy were excluded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and adults in school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults delivering therapy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Settings</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational and allied settings with vulnerable children: social work, child protection, play therapy, speech therapy, music therapy and counselling</td>
<td>As the review seeks to explore the experience of therapeutic relationships and journeys with children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intervention</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapy with children. Therapeutic relationships and therapeutic journeys with children</td>
<td>As the review seeks to explore children’s experience of therapeutic relationships and journeys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paper details</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Published in English</td>
<td>For the purposes of critical review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full texts</td>
<td>For the purposes of critical review, book reviews or abstracts were excluded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles published in peer reviewed journals preferred</td>
<td>To ensure high quality. Papers not peer reviewed, e.g. government reports, unpublished theses and service evaluations have been included but appraised according to quality frameworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Published after 2000</td>
<td>For the purpose of relevance, more recent articles were selected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3 – Quality Indicators Used to Assign WoE Ratings

- To assign WoE A ratings (methodological quality), the following checklists were appraised:

Table 35 - Guidelines for Critical Review in Quantitative Studies (adapted from Law et al., 1998)

For a rating of 3, the study has fully met the criteria below. For a rating of 2, the study has mostly met the criteria and for a rating of 1 the study has only partially met the criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Purpose</th>
<th>Clearly stated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>Background literature reviewed and justification of the need for study described</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Design</td>
<td>Design described and appropriate to the question. Any biases specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>Described in detail, sample size justified. Ethics procedures described</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Frequency of outcome measures described, e.g. pre / post/ follow up. Measures used detailed. Reliability and validity addressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>Described in enough detail to be replicated (focus, who delivered, how often, setting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Results reported in terms of statistical significance. Appropriate methods of analysis described and importance discussed. Any drop outs reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>Clearly stated conclusions appropriate to methods and results. Implications, limitations and biases described</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 36 - Credibility Measures within Qualitative Research (Brantlinger et al., 2005)

For a rating of 3, the study has fully met the criteria below. For a rating of 2, the study has mostly met the criteria and for a rating of 1 the study has only partially met the criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Triangulation (of data, investigators, theory or methodology)</th>
<th>Convergence searched for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disconfirming evidence</td>
<td>Inconsistent evidence described</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher reflexivity</td>
<td>Own assumptions, beliefs, values and biases described</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member checks</td>
<td>Participants reviewed and checked interview transcriptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative work</td>
<td>Multiple researchers concurring about conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External auditors</td>
<td>Examining inferences are logical and grounded in findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer debriefing</td>
<td>Providing critical feedback on descriptions, analyses and interpretations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit trail</td>
<td>Of interview dates, times, names etc showing that sufficient time was spent to obtain the results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prolonged field engagement</td>
<td>Repeated observations, multiple in-depth interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thick, detailed description</td>
<td>Sufficient quotes and field note descriptions to provide evidence for interpretations and conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Particularizability</td>
<td>Thick description, so that transferability to own situations can be determined</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 37 – Quality Indicators within Qualitative Research (Adapted from Brantlinger et al., 2005)

For a rating of 3, the study has fully met the criteria below. For a rating of 2, the study has mostly met the criteria and for a rating of 1 the study has only partially met the criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview Studies</td>
<td>Appropriate participants selected, reasonable interview questions, adequate mechanisms for recording and transcribing are used, participants are represented sensitively in the report, measures to ensure confidentiality are in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Studies</td>
<td>Appropriate setting +/-or people are selected, sufficient time spent in the field, researcher fits into the site (accepted, respected, unobtrusive), research has a minimal impact upon the setting, field notes systematically collected, measures to ensure confidentiality are in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document Analysis</td>
<td>Meaningful documents use and their relevance established, documents obtained and stored carefully, documents sufficiently described and cited, confidentiality ensured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>Results are stored and coded in a systematic and meaningful way, rationale provided for what was (and was not) included in the report, methods to establish trustworthiness and credibility are clear, reflections about personal position are provided, conclusions substantiated with quotes and evidence, connections made with relevant research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• To assign WoE B ratings (relevance of methodology), the following typology of evidence was appraised:

Table 38 – Typology of Evidence (Petticrew & Roberts, 2003)

This is a review specific judgement about the appropriateness of each article for answering the review questions; whether the method is fit for purpose. For a rating of 3, the research design and methods in the study were appropriate to answer the review questions (process questions; how and what). For a rating of 2, studies were mostly appropriate to answer the review questions. For a rating of 1, the studies were only partially appropriate for answering the review questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Qualitative research</th>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Case-control studies</th>
<th>Cohort studies</th>
<th>RCTs</th>
<th>Quasi-experimental studies</th>
<th>Non experimental evaluations</th>
<th>Systematic reviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process of service delivery</td>
<td></td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salience</td>
<td></td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td></td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptability</td>
<td></td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriateness</td>
<td></td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with the service</td>
<td></td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• To assign WoE C ratings (relevance of focus), the following factors were reviewed in relation to my review questions:

Table 39 – Relevance to my Review Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Mental health support in schools</th>
<th>Importance of the therapeutic relationship</th>
<th>Importance of the therapeutic journey (beginnings and endings)</th>
<th>Eliciting children’s views of their experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>In schools</td>
<td>In therapeutic settings</td>
<td>ELSA support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Adults providing therapeutic support</td>
<td>ELSAs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

264
NB - articles relating to the use of methods (case studies, PCP, thematic analysis etc) were not appraised.
Appendix 4 - Flow Diagram of Study Selection

Adapted from the PRISMA diagram (Brunton and Thomas, 2012)

Total number of papers found through searching electronic databases = 783

Additional articles found by manual searches = 23

Abstrac\ts and titles screened = 806

Excluded papers = 697

Potential includes = 109

Outside of dates = 11

Relevance = 519

No full text/ unable to locate = 103

Duplicates/ Repetitious = 64

Unable to locate = 5

Full documents screened = 104

Excluded papers = 51

Relevance = 50

Not in English = 1

Included in mapping the field = 53

Included in mapping the field = 53
Appendix 5 – Mapping the Field: a summary of studies included in the literature review

Key information from the studies reviewed was mapped using the headings below. Gough’s Weight of Evidence Framework (2007) was used to critique all studies and articles for methodological quality (WoE A), relevance of methodology (WoE B) and relevance of focus to the research questions (WoE C). WoE A ratings were assigned to quantitative studies using the criteria developed by Law et al. (1998) and to qualitative studies using credibility measures and quality indicators (Brantlinger et al., 2005). Petticrew and Roberts’ (2003) typologies of methodological appropriateness were used to assign WoE B ratings and WoE C ratings were assigned according to the relevance of the topic, context and sample to my research. WoE D ratings are an overall judgement of the three dimensions.

Social and Emotional Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of paper</th>
<th>Study type</th>
<th>Geographical distribution</th>
<th>Age of participants</th>
<th>Other characteristics of participants</th>
<th>Interviewer investigating</th>
<th>Context of intervention</th>
<th>Outcomes, variables measured</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Effect sizes / Limitations and Reviewer Judgement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Scientific Base Linking Social and Emotional Learning to School Success</td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Not determined</td>
<td>Not determined</td>
<td>Zins et al. (2007)</td>
<td>Social and Emotional Learning in schools</td>
<td>Reflections on literature reviewed and recommendations for schools provided</td>
<td>Emotions can facilitate or hamper learning. SEL plays a critical role in improving children’s academic outcomes</td>
<td>Literature review WoE A - 1 WoE B - 1 WoE C - 2 WoE D – 1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with ‘Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning’ (SEAL): associations with school ethos, pupil social experiences, attendance, and attainment</td>
<td>Review of implementation of SEAL Mixed methods</td>
<td>South of England</td>
<td>2242 pupils in 29 schools completed measures of social experiences and school ethos.</td>
<td>28 primary and 21 secondary schools</td>
<td>Banerjee, Weare and Farr (2014)</td>
<td>Social and Emotional Learning in schools</td>
<td>Semi-structured observations and interviews to review the implementation of SEAL Online pupil surveys – school ethos+social experience Attendance /attainment data. Thematic Analysis.</td>
<td>Role of school ethos in systematically connecting whole-school practices relating to SEAL with key indicators of school success</td>
<td>Data collected at 1 time period. Difficulties measuring programme fidelity. WoE A - 2 WoE B - 2 WoE C - 1 WoE D – 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building a case for whole-child, whole-school wellbeing in challenging contexts</td>
<td>Review and discussion paper</td>
<td>Not determined</td>
<td>Not determined</td>
<td>Not determined</td>
<td>Roffey (2016)</td>
<td>Social and Emotional Learning in schools</td>
<td>Discussion and implications</td>
<td>Builds a case for actively promoting protective factors when behaviour is challenging so that school experiences do not mirror or embed negative life experiences for pupils</td>
<td>WoE D – 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ASPIRE principles and pedagogy for the implementation of social and emotional learning and the development of whole-school wellbeing</td>
<td>Discussion paper</td>
<td>UK/Australia</td>
<td>Not determined</td>
<td>Not determined</td>
<td>Roffey (2017)</td>
<td>Social and Emotional Learning in schools</td>
<td>Discussion of research used to develop the ASPIRE principles</td>
<td>ASPIRE principles help students and teachers feel safe, engaged and positive about SEL</td>
<td>More research needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of paper</td>
<td>Study type</td>
<td>Geographic distribution</td>
<td>Age of participants</td>
<td>Other characteristics of participants</td>
<td>Interviewer investigating</td>
<td>Context of intervention</td>
<td>Outcomes, variables measured</td>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>Effect sizes / Limitations and Reviewer Judgement</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Qualitative Exploration of Therapeutic Relationships from the Perspective of 6 Children Receiving Speech-Language Therapy</td>
<td>Qualitative Exploratory IPA</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>6 children aged 5-12 years</td>
<td>Mono-lingual, received SALT for at least 6 weeks prior to interview. 2 females, 4 males.</td>
<td>Fourie et al. (2011)</td>
<td>Speech and Language Therapy</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews Child friendly interviews using arts, crafts, games, playdough, colouring, open ended questions</td>
<td>IPA themes – these of power, safe space, fun, trust, routines, understanding of role and functions, physical characteristics</td>
<td>Exploratory. Not all children were able to make explicit the various aspects of the goals, tasks and bonds of therapy. WoE A - 3 WoE B - 3 WoE C - 3 WoE D – 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Professional’s Influence Within the Client System: exploring Counter-Transference and Adult Attachment Within the Therapeutic Relationships with Children Experiencing Abuse and Their Caregivers</td>
<td>Reflective with personal example from own practice</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Not determined</td>
<td>Not determined</td>
<td>Lowe, (2016)</td>
<td>Attachment and counter-transference in social work</td>
<td>Own reflections and discussion in relation to literature</td>
<td>What the therapist brings to the therapeutic relationship is as relevant as what the child / carers bring</td>
<td>Reflections and implications WoE A - 1 WoE B - 1 WoE C - 2 WoE D – 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Title</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>First Author &amp; Year</td>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meta-analysis of therapeutic relationship variables in youth and family therapy</td>
<td>Meta-Analysis of 49 studies</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Not determined</td>
<td>Not determined</td>
<td>Karver et al. (2006)</td>
<td>Youth and Family Therapy</td>
<td>Meta-analysis of outcomes for YP were counsellor interpersonal skills, therapist direct influence, YP willingness to participate and parent willingness to participate. 25% studies not peer reviewed or published. Process measures based on memory or at the same time as outcome measures. WoE A – 2  WoE B – 3  WoE C – 2  WoE D – 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The alliance in child and adolescent psychotherapy</td>
<td>Meta-Analysis of 16 studies</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1306 participants: 208 children, 395 adolescents, 55 youths and 648 parents</td>
<td>Shirk, et al. (2011)</td>
<td>Psychotherapy</td>
<td>Meta-analysis</td>
<td>Consistency with the adult literature with a weighted mean correlation of .22 between alliance and outcome. Contribution of the alliance to outcomes tends to be evaluated in isolation. WoE A – 2  WoE B – 3  WoE C – 2  WoE D – 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Therapeutic Alliance in Cognitive-Behavioural Treatment of Children Referred for Oppositional, Aggressive and Anti-Social Behaviour</td>
<td>Quantitative Experimentional</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>185 children aged 3-14 years</td>
<td>Kazdin, et al. (2005)</td>
<td>CBT</td>
<td>Pre and post measures</td>
<td>Therapeutic Alliance Scale for Children Working Alliance Inventory Treatment Improvement Scale Treatment Evaluation Inventory</td>
<td>Greater alliance = greater therapeutic change</td>
<td>More boys. Not generalisable. Symptom change may come before the emergence of a positive alliance WoE A - 2 WoE B - 2 WoE C – 1 WoE D – 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He comes to me to talk about things’: supporting pupils experiencing social and emotional behavioural difficulties – a focus on interpersonal relationships</td>
<td>Evaluative case study and action research</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>69 pupils, parents, support group leaders and class teachers</td>
<td>Not determined</td>
<td>Support Groups in schools</td>
<td>Interviews and questionnaires</td>
<td>Interpersonal relationships lie at the heart of the school community. Key adults play a crucial role in determining outcomes for YP</td>
<td>Can’t generalise findings WoE A - 2 WoE B - 2 WoE C – 2 WoE D – 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Review of Psychotherapy Outcome Research: consideration for school-based mental health providers</td>
<td>Meta-analysis</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Not determined</td>
<td>Not determined</td>
<td>Psychotherapy</td>
<td>Meta-analysis</td>
<td>Psychotherapy effective for children and adults. Schools are perfect locations to site services. The development of the therapeutic alliance is more important for children than for adults</td>
<td>Lack of standards for meta analyses – effect size calculations are variable. Does not include diverse populations or settings WoE A - 1 WoE B - 2 WoE C – 1 WoE D – 1.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapist Alliance-Building Behaviour Within a CBT Treatment for Anxiety in Youth</td>
<td>Experimental Quantitative</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>56 children aged 7-13 years</td>
<td>Mean age 9.53, 34 males, 22 females. 52 Caucasian, principle diagnosis of generalised anxiety (27), social phobia (18) or separation anxiety (11)</td>
<td>Creed and Kendall, (2005)</td>
<td>16 sessions of a manualised CBT intervention</td>
<td>Anxiety Disorder Interview Schedule for Children and Parents. Child and Therapist Perception of the Therapeutic Alliance. Therapist Alliance-Building Behaviour Scale</td>
<td>Specific therapist behaviours identified that were predictive of a therapeutic alliance and contributed to the quality of the alliance</td>
<td>Restricted range of child reports. Generalisability of results beyond CBT? WoE A - 2 WoE B - 2 WoE C – 1 WoE D – 1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Therapeutic Journey, including beginnings and endings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of paper</th>
<th>Study type</th>
<th>Geographic distribution</th>
<th>Age of participants</th>
<th>Other characteristics of participants</th>
<th>Interviewer investigating</th>
<th>Context of intervention</th>
<th>Outcomes, variables measured</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Effect sizes / Limitations and Reviewer Judgement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Long-term Therapeutic Journey with an Asian “Parachute Kid”</strong></td>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>22 years</td>
<td>Parachute child, from Taiwan. Sent alone to the USA when he was 10 years old</td>
<td>Mok, (2015)</td>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>6 years of therapy, beginning, middle and end</td>
<td>Investment in the therapeutic relationship. Identification with client</td>
<td>Not generalisable as a case study. Based on an adult WoE A - 2 WoE B - 2 WoE C - 2 WoE D – 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship-based social work – how do endings impact upon the client</strong></td>
<td>Literature review and reflections on own practice</td>
<td>Not identified</td>
<td>Not identified</td>
<td>Not identified</td>
<td>Huntley, (2002)</td>
<td>Social work</td>
<td>Own reflections and discussion in relation to literature</td>
<td>Endings impact upon vulnerable children and can reactivate previous traumas, becoming a new trauma</td>
<td>Literature review WoE A - 1 WoE B - 1 WoE C – 2 WoE D – 1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reviewing and Ending Intervention: Achieving the Best Possible Outcomes for Children</strong></td>
<td>Book Chapter Literature review and reflections on own practice</td>
<td>Not identified</td>
<td>Not identified</td>
<td>Not identified</td>
<td>Rose (2012)</td>
<td>Safeguarding and Child Protection</td>
<td>Own reflections and discussion in relation to literature</td>
<td>Adults need to be aware of implications of transition and loss for vulnerable children. Endings can be an opportunity to mark achievements</td>
<td>Literature review WoE A - 1 WoE B - 1 WoE C – 2 WoE D – 1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trauma of parting: endings of music therapy with children with ASD</td>
<td>Exploratory</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Not identified</td>
<td>ASD</td>
<td>Kim, (2014)</td>
<td>Music Therapy Children with ASD</td>
<td>Clinical vignettes produced to aid the understanding of endings</td>
<td>Difficulties with change are exacerbated if the child has a strong bond with the therapist yet does not understand endings and does not have the capacity for emotional self-regulation</td>
<td>Exploratory WoE A - 1 WoE B - 1 WoE C – 2 WoE D – 1.5</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Termination as a therapeutic intervention when treating children who have experienced multiple losses</td>
<td>Literature review, description of a case and reflections on own practice</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Therapy with traumatised children aged 0-5</td>
<td>Not identified</td>
<td>Many, (2009)</td>
<td>Therapy</td>
<td>Own reflections and discussion in relation to literature</td>
<td>Getting the ending right is a unique opportunity to provide a new, more positive experience of loss</td>
<td>Further qualitative research is recommended WoE A - 1 WoE B - 1 WoE C – 2 WoE D – 1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeworking: Negotiating the Psychological Contract</td>
<td>Qualitative case study</td>
<td>Lancaster, UK</td>
<td>13 female home workers, 2 managers, 6 supervisory staff, 12 office-based employees</td>
<td>Home workers: all female, 11 full-time, 2 part-time</td>
<td>Collins, Cartwright and Hislop, (2013)</td>
<td>Employmen t, Use of psychological contract</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews Template analysis</td>
<td>2 key themes – temporal flexibility and fairness Importance of meeting needs of both parties</td>
<td>Study of adults, in one organisation, may not generalise to children / other settings WoE A - 2 WoE B - 2 WoE C – 1 WoE D – 1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Meta-Analysis of single-case Research on Behaviour Contracts: Effects on Behavioural and Academic Outcomes Among children and Youth</td>
<td>Meta-analysis of single-case research</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>58 children aged 5-21</td>
<td>41 male, 17 female. Only 5 studies reported ethnicity</td>
<td>Bowman-Perrott et al., (2015)</td>
<td>Behaviour contracts in ABA</td>
<td>18 studies analysed Outcomes examined for 58 children aged 5-21</td>
<td>Overall moderate effect of the use of behaviour contracts to decrease problem behaviour and increase appropriate behaviour. Effect size .57</td>
<td>Many studies reviewed are dated. As so few studies available quality standards were not part of the inclusion criteria WoE A - 1 WoE B - 1 WoE C – 1 WoE D – 1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Delivery of Therapeutic Interventions, Findings from 4 Sites</td>
<td>Site visits to follow up on survey results (interviews and focus groups)</td>
<td>Manchester, UK</td>
<td>4 EP services</td>
<td>PEPs, EPs, stakeholder s, commission ers and multi-agency partners</td>
<td>Atkinson et al. (2013)</td>
<td>Role of EPs in delivering therapeutic intervention s to CYP</td>
<td>Thematic analysis</td>
<td>Contracting can promote the delivery of therapeutic interventions</td>
<td>Services that were visited had already identified that they were providing effective therapeutic interventions WoE A - 2 WoE B - 2 WoE C – 1 WoE D – 1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships and Learning: A Review and Investigation of Narrative coherence in looked after children in primary school</td>
<td>Experimental Quantitative</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>17 LAC in foster care (ages 4-19) and a control group of 17 children not LAC or in foster care</td>
<td>All in mainstream education</td>
<td>Greig et al. (2008)</td>
<td>Story stems – Computerised MacArthur Story Stem Battery</td>
<td>Verbal measures – British Picture Vocabulary Scale and Renfrew Bus Story</td>
<td>Children in foster care outperformed by those not in foster care on measures of narrative coherence, intentionality and avoidance (significant differences)</td>
<td>Attachment quality of relationships linked to cognitive skill development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Eliciting Young People’s Views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of paper</th>
<th>Study type</th>
<th>Geographic distribution</th>
<th>Age of participants</th>
<th>Other characteristics of participants</th>
<th>Interviewer investigating</th>
<th>Context of intervention</th>
<th>Outcomes, variables measured</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Effect sizes / Limitations and Reviewer Judgement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hearing the unheard: Children’s constructions of their Nurture Group experiences</td>
<td>Exploratory Qualitative</td>
<td>A primary school in Wales</td>
<td>8 children (7-11 years old)</td>
<td>2 girls, 6 boys. 6 attending the NG and 2 who had recently reintegrated back into their mainstream classroom</td>
<td>Griffiths, et al. (2014)</td>
<td>Nurture Groups</td>
<td>Focus Group and thematic analysis. Child centred activities – the election of a toy mascot, paired discussions and posy-it activities</td>
<td>Emphasised the insight children have into their experiences and their ability to express what works for them and why</td>
<td>Small sample, single NG, individual constructs elicited - lack of generalisability WoE A - 2 WoE B - 2 WoE C - 2 WoE D – 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researching into some primary school children’s views about school: using PCP in practice with children on the special needs register</td>
<td>Case Study Qualitative</td>
<td>Somerset, UK</td>
<td>13 junior school pupils from one school</td>
<td>With SEN</td>
<td>Maxwell, (2006)</td>
<td>Use of PCP in schools</td>
<td>Drawing tasks and interviews using PCP</td>
<td>Social activities were of greater importance for the pupils than learning experiences and peer relationships defined the +ve or -ve experience the pupil had at school</td>
<td>Small sample, from one school, case study – findings not generalisable WoE A - 2 WoE B - 2 WoE C - 2 WoE D – 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to the voices of young carers using IPA and a strengths-based perspective</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>6 young carers aged 11-13</td>
<td>Equal numbers of boys and girls, all caring for a parent with a mental illness and known to the young carers project for at least 2 years</td>
<td>Doutre et al. (2013)</td>
<td>Young carers</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews and photo elicitation IPA</td>
<td>Revealed the complexity of the carer’s lives, but that they found ways to adapt and manage their situations</td>
<td>Small sample size, limited to young carers, lack of definition of parent’s mental illness</td>
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<tr>
<td>How EPs record the voice of the child</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>North of England</td>
<td>6 EPs in one LA</td>
<td>Not determined</td>
<td>Harding and Atkinson, (2009)</td>
<td>EP practice</td>
<td>Content Analysis of 30 random transition reports for YP in year 9 Focus groups</td>
<td>Wide ranging themes, EPs take a holistic view of YP and use a wide range of techniques and strategies to ascertain pupil views, dependent on child’s needs, nature of the meeting and the time available</td>
<td>Within 1 LA and 1-year group - may not be indicative of wider EP practice or with other age groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conducting School-Based Focus Groups: Lessons Learned from the CATS Project</td>
<td>Reflective</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>11-14 years</td>
<td>Six school-based focus groups with 8 to 10 participants per group.</td>
<td>Horowitz et al. (2003)</td>
<td>School-based focus groups</td>
<td>Review of literature, reflections of own groups and implications for future practice</td>
<td>Successful FGs when consider the issues regarding entry to schools, informed consent and confidentiality, students’ cognitive development, safety within the group, and planning effective procedures.</td>
<td>Even though in schools, very health focused</td>
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WoE A - 2  
WoE B - 2  
WoE C - 2  
WoE D – 2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical Issues in research with children and young people</th>
<th>Literature review</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>Not determined</th>
<th>Matutina (2009)</th>
<th>Ethics of research with children</th>
<th>Not determined</th>
<th>Researchers struggle to find a balance that would most benefit this vulnerable population. Strategies for safeguarding children in research</th>
<th>Health and US focused</th>
<th>WoE A - 1</th>
<th>WoE B - 1</th>
<th>WoE C – 1.5</th>
<th>WoE D – 1.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enabling pupil participation</td>
<td>Discussion and guidance paper</td>
<td>Newcastle University</td>
<td>Not determined</td>
<td>Not determined</td>
<td>Todd (2003)</td>
<td>Involving pupils in the identification, assessment and provision of their SEN</td>
<td>Practical guidance for SENCOs and teachers</td>
<td>Pupils learn better if they know more about themselves as learners. If they can be supported to provide their opinions and be involved in planning their support, it is thought more likely that they will succeed</td>
<td>Based on practice and practical guidance</td>
<td>WoE A - 1</td>
<td>WoE B - 1</td>
<td>WoE C – 1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating pupil involvement in assessment, planning and review processes</td>
<td>Discussion paper</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Not determined</td>
<td>Not determined</td>
<td>Roller (1998)</td>
<td>Children in schools</td>
<td>Recommendations for EP practice</td>
<td>There are clear advantages to involving pupils in their educational support: improved pupil motivation and a greater sense of control, confidence, autonomy and empowerment. She says that if pupils can understand the reasons for their involvement and are given some responsibility for their own progress it can lead to positive change.</td>
<td>Date of publication is outside of inclusion criteria.</td>
<td>WoE A - 1</td>
<td>WoE B - 1</td>
<td>WoE C – 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of paper</td>
<td>Study type</td>
<td>Geographic al distribution</td>
<td>Age of participants</td>
<td>Other characteristics of participants</td>
<td>Interviewer investigating</td>
<td>Context of intervention</td>
<td>Outcomes, variables measured</td>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>Effect sizes / Limitations and Reviewer Judgement</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Mixed Methods Evaluation of the ELSA project</td>
<td>Thesis. Unpublished</td>
<td>Mixed methods, pre/post-test non-equivalent group design</td>
<td>N. Yorks University of Nottingham</td>
<td>TAs (4 secondary, 10 primary)</td>
<td>Mann (2014)</td>
<td>ELSA Intervention</td>
<td>Quantitative: Pre-test and post-test changes in pupil and teacher scores on SDQ and EL Checklist. Qualitative: thematic analysis of focus groups and questionnaire data</td>
<td>Not possible to determine whether ELSA training had an impact upon pupil wellbeing. Thematic analyses suggested that participants perceived ELSA training to be of value to personal and professional development and support gained. Perceptions of colleagues regarding role and time restraints were a challenge to the role</td>
<td>Inconclusive findings, small sample, difficulty controlling other variables WoE A - 1 WoE B - 2 WoE C - 1 WoE D - 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>An Exploration of the Perceptions of ELSAs of the ELSA-Pupil Relationship</td>
<td>Thesis Unpublished</td>
<td>Qualitative, semi-structured interviews, thematic analysis</td>
<td>University of Cardiff</td>
<td>12 ELSAs working with KS2 children</td>
<td>Miles (2014)</td>
<td>ELSA - pupil relationship</td>
<td>Thematic analysis of transcribed semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>Main themes: giving time to pupils, having a 2-way relationship, respecting and understanding the child as an individual, trust, flexibility and confidentiality</td>
<td>Small number of ELSAs in one LA. May not generalise to older / younger YP. Only considers ELSA’s perceptions, YP’s not included WoE A - 2 WoE B - 3 WoE C - 3 WoE D – 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Relationship between a Child and an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant: An Analysis of Context and Impact</td>
<td>Thesis Unpublished</td>
<td>London and SE UCL</td>
<td>38 children (19 intervention gp, 19 comparison gp)</td>
<td>Mean age of children 8y, more females, more FSM and less EAL in intervention group</td>
<td>Ball (2014)</td>
<td>ELSA – pupil relationship</td>
<td>Qualitative – semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>ELSA group made no more progress on normative or criterion referenced measures but did on target ratings for literacy. Thematic Analysis illustrates the ‘facilitating context of ELSA sessions and the development and qualities of the ELSA-child relationship’</td>
<td>Diversity of interventions made it difficult to examine overall effectiveness of ELSA. SDQ not broad / sensitive enough to detect changes. Difficulties recruiting and incomplete measures meant that some analysis was run using less than the pre-calculated desired no. of participants WoE A - 2 WoE B - 2 WoE C - 3 WoE D – 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do Young People and Teaching Assistants experience the ELSA intervention in secondary school settings?</td>
<td>Thesis Unpublished</td>
<td>South of England UCL, Institute of Education</td>
<td>6 participants: 3 YP in years 9 and 10 and 3 ELSAs</td>
<td>ELSAs similar age and gender YP had ELSA for a minimum of 1 term, 2 had SEN</td>
<td>Begley (2015)</td>
<td>ELSA intervention</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews – IPA to produce a multi-perspectival series of idiographic accounts</td>
<td>Themes generated relate to how the individuals made sense of the role and experienced ELSA support</td>
<td>Begley questioned whether the approach did not go far enough? Schools self-selected – bias? WoE A - 2 WoE B - 2 WoE C - 3 WoE D – 2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ELSA: Accounts from Emotional Literacy Support Assistants</td>
<td>Thesis Unpublished Qualitative Sheffield University</td>
<td>7 ELSAs at the end of their training</td>
<td>Leighton (2015)</td>
<td>ELSA intervention</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews and reflective journals – thematic analysis</td>
<td>The ELSAs reported that the training provided them with a greater understanding of their pupils’ emotions and that they felt more competent in supporting their pupils… the ELSAs said they were more confident discussing the pupil’s emotionality with colleagues and parents. However, many reported obstacles which prevented them in engaging in their role: a lack of understanding emotional literacy, the challenge of working with parents who held a mismatch with the school’s expectations regarding behaviour.</td>
<td>Small sample size. Researcher known to participants, they may have said what they thought she wanted to hear. Inflation of positive responses due to novelty of ELSA training in the LA.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

WoE A - 2  
WoE B - 2  
WoE C - 1  
WoE D – 2
The Impact of ELSA Training on Teaching Assistants’ Own Trait-Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy and Their Perceptions in Relation to Their Future Role

Thesis Unpublished
Mixed Methods
Wales Cardiff University
95 TAs from primary and secondary schools and pupil referral units who were enrolled on the ELSA training.
Participants were aged between 18 and 65 years and both male/female. Participants were recruited from three different training cohorts from six different LAs in Wales
Rees (2016)
ELSA training
Quantitative - The TEIQue-SF (Petrides & Furnham, 2006) and the TSES-SF (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) questionnaires
Qualitative - Focus group – thematic analysis
Self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence scores increased after the ELSA training. Thematic analysis from the focus group revealed that TAs identified issues that influenced their perceptions of their future roles as ELSA both negatively and positively. The overarching main theme identified was ‘systemic issues’ as the main concern with ‘Improved Knowledge & Understanding’, ‘Benefits of ELSA for Children and TAs’, and ‘Low Self-Efficacy & Confidence’ emerging as important themes.

The Emotional Literacy Support Assistant Intervention: An Exploration from the Perspectives of Pupils and Parents

Thesis Unpublished
Qualitative
NE England Newcastle University
4 participants: 2 YP and 2 parents
Parents both female
YP – one in year 5 and one in year 6
Barker (2017)
ELSA intervention
Semi-structured interviews - IPA
Pupils and parents valued the ELSA intervention and it impacted positively on aspects of YPs’ emotional literacy development including improved confidence, coping strategies, and skills in managing and expressing their emotions
Based on retrospective accounts
WoE A - 2
WoE B - 2
WoE C - 3
WoE D – 2
| 'A Little Pebble in a Pond': A Multiple Case-Study Exploring How the ELSA Project Operates in Secondary Schools | Thesis Unpublished Qualitative, Multiple Case-Study | South England UCL, Institute of Education | 7 ELSA stakeholder s in 2 secondary schools (ELSAs, SENCos, pupils and school staff) | YPs aged 14-15 | Nicholson-Roberts (2019) | ELSA intervention | Semi-structured interviews – thematic analysis | Intervention length longer than guidance. Importance of pupil – ELSA relationships. Flexibility of approach enabled pupil-centred support but led to difficulties tracking outcomes. ELSA – parent and ELSA-teacher communication was limited. Whole school approaches to SEMH were developing but were challenging. | Small sample size. School staff and parents interviewed, but not parents. Schools who volunteered likely to be those most enthusiastic about its implementation. WoE A - 2 WoE B - 3 WoE C - 3 WoE D - 2 |
## ELSA Published Articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of paper</th>
<th>Study type</th>
<th>Geographic distribution</th>
<th>Age of participants</th>
<th>Other characteristics of participants</th>
<th>Interviewer investigating</th>
<th>Context of intervention</th>
<th>Outcomes, variables measured</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Effect sizes / Limitations and Reviewer Judgement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empowering Learning Support Assistants to Enhance the Emotional Wellbeing of Children in School</td>
<td>Qualitative and quantitative evaluation</td>
<td>Hampshire</td>
<td>13 ELSAs, 58 pupils (10 secondary) and 14-line managers returned the questionnaires. Teacher questionnaires completed for 54 pupils (7 secondary)</td>
<td>5 x 7-8-year olds and 1 x 11-year-old were assessed on the PASS pre and post ELSA intervention</td>
<td>Burton (2008)</td>
<td>ELSA intervention</td>
<td>Outcomes for ELSAs and individual pupils. Changes in ratings on PASS pre / post ELSA intervention.</td>
<td>Sharp growth in numbers of participating schools and numbers of ELSAs completed training. ELSAs are making a significant contribution to enhancing the ability of YP to engage more effectively with education. Being part of the project has helped ELSAs to support vulnerable pupils Pupils showed improved work ethic, confidence in learning, attitude to attendance</td>
<td>Small numbers involved in pre-post test Bias of programme founder conducting research WoE A - 2 WoE B - 2 WoE C - 2 WoE D – 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELSA’s Views on Supervision provided by EPs: What EPs can Learn from group supervision</td>
<td>Questionnaire. Used descriptive statistics for ratings questions and thematic analysis of open-ended questions</td>
<td>Hampshire</td>
<td>Questionnaires sent to all ELSAs in the authority (n=630), returned by 270</td>
<td>43% had been an ELSA for less than 3 years, 44% had been an ELSA for 3-6 years and 13% more than 6 years</td>
<td>Osborne and Burton (2014)</td>
<td>ELSA Supervision Questionnaire: extent to which supervision perceived to be meeting ELSA’s needs, relationships with their supervisor and group members, advantages and disadvantages of receiving supervision in a group and impact of supervision on practice</td>
<td>Majority felt supervision needs were being met &amp; that they had good relationships with their supervisor and other group members. Considered to be useful for discussing cases, sharing ideas and problem solving, therefore majority felt better able to support pupils.</td>
<td>43% response rate</td>
<td>No EP views on supervision</td>
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<tr>
<td>The ELSA programme: parental perceptions of its impact in school and at home</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Cardiff University</td>
<td>8 parents of primary aged pupils from 4 schools in 2 LAs</td>
<td>7 female, 1 male</td>
<td>Wilding and Claridge (2016)</td>
<td>Parents’ views of the ELSA intervention Semi-structured interviews Thematic Analysis</td>
<td>A majority of parents perceived the programme to positively impact social and emotional aspects of development, with skills learnt in ELSA sessions transferring to the home context</td>
<td>Parents with negative perceptions may have been less willing to participate, not possible to determine whether impact noted by parents was specifically due to the ELSA programme</td>
<td>WoE A - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ELSA Programme: Can you develop an evidence base for an adaptive intervention?</td>
<td>Review of evidence</td>
<td>Southampton University</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Pickering, et al. (2019)</td>
<td>Research into ELSA interventions</td>
<td>Critique of evidence base</td>
<td>Difficulties comparing like for like as ELSA is a flexible programme, adaptable for individual needs</td>
<td>Describes limitations in previous studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
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<td>WoE A - 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>The ELSA Programme: ELSAs' and Children's Experiences</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Rhondda Cynon Taff</td>
<td>8 ELSAs and 7 children</td>
<td>Children: 4 male, 3 female, age 5-11 years</td>
<td>McEwen, (2019)</td>
<td>The ELSA intervention</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews including a Q sort and comic strip activities Thematic Analysis</td>
<td>The relationship is central to both ELSAs' and children's experiences of the ELSA programme</td>
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<td>Did not control for variations in the role of the ELSA or the number of years in role</td>
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<td>WoE A - 3</td>
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<td>WoE C - 3</td>
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<td>WoE D – 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of paper</td>
<td>Study type</td>
<td>Geographic distribution</td>
<td>Age of participants</td>
<td>Other characteristics of participants</td>
<td>Interviewer investigating</td>
<td>Context of intervention</td>
<td>Outcomes, variables measured</td>
<td>Findings</td>
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<tr>
<td>An Evaluation of the ELSA Programme</td>
<td>Teacher and parent ratings on SDQ pre and post ELSA intervention</td>
<td>Hampshire</td>
<td>107 teacher questionnaires 52 parent questionnaires</td>
<td>Burton, Traill and Norgate, (2009)</td>
<td>ELSA programme</td>
<td>SDQ pre / post intervention</td>
<td>Teachers recognised improvement in children’s behaviour following ELSA (more dramatic in teacher ratings than parents’)</td>
<td>Bias of programme founder conducting research. Context related, different social pressures in the home WoE A - 1 WoE B - 1 WoE C – 1.5 WoE D – 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELSAs in Bournemouth: Impact and Outcomes</td>
<td>Evaluation: Online questionnaire and interviews</td>
<td>Bournemouth</td>
<td>Interviews of 21 ELSAs, 17 HTs completed an online questionnaire</td>
<td>Bravery and Harris, (2009)</td>
<td>ELSA programme</td>
<td>Questionnaire and interviews looking at impact and outcomes</td>
<td>Positive impact on individuals' behaviour, emotional wellbeing and improved relationships</td>
<td>WoE A - 1 WoE B - 1 WoE C – 1.5 WoE D – 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>The scope and Nature of ELSA work</td>
<td>Overview of work</td>
<td>Hampshire Questionnaire sent to 525 ELSAs (243 returned)</td>
<td>Bradley, (2010)</td>
<td>ELSA programme</td>
<td>Questionnaires to determine nature and scope of ELSA work</td>
<td>On average, ELSAs work with 13 children for 14 sessions lasting 30 minutes; most commonly in self-esteem, social skills and anger management. On average, work with 3 groups, for 12 sessions lasting 40 minutes. Groups varied between 4-15 (mode 6), most commonly in social skills, friendship and self esteem</td>
<td>46.3% response rate. Variation between individual ELSA’s, what is an ‘average’ ELSA? WoE A - 1 WoE B - 1 WoE C - 3 WoE D – 1.5</td>
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<td>An Evaluation of the Impact of the ELSA Project on Pupils Attending Schools in Bridgend</td>
<td>3-way mixed design</td>
<td>Bridgend Primary and secondary-aged</td>
<td>Burton, Osborne and Norgate (2010)</td>
<td>ELSA programme</td>
<td>Pre and post measures of EL and behaviour (EL Checklist and SDQ) for an intervention and a control group (completed by teachers and pupils)</td>
<td>Teacher measures were very positive and indicated significant improvements for the intervention group. No significant changes in pupils’ ratings at follow up for either group</td>
<td>Bias of programme founder conducting research. Many ‘pre’ questionnaires were not followed up by a ‘post’ measurement WoE A - 2 WoE B - 2 WoE C - 1 WoE D – 1.5</td>
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<td>An Evaluation of ELSA Training and Impact upon Pupil Progress</td>
<td>Evaluati on</td>
<td>East Hampshire</td>
<td>Murray (2010)</td>
<td>ELSA programme</td>
<td>Targets set by ELSAs coded. ELSAs completed EL checklist pre and post intervention SENCos.</td>
<td>Intervention groups EL scores improved. The control group did not progress, 66% of sample’s scores regressed. SENCos value ELSA support, to pass on skills and knowledge to support pupils in class and beneficial work to support transitions across partnerships of schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>He’s always there when I need him”: Exploring the Perceived Positive Impact of the ELSA programme</td>
<td>Appreci ative framew ork. Qualitati ve. Themati c Analysis</td>
<td>North Somerset / Wiltshire</td>
<td>Hill, O'Hare and Weidberg, (2013)</td>
<td>ELSA programme</td>
<td>Semi structured interviews</td>
<td>3 overarching themes emerged: Organisational factors, practical experience of children and creating positive change</td>
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| “He’s always there when I need him”: Exploring the Perceived Positive Impact of the ELSA programme | Appreci ative framew ork. Qualitati ve. Themati c Analysis | North Somerset / Wiltshire | Hill, O'Hare and Weidberg, (2013) | ELSA programme | Semi structured interviews | 3 overarching themes emerged: Organisational factors, practical experience of children and creating positive change |
| | | | | | Time taken to generalise skills may account for lower ratings from teachers than ELSAs WoE A - 1 WoE B - 1 WoE C - 1 WoE D – 1 |
| What are Children’s Views of ELSA Support | Qualitative Analysis | Southampton | 12 children aged 7-11 years | Cripps et al. (2017) | Semi-structured interviews Thematic Analysis | Themes – ELSA builds a positive relationship, unique qualities of the ELSA, YP learnt new skills, and had a positive impact | Small sample, TEP research WoE A - 1 WoE B - 2 WoE C - 3 WoE D – 2 |
| The impact of the ELSA Programme on Children in Care | Service Evaluation Mixed methods – questionnaires, interviews with 2 ELSAs and 3 CiC leading to 3 case studies | Chester West and Chester | Questionnaires sent to the SMT and ELSA of 56 schools where a CiC was on roll. Received from ELSAs of 25 schools and 16 from SMT | Bowerman and Davies, (2018) | Children in Care ELSA intervention | Questionnaires, interviews | Importance of building relationships, promoting attachment and key attributes of a successful intervention WoE A - 1 WoE B - 2 WoE C - 3 WoE D – 2 |
| Tower Hamlets ELSA Pilot Project | Service Evaluation Quantitative | Tower Hamlets | ELSAs in training Not determined | Lopez, Robinson and Weerasinghe (2018) | ELSA training Pre and post -training online questionnaire | Overall views of the training were positive and show an increase in ELSA confidence, knowledge and skills post training | WoE A - 1 WoE B - 1 WoE C - 1 WoE D – 1 |
| ELSA training: Impact on thinking and Practice | Service Evaluation Qualitative | Gloucestershire | 4 ELSAs in training Not determined | Bland and Macro (2018) | ELSA training Semi-structured interviews Thematic Analysis | Themes – increased understanding of children’s needs, child-centred practice, training delivery, whole-school approach and challenges | WoE A - 1 WoE B - 1 WoE C - 1 WoE D – 1 |
Appendix 6 – Qualitative Synthesis: a thematic summary of all papers reviewed

Themes were identified using a narrative synthesis of information from different studies under conceptual headings relevant to the review questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Name</th>
<th>Definitions / Concept of MH diffs and school</th>
<th>Qualities / Importance of a therapeutic relationship</th>
<th>Therapeutic Journeys</th>
<th>Beginnings / Expectations and use of contracts</th>
<th>Endings</th>
<th>Importance of seeking pupil views</th>
<th>Methods for eliciting pupil views - POPP</th>
<th>Context, Specific to ELSA intervention</th>
<th>Limitations, Reflection issues</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Qualitative Exploration of Therapeutic Relationships from the Perspective of 6 Children Receiving Speech-Language Therapy - Fourie, Crowley and Olivera (2011)</td>
<td>Therapeutic Relationship</td>
<td>Power, safe space, fun, trust, routines, understanding of role and functions, physical characteristics</td>
<td>Roles made explicit to achieve a therapeutic bond</td>
<td>Insights children can provide</td>
<td>Child friendly interviews using arts, crafts, games, playdough, colouring, open ended questions</td>
<td>Speech Therapy</td>
<td>Exploratory. Not all children were able to make explicit the various aspects of the goals, tasks and bonds of therapy.</td>
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<td>The Professional’s Influence Within the Client System: exploring Counter-Transference and Adult Attachment Within the Therapeutic Relationships with Children Experiencing Abuse and Their Caregivers - Lowe (2016)</td>
<td>Attachment and counter-transference</td>
<td>What the professional brings to the relationship is as important as what the child brings</td>
<td>Not frequently heard</td>
<td>Social work</td>
<td>Reflective</td>
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<td>Meta-analysis of therapeutic relationship variables in youth and family therapy - Karver et al. (2006)</td>
<td>Variables in therapeutic relationships and link to outcomes – best variables: interpersonal skills, direct influence of therapist and youth / parent willingness to engage</td>
<td>Clear information and rationale</td>
<td>Therapy&lt;br&gt;Meta -analysis of 49 studies. 25% studies not peer reviewed or published. Process measures based on memory or at the same time as outcome measures</td>
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<td>Modes of Therapeutic Relationship in Brief Dynamic Psychotherapy: A Case Study - Nuttall (2002)</td>
<td>Quality of relationship is key factor</td>
<td>Qualities of relationship at different stages of the therapeutic journey</td>
<td>Adult with HIV Case Study. Not a child</td>
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<td>The Therapeutic Alliance in Cognitive-Behavioural Treatment of Children Referred for Oppositional, Aggressive and Anti-Social Behaviour - Kazdin, Marciano and Whitley (2005)</td>
<td>Greater alliance = greater therapeutic change</td>
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<td>CBT More boys. Not generalisable. Symptom change may come before the emergence of a positive alliance</td>
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<td>Relationships and Learning; A Review and Investigation of Narrative coherence in looked after children in primary school – Greig et al. (2008)</td>
<td>Attachment and importance of early relationships</td>
<td>Story stems, verbal measures</td>
<td>Explanations of findings described by the authors as tenuous. Small group size affects power. Innovative use of computerised measures</td>
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<td>Homeworking: Negotiating the Psychological Contract – Collins et al. (2013)</td>
<td>Use of contracts, expectations negotiations</td>
<td>Homeworker s</td>
<td>Not with children</td>
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<td>Listening to the voices of young carers using IPA and a strengths-based perspective – Doutre et al. (2013)</td>
<td>Should be more emphasis on eliciting pupil views</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews and photo elicitation IPA</td>
<td>Young carers</td>
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<td>Within 1 LA and 1year group - may not be indicative of wider EP practice or with other age groups</td>
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<td>Hearing the unheard: Children’s constructions of their Nurture Group experiences - Griffiths, Stenner and Hicks (2014)</td>
<td>Emphasised the insight YP have into their experiences and their ability to express what works for them and why</td>
<td>Focus Group. Child centred activities – the election of a toy mascot, paired discussions and posy-it activities</td>
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<td>Researching into some primary school children’s views about school: using PCP in practice with children on the special needs register – Maxwell (2006)</td>
<td>Why ask children their views generally and in research</td>
<td>Case study - Drawing tasks and interviews using PCP</td>
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<td>The alliance in child and adolescent psychotherapy - Shirk, Karver and Brown (2011)</td>
<td>Found consistency with the adult literature and a weighted mean correlation of .22 between alliance and outcome</td>
<td>Use of PCP in schools with SEN children</td>
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<td>Therapist Alliance-Building Behaviour Within a CBT Treatment for Anxiety in Youth - Creed and Kendall (2005)</td>
<td>Specific therapist behaviours identified that were predictive of a therapeutic alliance and contributed to the quality of the alliance</td>
<td>CBT intervention</td>
<td>Restricted range of child reports. Generalisability of results beyond CBT?</td>
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<td>A Review of Psychotherapy Outcome Research: consideration for school-based mental health providers - Zirkelback and Reese (2010)</td>
<td>The development of the therapeutic alliance is more important for children than for adults</td>
<td>Psychotherapy</td>
<td>Lack of standards for meta analyses – effect size calculations are variable. Does not include diverse populations or settings</td>
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<td>‘He comes to me to talk about things’: supporting pupils experiencing social and emotional behavioural difficulties – a focus on interpersonal relationships - Mowat (2010)</td>
<td>Interpersonal relationships lie at the heart of the school community. Key adults play a crucial role in determining outcomes for YP</td>
<td>Support Groups in schools</td>
<td>Can’t generalise findings</td>
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<td>Relationship-based social work – how do endings impact upon the client – Huntley (2002)</td>
<td>Endings can reactivate previous traumas becoming a new trauma</td>
<td>Social work</td>
<td>Literature review</td>
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<td>Reviewing and Ending Intervention: Achieving the Best Possible Outcomes for Children - Rose (2012)</td>
<td>Adults need to be aware of implications of transition and loss for vulnerable children. Endings can be an opportunity to mark achievements</td>
<td>Safeguarding and Child Protection</td>
<td>Literature review</td>
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<td>The trauma of parting: endings of music therapy with children with ASD - Kim (2014)</td>
<td>Difficulties with change are exacerbated if the child has a strong bond with the therapist yet does not understand endings and does not have the capacity for emotional self-regulation</td>
<td>Clinical vignettes produced to aid the understanding of endings</td>
<td>Music Therapy Children with ASD</td>
<td>Exploratory</td>
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<td>Termination as a therapeutic intervention when treating children who have experienced multiple losses - Many (2009)</td>
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<td>Getting the ending right is a unique opportunity to provide a new, more positive experience of loss</td>
<td>Therapy with traumatised children</td>
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<td>Effective Delivery of Therapeutic Interventions, Findings from 4 Sites - Atkinson et al. (2013)</td>
<td>Contracting can promote the delivery of therapeutic interventions</td>
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<td>EP practice and delivery of therapeutic interventions to YP</td>
<td>Services that were visited had already identified that they were providing effective therapeutic interventions</td>
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<td>Conducting School-Based Focus Groups: Lessons Learned from the CATS Project - Horowitz et al. (2003)</td>
<td>Successful FGs when consider the issues regarding entry to schools, informed consent/ confidentiality, students’ cognitive development, safety within the group, and planning.</td>
<td>Focus groups in schools</td>
<td>Even though in schools, very health focused</td>
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<td>Building a case for whole-child, whole-school wellbeing in challenging contexts - Roffey (2016)</td>
<td>Builds a case for actively promoting protective factors when behaviour is challenging so that school experiences do not mirror or embed negative life experiences for pupils</td>
<td>Social and Emotional Learning in schools</td>
<td>Discussion and implications</td>
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<td>The ASPIRE principles and pedagogy for the implementation of social and emotional learning and the development of whole-school wellbeing - Roffey (2017)</td>
<td>ASPIRE principles help students and teachers feel safe, engaged and positive about SEL</td>
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<td>Social and Emotional Learning in schools</td>
<td>More research needed</td>
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<td>Ethical Issues in research with children and young people - Matutina (2009)</td>
<td>Researchers struggle to find a balance that would most benefit this vulnerable population. Strategies for safeguarding children in research</td>
<td>Ethics of research with children</td>
<td>Health and US focused</td>
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<td>Enabling pupil participation – Todd (2003)</td>
<td>Rationale and practical guidance for SENCOs and teachers</td>
<td>Pupils learn better if they know more about themselves as learners. If they can be supported to provide their opinions and be involved in planning their support, it is thought more likely that they will succeed</td>
<td>Schools - involving pupils in the identification, assessment and provision of their SEN</td>
<td>Based on practice and practical guidance</td>
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<td>Facilitating pupil involvement in assessment, planning and review processes - Roller (1998)</td>
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<td>Recommendations for EP practice</td>
<td>Clear advantages to involving pupils: improved motivation and a greater sense of control, confidence, autonomy and empowerment.</td>
<td>Schools - involving pupils in the identification, assessment and provision of their SEN</td>
<td>Date of publication is outside of inclusion criteria.</td>
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## Guidance for Developing the ELSA – Child Relationship

### What is a therapeutic relationship?
An emotional bond between the adult and YP

### Why is this relationship Important?
Children's relationships with others are 'at the heart of health and wellbeing' (Future In Mind report, DoH and NHS, 2015).

The relationship with the ELSA is a 'fundamental' part of the ELSA intervention (Begley, 2015).

ELSAs use their unique qualities to build attuned and genuine relationships with pupils before targeting emotional literacy skills (Nicolson Roberts, 2019).

'The greater the alliance, the greater the therapeutic change' (Kazdin et al., 2005).

Some children may have experienced traumatic experiences or felt ‘unsafe’ or ‘uncertain’ in their early attachment relationships, this may lead them to think that they are less able to trust the adults in schools and yet they may have more of a need for a ‘safe’ relationship with a key adult.

### How to develop the ELSA-child relationship
- Be engaging, playful and fun
- Be kind, friendly, warm and empathetic
- Show genuine positive regard
- Collaborate, talk, problem-solve and work together
- Be flexible, creative and led by the child. Use the YP’s interests to help engage them
- Listen and understand
- Be responsive
- Be available, have time for them
- Do what you say you will. Show the YP that they can trust you
- Create a safe space where the YP can be themselves and feel comfortable talking through their problems or worries
- Explicitly explain your role and the purpose of the support

### What do YP say about the ELSA-child relationship?
They appreciate the attention of an adult, having someone who is available and someone they can trust. (Begley, 2015) The relationship with the ELSA makes them feel happier, less alone and more secure. (Peters, 2020)

Be aware...

- of the impact of your previous personal experiences on the therapeutic relationship, and use these experiences to be truly genuine, authentic and empathetic.
- that relationships with different children develop at different rates; but are likely to develop and become stronger and more trusting over time.
- that the relationship you build can last the entire time the YP is at your school.
- that the beginning & ending of the intervention can impact on the relationship you have.
## Guidance for beginning the ELSA intervention

### Why is the beginning so important?

The way in which an intervention is set up and expectations managed can impact upon the experience of the intervention and the therapeutic relationship.

Research indicates that children can find beginning the ELSA intervention difficult as they do not know what to expect (Ball, 2014 and Begley, 2015).

For some children this lack of clarity, knowing ‘who that lady is’ or why they were having ELSA made them less likely to engage (Peters, 2020), had made them feel ‘worried or scared’ (Hills, 2016) or think that they were in trouble (McEwen, 2019).

### What do children /young people hope for?

They hope that the intervention will help them, that it will be fun and that they will have someone to talk to (Peters, 2020).

### What do YP benefit from?

Being consulted/ involved in the setting up of the intervention so that they can give informed consent.

Clear information about what ELSA support is, why they are having it, the likely content of sessions, when the support will take place, who their ELSA is and when the intervention will end.
What does the ELSA need to do?

Check the referral is appropriate for ELSA support (reduce inappropriate referrals by providing school staff with information on the ELSA role and what ELSA support is not).

Liaise with primary/secondary school ELSAs (if YP is changing schools) or previous members of staff to share information and to clarify differences in roles or expectations (as appropriate).

Find out about the individual needs and interests of the YP, consider the referral information received, collect baseline information, meet with the YP and consult with the YP about which lesson to withdraw them from.

Provide clear information about ELSA support to the YP. Consider using invitations, letters and information leaflets to provide practical information and help manage expectations.

Establish clear shared goals for the support with the YP.

Arrange an initial meeting with parents to give them information about the purpose of the support and to share targets and outcomes.

Consider using contracts with the YP to negotiate and clarify practical support arrangements (such as time, place, duration, frequency, confidentiality/privacy, information sharing etc), professional support arrangements (such as clarifying hopes and expectations, roles, the purpose and focus of the sessions and the targets to be worked upon).

Set up procedures for record keeping, reviewing progress, giving feedback and sharing information.
Appendix 9 – ELSA Intervention Preparation Checklist

(from the ELSA Trainer’s Forum at www.elsanetwork.org on 21/10/19)

ELSA Intervention Preparation Checklist


Things to consider before beginning an ELSA intervention

- Am I the best person to support this child’s emotional development? (e.g. Do we have a history that may get in the way of developing a trusting relationship? Is the child known to me in a different capacity such as a class TA, behaviour management role or outside of school?)
- Does the intervention fall within my remit? Was it covered in initial ELSA training or is more specialised input required?
- Are the difficulties that are being encountered influenced by environmental factors that need to be addressed at classroom level (e.g. bullying, personality clash between child and staff, classroom management techniques ill matched to child). An ELSA intervention alone is unlikely to bring about change in these issues.
- Are the difficulties present in school? If not, what alternative home-based support could be provided instead (e.g. parenting groups)?
- Is the focus of the intervention right or are there other underlying issues that need support (e.g. anxiety causing outbursts)?

Things to do before starting an ELSA intervention

- Check referral form and that you understand what you could support.
- Meet with staff and complete ‘Initial Planning Meeting’ document in order to develop understanding of the issue and jointly agree programme aims.
- Have an introductory session with pupil in order to explain your role, what you can offer, whether the pupil would like to work with you and whether they agree with programme aims or have different aims. (See introductory session sheet).
- If the pupil’s perceptions are different from referrer’s, go back to staff member and establish where to go from there.
- If a pupil does not want to work on an ELSA intervention, there is no point pursuing an intervention further at that time. An intervention will not work if a pupil is not engaged in the process and wanting to change. (For ideas of ways to communicate this positively to pupils see “Excellent ELSAs” pages 66-67).
- Once programme aims have been established consider how you will evaluate impact of the intervention. Are there measures you will use before the intervention starts and again at the end in order to evaluate progress?
ELSA introductory session with a pupil

It is important that pupils are given the choice whether to take part in an ELSA intervention or not. When we feel we have choice we usually react more positively than when we feel we are directed into something that we do not want or understand. In an introductory session with a pupil ELSAs should explain:

- Their role
- Why they are meeting with the pupil (how the child has been referred and why)
- How they may be able to support the pupil
- What might happen in sessions
- How often they would meet and how long for
- Likely minimum duration of support

An example explanation could be:

"ELSAs help children understand and manage feelings. I work with lots of different children. Some children have lots of uncomfortable feelings in school. Sometimes they are worried or angry or sad and they can find it difficult to manage their feelings. Sometimes they easily get into trouble. Some children feel lonely and find it difficult to make friends or get on with others.

Xxx has asked if I could meet with you. Why do you think that might be?

Xxx has asked me to meet with you because....

E.g.

- They think you sometimes find it difficult to manage your angry feelings/ worries
- They think you would like to make more friends and find that difficult
- They think you often fall out with others and get unhappy about that
- They think you often make behaviour choices that get you into trouble

What do you feel about that? / Do you think that is true? / How much of a problem do you think that is? (could scale from 1-10) / When is it a problem? / When is it less of a problem?

If we work together we would talk about your thoughts and feelings, play
games and do activities or crafts to learn about you and things that might help you. I will not tell you what to do but will try and learn about you and how things feel for you. Together we can think about things that can sometimes help or why things might not have worked before.

If you would like to work with me we can meet for xx minutes each week until ....(e.g. until the holidays).

Would you like to work with me? Are there any things you would like to ask me?

Possible activities for an introductory session

Self image profile
Pupil perspectives can be explored through a self-image profile (see ELSA Training Folder). Pupils can rate levels of agreement with statements. Pupils can then rate how much they would like statements to be true of them. This will allow ELSAs to explore the child’s ‘ideal self’ and what they would like to be different. The contents of the self image profile could be individually tailored to the child (based upon the contents of their referral form).

Drawing the ideal self (See ELSA Training Folder or www.drawingtheidealself.co.uk)
This activity allows the ELSA to explore how the pupil would like to be and how they would not like to be. This is often a lengthy activity and may take a couple of sessions to complete reflectively.

Blob pictures
Blob pictures (see ELSA Training Folder) allow the ELSA to assess characteristics that pupils identify with or would like to be different. Different blob pictures can be used to explore a range of social situations or scenarios.

Scaling
Scaling (using lines with or without numbers) allow ELSAs to measure change. ELSAs can ask questions like:
- Where are you on this scale? How close are you to being like .....?
- Have you ever been closer / further away? What happened to cause that?
- How close do you think you could get? What would you settle for? What would that look like?
- What do you think might help you get one step closer?

Drawing Feelings
In order to explore particular feelings pupils could draw what the emotion
means or looks like for them. Published resources “Draw on Your Emotions” or “Draw on Your Relationships” by Margot Sunderland can support this.

**Motivational Interviewing Approach** (see ELSA Training Folder)
This approach can be used to assess whether the pupil perceives a problem (and if so their ideas of pros and cons to change).

Further activities outlined in “Excellent ELSAs” (pp 54-61) include:
- **Life road**
- **Family drawing (or friends drawing)**
- **Feelings Graph**
- **Drawing life situations**
- **Exploring perspectives using stones, shells, buttons, puppets or miniatures**
Appendix 10 – Example of ELSA Flowchart
(from the ELSA Trainer's Forum at www.elsanetwork.org on 13/11/19)
Appendix 11 – Example of an Invitation to ELSA Sessions
(from www.elsa-support.co.uk on 12/11/19)

Dear __________________________

You are invited to come and spend some time with __________________________

Starting on __________________________

We are going to have so much fun talking and learning new things.
Appendix 12 – Example of a Pupil Feedback Form, Pre-Intervention
(from www.elsa-support.co.uk on 13/11/19)

Pupil Feedback Form
Pre-assessment

My name is __________________________
Date __________________________

My problem is that...

My problem is this big...
0 is tiny and 10 is huge. Draw a circle around the number.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

My problem makes me feel...

I want to achieve this from my ELSA sessions. This is what I want to take away with me...
Appendix 13 - Contract for ELSA Work

(adapted from Purdie in Sills (ed), 2015, p.175)

This contract is between………………………………………………………..(child / young person) and ………………………………………………………………………….. (ELSA).

The ELSA

An ELSA is a teaching assistant who has completed five days of training in supporting children with their feelings. ELSAs help children understand and manage their feelings. I attend regular supervision session with an Educational Psychologist. You may already know me from your school.

I use a variety of approaches including drawing, making things, talking, playing games, using puppets, completing a work book. This may be individually or in a group and can vary depending on the needs of the child / young person or group I am working with.

I am committed to providing a safe, therapeutic environment for all the young people I work with. We are both making a commitment of time and energy to each other when we work together. It is important for us both to be clear about our expectations and our agreement.

The child / young person

Your class teacher, head of year, parent, other has suggested that you might benefit from some support in the area of understanding your feelings, anger, anxiety, self-esteem, friendships, other. You have also told me that you would like to work on xxx. Your parents have been informed that you will be starting ELSA work (add any parent views as appropriate here).

Pupil Privacy, Safeguarding and Record Keeping

I will respect your privacy and I will always keep your welfare in mind. If you tell me anything that is dangerous or illegal, I will need to pass on this information (relate to
school's safeguarding policy). When I need to feedback general information on your progress to your teachers or parents, I will let you know and we will discuss how best to do this.

I will make brief notes when we are talking; these will be securely stored.

Sessions

Sessions will last 30 mins and will be held every week. There may be some occasions when I need to move our session, if this is the case, I will let you know. You can come and see me in room x in between our sessions if you need to.

Targets

We will discuss what you and your teachers want to focus on and set some targets to focus our work together. Your targets are:

- X
- X
- X
- X
- X

Our Relationship

The relationship we develop is very important to the success of the programme. The sessions will work best if you are open and honest with me so that we can work together to problem-solve and try out strategies.

I will:

- Explain my role and the purpose of the support
- Listen and respond to you
- Be understanding of your needs, be flexible and be led by you and your interests
- Create a safe space where you can be yourself and feel comfortable to talk to me
• Be engaging, playful and fun
• Be kind, positive and friendly
• Be creative
• Have time for you
• Do what I say I will

Ending

We will be working together for six to eight sessions. This can be reviewed and may be extended if necessary. When we finish working together, you can still come and find me. I will check in with you weekly.

This our working agreement and ground rules that will help us work together. Please read this carefully and talk to me about anything you are unsure about. If you understand and are happy to undertake this work together, please sign below.

Signed………………………………………………child / young person
Date………………………………

Signed………………………………………………ELSA
Date………………………………
**ELSA/Pupil confidentiality agreement**

Pupil Name: ____________________________

ELSA Name: ____________________________

We will be having a series of sessions over the next few weeks. I am here to help and support you with…

____________________________________________________________

___________________________________________

**Our working relationship**

**What I expect from you:**

- You always try your best.
- You turn up on time or come straight away when asked.
- You treat me with respect.

**What you can expect from me:**

- I will respect you, your views and feelings.
- I will always listen to you.
- I will help and support you to the best of my ability.
- I will try and make our sessions fun and enable you to learn something new.
- I will share all the wonderful things you have done with your parents/carers/teachers with your agreement.

**Confidentiality**

**What I expect from you:**

- You can choose to talk about our sessions with others outside of the room.
- In a small group you can only talk about what you have done or learned in the sessions. It is not your responsibility to discuss other pupil’s experiences.
What you can expect from me:

What is said between you and me is confidential. I will not tell anyone else about what you have said to me unless I am worried that:

- You might hurt yourself
- You might hurt someone else
- You are in any danger physically or emotionally
- You tell me of anything that is unlawful

I will then speak to __________________________ and we will try and work out the best way of helping or protecting you.

We will both sign this form to show that we both understand what is expected in our sessions.

Your signature __________________________
My signature __________________________
Date: __________________________
Appendix 15 – Example Contract and Review Record
(from the ELSA Trainer’s Forum at www.elsanetwork.org on 21/10/19)

ELSA Contract and Review Record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student name:</th>
<th>Tutor group:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELSA name:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreed sessions</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What do you hope to achieve in your ELSA sessions, and why?

What would you like your ELSA worker to do, in these sessions, to help you?

What will you do, in these sessions, to help yourself?

Targets agreed:

1. 
2. 

Document courtesy of Rachael Godlement and Henry Beaufort School
Appendix 16 – Example of a Pre-Therapeutic Letter of Introduction

Adapted from a letter written by David Damon, Educational Psychologist

Hello xxx,

My name is xxx and I’m an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant or ELSA.

ELSAs help children understand and manage their feelings.

Here is a picture of me, so you know who I am! You may have noticed me in school before, when I’ve been working with other children.

Your teacher/ parents have asked if I can work with you so that we can talk about how you are feeling.

We’re going to meet and work together after the Easter Holidays, on Tuesday 23rd of April. We will then meet every Tuesday for the next 6-8 weeks.

We will meet in xx room. We will play some games and do some talking and get to know each other.

I have already heard that you are really creative with Lego and that you enjoy watching football matches. I look forward to talking to you about Lego and football as well!

See you after the holidays,

From name

P.s: If you have any questions about us meeting, tell your teacher / parent and they can pass them on for me to answer.
Appendix 17 – Example of an ELSA Information Leaflet
(from www.elsanetwork.org on 21/10/19)

What are the benefits of ELSA?
Children learn better and are happier if their emotional needs are addressed.
They learn to:
- develop coping strategies and talk about difficulties.
- interact more successfully with others.
- develop greater self-awareness.
- manage school better and feel better about themselves.
Pupils with an ELSA feel they have been listened to and supported commenting that:

- I don’t worry anymore.
- I have learnt lots about myself.
- It was nice to talk openly.

What can I do to help at home?
- Find time to listen to your child.
- Do lots of fun things together.
- Encourage your child to see the positives in every situation.
- Encourage problem solving to find peaceful solutions.
- Help your child to see things from the view of other people.
- Discuss any problems or concerns you have with your child’s teacher/SENCo.

Who to contact
ELSAS School Contact:

Who are ELSA’s?
An ELSA is a specialist teaching assistant who has been trained to work with children who are showing a wide range of emotional or social difficulties for example: anxiety, low self esteem, problems with anger etc.

ELSA’s have been chosen for their ability to build good relationships with children.

What do ELSA’s do?
ELSA’s work closely with teachers to set clear objectives for individual children. The ELSA will then work on these objectives with the child individually or in a small group. Activities which target the needs of the child will be planned carefully by the ELSA’s.

Will my child enjoy the ELSA sessions?
Yes Of Course!!
ELSAS sessions are planned in advance and tailor made to suit the needs of the children. The sessions are designed to be fun and interactive to engage and motivate the child.
The ELSA may use a range of activities throughout the sessions which could include games, puppets, role play, making things, talking and listening etc.

For example puppets can be a great way of modelling social situations or getting children to talk about how they feel in different circumstances.

What issues may be covered during the sessions?
- RELATIONSHIPS
- RECOGNISING EMOTIONS
- SOCIAL SKILLS
- FRIENDSHIP ISSUES
- SELF ESTEEM
- UNDERSTANDING ANGER
- LOSS & BEREAVEMENT
- ANXIETY
- COPING STRATEGIES
- BUILDING RESILIENCE
- BULLYING ISSUES

What if my child needs further help?
Your child’s progress will be monitored closely during the ELSA programme. If the school or parent feels that the child needs further support the school has access to a range of external support services. ELSA’s have close links with the school’s Educational Psychologist.
## Guidance for ending the ELSA intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why is the ending so important?</th>
<th>Consider that</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Endings are a ‘potential site for a disruption of a stable, relational bond’. The beginning and ending of the ELSA intervention should be ‘carefully constructed’ so that the attachment relationship is ‘sensitively managed’ (Begley, 2015).</td>
<td>Having a prescribed ending time does not take account of the needs of individual children; particularly as it can take some children longer to build rapport and develop a trusting relationship. A flexible approach to ending can be taken as long as this is informed by clear targets and a review of progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research has shown that some children can feel ‘upset or worried by the prospect of ELSA support finishing’ (Cripps et al., 2017).</td>
<td>ELSA – YP relationships in secondary school contexts may be harder to develop and take longer (Nicholson-Roberts, 2019).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults themselves can find it difficult to end the intervention, particularly if the child wants it to continue, if they can also see the benefit of continuing or they feel ‘forced’ to stop (Peters, 2020).</td>
<td>Getting the ending right provides a ‘unique opportunity’ to provide the child ‘with a new experience of loss, one that is controlled, predictable and paced’ (Many 2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Having clear outcomes from the outset makes it easier to end the intervention once these have been met. A lack of focus or lack of target setting prior to the intervention beginning, may lead to difficulties knowing when to end the intervention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YP often know how best to support them. Listening to the views of children about how they have experienced the intervention, how they would like feedback, how they would like information about them conveyed and to whom can inform the intervention and the experience for the child.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What does the ELSA need to do?

- Discuss and plan the end of the intervention from the beginning with the child and build preparation for endings into their sessions.
- Help YP to understand the purpose of ELSA support, when this support will finish and what will happen afterwards.
- Establish the best time to end the sessions through looking at the clear programme aims set before the intervention and in liaison with the YP, teaching staff and parents, assess whether these have been achieved.
- Give specific feedback on progress towards these aims to pupils, their parents and teaching staff.
- Celebrate pupil achievements at the end of the intervention.
- Consider a phased ending rather than a sudden or final ending where support is gradually decreased over time or arrangements for a more informal ‘check-in’ or monitoring role are made so that the relationship with the YP can continue in some form after the sessions have finished.
- Visual countdown prompts can be used to help the YP see how many sessions are remaining. Separation cards can be used so that the pupil knows the ELSA is keeping them in mind when the sessions have ended.
- Therapeutic letters or documents can help manage the end of an intervention, to celebrate or emphasise achievements and to clarify what the YP can do if they need support in the future.
- Consider referral or signposting to other services and/or systemic work to strengthen support within the home, school or other key systems for the child.
Appendix 19 – Example of a Pupil Feedback Form, Post-Intervention
(from www.elsa-support.co.uk on 13/11/19)

Pupil Feedback
Post-assessment

My name is ____________________

Date ____________________

My problem feels better now because...

My problem makes me feel now...

My problem is this big now...
Appendix 20 – Example of a Review Session Record Form
(from the ELSA Trainer’s Forum at www.elsanetwork.org on 13/11/19)

Session 6: Final Review

What have you done in your ELSA sessions?

How did your sessions help you achieve your targets?

How helpful have you found your ELSA sessions? (Circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not helpful  Very helpful

Do you have any other comments?

Student signature: ___________   ELSA signature: ___________

Document courtesy of Rachael Goullemen and Henry Beaufort School
Appendix 21 – Post – Intervention Therapeutic Documents
(from Dunsmuir & Hardy 2016, p.58-62)

‘Below are some examples of therapeutic documents that vary in style, function, audience and therapeutic approach.

1. Examples of therapeutic letters sent at end of therapeutic intervention to involved adults from therapist and child/young person

"Dear XX. Now that XXXXX and I have finished our sessions together we thought it might be useful to write you all a letter to tell you about what we did in our sessions and what XXXXX has managed to achieve. XXXXX and I decided together what to put in this letter, but she asked me to write it from us both. We have had … sessions together over the last term. Each session had a slightly different aim.

1. Planning and deciding what our focus would be.

2. Thinking about different thoughts and feelings.

3. Thinking about how different situations affect what we think and how we feel.

4. Thinking about how situations make XXXXX feel and noticing any warning signs. We also practiced some relaxation techniques and talked about events that had happened during the week.

5. Talking about times when XXXXX has managed to make things better by trying.

6. Going over all the things we had talked about, planning the letter and deciding what might help XXXXX in the future. The main area that we focussed on was the thought, ‘If I try I can make things better’. This was not something that XXXXX felt was very true at the start of our sessions. In our last session XXXXX told me that although sometimes trying does not mean you will always do better, she feels it is a true comment most of the time. XXXXX was also able to give examples of times when she had tried and then things had improved.

Each week we talked about how Xxix week had been. It was nice to talk about some positive changes that Ms Z had noticed, for example, how XXXXX was trying harder in class. XXXXX has worked hard during the sessions that we have had together and was able to talk about different emotions and feelings. XXXXX was often able to describe the best ways of reacting to situations, other ways of reacting and the consequences of both of these. XXXXX was able to use a template (see attached) to think about thoughts, emotions, how her body was feeling and what might happen next. XXXXX feels that she has worked hard during the sessions. She is going to keep trying in school and will keep asking for help when she needs it. XXXXX said that she would like to try using the template to think about other situations at school. XXXXX and I also talked about the possibility of Ms Z or another member of school staff using this with her. XXXXX said that she would also try having a bookmark with the symbols from the template on it; as
she said, this might help her to be aware of what she is feeling or thinking. I have really enjoyed working with XXXXX over the sessions and I have been very impressed with how she has worked during them. I really hope that XXXXX continues to build on the positive changes that she has been making”.

“Dear XX. Many thanks for attending the CBT group we held in school. I enjoyed working with you and really valued the contributions that you made. When we first met you told me that your aim for attending the group was to be able to talk about how you are feeling and to feel less worried about your forthcoming exams. Throughout the group you noticed that you developed your confidence in talking about how you were feeling (I noticed this as well) and that the worries you had about exams had dropped in strength from 9/10 to 4/10. I was impressed with how well you recognised the influence your thoughts can have on your feelings and behaviours. We all have negative thoughts about ourselves and these thoughts are often inaccurate. You recognised that you sometimes have negative thoughts about your exams and that these contribute to the feelings of worry that you can experience in school. When we looked at the thoughts more carefully, you could see that these were ‘thinking errors’ that had minimal evidence. The thinking error that worried you the most was ‘I’m going to fail all my exams, and everyone is going to be disappointed with me’. We took a step back from this and challenged it with more balanced thoughts: I’ve revised for my exam and have worked hard, so whatever the outcome is I have tried my best. My parents are proud of the effort and care I put into my work and want me to do my best. I have good predicted grades based on my classwork and mock exams. Even if I don’t do as well in my exam as I would like, it’s okay, it is only one module and I can retake it if I need to.

Having challenged the thinking error, you were able to reframe it in a more balanced way: ‘I have revised and worked hard for my exam and all I can do is my best. My parents are proud of the hard work I have put in to revising’. Spotting thinking errors and reframing them in this way helped you to feel less anxious about your exams and I hope that noticing and balancing your thoughts in this way continues to be helpful. You told me that hearing other people’s similar experiences was helpful and I would like to invite you to our drop-in follow-up session on xx/xx/xx”.

2. Examples of between session letters to young people

“Dear XX. I’m writing to let you know the outcomes of the ratings we completed yesterday. On the Beck Youth Inventory which you completed, your anxiety was mildly raised in April at a score of 57 (where 50 is average) but has now dropped to the low side of normal at a score of 46. Your mum’s ratings on the Goodman’s Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, have dropped from 5 for Emotional Symptoms in April (elevated) to 1 yesterday, which is well within the normal range. Based on what you told me yesterday, the length of time doing night-time rituals has decreased greatly, even allowing for the minor relapse, and you are no longer troubled by obsessive thoughts at all, so the rituals are more of a long-term habit without purpose. I know you are a very courageous person, and I’m confident that you can manage to cut the rituals completely, although I know it will be a tough challenge. Don’t be disheartened by the re-emergence of some rituals recently. You’ve done it once and you can do it again. I hope you find the book helpful in conjunction with re-visiting the strategies we have developed together. I
Dear XX. It was a pleasure to talk with you again today. Once again, I thought you worked really hard. I hope that you found the session useful. I feel that together we learned three things today that link together into an important life story for you.

1. You want to make your parents proud of you. You do not want them to hear more of the story of bad behaviour from school.

2. The stories of good behaviour and of being a learner are in your life at the moment, but they come and go. The story of good behaviour has lots to it, it involves not arguing, doing your best, staying calm, being quiet, showing respect for others by not dominating them, thinking about whether it is the right time to say something and talking nicely. When ‘being a learner’ approach is with you, you do your work and you listen. This means that you are going to school, you look at the teacher, you are quiet because you are paying attention. You think, you ask questions and you make a contribution. You also told me that being a learner means going to all classes. When these two stories are part of your life you feel like you’ve achieved something that you are proud of yourself because you can prove to others that you can be good. These stories also affect other people, because you have more fun with others and get on better with them because you are a nicer person to be with.

3. There are good teachers at school. In fact, you named a lot more good teachers than bad teachers. The story of good teachers includes a number of important things. These teachers can teach well, they keep the class under control, they talk to you on a level, recognise and praise you and send letters home. Also, you feel that you can talk to some of these teachers as a friend as well as a teacher. I was wondering what would happen if you took this opportunity and tried to increase the amount of time the stories of good behaviour and being a learner are in your life? If you could achieve this then the good teachers might recognise you more, they might praise you more. If this was happening your parents might hear less of the story of bad behaviour and might make your parents proud of you. I hope you find this letter helpful and look forward to seeing you again next Friday.

3. Example of therapeutic letter used to reinforce engagement in sessions

“Dear XX. I enjoyed meeting you for our first talking session this morning. I thought you worked really hard and put a lot of thought into what you told me about school and I was really interested in what you had to say, so I thought I would write a short letter to you about some of the things that interested me most. You told me that you want to learn but you feel that you are falling behind because at the moment you are not attending lessons but working in the learning support centre and at the PRU, this is a worry for you. It was good to hear that you want to get back to lessons as soon as you can. What was clear from what you said is that although things are difficult for you at the moment, you still have your interest in learning and feel that although you are not in lessons you are still a learner. We talked about the fact that our lives are made up of different stories and that during the day the stories can change. We talked about the story of being a learner means to you. You told me that when you are being a learner you do your work
and you listen. This means that you are going to school, you look at the teacher, you are quiet because you are paying attention. You think, you ask questions and you make a contribution. You also told me that being a learner means going to all classes. I agree that going to all classes is important to making progress, but I was wondering if being a learner can only take place in classes or can it happen elsewhere? I want to suggest that your story of being a learner might also be with you when you are in the learning support centre. Why not try showing more of you ‘Being the Learner’ and see how this affects your relationships with teachers?

We also spent some time talking about another story. You called this the story of good behaviour. This story has lots to it, it involves not arguing, doing your best, staying calm, being quiet, showing respect for others by not dominating them, thinking about whether it is the right time to say something and talking nicely. You explained to me that when this story is happening you feel like you’ve achieved something that you are proud of yourself because you can prove to others that you can be good. You also feel that this story affects other people, that you have more fun with others and get on better with them because you are a nicer person to be with. I was wondering who else at school would know about this Good Behaviour story? Who would not be surprised to hear you tell this story? Who would know that this story is part of your life? I hope you find this letter helpful and look forward to seeing you again next Friday”.

4 Example letter to parent on completion of therapy

“Dear Mrs. XX. We have now had a total of 12 sessions of CBT. XXXXX has done really well in overcoming her fear of dogs (as shown by our recent visit to Battersea Dogs Home!). She told me she can now approach and stroke familiar or friendly dogs, such as her Aunt’s Jack Russell, and stand still if an unknown dog runs towards her off the lead. We have also worked together on other anxieties and worries which XXXXX has and developed some ways of coping which she can use in future. As we discussed at the last session, the goals we had initially set were achieved, and there was no need for further sessions at present. XXXXX has completed a ‘relapse prevention sheet’ which I expect she showed you last week. XXXXX has worked really hard throughout the sessions and with the home assignments, and I know this has taken a lot of courage for her. Thanks too for all the support you have given with the walks in the park and visits to friends and relatives with dogs. Please don’t hesitate to get in touch if you have any further concerns or feel that XXXXX would benefit from a booster session”.”
Appendix 22 - Examples of Separation Cards
(from www.elsa-support.co.uk on 12/11/19)

Ensure your children know you haven’t forgotten them. Use them when you have finished working with a child or during holidays.

Separation cards

Separation cards - for transition

www.elsa-support.co.uk
‘It is sometimes helpful for young children to be able to have a visual representation of how many sessions are left, and it can help them better prepare for termination. One way to do this is to create a session-tracking chart. In the examples below clients colour in one image, or choose a sticker, at the end of each session. The activity is quick and also provides a good opportunity for therapists to check-in with clients and help process any feelings surrounding termination that come up throughout the process’.
Appendix 24 - Activities to Support Therapeutic Endings

(from Treisman, 2018)

- **Sentence-completion ideas and discussion points for the ending experience**

  ‘These responses can be collaged, drawn, acted out, sculpted, depicted in a sand tray, etc. They are intended as ideas and need to be adapted and selected dependent on the individual and the specific situation’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When I think about endings and goodbyes I think…</td>
<td>When I think about endings and goodbyes I feel…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I think about endings and goodbyes I remember…</td>
<td>My wishes and hopes for this ending are…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My fears and worries for this ending are…</td>
<td>The highlight of this journey has been…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The things that will stay with me from this journey are…</td>
<td>If I could bottle up a moment or lesson it would be…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I could go back and do things differently, I would…</td>
<td>The hardest part was…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A word to describe my therapy journey would be…</td>
<td>If I could go back and do things differently, I would…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sentence/song/movie/poem to describe my therapy journey would be…</td>
<td>A word to describe my therapy journey would be…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have learned…</td>
<td>The things that are different now are…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The changes I have made…</td>
<td>I know I can…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am proud of…</td>
<td>I am proud of…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am thankful for…</td>
<td>I overcame…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I overcame…</td>
<td>My coping skills are…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My coping skills are…</td>
<td>In my treasure box of tools there is…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my treasure box of tools there is…</td>
<td>My safety plan is…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My safety plan is…</td>
<td>My go-to options are…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My go-to options are…</td>
<td>I will remind myself of…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will remind myself of…</td>
<td>I can teach others about…and how to…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can teach others about…and how to…</td>
<td>My dreams and hopes for myself, others, and the world are…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My dreams and hopes for myself, others, and the world are…</td>
<td>My future will be…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My future will be…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• **Ready to Set Sail: Termination Activity**

**Supplies:** Toy boat, paper boat, papier mache boat, box with a boat drawn on it, etc.

**Directions:**
- I’ve found that the use of metaphors increases the amount of information that clients retain and internalize so I use them frequently in termination. Start by explaining to the client that because of the progress they have made they are ready to sail off on their own.
- Reflect on what that feels like and process any anxiety, and transition into talking about all the things they will "take" with them to help with their journey.
- Have the client answer each question and write their response on the back of the cards. The boat will contain cards related to tools they will take with them (supports, coping skills, etc.), things that may get in their way and strengths (as identified by the client and therapist). Along with my pre-made cards, I also give them blank ones.

• **Treasure Chest Termination Activity**

**Supplies:** Treasure box (Michaels Crafts has wooden “treasure” boxes that are cheap and easy to decorate. A link to directions on how to make a paper one can be found [here](https://www.socialworkhelper.com/2014/04/02/ending-therapeutic-relationship-creative-termination-activities/); Stick-on plastic jewels (found at crafts stores, oriental trading co., etc.); Small note cards (cut to fit the box); Pen.

**Directions:** First, have your client decorate a treasure chest. Then stick a jewel to each card as your client writes down the “task” that is assigned to that specific colour (see below). On the back of the card they include a specific example of how what they identified has helped them in the past and/or how it will help them in the future. Below are examples of possible colour codes, but you should change them to meet your client’s specific age and needs. In the end the chest will be full with a stack of jewelled cards.
- **Blue:** Strengths (Identified by both the client and therapist)
- **Red:** Coping skills
- **Green:** Supportive people in their life
- **Orange:** Resources from therapist (ex. hotline numbers, therapist referrals or directions for re-enrolling in services.)
- **Purple:** Self-care activities
- **Pink:** Inspiration (future goals, motivational quotes, etc.)
- **Yellow:** Things they have learned in therapy

• **Suitcase Termination Activity**

At termination, your client is finally ready to continue their journey on their own. Even though they will be leaving you behind, they can pack up everything
that they have learned during their time with you to take with them. This metaphor is easy for most people to identify with and it is a fun activity.

**Supplies:** Plastic or cardboard suitcase; Blank sticker labels; Paper luggage tag; String; Cards; Travel stickers.

**Goals:** Process termination; Provide transitional object; Help prevent regression; Identify accomplishments, goals, coping tools, etc.

**Directions:**
- Have your client make and/or decorate their suitcase.
- Then they write something they will “take with them” from their time in therapy on each card provided (I print cards with travel clip-art on the back). This can be things they have learned, coping skills, supports, resources etc.
- You can also integrate this with the after-care kit I posted.
- On the labels they write or draw goals they have accomplished. (Like the old suitcases in movies that are covered with stickers of past travels). I also provide additional travel stickers.
- On the luggage tag they write where they are going next. This could be a new life stage (ex. my 8th graders usually write “high school”) or a goal they would like to accomplish that the contents of the box will help them achieve on their own.
- Process feelings about termination throughout the activity.

**Therapeutic Goodbye Cards**

This is such a simple, yet powerful termination activity. I got this idea from a client who gave me a very touching thank you note during our last session. It is something I have kept and reflect back on, and I realized that it could potentially play a similar role for a client.
- The focus of the content is on the journey through therapy and what has been accomplished. I highlight strengths, review coping tools and lessons learned, and express my thoughts about termination. At the end I usually include instructions of what to do if they decide to enter therapy again. You could also have the client write a letter to their future self that they can read when they are struggling.
I put a therapeutic twist on this summer craft. Most school therapists are unable to see clients throughout the summer but may pick up treatment again during the following school year, which is not ideal. This activity can help encourage adherence to after-care recommendations.

**Directions:** Have your client design a bucket that will help them to continue your work together on their own and prevent regression. On the back of the paper bucket they can write goals for the summer, self-care activities, etc. For the 3D buckets these can go on cards placed inside the bucket. On the shovel they write down “tools” that will help them to accomplish their goals (social supports, coping skills, resources, etc.)
Appendix 25 – Reflective Questions to Support the Adult at the end of an Intervention

(From Treisman 2018, p.388)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What have been some of your own personal and professional experiences of and relationships to endings, goodbyes, losses, changes and transitions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have a pattern or learned way of responding to endings, goodbyes, losses, changes and transitions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are some of your hopes, fears, worries and expectations about ending the therapeutic relationship?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What role does the child/ caregiver / piece of work play and fill in your week / month / life / therapy journey?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What implications or feelings might there be of that role or space no longer occurring?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Guidance for Head Teachers and Line Managers**

**ELSAs sometimes need extra support to...**
- Help the reluctant YP to engage.
- Know what to focus on, to set targets and to get started.
- Know when and where to end an intervention.
- Know how to demonstrate impact.
- Know that SLT understand and recognise their role.
- To say if a YP’s needs are too complex for ELSA support.
- Know that they are doing a good job and are making an impact.

**ELSA support is not...**
- An informal, ad-hoc, one off session for YP not meant to be receiving ELSA.
- Unplanned or without clear targets.
- Ongoing support.
- A ‘chat’ on the way to another lesson.
- Mentoring.

**It should be...**
- Planned, proactive and time-limited.
- Based upon clear targets.
- Include a clear process for reviewing and celebrating progress and sharing information with key members of staff and parents. Including positive feedback for the ELSA from school staff!

**Barriers to a successful intervention...**
- A lack of planning time.
- Long waiting lists.
- Not having clear targets or an outline of work.
- Inappropriate referrals.
- Having to be reactive and support other pupils.
- Being called away to cover lessons or exams during planned ELSA time (means that ELSA sessions cannot take place on consecutive weeks and demonstrates a lack of value of the work).
- A lack of resources or too many resources which lead to feelings of being unsupported or overwhelmed.
- A lack of opportunities for generalisation, i.e. YP to try out strategies in different settings.
- Feeling pressure to see lots of YP and ‘churn them out’ (quantity not quality).
- A lack of space, having to share a room, the ELSA room not being finished or being more of an office than a safe nurturing space.
- A lack of communication with parents.
## Appendix 27 - Participants and Interview Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Interview</th>
<th>Interview No</th>
<th>Pre/Post</th>
<th>ELSA / YP</th>
<th>M/F</th>
<th>Year Gp</th>
<th>Referred for</th>
<th>Years as an ELSA</th>
<th>School Pseudonym</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Interview Code name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09/03/2018</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>ELSA1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Oxford Road</td>
<td>Mrs Greenway</td>
<td>ELSA1 pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/03/2018</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>YP1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Anger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>YP1 pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/05/2018</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>YP1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Anger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>YP1 post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/05/2018</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>ELSA1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs Greenway</td>
<td>ELSA1 post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/10/2018</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>ELSA2.1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anxiety and confidence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Oaktree</td>
<td>Mrs Salmon</td>
<td>ELSA2.1 pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/10/2018</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>YP2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Anxiety and confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>YP2 pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/12/2018</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>ELSA2.1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs Salmon</td>
<td>ELSA2.1 post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/12/2018</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>YP2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Anxiety and confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>YP2 post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/10/2018</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>ELSA2.2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs Salmon</td>
<td>ELSA2.2 pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/10/2018</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>YP3</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Annabel</td>
<td>YP3 pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/12/2018</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>ELSA2.2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs Salmon</td>
<td>ELSA2.2 post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/12/2018</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>YP3</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Annabel</td>
<td>YP3 post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/01/2019</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>ELSA4</td>
<td>F</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Three Fields</td>
<td>Mrs Gulliver</td>
<td>ELSA4 pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/01/2019</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>YP4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Family diffs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>YP4 pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/05/2019</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>ELSA4</td>
<td>F</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs Gulliver</td>
<td>ELSA4 post</td>
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<tr>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>YP4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Family diffs</td>
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<td>Katie</td>
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<td>21/03/2019</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Focus Gp</td>
<td>Focus Gp</td>
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</table>
**Appendix 28 - School Information**

All the schools which took part in the main study and focus group are mainstream, mixed and non-selective secondary schools located within the same local authority.

- **Main Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Pseudonym</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Number on roll</th>
<th>OFSTED overall effectiveness</th>
<th>Attainment 8 score 2017-18 (LA average 50.2)</th>
<th>GCSE grade 5 and above in English and maths 2017-18 (LA average 52%)</th>
<th>No. of ELSAs in school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oxford Road</td>
<td>Academy</td>
<td>11-18</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Requires Improvement</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oaktree</td>
<td>LA Community</td>
<td>11-16</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Fields</td>
<td>Academy</td>
<td>11-18</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Focus Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Pseudonym</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Number on roll</th>
<th>OFSTED overall effectiveness</th>
<th>Attainment 8 score 2017-18 (LA average 50.2)</th>
<th>GCSE grade 5 and above in English and maths 2017-18 (LA average 52%)</th>
<th>No. of ELSAs in school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oxford Road</td>
<td>Academy</td>
<td>11-18</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Requires Improvement</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oaktree</td>
<td>LA Community</td>
<td>11-16</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Fields</td>
<td>Academy</td>
<td>11-18</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pines</td>
<td>Voluntary Aided – CofE</td>
<td>11-18</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashbridge</td>
<td>Academy</td>
<td>11-18</td>
<td>1395</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redwood</td>
<td>Academy</td>
<td>11-16</td>
<td>1243</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillside</td>
<td>Academy</td>
<td>11-18</td>
<td>1550</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 29 - Information Letters and Consent Forms

Information Sheet for Children and Young People
A Study about Emotional Literacy Support

As you know, you are going to have some support from an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) this term. If you are unaware of this or have any questions about this, please ask ...... (name of nominated member of school staff to be inserted) for further details.

You are invited to take part in this research project. You should only take part if you want to. If you decide you do not want to or change your mind later that is ok. Before you decide if you want to take part, you should read or listen to the following information carefully and discuss it with your parents or teacher(s). Please ask if you would like any more information or if anything is unclear.

What is the Study About?

I would like to find out more about what ELSA support is like for children and young people. I am going to interview some young people and some ELSAs to find this out.

Who am I?

I am a Senior Educational Psychologist working in Surrey and studying at University College London. My contact details are below.

Who is being invited to take part?

I am inviting young people in Surrey secondary schools who are just about to start working with an ELSA to take part. I am also inviting ELSAs.

Are there any benefits to taking part?

You will be able to talk about what you think of ELSA support and how it can be improved. This will benefit children and young people in the future.

What will you be asked to do?

I will meet with you on two occasions (once before you start ELSA support and once when you have finished ELSA) and ask you questions about your expectations and experiences of receiving ELSA support. This will happen during school time with school staff on-hand and will last about 30-40 minutes. I will record our conversation to help me capture and remember the details. If you agree and are able to, I will also ask you to complete a short diary entry in school after each ELSA session.

Are there any risks to taking part?

I will be asking you about your experiences and feelings about ELSA support, but if you feel upset at any time or you do not want to continue, then it will be ok to stop without needing to give a reason.

What will the information be used for?

The information you give is private (confidential). This means that I will keep your information private by using an identification number rather than your name. I will not use your name in any reports about my research. I will delete my recordings once I have written down all of the information I need. The findings of my study will be sent out to all the ELSAs in Surrey in a newsletter and to ELSA coordinators in other parts of the country through the ELSA network.
I will write about my research for other educational psychologists. I will also feedback some of the general findings to you and your parents.

The information will be used to improve the training ELSAs receive which will benefit children and young people in the future.

Would you like any more information?

If you have any questions, please ask your parent, teacher or contact me using the details below.

Thank you

Sue

Contact details:
Sue Peters, Area Senior Educational Psychologist
Educational Psychology, Consort House, 5-7 Queensway. Redhill. RH1 1YB
Email: 
Telephone:

Consent Form for Children and Young People - A Study about Emotional Literacy Support

Please circle your answer to the questions below:

Have you read the Information Sheet for children and young people (or had it read to you)?
YES
NO

Have you discussed it with your parents / teacher?
YES
NO

Do you understand what this project is about?
YES
NO

Do you understand that it is ok to stop at any time?
YES
NO

Do you understand that:
• I will keep your information securely and it will be confidential
• any recordings will be deleted once I have written down our conversations
• you will not be identifiable in the final report which may be published

Do you agree to take part in the study?
YES
NO

If you agree to take part in the study, please sign and write your name and the date in the boxes below:

Name:  Signature:  Date:

This study has been approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee (Project ID Number): 10643/001
Information Sheet for Parents
A Study about Emotional Literacy Support

As you know, your child has been selected to receive support from an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) this term. If you are unaware of this or have questions about this intervention, please contact ..... (name of nominated member of school staff to be inserted) for further details.

Your child has been invited to take part in a research project to examine how children experience ELSA support. Before you and your child decide whether or not to take part in the research, please read on to find out why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and discuss with your child and their teacher(s). If you would like further information or anything is unclear, please contact me using the contact details below.

Who am I?

I am a Senior Educational Psychologist in Surrey, currently undertaking research studies at University College London. I coordinate the ELSA training programme in Surrey. My contact details are below.

What is the Study About?

I would like to find out more about what ELSA support is like for children and young people. I am going to interview some young people and some ELSAs to find this out.

This study has been approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee (Project ID Number): 10643/001

Who is being invited to take part?

I am inviting young people in Surrey secondary schools who are just about to start working with an ELSA to take part. I am also inviting ELSAs to take part.

Are there any benefits to taking part?

I will learn what children and young people think about ELSA support and how it can be improved. This will lead to improved training for ELSAs and will benefit children and young people in the future.

What will your child be asked to do?

If you agree to your child taking part, I will meet with your child on two occasions (once before they start ELSA support and once when they have finished ELSA) and ask them questions about their expectations and experiences of receiving ELSA support. This will happen during school time with school staff on-hand and will last about 30-40 minutes. I will record our conversations to help me transcribe and capture the detail of the interview. If they are able to, I will also ask them to complete a short diary entry in school after each ELSA session.

Are there any risks to taking part?

I will liaise with staff at your child’s school to ensure they do not miss any additional lesson time and to check that they are comfortable to take part. I will be asking your child about their experiences and feelings about ELSA support, but if they feel upset at any time or do not want to continue, then it will be ok to stop.

What will the information be used for?
All data will be collected and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The information your child gives is private (confidential). This means that I will keep their information private by using an identification number rather than their name. I will not use the name of your child in any reports about my research. Once the interview has been transcribed the recordings will be deleted. The information will be used to improve the training ELSAs receive which will benefit children and young people in the future. The findings will be sent out to all the ELSAs in Surrey in a newsletter and to ELSA coordinators in other parts of the country through the ELSA network (www.elsanetwork.org). I will write about my research for other educational psychologists. I will also feedback some of the general findings to you and your child.

Does my child have to take part?

It is up to you and your child whether or not to take part in the study. If you do agree, your child will also be asked to sign a consent form at school. If you decide that you do not wish them to participate in the research, you do not need to sign the consent form; you can also withdraw your child from the research at any point, without giving a reason, and they will continue their ELSA support in the normal way.

Would you like any more information?

If you have any questions, please ask .... (name of nominated teacher to be inserted here) or contact me using the details below.

Thank you

Sue

Contact details:
Sue Peters, Area Senior Educational Psychologist
Educational Psychology, Consort House, 5-7 Queensway. Redhill. Surrey RH1 1YB
Email: [redacted]
Telephone: [redacted]
Information Sheet for ELSAs
A Study about Emotional Literacy Support

Thank you for expressing an interest in taking part in my research. Please read this information sheet to find out why the research is being done and what it will involve. If you would like further information or anything is unclear, please contact me using the contact details below.

Who am I?
I am an Area Senior Educational Psychologist in Surrey, currently undertaking doctoral research studies at University College London. I coordinate the ELSA training programme in Surrey. My contact details are below.

What is the Study About?
I would like to find out more about what ELSA support is like for children and young people. I am going to interview some young people and some ELSAs to find this out.

This study has been approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee (Project ID Number): 10643/001

Who is being invited to take part?
I am inviting young people in Surrey secondary schools who are just about to start working with an ELSA to take part. I am also inviting ELSAs to take part.

Are there any benefits to taking part?
I will learn what children and young people think about ELSA support and how the support can be improved. This will lead to improved training for ELSAs and will benefit children and young people and ELSAs in the future.

What will the child be asked to do?
Once the child’s parents have agreed to them taking part, I will meet with the child on two occasions (once before they start ELSA support and once when they have finished ELSA) and ask them questions about their expectations and experiences of receiving ELSA support. This will happen during school time with school staff on-hand and will last about 30-40 minutes. I will record our conversations to help me transcribe and capture the detail of the interview. I will also ask them to complete a short diary entry in school after each ELSA session (although they can opt out of this activity as appropriate).

What will I be asked to do?
I will also meet with you on two occasions (once before the child starts the ELSA intervention and once after they have finished it) and ask you about the experiences for the child. Each interview will last approximately 30-40 minutes and will be recorded before being transcribed. I will also ask for some basic information about the child’s needs, why they have been referred for ELSA and will ask for a copy of the targets you have set and an outline of your plan for the intervention. I will also invite you to join a focus group with other ELSAs taking part in the research to investigate themes raised in the interviews. There will be one focus group with 6-8 ELSAs taking part in the discussion.

I will be looking at the ‘process’ of the ELSA intervention rather than the ‘outcomes’. I will be focusing on the child’s experiences and the general features of the ELSA-child relationship, I will not be judging or evaluating your performance as an ELSA.
What will the information be used for?

All data will be collected and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you and the child give is private (confidential). This means that I will keep your information private by using an identification number rather than a name. I will not use names in any reports about my research. Once the interview has been transcribed the recordings will be deleted. The information will be used to improve the training ELSAs receive which will benefit children and young people and ELSAs in the future. The findings will be sent out to all the ELSAs in Surrey in a newsletter and to ELSA coordinators in other parts of the country through the ELSA network (www.elsanetwork.org). I will write about my research for other educational psychologists. I will also feedback some of the general findings to you and your child.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you whether or not to take part in the study. If you do agree, you will be asked to sign a consent form. You can withdraw from the research at any time and the child will continue their ELSA support in the normal way.

Would you like any more information?

If you have any questions, please contact me using the details below.

Thank you

Sue Peters, Area Senior Educational Psychologist
Educational Psychology, Consort House, 5-7 Queensway. Redhill. Surrey RH1 1YB
Email: [REDACTED]
Telephone: [REDACTED]

Dr Phil Stringer, Principal Researcher
Research Department of Clinical, Educational and Health Psychology, Educational Psychology Group, 26 Bedford Way, London. WC1H 0AP
Email: [REDACTED]
Telephone: [REDACTED]

Consent Form for ELSAs - A Study about Emotional Literacy Support

Please circle your answer to the questions below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you read the Information Sheet for ELSAs?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you understand that:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• any data collected will be confidential and kept securely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• any recordings will be deleted once the data has been transcribed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• you will not be identifiable in the final report which may be published</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you understand that it is ok to withdraw at any time?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you agree to take part?</strong></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you agree to take part, please complete the boxes below and the return the slip to me:

Your name: | Your Signature: | Date:
Information Sheet for Schools
A Study about Emotional Literacy Support

Thank you for expressing an interest in taking part in my research. Please read this information sheet to find out why the research is being done and what it will involve. If you would like further information or anything is unclear, please contact me using the contact details below.

Who am I?

I am an Area Senior Educational Psychologist in Surrey, currently undertaking doctoral research studies at University College London. I coordinate the ELSA training programme in Surrey. My contact details are below.

What is the Study About?

I would like to find out more about what ELSA support is like for children and young people. I am going to interview some young people and some ELSAs to find this out.

This study has been approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee (Project ID Number): 10643/001

Who is being invited to take part?

I am inviting young people in Surrey secondary schools who are just about to start working with an ELSA to take part. I am also inviting ELSAs to take part.

Are there any benefits to taking part?

I will learn what children and young people think about ELSA support and how the support can be improved. This will lead to improved training for ELSAs and will benefit children and young people and ELSAs in the future.

What will the child be asked to do?

Once the child’s parents have agreed to them taking part, I will meet with the child on two occasions (once before they start ELSA support and once when they have finished ELSA) and ask them questions about their expectations and experiences of receiving ELSA support. This will happen during school time with school staff on-hand and will last about 30-40 minutes. I will record our conversations to help me transcribe and capture the detail of the interview. I will also ask them to complete a short diary entry in school after each ELSA session (although they can opt out of this activity as appropriate).

What will the ELSA be asked to do?

I will also meet with the ELSA on two occasions (once before the child starts the ELSA intervention and once after they have finished it) and ask them about the experiences for the child. Each interview will last approximately 30-40 minutes and will be recorded before being transcribed. I will also ask for some basic information about the child’s needs, why they have been referred for ELSA and will ask for a copy of the targets the ELSA has set and an outline of their plan for the intervention. I will also invite them to join a focus group with other ELSAs taking part in the research to investigate themes raised in the interviews. There will be one focus group with 6-8 ELSAs taking part in the discussion.

I will be looking at the ‘process’ of the ELSA intervention rather than the ‘outcomes’. I will be focusing on the child’s experiences and the general features of the ELSA-child relationship, I will not be judging or evaluating their performance as an ELSA.
What will the information be used for?

All data will be collected and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The information the ELSA and the child give is private (confidential). This means that I will keep the information private by using an identification number rather than a name. I will not use names in any reports about my research. Once the interview has been transcribed the recordings will be deleted. The information will be used to improve the training ELSAs receive which will benefit children and young people and ELSAs in the future. The findings will be sent out to all the ELSAs in Surrey in a newsletter and to ELSA coordinators in other parts of the country through the ELSA network (www.elsanetwork.org). I will write about my research for other educational psychologists. I will also feedback some of the general findings to the ELSA and the child.

Do we have to take part?

It is up to you whether or not to take part in the study. If you do agree, the ELSA will be asked to sign a consent form. They can withdraw from the research at any time and the child will continue their ELSA support in the normal way.

Would you like any more information?

If you have any questions, please contact me using the details below.

Thank you

Sue Peters, Area Senior Educational Psychologist
Educational Psychology, Consort House, 5-7 Queensway. Redhill. Surrey RH1 1YB
Email: [email]
Telephone: [phone]

Dr Phil Stringer, Principal Researcher
Research Department of Clinical, Educational and Health Psychology, Educational Psychology Group, 26 Bedford Way, London. WC1H 0AP
Email: [email]
Telephone: [phone]

permission Form for Schools - A Study about Emotional Literacy Support

Please circle your answer to the questions below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you read the Information Sheet for ELSAs?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you understand that:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• any data collected will be confidential and kept securely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• any recordings will be deleted once the data has been transcribed</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• you will not be identifiable in the final report which may be published</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you understand that it is ok to withdraw at any time?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your school agree to take part?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you agree to take part, please complete the boxes below and the return the slip to me:

| Your name: | Your Signature: | Date: |
13th June 2017

Dr Phil Stringer
Research Department of Clinical, Educational and Health Psychology
UCL

Dear Dr Stringer

Notification of Ethical Approval Re: Ethics Application 10643/001: A case study approach to explore the ‘journey’ for a pupil through the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) intervention. What is the experience for the child of the ELSA intervention?

I am pleased to confirm in my capacity as interim Chair of the UCL Research Ethics Committee (REC) that your study has been ethically approved by the REC until 31st October 2018.

Approval is subject to the following conditions:

Notification of Amendments to the Research
You must seek Chair’s approval for proposed amendments (to include extensions to the duration of the project) to the research for which this approval has been given. Ethical approval is specific to this project and must not be treated as applicable to research of a similar nature. Each research project is reviewed separately and if there are significant changes to the research protocol you should seek confirmation of continued ethical approval by completing the ‘Amendment Approval Request Form’: http://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/responsibilities.php

Adverse Event Reporting – Serious and Non-Serious
It is your responsibility to report to the Committee any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to participants or others. The Ethics Committee should be notified of all serious adverse events via the Ethics Committee Administrator (ethics@ucl.ac.uk) immediately the incident occurs. Where the adverse incident is unexpected and serious, the Chair or Vice-Chair will decide whether the study should be terminated pending the opinion of an independent expert. For non-serious adverse events the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Ethics Committee should again be notified via the Ethics Committee Administrator within ten days of the incident occurring and provide a full written report that should include any amendments to the participant information sheet and study protocol. The Chair or Vice-Chair will confirm that the incident is non-serious and report to the Committee at the next meeting. The final view of the Committee will be communicated to you.
Final Report - At the end of the data collection element of your research we ask that you submit a very brief report (1-2 paragraphs will suffice) which includes in particular issues relating to the ethical implications of the research i.e. issues obtaining consent, participants withdrawing from the research, confidentiality, protection of participants from physical and mental harm etc.

With best wishes for the research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Lynn Ang
Interim Chair, UCL Research Ethics Committee
Cc: Susan Peters
Appendix 31 – Ethics Approval Email Dated 13/06/2017

From: AcadServ.Ethics <ethics@ucl.ac.uk>
Sent: 13 June 2017 12:00
To: Sue Peters; Stringer, Phil
Cc: CEHP.Edadmin
Subject: APPROVED: Sue Peters - Ethics application 10643/001

Dear Dr Stringer and Sue

Project ID: 10643/001
Project Title: A case study approach to explore the ‘journey’ for a pupil through the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) intervention. What is the experience for the child of the ELSA intervention?

Further to yesterday’s meeting of the UCL REC, I am pleased to confirm that your study has been ethically approved by the UCL REC. Please find attached an ethics approval letter signed by the interim REC Chair. However, the following observations were made which I would be grateful if you could respond to.

1. It would have been helpful if you had provided a copy of the Information Sheet/letter to the school asking for permission to run the project which formalises what is outlined in Section B4 of your application form.
2. The Information Sheet for ELSAs should contain the name and contact details of the principal researcher and include further information on focus groups e.g. how many in a group, duration etc.
3. You do not make it clear if staff will be on hand during the sessions. Could you clarify.
4. It was recommended that there should be an opt out of completing the diary statement so that if the child has not completed it they do not feel anxious before the next meeting.
5. The interview guide for children – Could you clarify how children can describe the relationship they have with the ELSA before the intervention has begun?
6. How will you ensure that participants recruited will not be stigmatised by virtue of being part of the ELSA intervention group?

With best wishes, Helen

Helen Dougal
Research Ethics Administrator | Academic Services | Student & Registry Services
University College London
9th Floor | 1-19 Torrington Place | London | WC1E 7HB
ethics@ucl.ac.uk
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>It would have been helpful if you had provided a copy of the Information Sheet/letter to the school asking for permission to run the project which formalises what is outlined in Section B4 of your application form.</th>
<th>Attached</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Information Sheet for ELSAs should contain the name and contact details of the principal researcher and include further information on focus groups e.g. How many in a group, duration etc.</td>
<td>Amended information sheets to include this information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>You do not make it clear if staff will be on hand during the sessions. Could you clarify.</td>
<td>Yes, there will be staff on-hand. Amended information sheets to include this information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>It was recommended that there should be an opt out of completing the diary statement so that if the child has not completed it they do not feel anxious before the next meeting.</td>
<td>Ok. Amended information sheets to include this information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The interview guide for children – Could you clarify how children can describe the relationship they have with the ELSA before the intervention has begun?</td>
<td>This question is to ascertain whether they have a pre-existing relationship. Do they know the ELSA in another role, have they seen them around the school, worked with them on another intervention?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>How will you ensure that participants recruited will not be stigmatised by virtue of being part of the ELSA intervention group?</td>
<td>The ELSA intervention is a well-established intervention in Surrey schools. Anecdotally, ELSAs report in supervision that young people enjoy coming to the sessions, there have not been reports of feelings of stigmatisation. If the young person does not want to engage with the ELSA intervention, they do not have to. ELSA is just one of a range of interventions that pupils are withdrawn for in schools. How pupils are prepared for ELSA sessions and the information they are given beforehand is one aspect I would like to explore in my study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 33 – Confirmation of an Extension of Ethical Approval Email Dated 15/10/2018

From: VPRO.Ethics <ethics@ucl.ac.uk>
Sent: Monday, October 15, 2018 12:49:23 PM
To: Tucker, Alice
Cc: 
Subject: APPROVED 10643/001: Ethics Amendment Approval Request

Dear Sue

I am pleased to confirm that your extension request has now been approved by the UCL REC Joint Chair, Professor Michael Heinrich and ethical approval has been extended until 31/10/2019. Please take this email as confirmation of that approval.

IMPORTANT: For projects collecting personal data only

(a) However, if you are collecting personal data and your project is registered with the UCL Data Protection Officer and the parameters of the processing of your research data have changed significantly (or you wish to extend your study for an additional period) from your original application for Data Protection registration you will need to advise the UCL Data Protection Office forthwith: data-protection@ucl.ac.uk

(b) Change to legal basis for the processing of data: If you are processing (i.e. collecting, storing, using, disclosing or destroying) identifiable personal information about living individuals as part of your research then you should ensure that you comply with the requirements of the GDPR and the Common Law Duty of Confidentiality. An appropriate legal basis for the processing of your data must be identified, and you must be explicit about this and document it as part of your ethics application, and in the information you provide to your research participants. UCL’s view is that, for the vast majority of research undertaken at UCL, the appropriate legal basis will be ‘a task in the Public interest’: the processing is necessary for UCL to perform a task in the public interest - rather than ‘consent’.

However, even though the legal basis for the processing of a person’s data is most likely to be ‘a task in the public interest’ rather than ‘consent’, from an ethical perspective, obtaining a person’s informed consent for their involvement in the research is still likely to be required in order to abide by the fairness and transparency elements of principle GDPR Article 5(1)(a) or to meet confidentiality obligations.

We have recently changed the data privacy section of our template participant information sheet (PIS) to reflect this change to the legal basis for data processing – see attached. You will need to update your PIS accordingly.

With best wishes for your ongoing research, Helen

Helen Dougal
UCL Research Ethics Administrator
Office of the Vice-Provost (Research)
University College London
2 Taviton Street, London, WC1H 0BT
Email: ethics@ucl.ac.uk
Appendix 34 - Semi-Structured Interview Guides

Semi-Structured Interview Guide – Young People

Pre – ELSA intervention

Section 1 – The ELSA and the relationship

Tell me about your ELSA? What are they like?

How do they make you feel? (show feelings chart)

Complete the ideal ELSA/ non-ideal ELSA drawing activity

Section 2 – The Support and the Quality of the experience including the beginning and the ending

What do you know already about ELSA support?

Who has talked to you about this, what have they said about it?

Why do you think you are having ELSA support? How does this make you feel? (show feelings chart)

What do you find hard? What do you think about this? Rate how hard you find this / how big is the ‘problem’? (show and explain scale - 1=not very, 10= very much). Why do you think this? (Repeat for each area of difficulty)

How does this make you feel? (show feelings chart)

What do you want to get better at?

How do you think the ELSA support will help you?

How are you feeling about starting ELSA support? (show feelings chart)

What are you expecting– prompt for timing, frequency, goals, activities, when it will end?

Thank you

I will see you again once you have finished your ELSA support and will ask what you have worked on and how you have found it. See you then.
Post – ELSA intervention

Section 1 – The ELSA and the relationship

Tell me about your ELSA? What are they like?

How do they make you feel? (show feelings chart)

What has it been like working with your ELSA?

Is working with them now different to how it was at the start? How?

Draw a picture of you and your ELSA doing an ELSA activity

Section 2 – The Support and the Quality of the experience including the beginning and the ending

How has the ELSA support helped you? What can you do better now?

How has ELSA support made you feel? (show feelings chart)

Refer back to pre-intervention interview, you told me that you found xxx hard? What do you think about this now? Rate how hard you find it now / how big is the ‘problem’? (Re-explain the scale and show scale - 1=not very, 10= very much). (Repeat for each area of difficulty)

What have you learnt from your ELSA support?

What activities did you do together?

What have you liked the most about ELSA support (can you tell me 3 things)?

Is there anything you haven’t liked about it? Why?

What would you change about ELSA / how would you make it better? Why?

Why / how did the ELSA intervention end?

How did this make you feel? (show feelings chart)

Did you know it was going to end?

If you have the chance, would you like ELSA support again in the future?

If your friend was about to have ELSA support, what would you tell them about it?

Thank you very much

Explain what will happen to the information, will write about it for my research project with information from other YP and ELSAs. No one will be able to tell who said what.
Semi-Structured Interview Guide – ELSAs

Pre – ELSA intervention

Information About YP to be gained from ELSA:

Year group?
Reason for referral? SEN?
Type of support – group / individual?
Length of time since ELSA training
Length of ELSA intervention, number of sessions, frequency etc
Session by session plans / outline of sessions
Targets set initially and reviewed

Reassure: I will be looking at the ‘process’ of the ELSA intervention rather than the ‘outcomes’. I will be focusing on the child’s experiences and the general features of the ELSA-child relationship, I will not be judging or evaluating your individual performance as an ELSA.

Section 1 – The ELSA / Child Relationship

Tell me about the child you are going to work with? What are they like?
How will working with them make you feel?
Do you have any relationship with them already? If so, can you describe it?

Section 2 – The Support and the Quality of the experience including the beginning and the ending

What is the reason you are going to be working with the child? Who has referred them to you and why?
What do they know / understand about ELSA support and why they are having it? Who has told them? How have them been told? How are they feeling about this?
What are you hoping that they will achieve / improve?
How are you going to work on these?
How are you feeling about beginning this intervention?
Can we look at your targets / plans?
Can we set a date for me to come back and do the post-intervention interviews with you both?

Thank you
Post-ELSA intervention

Section 1 – The ELSA / Child Relationship
Tell me about your child? What are they like? What is it like working with your child?
How do they make you feel?
How has your relationship developed? How was the relationship at the beginning/end? How did it change?

Section 2 – The Support and the Quality of the experience including the beginning and the ending
How has the ELSA support helped the child? What can they do better now?
Did they achieve what you hoped? If not, why not?
How has supporting this child made you feel?
What activities have you done?
What has worked best?
Is there anything that hasn’t worked as well? Why?
What would you change about ELSA / how would you make it better? Why?
Why / how did the ELSA intervention end? How did this make the child feel?
Did they know it was going to end? How did you prepare them for the ending? Will you see them again in any capacity?
Complete the ideal / non-ideal ELSA drawing activity and rating scale activity

Please can I have your diary back?

Thank you very much
Appendix 35 - Ideal ELSA and Drawing task

Prompt sheet for Ideal ELSA activity with children/yp.

Ask for quick drawings / sketches. No right or wrong answers. I will take notes.

Part 1 – Drawing the non-ideal / worst ELSA

The ELSA – think about the kind of person you would not like to support you. It could be made up of several people you have known. How would you describe this person? What kind of person are they? What do they look like? Tell me three things about what they are like?

The bag – this person goes to school every day and takes a bag with them, what kind of bag would they have? What is inside the bag?

In the ELSA room – what is in the room? Furniture? Displays? Equipment? Stationery? What is the worst/ most important worst thing in the room? When you walk in, how does it make you feel? If this room has rules, what would they be?

With students – What kind of work do they do together? how would this person get on with children? What do they say to them? How do they make them feel?

With other adults – how would this person get on with other adults at school? What do they say to them? How do they make them feel?

Part 2 - Drawing the ideal/ dream ELSA

The ELSA – think about the kind of person you would like to support you. It could be made up of several people you have known. How would you describe this person? What kind of person are they? What do they look like? Tell me three things about what they are like?

The bag – this person goes to school every day and takes a bag with them, what kind of bag would they have? What is inside the bag?

In the ELSA room – what is in the room? Furniture? Displays? Equipment? Stationery? What is the best thing/ most important thing in the room? When you walk in, how does it make you feel? If this room has rules, what would they be?

With students – What kind of work do they do together? how would this person get on with children? What do they say to them? How do they make them feel?

With other adults – how would this person get on with other adults at school? What do they say to them? How do they make them feel?
Prompt sheet for Ideal ELSA activity with ELSAs

Ask for quick drawings / sketches. No right or wrong answers. I will take notes.

Part 1 – Drawing the non-ideal / worst ELSA

*The ELSA* – think about the kind of ELSA you would not like to be. It could be made up of several people you have known. How would you describe this person? What kind of person are they? What do they look like? Tell me three things about what they are like?

*The bag* – this person goes to school every day and takes a bag with them, what kind of bag would they have? What is inside the bag?

*In the ELSA room* – what is in the room? Furniture? Displays? Equipment? Stationery? What is the worst/ most important worst thing in the room? When you walk in, how does it make you feel? If this room has rules, what would they be?

*With students* – What kind of work do they do together? how would this person get on with children? What do they say to them? How do they make them feel?

*With other adults* – how would this person get on with other adults at school? What do they say to them? How do they make them feel?

Part 2 -Drawing the ideal/ dream ELSA

*The ELSA* – think about the kind of person you would like to be. It could be made up of several people you have known. How would you describe this person? What kind of person are they? What do they look like? Tell me three things about what they are like?

*The bag* – this person goes to school every day and takes a bag with them, what kind of bag would they have? What is inside the bag?

*In the ELSA room* – what is in the room? Furniture? Displays? Equipment? Stationery? What is the best thing/ most important thing in the room? When you walk in, how does it make you feel? If this room has rules, what would they be?

*With students* – What kind of work do they do together? how would this person get on with children? What do they say to them? How do they make them feel?

*With other adults* – how would this person get on with other adults at school? What do they say to them? How do they make them feel?
Part 3

Place the 2 drawings on the table with a piece of landscape paper with a horizontal line across it in the middle.

*Rate yourself –*

- Before you did the ELSA training (if you were doing this kind of work before you trained)
- After the ELSA training
- now
- where you would like to be
- the ideal/ dream ELSA

*How did you get there?* -What were the reasons for the changes? What was happening?

*How could you move nearer to your ideal* -3 things?

*Other views*- where would the child you are working with rate you? Another ELSA? Your line manager? Ask about any differences in views
**Appendix 36 - Visual Prompts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emoticon</th>
<th>Word</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="afraid" /></td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 37 - Rating Scales

Not much

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Very much so

Nothing

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Everything
## Diary of Emotions

How did you feel after your ELSA session today?  
*Please tick √. You can choose more than one if needed.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
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</table>

360
ELSA Focus Group

Reassure - I am looking at the ‘process’ of the ELSA intervention rather than the ‘outcomes’. I am focusing on the child’s experiences of the ELSA-child relationship and their journey through the intervention, I will not be judging or evaluating your individual performance as an ELSA.

The purpose of a focus group is to explore in greater depth the themes that have arisen from the interviews. It is a relatively unstructured, guided discussion.

Ground rules for a focus group are similar to the group rules we have for supervision: confidentiality, respecting and listening to each other. We have an hour for this discussion and should try to stick to the topics raised during this time.

Reminder – I am going to record the interview using my dictaphone. Once the interview has been transcribed the recording will be deleted. I will anonymise what you say and use pseudonyms; you and your school will not be able to be identified.

Section 1 – The Support and the Quality of the experience including the beginning

Who refers children to you and why?

What do the children know / understand about ELSA support and who an ELSA is and why they are having it? Who has told them? How have they told them? Do they give consent?

What do you tell them/ how do you prepare them?

Have you developed any resources to support children in their understanding of the intervention / your role?

How do children generally feel about starting ELSA work? How do you know / what do you see?

What do the parents know and how?

Is the child involved in setting the targets? Do they have a say in when the support will take place?

Section 2 – The Support and the Quality of the experience including the ending

How long is the intervention usually?
Why / how does the ELSA intervention end?

Have they usually made progress against their goals? Is the child involved in reviewing their goals?

Who do you feedback to? Is the child involved in this? How do you celebrate their successes?

What do you do if you feel the child needs longer?

What factors might mean that they need longer?

How does the ending make the child feel? How do you know, what do you see?

Do they know it was going to end? How do you prepare them for the ending?

How has the ending made you feel? What do you do about these feelings?

When do endings work best?

Will you see them again in any capacity after it has finished? Do you have any systems for reducing / maintaining some form of support? What happens next?

Section 3 – The ELSA / Child Relationship at the beginning and at the end

What is the relationship like at the beginning?

What do you do to get to know the child and build a relationship? Any particular activities/ type of activities that help build the relationship?

How long does this usually take?

What do you do to reach a child who is hard to engage?

What are the important qualities of an ELSA in building a relationship?

What makes a good relationship?

How has your relationship developed?

How was the relationship during the intervention and by end?

How/ when did it change?

What helped it to develop?

What skills did you use to build this relationship?

What will your relationship be like now the intervention has ended?
Can you tell me a little bit about your ELSA? What is she like?

She’s really nice, she’s friendly and she’s someone you want to be around.

How does she make you feel?

She makes me happy, when she’s like… she’s like comforting. She’s just… she’s like a friend, she’ll be there for you.

Non-Ideal/worst ELSA drawing activity

What are they like - Someone who has a horrible expression, doesn’t really like to be there. They’re all grumpy.

What do they look like? An angry person with their hands up, trying to like single eyeball.

What kind of bag do they have- A bag with big handles.

What is inside it? – obviously some marking things, maybe some detention slips.

What is their room like?– maybe there would be something that shows their anger, maybe lots of red stuff on their desk, or some different coloured things to show how this ELSA person is feeling, to show if they want to be there or not.

What’s in the room? - A little bobble head with demon horns maybe

Rules of the room – don’t be late, sit down as soon as you come in, don’t touch anything, as soon as you are given your paper- start and silence and some other rules like that.

Students in the room/ what kind work are they doing? – probably be doing more work that they are supposed to, they would probably give them more homework than regularly set. Sometimes she might keep them in for doing their homework but not good enough and it is good.

What do the students in the room look like / what are they feeling? - they feel anxious to go there, they feel scared and they just feel really worried and they can’t trust this ELSA.

What does she say to the students? - stuff that’s not really appropriate for a school, maybe calling them something like idiots most of the time and just harassing them when they haven’t done anything.
How does she get on with adults – I think she tries to hide it and if there is someone else in the room, she will act like a normal person until they leave.

How does she make the adults feel? - They probably might be all friendly and make the adults happy, but the children.. is the opposite.

Ideal / dream ELSA drawing activity

What is she like? – they are happy, they give thumbs up to everyone and they are really nice.

What does she look like? They are tall, they would be a lot different to some other teachers. They might be a bit like laid back than most teachers and they might always smile.

What does her bag look like and what is in the bag? – they have a really big bag to store stuff like their marking things, maybe some treats for the students, maybe some like toys they could bring into ELSA… so the students can also do their work but if they feel a bit stressed they can use these toys to make them feel a bit better.

What is the ELSA room? – there would be lots of happy things, bright colours, umm the walls and everything would be like really bright to show that this room is a happy room and only happy people can be in it. Maybe they could have some tables with like couches around, little couches.

Best thing in the room? – probably the couches, cos they’d be soft while you work.

When you walk in the room, how does it make you feel? - happy, amazing, makes you want to… just be there all the time.

Rules of the room? – they would have… not too much talking, but you can speak, and … there wouldn’t be too many rules, because it would be a classroom, for … to make it your own space, you can be free.

What kind of work are the students in the room doing? – the first one is drawing as he is allowed to, cos he’s free and then the other student would probably be writing his imagination.

What does the ELSA say to them? – The ELSA compliments them, tells them how good they are doing and just makes them feel like just the best thing.

How does the ELSA get on with any other adults coming into the room? – they get on really good, they are always friendly to each other. Some people stop by to say hi and get the nice feeling of being greeted.

How do the other adults feel? They feel good and amazing after they walk by and say hi.
What do you already know about ELSA support? (I think you had some at junior school)

I know there’s someone that can be there for me, always there to listen and somebody I can trust.

Who has spoken to you about ELSA support?

Mrs Salmon.

What have you been told about the kind of support you were going to have?

She’s told me that she’s going to be supportive and she’ll be helpful.

Has she told you how long for and what you are going to work on?

She did say it will be about half an hour long, it will finish in about 6 weeks, just before Christmas.

Have you been told why you were chosen to have it?

Cos… to boost my confident and to help… get rid of some of my fears.

How does that make you feel?

It makes me feel good cos I know there’s someone there that can help me.

What do you want ELSA support to help you improve?

My confidence… it’s pretty low right now. It’s just started… I’m just nervous to speak.

On a scale (1-10), where would you say your confidence levels are on this scale?

4/10

How does that make you feel?

It makes me feel like I can improve it, I can definitely work up to make it about an 8. It will take some time, but I know I can get there.

How to move to 8?

Maybe I need to try and speak a bit more in class and try and share.

Is there anything else you want to get better at?

Not yet, all I know for now is my confidence.

How do you think ELSA support will help you?
It will give me more chances to speak out, so I can share and the more I speak out, the more I can get confidenter.

**How are you feeling about starting ELSA support?**

It’s think it’s going to be fine, fun and something I can deal with so I can get help.

**Do you know what activities / goals or what you are going to work on?**

Not yet.

**Do you know how many times a week you are going to meet?**

Twice I think.

**Anything else?**

No, I think I’ve said everything.
Can you tell me a little bit about your ELSA? What is she like as an ELSA?

She’s very nice, I can trust her and she’s always there if I need to talk to her and I can say stuff to her that I wouldn’t normally say to my friends. She can keep secrets; she’s really good.

That’s nice, I notice you had a big smile when you said that last bit? Mmmm

How does your ELSA make you feel?

She makes me feel trusting, she makes me feel happy and yeah…

What has it been like working with your ELSA?

It’s been good, I’ve been getting through ELSA, yeah…

Are there any differences in working with her now compared to working with her at the beginning? Has anything changed?

Not really, but I have become more confident speaking to her.

Do you know what has made a difference, why you feel more confident in speaking to her now? Uuum… I think it’s because, she said… uuur that I can trust her and I’ve told her some stuff bout home and yeah… she hasn’t told… She can say some stuff to me. She can tell me what to do about this and yeah… it’s nice advice

Can you draw a picture of you and your ELSA doing one of your ELSA activities together?

So I’ve drawn me and Mrs Salmon with the booklet and all the other activities and we’re having a chat about it and getting through it

And you’re sitting at chairs and a table? Yes

Is that a speech bubble? To show that you are talking to each other? Yes

What kind of activity are you likely to be doing there? Uuum, most likely the board of the emotions cards

How do you think ELSA support has helped you?

It’s made me a lot happier with some stuff at home and it makes me feel that I can trust a lot more people
How has it done that? It... because I can tell Mrs Salmon lots of different things and she knows that whatever this thing is, she can always give a response back, a very helpful response

Anything else you can do better now? I can solve a lot more of my home issues and I can solve them. I can get my family in and we'd have a talk

Can you solve difficulties in school as well? Yes... so I normally wouldn't speak a lot in class. I'm not... I wasn't that confident but now I feel like, if I know the answer, I can speak up and I can give the answer and feel more confident about it

How has having ELSA support made you feel?

It makes me feel interested, it makes me feel trusting, it makes me happy and sometimes it makes me surprised as I'm not too sure what we're doing and then I'm just really surprised

Can you give an example of when you've been surprised? So... I would say the booklet, I was surprised the first time, cos I saw how big the booklet was and I was thinking you probably won't get through all of that. I was really surprised that we managed to get through... not all of it but most of it

You told me that your confidence was about a 4 when we first met and you wanted to get towards an 8 and you told me that you knew you could get there. How do you feel about your confidence now?

I would say it's a 7, almost an 8

What's the difference, from when it was a 4? So, when I was at the 4, I didn't really put my hand up that often. Sometimes I'd get picked on and I'd go into a panic, but now I'd most likely put my hand up if I know the answer. If I do get picked on, I try my hardest to give the answer

What have you learnt from your ELSA support?

Umm, a breathing strategy. So if I get picked on and I don't really know the answer, I just breathe in for a couple of seconds and breath out a couple of times until eventually I think of an answer I could say that might be right and so I say it and if I get it wrong, it's fine

You don't panic now? No

Anything else you have learnt? Any tips, techniques or strategies? Not really, I would say the breathing one is the most efficient

What activities did you do together?
So, we did a mirror activity, we did ‘what makes a good friend?’, we did ‘how am I a good friend?’, we did ‘how are my friends good friends?’. We did lots of things like that.

**Can you tell me about the mirror one?** Well it would have a picture of a mirror and different bubbles around it and I would fill in the different bubbles for whatever the questions were.

**What does the friends activity involve?** So a good friend is someone that I can trust, someone that doesn’t hang out with just me, but hangs out with their friends as well, and I try to join them, maybe I can join them, then I get some more friends and what I can do to be good friend is the same, trust, I can go to my friends, my other friends can join me and they’d make more friends.

**Can you tell me the 3 things you have liked the most about ELSA support?**

The three things would be … the booklet, working through that was fun, learning to trust Mrs Salmon more and… definitely getting my confidence up.

**Is there anything you haven’t liked about ELSA support?**

Not that I can think of, no.

**Is there anything you would change? Anything that could be even better?**

Still no.

**How or why did the ELSA support end?**

It ended because of Christmas and the way it ended was … I think we had a big chat, we did an activity and then ELSA ended.

You knew it was going to end when it did didn’t you? Yes

You weren’t surprised? No

**When it ended, how did this make you feel?**

It made me feel a bit sad, cos knowing that I don’t do it anymore is a bit weird as normally I can go there on Tuesdays and talk to Mrs Salmon about some things.

**Will you still see your ELSA from time to time?** Yes, she did say maybe once or twice a week… not… once a week or once every two weeks she might take me out of class just to have a catch up.

**How does that make you feel?** It makes me feel good knowing that I can still speak to her.
Do you see her around the school? Yes

If you have the chance, would you like ELSA support again in the future?

Yeah

If your friend was about to have ELSA support, what would you tell them about it?

I would tell them to trust Mrs Salmon and I’d tell them that you will be doing a booklet and it will be very good. You will enjoy it and it’s a good way to help you share stuff with Mrs Salmon cos you can trust her

Anything else?

No, I think I’ve said it all
So YP4 is in which year?

year 7

Why has she come to you?

It started off… we were alerted from the junior school where she’d had a few issues. The family were on a Child in Need plan, but mainly due to the parent’s separation. One parent was using one against the other. YP4 was coping fairly well with it but the younger brother who is currently in year 4; recently diagnosed with ADHD was not coping well… with school… behaviour… everything and this was obviously having a knock-on effect on YP4. So I attended the CiN meetings. Since coming here, she’s absolutely settled in fabulously, loves the school, really helped her to be away from her younger brother at the junior school. So she’s judged for her, not on his behaviour, which was happening. Doing really well here but the feedback at home wasn’t so good as she was struggling with dealing with him and having some outbursts at home due to the situation. We don’t see that at school at all. So I felt, the family is… recently the dad has now moved out, parents are getting divorced so it’s settling down better and I felt it would help her, giving her strategies how to deal with her sibling with ADHD. I’ve got a child with ADHD so I feel, from knowing how his brothers react, I thought I could really help her… that’s how it came about. Suggested it at the meeting and everyone was happy for me to go ahead with that.

Does she have any special educational needs?

No, none at all, she’s a very able child.

Are you planning to see her on her own or in a group?

She’s been in the nurture group, which she really enjoyed and that went from September through to Christmas. It went on a bit longer due to my commitments… helping with exams… went up to Christmas. She was sad when that ended, so I offered her this. Very good in the group…very good group member and again the nurture group came from recommendations from the junior school that it would do her good. I know she’s had previous ELSA involvement at junior school as well.

Have you had any thoughts yet on the type of work you want to do with her, have you done any planning for her yet?

Not as yet to be honest. I’ve got some things in my mind I’m going to do. I know the first session I’ve got planned as that is this week… looking at ADHD, what it does, so she can have an understanding that a lot of things her brother are out of his control but it’s all about the medical issues… and that’s where we’re going to start
Do you know how long your intervention will be?

I don’t think it will be any more than the six weeks, I don’t think it’s needed, because a) she’s a very able child. One of the things that did… upsets her… or more annoys her was the two lessons I took her out of for the nurture group, on her report she got a T- which says she is behind schedule as she’s missed some time and it really upset her that there were T-’s on her report and everything else and it could have been coincidence but I think probably because I took her out she missed some, so I don’t want her missing too many lessons… she really wants to do well, but she’s keen so she wants to come for ELSA work.

Have you set any targets so far?

Yes, I’ve got the targets here on the referral sheet; that she can cope better with her brother with ADHD and cope with the family separation; to just to come to terms. Academic-wise it’s not necessary.

Length of time since ELSA training? I looked it up, it’s about 5 years isn’t it?

Yes, it’s a while now, I’ve been a learning mentor here for… I’m into my tenth year, which I consider as pretty the much the same job, obviously I learnt a bit more doing the ELSA course, but it is the same sort of work

How often are you going to meet?

Once a week

How long are your sessions?

Half an hour

The ELSA / Child relationship:

What is YP4 like?

She’s a very happy child, very settled, really wants to do well academically. Feels that since coming to senior school she can be herself, and I think that’s very important for her, it’s a big step for independence. Since coming here, she’s now started cycling to school… which she’s… few friendship issues with cycling to school, I think trying to key it up, now she… most of the time, she prefers to come on her own from what I can gather, umm yeh that’s it really. I think she needs to not be… have what’s happening at home having a knock-on effect on what’s happening here, that’s what we really want to avoid. Her mum is yeh very very supportive and she has supportive grandparents who she spends time with as well but I think she does find it extremely difficult with her brother’s extreme behaviour

Has she just got the one brother? Yes. In year 4. I’ve not met him, but I’ve heard lots about him.
Have you had any contact with Mum?
Yes, I got to know her at the Child in Need meetings. I have met her Dad as well. She still sees her Dad regularly, but he’s got his own mental health issues, so it’s quite tricky. Her grandparents I think, are the sort of stable influence and she spends quite a bit of time. She’s also got an older sister, different Dad, quite a lot older, I think she’s in her mid-20’s. Her sister lives with the grandparents, she sees her on a regular basis. They are quite a close family.

Did you have any relationship with her before / did you know her before?
I’ve worked with her in the nurture group, but not before that.

How do you think the relationship will develop, how are you feeling about working with her?
I think it will develop well, I think she’s the sort of child that even once we’ve finished the sessions, she’s the sort you’d touch base with. If I’m out on the playground, she’s the sort who would … lunch duty come and speak. It could be one of those that if things aren’t going well, she would, I’d like to think she’d come to me… if she was having any further problems… but she’s very very happy here so I think she’ll do well here

Is YP 4 looking forward to the ELSA sessions?
Yes, she was disappointed when the nurture group ended. At Christmas, she wrote a little note to say thank you, that she was a little bit sad that the nurture group had finished. She’s possibly one… I’ll see how she goes, but possibly one I’d consider for the ‘Friends for Life’ group which I do after Easter, but if she settles then you know… I won’t. I’m very mindful that I don’t want to take her out of lessons. Cos that would be an hour a week then.

Are you looking forward to working with YP4?
Yes, definitely, definitely, definitely. I really feel that I can help her sort of to come to terms with how difficult it is as a sibling of someone with ADHD, so…

Support and Quality of the Experience:
Who has referred her to you and why?
I’ve referred her to me which is unusual, I’m one of the safeguarding officers, but I obviously have spoken to the deputy head who is the safeguarding officer and the SENCo… this is what I intend to do and they were fine with that.

So you picked her up through your safeguarding role? Yes, she came to me for the nurture group, from the information from the junior school, her name was on the list and it is from the child in need
meeting, I thought actually I could do something here, I could actually help the family, it’s just been dropped to a team around the family. So at the next meeting, I will still be involved in those and go to the meetings

What do you think YP4 knows or understands about ELSA support?

I think she understands quite a lot because of what happened with the junior school, the ELSA there, so I think she knows that it is like a support network for her, to be able to talk about things that are worrying her, we can work through things

And is it you that has told her about it? Yes. She does.. one of her favourite subjects is Art, I had to check what she had today is Art… so I definitely intend to use some art-based work that I’m going to do with her

What are you hoping she will achieve or improve?

I’m hoping that when she’s at home, she that she’ll be able to deal better with her brother’s behaviours. From what I can gather from the meeting, she’s… what I want to get her away from… is that she’s acting more like a Mum rather than a sister, so she’s sort of… particularly when she’s with her Dad, she’s taking control of the medication and telling him when to take it. Maybe…I don’t know as I’ve not seen them together, maybe being a bit bossy …. And I know from my own experience that that really doesn’t work and they don’t work well with being bossed around by… there’s different ways of approaching it, I still think it’s good her being involved and encouraging him with the medication, cos that’s always a big issue… when to take it… but I think her Dad puts too much on her and I think emotionally he puts too much on her as well. So that’s one of my concerns.

How are you hoping she will improve in regard to her parent’s separation?

Well, I think what had been happening, Mum had told her one thing and Dad’s telling her another and trying to improve the whole communication and more openness. So she’s able to say, well dad has said this, and so it can be openly talked about and I think she is starting to realise that not everything is true that she has been told or an emphasis has been put… maybe an element of truth…but it’s been pushed in the wrong way. So I’m hoping she can cope better with that and realise that both parents love her, but it’s just a tricky situation and it is better that they are not together… which it definitely is better … so it’s just building her resilience I think which is key.

Have you had any thoughts on how you going to work on these? You mentioned art work as an approach?

Not as yet, I need to have a little think about that. I’d already found out that her favourite subject is art. She loves doing art at home. She loves colouring.
So I am going to find some things. I haven’t looked at that as yet but I’m running through my own mind

**Worksheet-based or Practical?** I tend to not be worksheet focused. Maybe a little bit more with the year 7’s, I tend to look for activities to do whilst we are talking. Depending on how well... but I think I know YP4 really well, so it will be more talking-focused, but because of her love of art, along with art. I’m definitely going to sort some things out that she can do whilst we are doing the sessions

**Knowing her already helps?** Exactly, we don’t have to start with the getting to know you activities. I would judge it on … depending on the child, what sort of child, some that I work with really really don’t like the paperwork… but you know… you start giving them out activities to do and you’ve lost them already, but with her, you know… she’s very very focused on learning.

**Does having had ELSA before make a difference?** Exactly, she’s got a good knowledge of what ELSA does, she’s ready to go with it.

**Do you know what she did with the ELSA at junior school?** No, I don’t, I’m not sure, I don’t know if it was 1:1 or group work. I haven’t really discussed that with her. It’s going to very different. I did say to her it’s going to be different. Lots of the kids love Mrs Junior ELSA from the junior school, but I think it will be very very different. I expect they have their own expectations and it’s very different, but I don’t know what junior ELSAs do really

**We’ve looked at your targets, tell me what happens before you begin and at the end?**

It’s based on 6 weeks, I’ll review her after 6 weeks. If I think it’s necessary for an extra couple of sessions, then we’ll do that. I say 6 weeks, I’ve explained this to her, because I’m called off for other things, it will be 6 sessions, I hope that they will be six consecutive sessions, but it doesn’t always work like that unfortunately, it’s out of my control.

**Referral form? Who has completed the teacher checklist on the referral form?** I did! Ha ha! Normally it would be someone else, but in this instance…. It’s good to have the paper trail. I think in the past, as I’ve discussed at previous supervision meetings, we haven’t had a proper paper trail. So from the supervision meetings, someone has sent their form, I’ve tweaked it a bit, it’s been approved and they’re happy here for me to use it and put our logo on it and that works better.

**Do you review this at the end?** Yes, review it. I’d review everything. I’d normally do a self-esteem questionnaire, but because I’ve done that in the Nurture Group then it’s not necessary for me to do that, she
is happy to be in school and happy to be doing the lessons, so there’s no problem with self-esteem at school

**Who will you feedback progress to?** The progress will go back to the SENCo

**Does she share the same concerns as you?** Yes. And I would speak to the Head of Year as well

**What about the Form tutor?** Only if I thought there was an issue. I do email the form tutor before the CiN meetings, I said can you let me know if… tell me any issues / problems and it’s always been really really positive. So I would ask the question, have you noticed any thing, is she settling?

And again, if a round robin was needed, but in this case it’s highly unlikely I’d need to do a round robin cos I’d look at the school report, I look at… we have class charts which looks at positives and negatives. But I think she had one negative, I think for forgetting a homework, which upset her as she had done it. But it’s all positive, it’s all really really good. So I always look at that so I can get an overall picture… look at attendance, again attendance was excellent, I think there was an illness just before Christmas… a couple of days off, but she hates missing school. So I look at all that sort of data as well, I find that really helpful.
Can you tell me a bit about your student, describe her for me?

YP4 is very easy to work with, she’s very receptive to discussing things. I’ve found that the sessions have definitely brought out more things, more things to look at and deal with. I think what she presents at school, from the discussions is very different to how she presents at home, so I’ve found that quite interesting. A few friendship issues have come out that she has got a little bit upset over, but she will listen and she’s very perceptive to changing and changing mindset as well.

What did it feel like to work with her?

Really nice, a really nice experience. I’d always look forward to seeing her. She’s always smiling, always cheery, yup… lovely child to work with… absolutely.

How has your relationship developed over the sessions?

I think the relationship has got stronger, if I can give you an incident where she had… where there were some major friendship problems going on, where she got accused of something, she was really upset about it and it was nice that she came to me, she said what happened and we talked through it, looking at both sides, so looking at the side from the Head of Year’s perspective, looking at it from her perspective and she did accept that there were some faults that were hers but not necessarily all of them, it was just that she viewed it in a different way, so I think it’s very nice that she knows that she can come to me at any point not just with the ELSA sessions and it’ll be long after the sessions are completed that she’ll still continue to do that I think.

Do you think she wouldn’t have felt that she could come to you at the beginning? I don’t think she would have done, I think even though she was in my nurture group so we already knew each other, which was a benefit but I don’t think I would necessarily have been, I think she may … a tutor probably would have been the first person, but she knows I’m quite good at problem solving and we’ll go and speak to people and we’ll deal with things then and there… umm so I think, yes, more so now that she would come and see me

What do you think it was that enabled that change?

I think it was just literally talking through the ‘what if’ scenarios or if you had done this differently and then just thinking of the big picture, cos I think we can all be very single-minded… this is what I always do and I think it just opened up a little bit more for her, so I think that was the
big difference. Home for her is a little bit tricky at the moment and I think that school is her safe place and it is a place… academically she really really wants to do well and she really tries hard, lots and lots of house points and very proud of. School is her good place so when things go wrong in school it's really important to get that under control really really quickly…. And they’re only minor things, nothing major.

**How do you think the ELSA support has helped her?**

I think the big thing… with ELSA support… it has opened up… cos initially, the main bit about the ELSA support was helping her with living with a sibling with ADHD and helping her to make better choices….. of how to help him, whereas… from the …. because I was involved in the TAF meetings as well, the main things she tried to be the parent, so she was being too bossy to the little brother, rather than trying to get more on his level and still give him choices, but help her Mum and help her dad when she was with him, so I think it’s opened … the ELSA has opened her mind to that there’s other ways of doing things to get the result you want and to be happy, so I think that that has really helped her learn a bit more about herself I would say.

**Did she achieve what you had hoped for?**

Yes, she has achieved what I’d hoped for but as part of the sessions other things have opened up, so I am going to do another six sessions with her. From what I wanted to achieve and what she wanted to achieve with the family situation and her brother… definitely successful, but it’s just opened up other areas which I think I can help her with.

**What are you going to focus on for the next 6 weeks?**

It’s more about … we’ve just started this book… getting to know you, getting to know herself more and how to deal with issues with friendships when you fall out and not seeing it as such a big problem, that there’s an easier solution there, so I think that's the big thing that we’re going to look at as we’ve worked on the family side of things

**How has it felt as you have been supporting YP4 and seeing her being successful?**

It has made me feel really good actually, I have developed a relationship with her Mum as well, so I think her Mum feels she can speak to me and ring me up if there’s anything, any issues or problems. It’s certainly made me feel good – yes, definitely. I’ve enjoyed working with her. She’s a pleasure to work with. In fact, I'm organising all the additional transition groups for the new year 6’s coming in, above what TF School offer and I’ve asked her to come and help me, cos as she’s had a few little hiccups and things, so she can come and talk to them about how it felt to be new into the school… so she’s one of the ones I’ve picked to do that and she’s really happy to do that. She'll be brilliant.
Can you talk through some of the activities you did with her?

We did a few… we did some spider diagrams looking at the… the main thing I was trying to focus on… the mornings in the household were absolutely chaotic… because of her younger brother’s ADHD and we focused on what we could do, so looking at when the younger brother got up, he got up very early in the morning… what she could do to help her Mum to keep him entertained but keep him off the x-box or play station, so we looked at distraction techniques, games, but he would pick the games and everyone was involved in it. We did a bit of …we used spider diagrams to come up with ideas. She came up with a lot of the ideas herself, so we did that. A lot of the sessions I got her to do colouring, cos that was quite a good way of talking through things and each week she’d have the sheet that she’d tick to show how she was feeling, but that was mainly based in school, probably this time I’ll do the sheet how she’s feeling at home, because school seems good and there’s not an issue there about how she is feeling, the feelings of the situation with Mum and Dad, I think are more important… to see how she feels when she’s at home and at the weekend, so I think I’ll probably concentrate on that.

You can see the really clear movement over the sessions

Yes, from the 7-9, absolutely. It gives you just a quick snapshot of how she is feeling.

What activities worked best?

Definitely the colouring. Not so much doing pictures, even though we touched a bit on that. The colouring makes her nice and relaxed. It means that she hasn’t got to make that eye contact, not that it’s a problem for her to make eye contact, but she can concentrate on the colouring and we can just talk, I find that works really well. She picks the picture she wants to colour and we just talk through that.

Was there anything that didn’t work as well?

No, I think it’s all worked well, it all worked out really positively. The only frustrating thing from my perspective is that there’s been a couple of weeks where I should have seen her and haven’t, when things have happened elsewhere, but I’ve always gone and found her afterwards and said sorry, last week we missed our session as I had to deal with another child, but she was absolutely fine about that. I said we’ll catch up on another one, so we’ll do an extra one another time, but no, it’s actually worked very well to plan. Which is unusual, haha.

Would have done anything differently, made any changes?

I think from my perspective, it is the lack of time for planning that is the biggest thing. I would like more resources on-hand to be able to think, not necessarily to plan in advance, but if the sessions goes slightly different to how you originally though, you could call upon more things. We do … as part
of the session we normally have a game of Dobble or something like that at
the end or just to... I think we have run out of time a few times, I tend to
make it game-based, with the younger ones, definitely with the year 7’s, they
like a little game at the end.

So there is an ending of this part of the work. Does she see this as an
ending?

It’s an ending to the particular bit I originally set out to do.

I think she does, because at the end of the last session we had, we talked
about whether things had improved at home with her brother and she felt... I
think she felt empowered, she let him choose the games that he wants to do,
I can’t remember the amount of time, I’ve got it in my notes somewhere, they
kept him for something like an hour on this game. Mum joined in as well. He
set his own rules, but ... so she said sometimes she had to sort of step back
... not because he was cheating... but as he had changed the rules slightly.
Whereas I think, at the beginning, she wouldn’t have been able to... she’d
have said no, these are the rules, we have to do it this way and there would
have been that barrier and an argument. So I think she feels really pleased
with herself. She admitted it doesn’t always go to plan, sometimes he’ll be
very cross and then she’ll try to step in and help, but I would say it’s been
really successful and what we set out to achieve has been achieved, which is
great.

At the end of the next 6 weeks, how will you prepare her for that
ending?

What I tend to do ... what I’m hoping over the next 6 weeks, she definitely
does need to build up some more resilience with friendships... definitely, like
a lot of the kids, not being so reliant on social media because that’s what’s
caused most of the problems.

The way I tend to pitch it, that... sometimes, and I don’t think it will be
necessary with her, I’ll drop to once a fortnight but I will probably leave it as
an open invitation if there’s any problems to pop in one tutor a week, it would
just be a 10 minutes in the afternoon. I’ll say the door is open. You don’t have
to come if you are feeling fine, then don’t come. If you just want to tell me that
you are doing really well, then do come. So that’s what I tend to do, it doesn’t
just stop and I do lunch duty as well so I always go and speak to her at lunch
and just say ‘how’s your day?’... with some of the other kids as well. She
knows she can see me on lunch duty as well, which is quite good just to
know someone’s there, but I know if she had any problems, she would come
and find me.

Well she’s already done that hasn’t she? Yes, that’s it.

How do you think she will manage that ending when it does
come?
I think she’ll be absolutely fine, I think as long as she knows that if there are any problems, she can come and see me and in fact she did bring one of her friends to me during... it was about half way through the sessions. She’s identified that her friend needed some support and some help and she did bring her to me, so I spoke to her.... And I didn’t end up seeing her but I did signpost her to our wellbeing officer who had a chat with her, but that was a really kind thing to do.

Ideal Self Drawing

1. The Non-Ideal ELSA

Can you describe the type of ELSA you wouldn’t want to be? Describe them?

So, someone is very angry or no expressions at all. Sitting in front of the desk so you feel that there’s a barrier there, maybe concentrating on the laptop rather than concentrating on the person, so that’s what I’d say. So it feels a bit more like an interview, rather than... you know... not saying that my office is the nicest office, but I try not to have the laptop on the desk. I try not to do anything on the laptop other than sign them in until after they’ve gone. So, yes... non-welcoming, if they are reading body language, it’s ‘I don’t feel welcome here’.

What kind of person are they?

A person with not a lot of empathy, not very sympathetic towards a situation, not very open, not prepared to listen. They’ve already decided, it may be that they’ve read the information about this child and they’ve already made a decision about them, rather than be totally open and find out about the child themselves, let them tell you all about them and their situation. They are probably making judgements without knowing the true picture.

What do they look like?

I don’t think it really matters what they look like, I think it’s more how you present yourself and your expressions.... For me the most important thing is to be welcoming, that they are happy to come in, sometimes I see people that I’ve never seen in school before and it’s obviously going to be scary for them, coming in and seeing an adult that they’ve never seen. Some, even though they’ve been sent to ELSA, they don’t really want to do it, so my first thing would be to make it clear that they don’t have to do it, give it a chance, let’s get to know each other, so I always share something of myself so that I’m not just asking questions about them, which I think is important so that they know you are open and honest and obviously, I always explain it will always be confidential unless there is something safeguarding-wise that worries me that would be passed on so that they know that they can trust
you…. but there's a line that if … for their own protection and that you have to then report it back.

**So the non-ideal ELSA would do the opposite of this?**

The opposite, exactly, not open and honest, not sharing of themselves, not trust-worthy, yes and very judgemental.

**The bag, what kind of bag do they have, what is in it?**

Mmmm, interesting… ok, so I think it would be more of your solid briefcase type of bag. I don't think they'd be a lot of fun things in there. I think it would be very analytical, I think they'd be some surveys, too much paperwork which the kids really don't like. Not enough fun things.

**What is in the ELSA room?**

I think the room would be fairly bare, I don't think there would be lots of colours, I don't think there'd be pictures on the walls, I don't think that it would look like an inviting room. It's a bit like kids going into a Drs waiting room, they used to have all the toys everywhere, mostly, they've taken all those away, you just feel a little bit out of sorts. In an idea scenario, there would be things they could pick up, touch and see, nice things...

**What is the worst thing in the room?**

I think they probably have notices on the wall, nothing to do with ELSA, rules and regulations, I think… you mustn’t do this… you mustn’t do that… which I think would be a barrier… too many school rules

**If the room has rules, what would they be?**

Things you mustn’t do, they’d be rules for the school, which would be correct, but I think they’d be put across… I don’t think it’s the right place to have all those rules… your normal ones, so only speak when you are spoken to, that kind of thing.

**When you walk in, how does it make you feel?**

When you walk in a room like that, you feel I really don’t want to be here, so you would not feel I can sit down and talk to this person about my problems, because the empathy would not be oozing out…you’d probably be thinking why am I here? I don’t like this. I’d rather be in lessons. I would imagine that is how they would feel.

**With Students? What kind of work are they doing?**

I think they’d be doing more academic work, which is obviously not what it is about. I think they’d get them doing the surveys of how they are feeling (which you need to do to a certain degree), but then I think they’d base it on more academic studies which a lot of kids do struggle with, it’s part of the reasons they come and see us… the stresses of dealing with classroom activities.
How do they get on together?

I’d say not brilliantly well, as I don’t think the young person would warm to them, so the relationship wouldn’t develop. I don’t think the YP would share their feelings of what’s worrying them and what’s bothering them, so I think it would probably be a bit of a waste of time, on both sides really.

What does she say to the students she’s working with?

I think they’d say things like, ‘well, you have to go to school, you’ve just got to get on with it’, ‘everyone’s got problems, I’ve got problems, so you’re not the only one’, but not pitched in a sympathetic way. They may also have the views that certain medical conditions don’t exist, in their day there was no such thing as ADHD, I’ve heard that mentioned a few times.

How do they make them feel?

I think they’d feel an awful lot worse than when they first went in there, they’d feel unsupported, they’d feel that maybe there was something wrong with them and I think it would also create a huge barrier if they then saw a nice ELSA… to break that down and then work with someone that wanted to work with the young person and wanted to help. I think they’d find it extremely difficult to engage after an experience like that.

How are they with other adults?

I think, it would a be a similar feeling actually. Let’s just say, if I had a line manager who came across as a bit angry, I’d be worried, I’d probably be worried about asking… if I needed an hour off or something to go to something for my child’s school for example… I would feel a bit anxious about going in and asking. I think it would put people off from wanting to go in and have a conversation, most definitely.

2. The Ideal ELSA

Can you describe the ELSA you would like to be? Describe them?

Friendly, smiley, welcoming. No barriers in front of them… so as the person comes in they are directly in front of you. If they want to move the chairs along the side, I always encourage them to move the chairs. Just a very welcoming… open. Not with the laptop directly in front of them. Definitely welcoming.

The bag, what kind of bag do they have, what is in it?

More of an open bag and in the bag there would be… some paperwork still, but more fun things, they’d be fun activities, some games in there, a few of the different workbooks which could be used at some point, maybe their ELSA book for reference to certain things. The bag is not all closed in, the
briefcase one was very closed… and this is mine. The child can see the bag is open and there are fun things in there for them to do in there.

**What is in their room?**

They’d definitely be some stationery, they’d be some posters on the wall, there’d be some games. Hopefully a room with windows, with lots of light in there would be good. In an ideal one, it would be nice to have some beanbags, definitely bright coloured beanbags, so they can be a bit more comfortable and relaxed, some stress toys or things to fiddle with, some cubes, sand… they like the sand timers, just to make them feel relaxed. Things they can actually pick up and look at… so they don’t have to directly look at the ELSA when they don’t particularly know them, so they can feel a bit more…they can get to know the room as well as the person. I think the room is key, having a room you can go into, that they know where it is, they feel safe in there, feel comfortable, feel that they can open up. I think that is very important.

**What is the most important thing/ best thing in the ELSA room?**

I don’t think the room is the most important, it is the person that’s in there that is the most important. It’s important that you’ve got someone who is friendly and will help, is prepared to help and is prepared to listen, that is the most important thing, sometimes the kids just needs someone to listen to them.

**When the YP walks in, how does it make them feel?**

I hope they feel welcome, so if I haven’t seen them before, I normally collect them, I would have said we’re doing these sessions, your parents should have had a letter home, tell them a little about it, that’s not in my room, I go and see them somewhere else in their own environment and normally they say will you come and get me for the first session. Sometimes they want to come directly to me but mostly I go and collect them. We’ll chat a little bit along the way to break the ice and then I would say a little bit about myself and then I’d say, I’d like to… I’ll say who referred them to me, but I’m not going to look at the form as I want you to tell me about yourself, rather than me reading something on a piece of paper.

**If the room has rules, what would they be?**

Yes, it would be nice rules, to be honest, to share the information, the rules are whatever is said within the room stays in the room, unless something is said that would worry me safeguarding-wise, trust – that we trust each other, which is very important. There wouldn’t be a whole list of rules, they’d be very simplistic.

**With students? What would they be doing together?**

We have a number of different workbooks. I tend to… I have to confess I’m not a big fan of workbooks, but sometimes they can have their place. I very rarely complete the whole of one. I have the getting to know me one,
increasing self-esteem, anger-management, I have one we put together just on resilience which is just a few pages, I tend to just pick various activities from the ELSA pack. Various activities we will do, filling the emotions tank and it over spilling and the exploding anger one, we tend to do those. More so with the girls… but I always give them something to colour, I always have a range of things they can pick what they want to colour or just give them a blank piece of paper and they can colour abstractly. They tend to like that.

**How do they get on? How does she make them feel?**

Very well, good relationship, in most cases, the kids… even if they are reluctant at first to come, they really want to. Another important thing is when I meet them, I go through the timetable with them and try my best to take them out of lessons that are not quite so keen on and try not take them out of things that they really do like, cos otherwise that just puts you on the back foot if it is something they absolutely love. I’d say that it builds up a good relationship.

**What does she say to them?**

She makes it clear that it is confidential, that she is there to listen, that they are going to come up with the solutions to their problems but the ELSA will help them find those solutions which I think is important, rather than an adult saying this is what you have to do to change your life. Give them ideas, you could do this, you could do this but they have got to come up with what is best for them. One of the big things I do is… whatever the problem is… is coming up with a happy place. I pretty much do that in all my sessions and I’d describe what my happy place is and if I’m feeling sad or low, I can visualise it and look at all the senses and that tends to work quite well. I get most of them to do that. Cos, I’d say the majority don’t actually like putting pen to paper that I see so getting them to describe things or visual things works well.

**How does the ELSA make those YP feel?**

I hope the ELSA makes them feel a lot better about themselves, I think it will help them get to know themselves better, by asking the right questions and suggesting different ways of looking at things and hopefully it would make them feel that there always is a solution to the problem, some are easier to find than others, but to have trust in people, that they are not alone, that they have people that will fight their corner and will help them.

**How does the ELSA get on with other adults?**

They get on really well, they have a chat about their own family lives. They’re relaxed, they are happy to come in a speak to the ELSA, they have a good relationship with all the staff.

3. Rate yourself as an Ideal ELSA
Before the ELSA training?

I think, about here...

After the ELSA training?

Straight after the training… here

Now?

I still think I could do more

What has made the difference, how have you got from there to here?

Then it is then implementing what was learnt in the training. Loads and loads of new resources, new ideas, speaking to other people, just thinking I want to implement all these. Some were restricted because of budgets… then the roles changed a bit and I had to teach numeracy, my colleague had to teach literacy and we went away from it… just the way the school went… then they were totally back on board with it, so you felt more supported, there was a little bit of money here and there to buy a few bits of resources and things.

I think the big thing is… we would like to improve the workbooks, make them less wordy, make them more colour and drawing-based, where you can get something out of them, so you can get what you want to know without having to write lots of things down. Definitely the resources need to be improved, we both feel that. A few more posters and things on the wall. Delivery-wise, I’m quite happy with how I deliver the ELSA.

Where you would like to be?

As good as possible…. Up here!

Anything else you’d like to improve to get to that ideal point?

My biggest thing is that I see too many students and there’s not enough time. Most days it’s 2 per hour. Sometimes one leaves the room and the next one walks in, there’s very little time to reflect and then plan … thinking time. I make notes as I’m going along, I used to then type them up, but I haven’t done that for a couple of years, it’s impossible, so I do have my rough notes, because I think, one of the worst things when you are meeting a student that you’ve not met before and you are asking them about their family situation and who do they live with, brothers and sisters and then you’ve seen them a second time and you haven’t remembered that information, then they’re not going to feel that you are getting to know them and they are going to feel upset that they have told you that and that you haven’t remembered. So, more time for … I would have a quick flick through, but more time for … so you are not asking the same questions and you are getting to know the student properly… so find out their interests, their hobbies. I would always find out if they like sport… so you are showing an interest in them and not just their problems.
Where would YP4 rate you?

I certainly hope… I think she’d rate me about in the middle of here.

**What do you think she would say about you?**

I think she’d say that she likes me, that I listen to her, that we come up with solutions together, supportive and if things go wrong, I’ll go and see people and try to problem solve for them and put things right and make them feel better about the situation.

Where would the other ELSA at TF school rate you?

Oh, I think she’d rate me about the same as YP4, she’d say something similar, that I’m good at listening. I hate anything that is not fair. So if I feel …. even if the kids have been a little bit cheeky, but if I think they are being discriminated against because of something that happened before, she knows I’d be straight on the case and very defensive of the children. Just to make their point. I do obviously have a lot of sympathy for the teachers, but some of them, they’ve just lost their way a bit and for judgements to be made because of it… and other kids egging them on, I’d try and be fully supportive and speak to the teachers about the situation. S knows I’m like that.

**Your line manager?**

I think she’s put me further up, up there. They would say similar, know that I always fight the cause and I get a little bit cross if I don’t feel those kids are getting the support and help that they need. She knows I always want to give 110% and would always put myself out for whoever they are, whether it’s coming in early because they needed to see me before school or before my start time, I would come in and see them

**Difference between own rating and line manager’s rating, any thoughts?**

You always strive to be better, even if you got to here, then this line would just increase cos you still want to do more and improve, that’s why the supervision sessions are good, you can always do more, you get different ideas from other people … confidence I’m looking for… even if it’s courses you have done before or you think you know, there’s always something else that comes out of it or something that’s right at the back of your head that you’ve forgotten and you think ‘oh yeah, I remember when I used to do that’. I think it’s important to continually be developing yourself in a professional sense.

**Anything else?**

No, it’s interesting doing this, it does make you think of things from the training that you haven’t maybe thought about for 4 or 5 years.
Appendix 41 - Initial Codes

Code-Filter: All

activities
Always there for them
awareness
bought a friend to see me
Boys
Can always seek me out
can get support from others
Chats on the way to ELSA
check in
Child wants to carry on
collated all the strategies for them as reminders
Comfort blanket
Comfortable
Confidentiality
cutting ties
demonstrating impact
Doesn't seem to be an ending
doing not talking
Don't want to be different
Duration of the intervention
ELSA at junior school
ELSA characteristics
ELSA feelings
ELSA room
ELSA to fill a gap in CAMHS provision
Ending
Ending of this part of the work
feedback
Feel you ought to carry on for the child
Form filling
Frequency of the intervention
get things off your chest
Getting to know you
girls
give it a chance
Gives advice
Giving a piece of me
Happier
Happy to come
he didn't want it to end
He needs it
Help please
Hopes
I can be myself
I can support her / him
I could be myself
I could show all my feelings
I don't know how to measure it's impact
I don't know if it has ended
I don't know what I can do to help her
I don't know when I'm going to finish
I don’t know where to end it
I don’t know who that lady is
I find it difficult to end it
inappropriate referrals
Individual interests
Individual needs of students
informal
information and preparation for ELSA
Involvement of parents
It’s not ELSA
It helps to talk
just want reassurance
know the student
learnt strategies
let people in
Liaison with junior school ELSAs
liaison with other teaching staff
look for positives
Made a difference
Merry go round
more confidence
more practical/ active/ making things
need more resources
new ELSA
new issues have emerged
Not alone
Not doing very much, didn’t have a set theme
Not in front of my friends
Not sure what to do
Not target setting
Not what they were expecting
Ongoing ELSA
ongoing targets
Other school events call me away
Part of my job
physical break
Planning
Pressure of waiting lists
Pressure to end ELSA
Pressure to keep churning them out
record keeping
reduction of support
refer for another intervention
refer to the strategies given
Relationship characteristics
relationship has got stronger
reluctance
rewards
sadness
safe space
scheme of work/ booklet
setting up ELSA
she / he can talk to me
She helps
She understands and explains
SLT understanding
Small steps can be big steps
So many resources
So much information
Solve more of own issues
someone to help me
Someone to talk to
Something else comes up
Space
Squeezed in
Structure would help
Student characteristics
support
surprised
talk
Target setting
Target setting at the end
Target setting half way through
Targets equal pressure
targets just come along
there if they need you
things to reflect upon
think before I act
time for them
Time to chat
Time to generalise what learnt
Toys and Games
Transition
Trust
Two ELSAs in one school
use strategies learnt
waiting list
walking and talking
warning of the ending
What is ELSA all about?
Why am I seeing an ELSA?
will miss it
Would like more ELSA time
You don't need to worry
YP characteristics
YP engagement / involvement
YP feelings
Appendix 42 - Revised Codes with Similarities Reduced and Grouped

Code-Filter: All

HU: 2019.05.23 Project ELSA thesis ELSAs, YPs and FG reduced sim codes
File: \[\[\Client\CS\Users\Sue P...\2019.05.23 Project ELSA thesis ELSAs, YPs and FG reduced sim codes.hpr7\]
Edited by: Super
Date/Time: 2019-05-23 14:55:04

Activities
Always there for them
Awareness of own needs
Barriers
Boys
Can always seek me out
Support from other staff
Quick check ins
Ending - child wants to carry on
ELSA is a comfort blanket
Comfortable
Confidentiality
Demonstrating impact
Doesn’t seem to be an ending
Doing not talking
Duration of ELSA
ELSA at junior school
ELSA characteristics
ELSA feelings
ELSA room
ELSA to fill a gap in CAMHS provision
Ending
Ending of this part of the work
Ending reassurances
Ending sadness
Feedback
Form filling
Frequency of the intervention
You can get things off your chest
Getting to know you
Girls
Give it a chance
Gives advice
Giving a piece of me
Happy to come
He needs it
Help please
Hopes
I can be myself
I can support her / him
I don’t know who that lady is
inappropriate referrals
Individual interests
Individual needs of students
Involvement of parents
It’s not ELSA
It helps to talk
Let people in
Liaison with other teaching staff
Listening
Look for positives
Made a difference
Merry go round
More practical/ active/ making things
Starting out as an ELSA
New issues have emerged
Don’t feel alone
Not target setting
Not what they were expecting
Ongoing ELSA
Ongoing targets
Other school events call me away
ELSA role
Some kids just need a physical break
Planning
Pressure to end ELSA
Record keeping
Reduction of support
Refer for another intervention
Relationship characteristics
Rewards
Safe space
Scheme of work/ booklet
Setting up ELSA
SLT understanding
Small steps can be big steps
So many resources
So much information
Solve more of own issues
Someone to talk to
Space
Squeezed in
Structure would help
Support
Target setting
Time to reflect and think before acting
Toys and Games
Transition
Trust
Two ELSAs in one school
Use strategies learnt
Waiting list
Warning of the ending
What is ELSA all about?
Would recommend it to a friend
You don’t need to worry
YP characteristics
YP engagement / involvement
YP feelings
Appendix 43 - Codes Categorised into Themes

Code-Filter: All

HU: 2019.05.24 Project ELSA thesis ELSAs, YPs and FG themes
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Date/Time: 2019-05-24 11:04:39

Bar - Barriers
Bar - Help please
Bar - Other school events call me away
Bar - So many resources
Bar - So much information
Bar - Starting out as an ELSA
Bar - Structure would help
Beg - Confidentiality
Beg - Duration of ELSA
Beg - ELSA at junior school
Beg - ELSA role
Beg - ELSA to fill a gap in CAMHS provision
Beg - Form filling
Beg - Frequency of the intervention
Beg - Hopes
Beg - I don't know who that lady is
Beg - Inappropriate referrals
Beg - Individual interests
Beg - Individual needs of students
Beg - Involvement of parents
Beg - It's not ELSA
Beg - Liaison with other teaching staff
Beg - Not what they were expecting
Beg - Planning
Beg - Scheme of work/ booklet
Beg - Setting up ELSA
Beg - SLT understanding
Beg - Target setting
Beg - Transition
Beg - Two ELSAs in one school
Beg - Waiting list
Beg - What is ELSA all about?
End - reassurances
End - sadness
End - Can always seek me out
End - Didn't know when it was going to end
End - Doesn't seem to be an ending
End - Ending of this part of the work
End - He needs it to continue
End - Knew it was going to end
End - Merry go round
End - New issues have emerged
End - Ongoing ELSA
End - Ongoing targets
End - Pressure to end ELSA
End - Quick check ins
End - Reduction of support
End - Refer for another intervention
End - Rewards
End - Warning of the ending
End - child wants to carry on
End - Can get support from other staff
Imp - Demonstrating impact
Imp - Feedback
Imp - Made a difference
Imp - Record keeping
Imp - Small steps can be big steps
Imp - Solve more of own issues
Imp - Time to reflect and think before acting
Imp - Use strategies learnt
Imp - Would recommend it
Imp - Would recommend it to a friend
Mid - Activities
Mid - Boys
Mid - Comfortable
Mid - Doing not talking
Mid - ELSA room
Mid - Girls
Mid - More practical/ active/ making things
Mid - Not target setting
Mid - Some kids just need a physical break
Mid - Support
Mid - Support from other staff too
Mid - Toys and Games
Rel - Always there for them
Rel - Awareness of own needs
Rel - Don’t feel alone
Rel - ELSA characteristics
Rel - ELSA feelings
Rel - ELSA is a comfort blanket
Rel - Getting to know you
Rel - Gives advice
Rel - Giving a piece of me
Rel - Happy to come
Rel - I can be myself
Rel - I can support her / him
Rel - It helps to talk
Rel - Let people in
Rel - Listening
Rel - Look for positives
Rel - Relationship characteristics
Rel - Safe Space
Rel - Safe space
Rel - Someone to talk to
Rel - Trust
Rel - You can get things off your chest
Rel - You don’t need to worry
Rel - YP characteristics
Rel - YP engagement / involvement
Rel - YP feelings

Key:
Bar = Barriers
Beg = Beginning
End = Ending
Imp = Impact
Mid = Middle
Rel = Relationship
### Appendix 44 - Examples of Extracts to Illustrate the Therapeutic Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overarching Theme</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Examples of extracts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Therapeutic Relationship</strong></td>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td><strong>Always there:</strong></td>
<td>They see us round the school and it’s ‘Miss, can I talk to you?’... they can rely on us to have a little chat’ FG ELSA</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>‘If you need help, she’ll be there’. Katie</td>
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<td>‘When I feel down or if I am worrying about something, I can always go to her’. Annabel</td>
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<td>‘It’s just that reassurance and knowing you are there if they need you’. FG ELSA</td>
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<td><strong>Like a comfort blanket</strong></td>
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<td>‘I’ve got ones in year 11 now, that I’ve seen since year 7. Not continuously, but it’s like a comfort blanket almost and to see them through the troughs’. FG ELSA</td>
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<td>‘She makes me happy, when she’s like... she’s like comforting. She’s just... she’s like a friend, she’ll be there for you’. Adam</td>
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<td><strong>Time for them</strong></td>
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<td>‘They’ll always have time for you’. Katie</td>
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<td>‘The most important thing is time for these kids’. Mrs Greenway</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship gets stronger and lasts</strong></td>
<td><strong>Relationship before ELSA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘So I did get to know Adam bit before ELSA. I think that helped’. Mrs Salmon</td>
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<td><strong>Gets stronger</strong></td>
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| **Trust** | ‘Well it is different, cos at first it was like, quite quiet, but then now cos I know her more and we’re more chatty as well, so it’s quite fun’. Annabel  
‘I’ve got to know her a lot more. I feel I can talk to her and if there is something troubling her, we can get straight to the point rather than sort of, I don’t know, go round the houses for a bit’. Mrs Salmon  

*It lasts*  
‘They’ve always got that base with us’. FG ELSA  

‘and it (the relationship) tends to last the whole time they are here. It’s really nice and they will always speak to you, they’ll see you in the corridor and it’s ‘hello Miss’. It’s a real positive I would say’. FG ELSA  

‘I think it’s very nice that she knows that she can come to me at any point not just with the ELSA sessions and it’ll be long after the sessions are completed that she’ll still continue to do that I think’. Mrs Gulliver  

‘She’s very nice, I can trust her and she’s always there if I need to talk to her and I can say stuff to her that I wouldn’t normally say to my friends. She can keep secrets; she’s really good’. Adam  

‘It’s made me feel trusting cos I now know that someone’s here to help and support me’. Annabel  

‘She said that I can trust her and I’ve told her some stuff ‘bout home and yeah... she hasn’t told...’ Adam |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YP characteristics</th>
<th>Needs</th>
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</table>
| **Safe space**    | **I can show my feelings** | ‘It was a session where I could be like myself and when I could show all my feelings to someone’. Annabel  
* I can be myself  
‘She does make me laugh when I’m worried and stuff. I can just be myself’. Amy  
‘They just need a safe space to vent sometimes and that time’. FG ELSA  
‘This was the main thing that I could come to and be relaxed and have fun basically’. Amy  
‘She’s got to have space and time to speak and knowing that she had that helped her become a bit more open with me generally’. Mrs Greenway |
| **Needs**         | **Awareness of needs** |  
Accepting of help  
‘I do feel he can come and talk to me because he has spoken to me about a couple of delicate issues and yeh.. he’s been able to open up’. Mrs Salmon  
‘She will listen and she’s very perceptive to changing and changing mindset as well’. Mrs Gulliver  
Other individual needs were mentioned such as:  
Likeable  
Kind and caring  
Lively  
Literacy  
Vulnerable  
Struggles socially  
Low self-esteem  
Family difficulties  
Anxious |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YP feelings</th>
<th>Made me feel better</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘So then I think ELSA is when you don’t have someone you can always like come to them and they can talk to you and make you feel better’. Annabel</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Yes. Well, like, it makes me feel like I have someone to talk to and it makes me feel a bit more like happier and comfortable in school cos I know there’s someone there’. Katie</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘It’s because I can tell Mrs Salmon lots of different things and she knows that whatever this thing is, she can always give a response back, a very helpful response’. Adam</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘I feel that he’s happier cos he can talk to me and he knows I can support him and resolve issues’. Mrs Salmon</td>
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<tr>
<td>I don’t want it to end</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘So, I said to him, you know... we need to finish and his little face dropped’. FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘A pupil was almost in tears and said that he didn’t want it to end, he wanted to carry on coming’. FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>I don’t feel alone</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘It makes me feel quite happy, cos then you know that someone’s there to always help you and if you are in a situation, you know that you are not alone’. Annabel</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘It’s helped me because like if I was lonely then I could always go to her and we could always like think about something as a positive thing that I can think about’. Annabel</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Feelings of security**
‘It makes me feel quite happy cos I know now that someone will be there for me and supporting me wherever I go’. Annabel

**Relaxed**
‘She was very relaxed and quite open in our relationship’. Mrs Greenway
‘I feel quite happy and relaxed, it’s like easy’. Amy

**I enjoyed it**
‘It’s made me a lot happier with some stuff at home’. Adam
‘Quite excited because I actually enjoy working with her’. Amy
‘She makes me feel happy’. Adam
‘… with a year 9 boy, he was getting quite angry so we did make a cornflour balloon / stress ball and he really enjoyed that’. FG ELSA

**You don’t need to worry**
When I feel down or if I am worrying about something, I can always go to her’. Annabel
‘You don’t need to be afraid to talk about your feelings as that is what the group is about and you don’t need to worry anything any more’. Annabel

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<tr>
<th>ELSA characteristics</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Not a teacher, not a parent</strong></td>
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<td>(You are) quite independent, you’re not the family member, you’re not a teacher’. FG ELSA</td>
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</table>

| Wise |
| ‘a wise mind, maybe they can’t see a way forward, but you can suggest different ways’. FG ELSA |

| Give a piece of ourselves |
| ‘I will be giving of myself’. FG ELSA |
‘We’re asking quite a lot of them, aren’t we? To open themselves up, so actually perhaps we need to give them a little bit too...’ FG ELSA

Fun
‘She’s really like bubbly, so like if I come in here angry like, she just makes me leave with a smile’. Amy

Kind and Friendly
‘They will always be able to help you and they are really friendly.’ Katie

‘Mrs Salmon is quite friendly, um she’s kind and she always helps people when they need to be helped’. Annabel

‘So she helps me, she always makes sure that everyone is happy and she’s like really kind and she helps everyone’. Katie

‘Well, she’s like really nice and if she sees you around the school she’ll always like greet you and see how you are’. Katie

‘She’s really nice, she’s friendly and she’s someone you want to be around’. Adam

The kind of people we are
‘We’re hoping to do so much more for them cos that’s the kind of people we are’. FG ELSA

They are at ease with me
‘She is very comfortable with me’. Mrs Greenway

‘I do feel he can come and talk to me because he has spoken to me about a couple of delicate issues and he’s been able to open up’. Mrs Salmon
| **Listens** |  ‘I know there’s someone that can be there for me, always there to listen and somebody I can trust’. Adam  
‘I think they learn to trust you, someone they can talk to, you listen to them’. FG ELSA |
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<tr>
<td><strong>Understands and explains</strong></td>
<td>‘It’s really helpful talking to her, cos if I’m like angry and I come into a session really angry, then she like understands and it’s not like oh you go into a classroom angry and they tell you off. She won’t tell me off, she explains to me what’s up and stuff, like why are you being like this and yeah…’ Amy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **ELSA feelings** |  **Sad when it ends**  
‘but in a way it’s a bit like cutting ties as well for ourselves because we have given of ourselves a little bit to them and it can be quite sad’. FG ELSA |
| **It’s rewarding** |  ‘I love ELSA and I love the students. I always see that they come out with something... and it’s good’. Mrs Salmon |
| **Happy I’ve been able to help** |  ‘Happy, because we’ve talked through issues at home and issues at school and it has helped him and he has said that it feels better’. Mrs Salmon |
| |  ‘Happy actually cos I felt that along the weeks we’ve worked together I’ve been able to provide support and she’s gone back home or she’s done whatever it is in school and she has felt happier in herself as well’. Mrs Salmon |
| |  ‘I think if you know they’ve gone back in (to the classroom) and they seem much calmer and happier and in the right place, then yeah, it’s great!’ FG ELSA |
‘The time we spent together was positive’. Mrs Greenway

*I look forward to working with the YP*

‘I’d always look forward to seeing her. She’s always smiling, always cheery, yup... lovely child to work with... absolutely’. Mrs Gulliver
### Appendix 45 - Examples of Extracts to Illustrate the Therapeutic Journey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overarching Theme</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Examples of extracts</th>
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</table>
| The Therapeutic Journey | Beginnings and Expectations | Hopes and Expectations | ‘It will give me more chances to speak out, so I can share and the more I speak out, the more I can get confidenter.’ Adam  
‘So I do know that we go once a week and I’m expecting to have nice things to do and have lots of activities like making things and drawing and I’m also hoping for lots... well not lots, but most teachers to help me and support me as well.’ Annabel  
‘So then I think ELSA is when you don’t have someone, you can always like come to them and they can talk to you and make you feel better.’ Annabel  
‘I’m looking forward to feeling a bit more comfortable and happier and feeling that if I have a problem, I have someone to talk to’. Katie  
‘I think it’s going to be fine... fun’. Adam  
‘I think I could really help her’. Mrs Gulliver  
‘whatever we talk about stays with us and it won’t be shared around with anyone’. Annabel |
|                   |                           | It’s going to help me        |                                                                                                                                                     |
|                   |                           | I’ll have someone to talk to  |                                                                                                                                                     |
|                   |                           | It’s going to be fun         |                                                                                                                                                     |
|                   |                           | I can help him/her          |                                                                                                                                                     |
|                   |                           | Set up                      |                                                                                                                                                     |
|                   |                           | Confidentiality             |                                                                                                                                                     |
|                   |                           | Planning                    | ‘I have standard resources that I would apply for anger management or self-esteem and I just list those at the top, so for example for anger management I |
use pipe cleaners, Jenga and the firework model and then I will record the meeting and do a short evaluation at the end’. Mrs Greenway

‘When I will sit down with him and work out where he is and see what comes out of the assessment that we’ll start on, that will give me a good steer if there’s anything else I should include’. Mrs Salmon

‘You do go off on a tangent or something else will come up, definitely. You have a plan, looking at the targets, you know... so I base it on the target, the target is more resilience, could be friendships, so I base it around that but normally you find a root cause of something else and you’re going off on a tangent a bit, but it is important and it is what they need, so….’. FG ELSA

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<th>Target Setting</th>
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<td>‘Amy identified anger management herself as something she wanted to work towards and control and other issues have come up along the way’. Mrs Greenway</td>
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<td>‘We normally set a target at our first meeting’. Mrs Salmon</td>
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<td>‘At the beginning I used to do all the target setting myself... and some of the kids that I saw I knew really well, but with all the year 7’s I don’t know them so I’ve now put it onto the heads of year... and they will set the targets and they will say what they want to achieve by the end of the ELSA sessions’. FG ELSA</td>
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<td>‘Sometimes the targets change though I find, you think about what might be a target and then actually ‘woooh, that’s no good’, they change to a completely different one’. FG ELSA</td>
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<td>‘I do my targets weekly’. FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Form filling</td>
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<td>Waiting lists</td>
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<td>Involvement of parents</td>
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<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>Duration</td>
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<td>Information gathering</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘We do it at the start and at the end and hopefully you would have seen some improvement (ELSA referral form/graph – given on training)... it’s a visual one so it’s a lot better for the students and they plot where they are at the start with maybe a dot and at the end they do it in a different colour with an x and they like to draw the line and see where they have made progress themselves’. FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<th>Referral information</th>
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<td>‘There is a long drawn out referral process through the Head of Year or Head of Department and it’s quite stretched so people can’t exactly come to me... she’s now dealing with all the referrals to Learning Space or Spark fish or whatever and then CAMHS’. FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<th>Initial meeting with YP</th>
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<td>‘They do know the reasons why they’ve been referred, so you talk about that in your first initial meeting and say ‘we’re going to talk a lot about anxiety or friendships and we have a booklet that we work through’ and obviously anything that comes out, we will support and get through in the 6 weeks’. FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘so a getting to know you session is the first session and then I’ll plan it for 6 weeks and then review at the end of the 6 weeks’ FG ELSA</td>
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<td>‘So the referral comes and I’ll go and meet with them and chat with them and say, you know, you’ve been referred, when we are going to meet and work out which lessons are appropriate for them to miss’. FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Needs/Interests</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual needs of YP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual interests of YP</td>
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<td>Which lessons to withdraw them from</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information sharing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liaison with other school staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liaison at junior – secondary transition</td>
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</table>
| ELSA role | What is ELSA all about? | *Why am I having ELSA support?*  
‘Well I know that they are a group of people or a person who would like talk to you and help you with your emotions. I think they are there for people who sometimes struggle’ Katie
At the beginning, I didn’t really understand it... I didn’t want to come here’. Amy
‘I was told that it was going to help in lessons and stuff cos like before I used to get really angry and stuff and I’d have no one to talk to ... so it would like help and guide things and I’d have someone to talk to’. Amy

‘To boost my confident and to help...get rid of some of my fears’. Adam

‘Do they know why they are coming to see me? Most of the time they don’t’ FG ELSA

Who Is That Lady?
‘I’ve had a couple of the boys... the older ones where things haven’t been going right ... and I just sit down and talk ... so they don’t actually know what I do, but they then ask to see me and that sometimes starts ELSA work because they want to engage with me then ...and they turn round and say I don’t know who that lady was’ FG ELSA

‘What I tend to do is give an example, you have a TA in class sometimes for academic work, this is ... just for you and it’s for emotional... for time out and space and things... I’m just outside of the class but still helping’. FG ELSA

Why am I doing this?
‘I’m feeling a bit more pressure to keep churning them out and so I think ‘well what is ELSA about actually?’ FG ELSA
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Inappropriate referrals</th>
<th>To fill a gap in CAMHS provision</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘What we’re finding now is that because there’s such a long waiting list for CAMHS, we’re getting more referred to ELSA, to tide them over a little bit’. FG ELSA</td>
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| SLT understanding | ‘I also think the people higher up need to realise, that although we are ELSA support, sometimes ‘oh, we’ll just give them that’ and they don’t always need that, it could be something else. You have to be a bit careful that they are not just dumping people on you, and you know that the kids won’t engage with it’ FG ELSA |

| ‘It might be the size of the school but I am getting more referrals that are just behaviour, for example a student that has a huge chunk of behaviour points on their record but no SEN ... to a certain extent we are a tick box in this situation which is a shame... because I get more and more of the bolshi individuals’ Mrs Greenway |

| ‘Some of the referrals I’ve got haven’t been appropriate for ELSA and I think that’s possibly why I find it difficult to end it because it takes you ages to find out what the nature of the beast is really’ FG ELSA |

| ELSA at junior school – differences in role | ‘At my old school, there was this really small room and this teacher called Mrs ELSA and I used to go in there and there were toys and craft things, her room was mainly just toys and there was this bottle with liquid and you tip it upside down and it starts dripping and a bubble appears at the top and more comes down and I used to play with it in her room and I actually bought one’. Katie |

| ‘It is more like an office. She has pens but she doesn’t have huge shelves of toys like Mrs ELSA (the junior school ELSA) had.’ Katie |
‘Well, I’d say that... my old school, Mrs ELSA (junior school ELSA) - I preferred her room but I’d say that I speak about more sensible things with Mrs Gulliver’. Katie

‘I asked him if he done it in junior school which I know is completely different to how we work here, so I said it’s on similar lines but it may be at a higher level and I said I would like to do a similar thing with you and he was like ‘oh yes’ I think he really appreciated the support he had in the junior school’. Mrs Salmon

‘I think sometimes the children that have seen ELSAs at junior school it’s a bit of a shock to them... the difference... and they come and see us, we haven’t got all those nice games. There are some games and things but it’s not predominantly about that. I think when the year 7’s come in and they have experienced ELSA, they think it’s going to be the same sort of thing and that is a little bit of an eye opener to them’. FG ELSA

‘I think she understands quite a lot because of what happened with the junior school, the ELSA there, so I think she knows that it is like a support network for her, to be able to talk about things that are worrying her’ Mrs Gulliver

‘It’s going to very different. I did say to her it’s going to be different. Lots of the kids love the ELSA from the junior school, but I think it will be very very different. I expect they have their own expectations and it’s very different, but I don’t know what junior ELSAs do really’. Mrs Gulliver

‘and they do like sitting with a cup of tea and having a chat. I think that is the difference between primary and secondary a lot of the time, it’s that kind of interaction that they really like’ FG ELSA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The middle, the intervention, the support</th>
<th>Informal ELSA support/ It’s not really ELSA support</th>
<th>ELSA without realising it</th>
<th>‘He’s not actually down for ELSA, he’s down for speech and language but he needs ELSA… on the way to the room for the speech and language he chats… by the time we’ve got to the room it’s all off-loaded and that helps him…. he has a bit of ELSA without realising’ FG ELSA – Mrs Buncombe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YP doesn’t know why they are having ELSA support</td>
<td>‘Most of the time they don’t (know why they are having ELSA), they’re happy to come and talk and chat, they want someone to talk to, they’ve asked for someone to talk to’. FG ELSA</td>
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<td>No pressure on YP</td>
<td>‘You don’t want to put too much pressure on them. They’ve already got all that pressure, so to have another target sometimes…’ FG ELSA</td>
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<td>Ad hoc sessions</td>
<td>‘Some of the year 11’s, it may be that they just need a couple of sessions, to give them some strategies, to get them through the exams so I’ll say ‘I’ll be seeing you for a couple of sessions, if you feel that you need more, we can talk about that’ FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not working towards to set targets</td>
<td>‘Some students know what they want to repair or feel better about. Other students have not a clue… you don’t set any targets, the targets just kind of come along…’ FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Just chatting</td>
<td>‘He comes and chats, but I didn’t feel that we were doing very much, in terms of… I didn’t really have a set theme with him’. FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Never-ending ELSA support</td>
<td>‘I’ve got some who are looked after children that I’ve been seeing since year 7 and they are now in year 10. On and off, so they will go and then come back and that is always left open’ FG ELSA</td>
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</table>
‘My year 11’s, most of whom I have had since year 7 on and off, they come and see me at tutor time every other week’. FG ELSA

### ELSA room

**Space to vent**

‘A space where they feel able to talk, for some people that is a more formal setting, but for others... you just need to be mindful of that’ FG ELSA

If they are in a real state, then behind the door of the office is where the language comes out, but they’re not going to get reprimanded for it (within reason), but they just need a safe space to vent sometimes and that time’. FG ELSA

### Using the rest of the school / grounds

‘Sometimes it’s appropriate to be in a room, other times we’ve taken people to the canteen cos there’s a big area there, you can get a hot chocolate or something if you need to’. FG ELSA

‘Sometimes we go for a walk, we’ve got big playing fields behind the school and as long as we get parental permission, then we are allowed to go outside of the school gates, we use the playing fields anyway, we literally walk round in a big loop, I know they just need to get out of the boundary line and then when you go back in, they can breathe a little bit more’. FG ELSA

### Activities

**Doing whilst talking**

‘Colouring makes her nice and relaxed. It means that she hasn’t got to make that eye contact, not that it’s a problem for her to make eye contact, but she can concentrate on the colouring and we can just talk, I find that works really well. She picks the picture she wants to colour and we just talk through that’. Mrs Gulliver

‘Because the pressure is off, as long as they’re not sitting there being bombarded with questions, they just need to be doing something’. FG ELSA
<table>
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<th>Doing not talking</th>
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<tr>
<td>‘I always put out fiddly bits, some theraputty, I’ve got this... snake thing which is tentacle-y, they sit there pulling the tentacles and they like having something to fiddle with. A bag with squeezy things in ... I just leave it there and they can pick it up’. FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<th>Practical activities</th>
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<td>‘We did this Jenga thing and we would pile it up on all the problems. We did that... you know that really weird stuff (pipe cleaners) and we scrunched it up into a ball and then we threw it at the wall to see if it would do anything and stamped on it to see if it would change. It just wouldn’t change. Getting angry and shouting... it doesn’t do anything. I realise that it just makes me get told off over it, it still doesn’t change’. Amy</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘The one that made the most impact on her was a tactile resource, the problem ball, screwing up the giant pipe cleaners, we had a good time throwing that around, stamping on it, discovering that it didn’t actually change and we had to sit down and pull the problem apart’. Mrs Greenway</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘I did do... with a year 9 boy, he was getting quite angry so we did make a cornflour balloon / stress ball and he really enjoyed that’. FG ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The activities like screwing something up and like seeing what changes. Or doing ...building those block things up, Jenga but we do it in like stress and stuff, what has built up and it knocks down. So, you get that off your chest as well’. Amy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Maybe if we (could) do more like active sessions maybe. Maybe if it’s like even making things to calm yourself down and stuff’. Annabel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘We discuss about what you’ve done at the weekend, how you are feeling and you also get to do lots of fun things and making things’. Annabel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support</td>
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<td>Scheme of work or booklets</td>
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| | ‘Our booklet is self-esteem, anger and friendships, that’s how our booklet works... that’s very good as visually the student can see where they are over the
**six weeks... we’re not normally given specifics with our ELSAs (students), we just work through the booklet from start to finish’. FG ELSA**

‘I was surprised the first time, cos I saw how big the booklet was and I was thinking you probably won’t get through all of that. I was really surprised that we managed to get through. not all of it but most of it... working through that was fun’. Adam

| Problem-solving | We used spider diagrams to come up with ideas. She came up with a lot of the ideas herself’ Mrs Gulliver  
‘I think it was just literally talking through the ‘what if’ scenarios or if you had done this differently and then just thinking of the big picture’. Mrs Gulliver  
‘We’ve done some problem solving, we’ve spoken about... you have an issue, you’ve got a reaction and a stimulus but you always have a choice, so we’ve done some work on choice and consequences’. Mrs Gulliver |
| Relaxation | ‘She’s very good at practicing the breathing, she doesn’t feel silly doing it which some students do and she’s quite happy to sit in here with me and just do a couple of minutes of breathing, either before she starts talking to me or at the end of the session’. Mrs Greenway  
‘The things she reacted best to was definitely the breathing’. Mrs Greenway  
‘We went through a breathing exercise to make sure he is calm, if he’s in the lesson’. Mrs Salmon |
| Child-led | ‘You need to take a lead from the individual I think’. FG ELSA  
‘Amy tends to lead the sessions on this one. I think it’s very important to her, that she has some control’. Mrs Greenway |
| Looking for positives | ‘I’ve learnt that there’s always something positive about your life that you can reflect on if there’s something bad going on’. Annabel |
| Triggers and strategies | ‘You have an issue, you’ve got a reaction and a stimulus but you always have a choice, so we’ve done some work on choice and consequences. We’ve done the Jenga game where the wrong choices stack up and make a mess and also, she understands how just small things can also turn into a big wobbly tower and you fall down’. Mrs Greenway  
‘I learnt how to put my anger on a leash so I can calm it down. I learnt screwing up stuff and chucking it at a wall or stamping on it doesn’t change it. So, there’s no point starting it if it doesn’t change’. Amy |
| Resources | Toys, games and creative activities | ‘Would you rather?’ card game...if I’ve no idea how this child is going to be, we just play would you rather and they start.’ FG ELSA  
‘As part of the session we normally have a game of Dobble or something like that at the end ... I tend to make it game-based, with the younger ones, definitely with the year 7’s, they like a little game at the end’. Mrs Gulliver |
| Ending or not ending | Reduction of support | They can always seek me out | ‘She can, she can always come and find me’. Mrs Greenway  
‘I said to Annabel on our last session last week that I would see her in the new year. It won’t be in a weekly session like an ELSA but it will be a catch up how are you and obviously she can come and talk to me if she wants to’. Mrs Salmon  
‘I’ll say ‘the actual intense course has finished but if you need to come back...’ and they do’. FG ELSA  
‘I say to mine, although it’s ending, if you do feel you need to come and talk to me, you can at any time’. FG ELSA |
| Quick check-ins | | ‘Once every two weeks she might take me out of class just to have a catch up’. Adam |
‘I’ll probably see her two or three times (more). Because she’s got a target as well and because I’ve set it until the end of February, I’d like to see her twice, if not three times in that six-week period’. Mrs Salmon

‘I’ll drop to once a fortnight but I will probably leave it as an open invitation if there’s any problems to pop in one tutor a week, it would just be 10 minutes in the afternoon. I’ll say the door is open. You don’t have to come if you are feeling fine... If you just want to tell me that you are doing really well, then do come’. Mrs Gulliver

‘What I’ve done with a few of mine is, in the six weeks you see them every week and then for a couple of weeks afterwards you see them every other week, just for a ten-minute drop in and then they go’. FG ELSA

‘My year 11’s, most of whom I have had since year 7 on and off, they come and see me at tutor time every other week. Sometimes, I say if you don’t need to come, don’t come. It’s more of an open invitation and sometimes they don’t’. FG ELSA

‘Or they just come past the office and I initially just say to them, just give me thumbs up at the window if you are ok and then... they have a check in rather than coming in to talk to you’. FG ELSA

Need ongoing reassurance

‘She sort of went ‘aaawww’ when I said this is our last one but I said it’s not the end and we will still catch up so that was quite reassuring for her’. Mrs Salmon

‘It makes me feel good knowing that I can still speak to her’. Adam

‘It would make me feel like ok, but I know that I can still go and see her if I want to’. Katie
‘I think when I said this is the end of the ELSA, but I’ll still be able to catch up with you, I think that made her feel a bit happier’. Mrs Salmon

‘It’s just that reassurance and knowing you are there if they need you’. FG ELSA

‘I’ve got ones in year 11 now, that I’ve seen since year 7. Not continuously, but it’s like a comfort blanket almost and to see them through the troughs’. FG ELSA

‘Oh yeh… because you only get, well you get 6 weeks and if you still haven’t improved or nothing’s changed you can get a few more weeks, but mine was working and so that’s why I stopped’. Amy

‘It was on the fifth one, oh you know ‘that’s our last one next week’. Also at the start I said it will run up ‘til Christmas, so I ended it, yeh… letting them know before the last actual one’. Mrs Salmon

‘We work through our booklet that we have got and you say next week will be our last of the six weeks, we let them know’. FG ELSA

‘You also list who else they can go to if they need to, ie their year team or their tutor’. FG ELSA

‘Then we give it a six week break and if we feel they need to be referred from ELSA to a BFL (Behaviour for Learning intervention) or something else, you’ve given them that break and then start again afresh with something else’. FG ELSA

‘Have they achieved their targets, are they still working towards it, have they not achieved it, in which case what further support can you introduce after 6 weeks of the ELSA. You leave it 6 weeks and then think, this person would really benefit from learning space or whatever and you write it on this form and this is all obviously on our data base and then we’d put in a referral for the next stage of support if we feel they need it’. FG ELSA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use strategies learnt</th>
<th>Things to reflect on</th>
<th>‘I have a self-evaluation script really and I ask them to reflect on what we have done and how it has helped’. Mrs Greenway</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>‘I feel like I’ve learnt that if there’s a problem, I can always go to someone and I’ve learnt that there’s always something positive about your life that you can reflect on if there’s something bad going on’. Annabel</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>‘So we were reflecting on what’s been good about the sessions and how things you can still look at if something’s bad and we were looking about targets and if you’ve achieved them and that if we’re still going to keep it going with them’. Annabel</td>
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<td>Time to generalise</td>
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<td>‘Well, he felt if he was asked a question he would stutter in the classroom and sometimes the teachers will say ‘Alright, A, what do you think of that?’ Not purposefully putting you on the spot, but obviously making sure everyone is engaged and listening. So a couple of times, he has said that he has stuttered because he hasn’t known what to say... um, but we went through a breathing exercise to make sure he is calm, if he’s in the lesson and he feels that he can ... it might be one where the teacher is going to say ‘can you give me an answer to this’ and then go around the room... uuum, he uses the breathing exercise and he says that has helped. The one class he felt ... obviously a bit more wary of... he’s been able to ask question now.... Mrs Salmon</td>
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<td>Rewards</td>
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<td>‘Towards the end of ELSA we have a page in there that we photocopy, a certificate and they all like this and I get them laminated, so they can see ‘oh, yes, I completed ELSA’...That’s basically just a certificate of completion and I put their name in the middle, get them laminated and they take them home. FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pressure to end</td>
<td>Pressure of waiting lists</td>
<td>‘If the child still wants to come and still wants to talk, then you’re sort of you know... you feel you ought to give them a bit of justice and let them stay, but not when there’s pressure with waiting lists...’ FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merry go round of new referrals</td>
<td>‘So my boss who is charge of ELSA is putting more pressure on us to finish them as ... it’s almost become a bit more of a merry-go-round really’ FG ELSA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘We don’t always get that much time to think do we? And you know the next one’s there’. FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pressure to keep churning them out</td>
<td>‘I’m feeling a bit more pressure to keep churning them out’. FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doesn’t seem to be an ending</td>
<td>New issues have emerged</td>
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<td>Need more time</td>
<td>‘The student I’ve got now and I am still seeing weeks after... there doesn’t seem to be... one problem is solved and the next problem comes along and there doesn’t seem to be an ending with this student, because we keep going and we do one thing and then ...something else is now the bigger issue as that one has been resolved’. FG ELSA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘She has achieved what I’d hoped for but as part of the sessions other things have opened up, so I am going to do another six sessions with her’. Mrs Gulliver</td>
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<td>‘Yes, you do go off on a tangent or something else will come up, definitely. You have a plan, looking at the targets, you know... so I base it on the target, the target is more resilience, could be friendships, so I base it around that but normally you find a root cause of something else and you’re going off on a tangent a bit, but it is important and it is what they need, so.... And that’s why it probably takes me longer’. FG ELSA</td>
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<td>I get called away or school events get in the way</td>
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<td>‘The only frustrating thing from my perspective is that there’s been a couple of weeks where I should have seen her and haven’t, when things have happened elsewhere’. Mrs Gulliver</td>
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| Ongoing ELSA/ targets | ‘It tends to last the whole time they are here. It’s really nice and they will always speak to you, they’ll see you in the corridor and it’s ‘hello Miss’. It’s a real positive I would say’. FG ELSA

‘I’ll probably see her two or three times. Because she’s got a target as well and because I’ve set it until the end of February, I’d like to see her twice, if not three times in that six-week period’. Mrs Salmon |

| I feel I ought to carry on | ‘If the child still wants to come and still wants to talk, then you’re sort of you know… you feel you ought to give them a bit of justice and let them stay, but not when there’s pressure with waiting lists’ ‘FG ELSA |

| Difficulties ending it | Sadness

‘Quite sad, because I do actually like talking to Miss, she’s a nice teacher. To have a teacher like that, that you can get on with so well… yeh, it’s sad’. Amy

‘It made me feel a bit sad, cos knowing that I don’t do it anymore is a bit weird...’ FG ELSA |

| YP wants or needs it to carry on | ‘It kinda made me sad cos I always wanted to carry it on, cos it was a session where it could only be like myself and when I could show all my feelings to someone’. Annabel

‘I just can’t finish with that child cos he wants to carry on’. FG ELSA

‘A pupil was almost in tears and said that he didn’t want it to end, he wanted to carry on coming’. FG ELSA

‘I just thought what we were doing was really general, just chatting and so I thought, after 6/7 weeks I thought, well it’s time to finish and so I said to him, you know… we need to finish and his little face dropped and I thought well, ok and so I went back to my boss and said I need to carry on and I still don’t know when I’m going to finish, so...’ FG ELSA |
as normally I can go there on Tuesdays and talk to Mrs Salmon about some things’. Adam

**Difficulty cutting ties**
‘It’s a bit like cutting ties as well for ourselves because we have given of ourselves a little bit to them and it can be quite sad’. FG ELSA

**I don’t know when or where to finish it**
‘I’m thinking of one girl at the moment who I really don’t know what I can do to help her, her Dad is in prison, she wants to see him and I don’t really know what I can do, so what do you do... keep talking about it constantly with her and I can see that it’s either going to end with it being quite short or it could go on forever. I don’t know where to end it’. FG ELSA
Appendix 46 - Examples of Extracts to Illustrate the Impact of the Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overarching Theme</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Examples of extracts</th>
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| The Impact of the Intervention | Made a Difference |            | *I've made more friends*  
It’s helped me to build my confidence of dealing with situations and to build friendships as well*. Annabel  
...I’ve made more friends and I chat with them a lot more as well*. Annabel  

*I feel happier*  
She said that she always felt much better, even if she came in feeling really glum and depressed, she recognised changes in her mood and she always felt better by the end of the session*. Mrs Greenway  

‘Happy, because we’ve talked through issues at home and issues at school and it has helped him and he has said that yeh it feels better*. Mrs Salmon  

‘Happy, happier than I was when I first came in’. Katie  

*More confident*  
Well at the beginning, I was a bit shy but then I kind of got my confidence up. At the beginning I wasn’t really saying much but then I became more confident and I started saying more.’ Katie  

‘I have become more confident speaking to her (Mrs Salmon)*. Adam  

‘He said his confidence has grown*. Mrs Salmon

424
I realised it was actually helping
‘Yes, at the beginning, I didn’t really understand it...I didn’t want to come here. Cos, I just didn’t want to give stuff a go, but then I started getting used to it and then I realised it was actually helping, so yeh’. Amy

She felt empowered
‘At the end of the last session we had, we talked about whether things had improved at home with her brother and she felt... I think she felt empowered... So I think she feels really pleased with herself... I would say it’s been really successful and what we set out to achieve has been achieved, which is great’. Mrs Gulliver

She’s better equipped
‘I think she’s better equipped to deal with her own feelings and situations’. Mrs Greenway

She’s more settled into school
‘I feel a lot more happier in school now. I actually know where I’m going and I sit down places with my friends, we’ve found our own spaces and nobody’s trying to take us away from them’. Katie

Having someone who has the time for you
‘It makes me feel quite happy, cos then you know that someone’s there to always help you and if you are in a situation, you know that you are not alone’. Annabel

‘I think it’s helped me cos if there situations that I don’t want to talk about at home or if something has happened at home, then I can always come to her
or even if it’s at school as well and I don’t feel like right and like I’m worrying about something, I can always come to her and it’s helped’. Annabel

*She has learnt to trust*

‘I think she’s been able to trust me and know that I’m someone she can come to’. Mrs Salmon

‘It’s made me a lot happier with some stuff at home and it makes me feel that I can trust a lot more people’. Adam

*She’s calmer*

‘I’m probably better now at calming myself down if something happens or coping with stuff like if I’m alone or worried and stuff’. Annabel

‘Then with ELSA it made me calm down and they had lots of ways for me to reveal my stress and just calm down and then it makes me feel much better’. Annabel

*She talks more*

‘I think she’s able to talk to me more now’. Mrs Salmon

‘I’m better at talking to people cos at the beginning of the year, I wouldn’t normally say anything to other people’. Katie

*Talking helps*

‘Well... if I’m rowing with someone, I can get it off my chest rather than building it up, so like I don’t have anything I’ve built up, I can just talk to people about stuff, which isn’t an easy thing. It’s helped...’. Amy
She has learnt more about herself
‘The ELSA (support) has opened her mind to that there’s other ways of doing things to get the result you want and to be happy, so I think that that has really helped her learn a bit more about herself I would say’. Mrs Gulliver

‘I love ELSA and I love the students. I always see that they come out with something... and it’s good’. Mrs Salmon

‘She’s one of my ticks’. Mrs Greenway

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<th>Learnt Strategies</th>
<th>Helps me focus on the positive</th>
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<td></td>
<td>‘I feel like I’ve learnt that if there’s a problem, I can always go to someone and I’ve learnt that there’s always something positive about your life that you can reflect on if there’s something bad going on’. Annabel</td>
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Time to reflect and think
‘I think about stuff now’. Amy

Remembering Strategies
‘Even getting them to remember the strategies is often a big plus... because once you have remembered them, you can say ‘oh yeh, I remember how we did that and what it meant’... she was really good at picking it all up, so I know that what we have shared has sunk in and hopefully that will stay with her, so I think it is important to have a fairly set format to guide the students through remembering what you have done and how to apply it’. Mrs Greenway

Can solve more of own issues
‘I can solve a lot more of my home issues. I can get my family in and we’d
<table>
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<th>have a talk’. Adam</th>
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<td><em>She’s retained strategies</em></td>
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<td>‘She’s retained a lot of the things I’ve taught her’. Mrs Greenway</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Talking through what if scenarios</em></td>
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<td>‘I think it was just literally talking through the ‘what if’ scenarios or if you had done this differently and then just thinking of the big picture, cos I think we can all be very single-minded... this is what I always do and I think it just opened up a little bit more for her, so I think that was the big difference’. Mrs Gulliver</td>
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<td><em>I can let people in now</em></td>
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<td>‘Well, I can let people in and stop putting a big guard up. Cos that’s what I used to do, but that got me in more trouble, so I think about stuff now’. Amy</td>
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<td><em>I use calming strategies</em></td>
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<td>‘I’m probably better now at calming myself down if something happens or coping with stuff like if I’m alone or worried and stuff’. Annabel</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Strategies to take away</em></td>
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<td>‘I’ve had an anxiety group for girls and because of the sort of girls they were, at the end of it I did put all the strategies that were going to help them together... so I put them on a little keyring for them and quite often I see them in the lesson and they have their little cards out... just to keep them going’. FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Breathing</em></td>
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<td>‘The things she reacted best to was definitely the breathing’. Mrs Greenway</td>
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‘A breathing strategy.... so if I get picked on and I don’t really know the answer, I just breath in for a couple of seconds and breath out a couple of times until eventually I think of an answer I could say that might be right and so I say it and if I get it wrong, it’s fine’. Adam

‘He uses the breathing exercise and he says that has helped’. Mrs Salmon

**Demonstrating Impact**

*Small steps can be big steps*

‘And the targets can seem to us really small can’t they? We’re hoping to do so much more for them cos that’s the kind of people we are, but that’s not always going to happen. Sometimes small steps are big steps. Remembering to bring a pen in every day, which we think is small... but for some...’. FG ELSA

*Self esteem*

‘I’d review everything. I’d normally do a self-esteem questionnaire’ Mrs Gulliver

*SDQ*

‘We fill out the SDQs...’. FG ELSA

*Pre and Post measures*

‘The first session is all about where they are at today and then we do a similar thing right at the end so we can see where they have made progress, so evidence showing at the end’. FG ELSA

‘We do it at the start and at the end and hopefully you would have seen some improvement. There is another similar one that we’ve just got for ELSAs. We can use either and that’s this one (ELSA referral form/graph – given on training). Exactly the same thing, but it’s a visual one so it’s a lot
better for the students and they plot where they are at the start with maybe a dot and at the end they do it in a different colour with an x and they like to draw the line and see where they have made progress themselves’. FG ELSA

‘Yes, we do that at the start and we go back to it at the end and we see whether or not, how they feel, they have met their target’. Mrs Salmon

_Self-evaluation of targets_

‘I have a self-evaluation script really and I ask them to reflect on what we have done and how it has helped’. Mrs Greenway

_Feelings diaries_

‘It gives you just a quick snapshot of how she is feeling’. Mrs Gulliver

_I don’t know how to_

‘One of my personal targets is about ELSA and measuring it’s effectiveness was saying, I don’t really know, how can you?’ FG ELSA

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<th>Feedback</th>
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<td>Feedback</td>
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<td>From parents</td>
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‘I’ve had feedback from parents, she feedback and said how much her son had appreciated the support’. FG ELSA

_From an ex-pupil_

‘As you know, I’ve had the lovely gentleman who’s now about 21 and he had two years after leaving school where he just went off the rails and then he said he remembered what we had done and now he’s got his little business and now he’s happy and feeling good. So, you know, whatever point it kicks back in, it’s nice to know that it has’. Mrs Greenway

_Certificate of completion_
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Advice for other YP</th>
<th>‘A certificate of completion and I put their name in the middle, get them laminated and they take them home’. FG ELSA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You can trust her/ You will enjoy it</td>
<td>‘I would tell them to trust Mrs Salmon and I’d tell them that you will be doing a booklet and it will be very good. You will enjoy it and it’s a good way to help you share stuff with Mrs Salmon cos you can trust her’. Adam</td>
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<td>It really helps</td>
<td>‘cos it helped me... if it’s going to help them, then just be calm and actually talk to them, don’t be aggressive to Miss or anything’. Amy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t be afraid to talk about your feelings / You don’t need to worry any more</td>
<td>‘I’d would probably give them advice that you don’t need to be afraid to talk about your feelings as that is what the group is about and you don’t need to worry about anything any more’. Annabel</td>
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<tr>
<td>They’ll always have time for you/ They are friendly</td>
<td>‘I’d tell them that they will always be able to help you and they are really friendly. They’ll always have time for you’. Katie</td>
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### Overarching Theme

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<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Examples of extracts</th>
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<tr>
<td>Barriers and Help Needed</td>
<td>Barriers</td>
<td><strong>Room not finished</strong>&lt;br&gt;‘The room, we haven’t finished. It’s been a few weeks. Yes, we’re up and running but things like the carpet, the pictures on the wall, the nicer things, we’ve not been able to do that’. Mrs Salmon</td>
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<td>The environment</td>
<td><strong>Lack of space / use by other people</strong>&lt;br&gt;‘I was doing the ELSA and it got quite busy in the wellbeing room’. Mrs Salmon</td>
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<td><strong>An office not a nice room</strong>&lt;br&gt;‘Yes but it is more like an office. She has pens but she doesn’t have huge shelves of toys like Mrs Junior ELSA had’. Katie</td>
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<tr>
<td>School processes</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Having to be reactive and support other pupils</strong>&lt;br&gt;‘There was one session where I was doing the ELSA and it got quite busy in the wellbeing room and I prefer to be just one to one… Adam was absolutely fine, I think he could see the student was upset and he didn’t… we just carried on talking about what we were going to do at the weekend rather than ELSA. So it stopped it that time’. Mrs Salmon</td>
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<td><strong>Inappropriate referrals</strong>&lt;br&gt;‘It might be the size of the school but I am getting more referrals that are just behaviour, for example a student that has a huge chunk of behaviour points on their record but no SEN and I just don’t think we’re able to reinforce that enough because there is so much going on school-wide. I don’t take it personally, but to a certain extent we are a tick box in this situation which is a shame… because I get more and more of the bolshi individuals that the little'</td>
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quiet ones at the back that aren’t engaging because of a situation’. Mrs Greenway

‘some of the referrals I’ve got haven’t been appropriate for ELSA and I think that’s possibly why I find it difficult to end it because it takes you ages to find out what the nature of the beast is really’. FG ELSA

*Long waiting lists*
‘We’ve got a long list... hundreds of them for different reasons’. Mrs Greenway

*Lack of opportunities for generalisation*
‘Amy might benefit from some group work so she can work on her relationships. We spent time on a 1:1 on her personal situation, just to see how it transferred out of a 1:1 and into a group setting. But that’s not always possible because of the amount of students you’d have to pull from a lesson’. Mrs Greenway

*Lack of planning time*
‘I think from my perspective, it is the lack of time for planning that is the biggest thing’. Mrs Gulliver

*Would like more resources*
‘I would like more resources on-hand to be able to think, not necessarily to plan in advance, but if the sessions goes slightly different to how you originally though, you could call upon more things.’. Mrs Gulliver

*Too many resources*
‘Because I’m new to it, I feel that there’s so much information out there and I’m not quite sure what to do, where to go. So, even at the beginning, for me,
having a bit of structure. I do feel quite overwhelmed by it all. We do have resources, but there are so many’. FG ELSA

No clear targets / plan
‘a pupil was almost in tears and said that he didn’t want it to end, he wanted to carry on coming. It was surprising to me because he wasn’t giving a lot, he comes and chats, but I didn’t feel that we were doing very much, in terms of... I didn’t really have a set theme with him. He had a tricky start to the year, a year 7 boy. A tricky start and I just thought what we were doing was really general, just chatting and so I thought, after 6/7 weeks I thought, well it’s time to finish and so I said to him, you know... we need to finish and his little face dropped’. FG ELSA

Other school events call me away / can’t do on consecutive weeks
‘I say 6 weeks, I’ve explained this to her, because I’m called off for other things, it will be 6 sessions, I hope that they will be six consecutive sessions, but it doesn’t always work like that unfortunately, it’s out of my control’. Mrs Gulliver

‘it’s very rarely, occasionally I can do it in 6 weeks but normally I’m looking at half a year to be honest... because unfortunately there are gaps in between, when we have the exams, other things going on.... trips, so I very rarely get to do 6 consecutive weeks and that is a problem, I think it would be better if I could, but most of the things are out of my control...’. FG ELSA

‘The only frustrating thing from my perspective is that there’s been a couple of weeks where I should have seen her and haven’t, when things have happened elsewhere, but I’ve always gone and found her afterwards and said sorry, last week we missed our session as I had to deal with another child...’. Mrs Gulliver
<table>
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<th><strong>Pressure to end the intervention</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>‘so my boss who is charge of ELSA is putting more pressure on us to finish them as ... it’s almost become a bit more of a merry-go-round really’. FG ELSA</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Young people</strong></th>
<th><strong>So much intervention / don’t want to be seen as different</strong></th>
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<td>‘Some children have had so much intervention, that they don’t want to be different, they don’t want another ‘session’’. FG ELSA</td>
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<th><strong>Reluctance to engage</strong></th>
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<td>‘I find it’s the boys that can be more reluctant, they don’t want to be seen to be coming out... I’ve had a couple that didn’t want to come out ...’. FG ELSA</td>
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|  | I’ve had one, he was in year 10, a boy, he really didn’t want to come, he’d been referred by the Head of Year...’. FG ELSA |

|  | ‘At the beginning, I didn’t really understand it, still I was really like... quite... not so nice, but I didn’t want to come here. Cos, I just didn’t want to give stuff a go...’. Amy |

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<th><strong>Impact of their other needs</strong></th>
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<td>‘I think the biggest challenge for A is that she has other issues surrounding her learning, she has problems reading and writing.... And she is sometimes sucked into the wrong friendship groups, so she can be quite reactive if she spends too much time with the wrong people’. Mrs Greenway</td>
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<th><strong>Help needed</strong></th>
<th><strong>How to measure impact</strong></th>
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<td>‘One of my personal targets is about ELSA and measuring it’s effectiveness and I was saying, I don’t really know, how can you?’ FG ELSA</td>
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*New ELSA*
‘Because I’m new to it, I feel that there’s so much information out there and I’m not quite sure what to do, where to go’. FG ELSA

*Structure would help*
‘So, even at the beginning, for me, having a bit of structure. I do feel quite overwhelmed by it all’. FG ELSA

*Help with endings / I don’t know when or where to end it*
‘I would like more advice on endings, that would be very useful’. FG ELSA

‘it’s the endings I struggle with’. FG ELSA

‘I don’t really know what I can do, so what do you keep talking about constantly with her and I can see that it’s either going to end with it being quite short or it could go on forever. I don’t know where to end it’. FG ELSA

‘so my boss who is charge of ELSA is putting more pressure on us to finish them as ... it’s almost become a bit more of a merry-go-round really. I don’t know ... and I’m sticking my heels in and thinking well ‘I just can’t finish with that child cos he wants to carry on’ and I’m feeling a bit more pressure to keep churning them out and so I think ‘well what is ELSA about actually?’ FG ELSA

‘So I thought, after 6/7 weeks I thought, well it’s time to finish and so I said to him, you know... we need to finish and his little face dropped and I thought well, ok and so I went back to my boss and said I need to carry on and I still don’t know when I’m going to finish’. FG ELSA
Appendix 48 - Theoretical Stance to the Research
(Adapted from Crotty, 1998)

Research Questions

- **Research Question 1** - How does the relationship with the individual ELSA and the qualities of the ELSA impact upon the YP’s experience of the ELSA intervention?
- **Research Question 2** - How does the YP experience the therapeutic journey of the ELSA intervention? How is the beginning and ending of the intervention experienced?
- **Research Question 3** - What are the barriers to programme fidelity?

Methods

Qualitative:
- Multiple Case Study
- Semi-Structured Interviews
- Diaries
- Drawings, PCP
- Focus Group
- Thematic Analysis

Methodology

- Phenomenological
- Interpretative
- Inductive

Epistemological Position

- Constructionism

Theoretical Perspective

- Social Constructionism
- Phenomenological