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An Exploration of School and Young People's Perceptions and Experiences of In-School Units

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

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Abstract

The evidence base on exclusions highlights many negative long-term consequences for young people, yet they are continuing to rise. One response to managing behaviour has been the use of in-school units (ISUs) which provide a halfway point between formal exclusion and being in mainstream classes. ISUs are particularly prominent among secondary schools and academies. Little is known about how ISUs operate and how the LA supports schools in managing behaviour. There is little research that seeks the views of young people regarding their experiences of ISUs. However, recent guidance has indicated that the government want to encourage the use of ISUs. Data were collected in two phases via semi-structured interviews. Phase one consisted of interviewing 4 school staff each from different secondary schools and 3 members of a LA behaviour team in one LA. This explored how ISUs are operating in some secondary educational settings and the support that schools receive from LA behaviour services. Phase two interviewed 8 young people from two secondary settings to explore the experiences of those who have accessed ISUs. Data were analysed using a thematic approach. Findings from school staff and the LA behaviour team highlighted three key themes: the discrepancies about the procedure, use and impact of ISUs; the school context and how the school system understands the strengths and needs of staff and pupils and accommodates these; and wider systemic considerations that could impact on the availability of support. Findings from young people highlighted three key themes: the negative impacts of the ISU, the sense of social injustice that arose from attending ISUs, and young people's ideas on moving forward with the practice of ISUs. Implications for schools, professionals and policy makers are discussed.

Impact Statement

Research into in-school units (ISUs) and the way that they operate is sparse and there is limited research exploring the views of young people. This thesis explored how ISUs operate in four secondary educational settings in the context of one LA. It also explored the support that schools receive from LA behaviour services. Additionally, it sought the experiences of young people who have accessed ISUs in two different secondary educational settings.

Findings from this research have implications for professionals such as EPs and LA behaviour teams. There are implications for schools and policy makers regarding the use of ISUs and considerations that need to be made. Implications for consideration are raised in the following areas:

- Management of behaviour including the use of ISUs are operating on a behaviourist underpinning which reduces the understanding of behaviour to a simple stimulus-response, which alienates consideration of the context and internal thoughts.
- There is a need for supporting schools to work with young people in identifying, understanding, and meeting needs of individuals.
- Young people can share what works for them in practice both within classrooms and in needing further support and intervention and they should be given opportunities to participate in this process.
- There is a need for meaningful involvement and interaction should ISUs continue to be used.
- Data should be collected on those young people who are accessing ISUs with outcomes set to measure impact and effectiveness.

- Schools should have a clear set of policy and guidance that quality assures their decisions about the operation of ISUs.
- There needs to be a centralised policy document that provides clearer guidance on the purpose of ISUs including entry and exit criteria, aims of the intervention, and a plan for afterwards.
- Reintegration of pupils following time out of their usual classes is important and may need a tailored approach.
- Schools need support to structure reflection for young people to support them through the process and in applying their skills in the future.
- The LA behaviour teams and EPs need to better emphasise and advertise their skills in working with students at risk of exclusion.
- ISUs need to be more inclusive to ensure that they are not used at the cost of young people's education.

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List of abbreviations

Adverse Childhood Experiences	ACEs
Behaviour and Education Support Teams	BEST
Department for Education	DfE
Department of Health	DoH
Design and Technology	DT
Designated Safeguard Leads	DSL
Education, Health, and Care Plans	EHCPs
Educational Psychologist(s)	EP(s)
In-school Unit(s)	ISU(s)
Local Authority	LA
Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills	Ofsted
Senior Leadership Team	SLT
Social, Emotional, and Mental Health	SEMH
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	SEND
The British Psychological Society	The BPS
The Department for Children, Schools, and Families	The DCSF
United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child	UNICEF

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 External Exclusions

Exclusions have many long-term negative impacts on young people, which include implications on attainment (Timpson et al., 2019), criminality (Timpson et al., 2019; Middleton & Kay, 2020), and emotional wellbeing (Middleton & Kay, 2020). Exclusions are continuing to rise despite what we know about the impacts on the young person's future. Formal exclusions and punitive action are permitted by guidance for schools where disruptive behaviour "falls below the standard" (p.7) that is reasonably expected of them (DfE, 2016a). It continues to say that teachers can "impose a punishment" (p.7) where there is misbehaviour, breaking of school rules and failure to follow instructions.

The most common reason for both suspensions and permanent exclusions during 2019-2020 was persistent disruptive behaviour (National Statistics, 2021b). Research has highlighted that teacher perceptions of disruptive behaviour may reflect an increase in the political focus on outcomes rather than on the process of learning (Nash et al., 2016). Consequently, young people who disrupt the learning of others are disciplined or in some cases excluded (Nash et al., 2016).

1.2 Defining in-school units

Another response to managing behaviour is the use of in-school units (ISUs), which are becoming more frequently used (IFF Research Ltd et al., 2018). There are various names used to represent these areas in different guidance documents and research. ISUs have several names including "internal inclusion units" (IFF Research Ltd et al., 2018), "inclusion rooms" (Gilmore, 2012; Gilmore, 2013), "seclusion" or "isolation" rooms (DfE, 2016a). The Timpson report (2019) referred to them as ISUs. Later documents have referred to

“removal rooms” (DfE, 2022b). For this research, the term “ISUs” will be used to capture the number of terms typically used. I wanted to use a general term that would encompass varied practice within educational settings.

ISUs provide a delay to the formal exclusion process (Middleton & Kay, 2020), providing a halfway point between excluding a pupil and keeping them in their usual classroom (IFF Research Ltd et al., 2018). Despite their frequent and increasing use, ISUs are unmonitored and do not have to be reported to the local authority (LA). The use of ISUs has been particularly driven by mainstream schools and academies and findings suggest that over half of secondary schools use them (IFF Research Ltd et al., 2018). There are no figures or guidance about how they operate, although a review of exclusions has found that they vary significantly in their approaches (Timpson et al., 2019). As there is no formal data on their use, there is no accountability given to schools about their decisions to use ISUs, nor is there an evidence base to provide an understanding of their impact.

From the little research that does exist on ISUs, there have been questions about their punitive nature that deny the rights of young people (Barker et al., 2010). ISUs appear to operate on a behaviourist underpinning which reduces our understanding of managing behaviour by using rewards and sanctions (Woollard, 2010). Research has found that ISUs have been designed to focus on control and operate in small, dedicated spaces, with seating arrangements that discourage conversations (e.g., Barker et al., 2010; Gilmore, 2013; Barker, 2019). There are various findings about the work that young people undertake while in the ISU that comprises completing pre-prepared packs or following the subjects of their usual timetable (e.g., Barker et al., 2010; Power & Taylor,

2020). There is very little research that describes intervention strategies or explicit use of reflection with young people.

There is a lack of research that primarily focuses on the experiences of young people who have accessed ISUs although there has been evidence to suggest that students do not get help with work when in the ISU (Gilmore, 2013). Young people should be asked about their experiences to develop our understanding of their impact in practice. Providing education and supporting the learning of young people is the school's responsibility to help students reach their full potential (DfE, 2016b). ISUs are removing the young person from their class and there needs to be more understanding of their function and intervention strategy. ISUs must not be at the cost of a young person's education (Timpson et al., 2019).

1.3 National Context

An independent review of behaviour in schools (Bennett, 2017) has recommended that the government should provide funding to create more ISUs focused on those schools with higher levels of "challenging behaviour" (p.9). The review highlighted that removal of a young person should be seen as a positive solution, which contrasts with the existing literature on the many negative impacts of exclusion.

ISUs have received attention from the media stirring debate about their use, with strong headlines such as "It's like being in prison" (Harris, 2021). Further media attention has turned to the implications that ISUs can have on the mental health of young people. For example, one article has raised concern about ISUs punishing behaviours that are linked to mental health needs that could potentially cause further harm (Whittaker, 2022).

Recent consultations into revised guidance for behaviour and exclusions (DfE, 2022b) discussed ISUs (referred to as removal rooms) as a method of intervention. Much of the guidance appears to suggest that specifics of these areas will be at the discretion of each school (DfE, 2022b), indicating that they will continue to operate without clear guidance. For example, decisions about location suitability, reasons for the use of the rooms, and process of reintegration (DfE, 2022b) were broadly up to the interpretation of schools. As there appears to be a continued argument for their use, ISUs need stronger guidance that is informed by evidence of what works (Timpson et al., 2019).

The literature on the role of professionals within the LA and exclusions is limited, although they have a statutory role in monitoring external exclusions and providing education to those permanently excluded (DfE, 2017a). This is a gap in our understanding of the roles that the LA could adopt in supporting schools with managing behaviour and reducing exclusions.

Pastoral input can positively impact a young person's life when done in an appropriate way (Timpson et al., 2019). This makes it important to understand how ISUs could operate to have a meaningful impact to support positive change.

1.4 Local Context

As a trainee educational psychologist (EP), I have been working on a placement in a London borough LA. The LA is an ethnically homogenous place with over 80% of the population identified as White British. The employment rate within the LA is over 70%. The rate of homeless households in temporary accommodation is high. An inspection found that a proportion of secondary schools in the LA needed to improve their provision for pupils with special

educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to increase the quality of their education.

I have always had an interest in understanding behaviour and its relationship with exclusions. Through my career and training experiences, I have worked with young people who have mentioned being in ISUs, which has furthered my interest in this area. I have discussed these experiences with EPs in the LA and members of the LA behaviour support team. Across the EP team, there was little knowledge of the prevalence of ISUs, how they operated and how they supported young people. It was known that schools often made requests for support to the behaviour team for young people at risk of exclusion, particularly those with social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs. Given the importance of ISUs as a potential preventative factor in formal exclusion and the interest in ISUs across the EP team, this seemed a worthy topic for the thesis.

1.5 Aims of the research

This research was conducted within one LA and deliberately split into two phases of data collection. The first phase was to explore how schools are using ISUs. It also explored wider LA behaviour support to understand the relationship they had with schools and the services they provided for behaviour management. The second phase explored the views of young people to learn about their experiences of attending these ISUs. This provided some understanding about their impact on the individual.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

Chapter two includes a review of relevant policy and guidance to schools in relation to managing behaviour and exclusions. This provides the context of how schools are guided and supported in this area. There is also a review of the

literature available on ISUs considering some of the implications for roles within the LA. The methodology is outlined to provide information on the research design and analysis of data. Chapters four and five describe the findings from the data analysis and then chapter six presents a discussion of these findings. The thesis then provides a summary of findings, strengths and limitations of the research, and implications for professionals and policy makers. Future research is considered followed by the next steps and then a conclusion of the research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to Chapter

This chapter will highlight the literature on formal exclusions and the long-term negative consequences that exclusions can have on young people. It will look at the existing policies, guidance, and data on formal exclusions that hold schools accountable for the use of external exclusions and reflect on how this differs from the sparse amount of guidance and data available on ISUs. Next, it will look at the current context of ISUs and the political indicators that promote their use of them, despite their lack of an evidence base, and their unmonitored nature. It will then draw on the limited research that exists. Finally, it will consider the implications for professionals working in LAs such as EPs and behaviour support teams leading to the research questions for the present research.

2.2 Exclusions and the impact on young people

Exclusions in schools happen when young people are removed from the school environment. There are several forms of exclusion, two of which are recognised widely, these are suspensions (previously known as fixed period exclusions) and permanent exclusions (DfE, 2017a). There are other forms of exclusion and exclusionary practice, and these will be identified after we have established the literature on formal exclusions.

Exclusions have been found to have detrimental effects on the wellbeing and development of young people. For example, formal exclusions have been found to be a factor that could pose some risk to attainment in English and maths GCSEs for pupils (Timpson et al., 2019). In 2015-2016 only 7% of permanently excluded children and 18% of children with multiple suspensions proceeded to pass these subjects (Timpson et al., 2019). This suggests that exclusion affects

young people's education and GCSE attainment. This contrasts with the educational excellence everywhere paper (DfE, 2016b) which states that every young person deserves a high-quality education that allows them to reach their full potential, that prepares them for success in their adult life.

Evidence has also highlighted a further correlation that 23% of young offenders sentenced to up to 12 months in custody were permanently excluded from school in 2014 (Timpson et al., 2019). While this may not be a direct cause, it does show the potential risk factors for excluded young people who become involved in criminality and the youth justice system. This suggests that they have not had opportunities to be prepared for successful adult life as they should be (DfE, 2016b).

Middleton and Kay (2020) highlighted six key dimensions that can be affected by school exclusion, which included social relationships, emotional wellbeing and mental health, progress and achievement, attitudes to school and education, economic factors, and behaviour and criminality. This shows some of the many areas that are impacted by exclusion and suggests that these young people have not been given opportunities to reach their full potential.

It has been argued that exclusions reflect a breakdown in relationships which are left unaddressed and unresolved (McCluskey et al., 2016), therefore not dealing with the underlying difficulties. Exclusions do not model the pro-social skills of relating to and communicating with others, nor does it support somebody's understanding of how to repair relationships (McCluskey et al., 2016). Further to this, research by McCluskey et al. (2016) noted that there is no evidence to suggest that exclusion "sends a message" (p.535) to other young people about good behaviour nor does it change how young people

interact with others. This suggests that exclusions are not beneficial for the young person who is excluded or in teaching other young people that witness this what positive behaviour should look like. However, there has been a rise in suspensions and permanent exclusions in England since the academic year 2010-2011 (National Statistics, 2021b). This leads to the question of why exclusions are continuing to rise, given the evidence that they do not address underlying needs.

Other Exclusionary Practice

It is also important to consider other exclusionary practices. It has been said that behaviour of some young people that is “severe” (p.32), can be difficult to manage within typical educational settings (Harriss et al., 2008). Middleton and Kay (2020) define internal exclusion as an approach that moves a young person away from learning alongside peers to a specific room or area for extended periods. This is something to consider when we address the current context for the proposal of the in-school behaviour units. Other areas such as learning support units have been set up to accommodate pupils who are at risk of exclusion, are disengaged or are deemed vulnerable because of social difficulties (Rogers, 2016). These areas provide teaching and support programmes to help improve behaviour, attitude, attendance, and learning (Rogers, 2016).

Nurture provision groups have also been an intervention designed to run for two to three school terms to build on missed early years experiences with the aim of reintegrating into mainstream classes (Garner & Thomas, 2011). It is claimed that criteria such as this help counteract the potentially exclusionary nature of these areas, however, research has found that some nurture groups in

secondary schools offer extended support which means that it is not fulfilling the intended function (Garner & Thomas, 2011). This could be seen as an alternative exclusionary practice.

In addition to learning support units and nurture groups, there are pupil referral units, which are separate schools providing a short-term placement while appropriate provision is investigated (Pillay et al., 2013). Pupil referral units have been said to offer a fresh start for pupils, which build an understanding of needs through assessment and formulation to initiate change within the student or by changing the environment (Solomon & Thomas, 2013). Evidence from the recent SEND review suggests that outcomes for children and young people with SEND and those attending alternative provision are consistently worse than their peers, and that experiences of the SEND system and alternative provision are not positive (HM Government, 2022). Therefore, we must consider what more can be done to support young people at risk of exclusion within their mainstream settings.

2.3 What are in-school units and what do we need to consider?

Exclusions are one response schools have in answer to behaviour difficulties. Other responses include pupil referral units and managed moves. A recent initiative that schools have taken to support pupils at risk of exclusion is the use of ISUs where young people are temporarily withdrawn from the usual school routine (IFF Research Ltd et al., 2018). In the short term, these ISUs will place an additional stage within the behaviour management system and are a delay to a formal exclusion (Middleton & Kay, 2020). Until recently, guidance did not exist on the use of ISUs, however, schools are permitted to have policies that allow them to place “disruptive” (p.12) students in an area separate from other students (DfE, 2016a).

It has been suggested that behaviourism, which uses concepts of punishment and rewards is a widely used strategy in schools (Woollard, 2010). Behaviourist approaches claim that learning can be shaped by using reinforcers (Bjork, 1997) and the goal is to predict and control behaviour (Watson, 1914). Watson claimed that you could shape the environment to nurture an individual's learning into anything of desire irrespective of human consciousness (Woollard, 2010).

Watson argued that internal states such as motivation and satisfaction could be observed objectively by patterns of behaviour through actions and verbalisations (Woollard, 2010). Skinner claimed that behaviour is shaped through operant conditioning to encourage an increase in the frequency of a given response (Skinner, 1965). For example, responses to a situation that provides satisfaction are likely to reoccur compared with the discomfort that may follow a situation which could make the response less likely to reoccur in future (Woollard, 2010). One application of behaviourism to education may present the use of ISUs as the operant that changes/shapes behaviour.

There are continued arguments that behaviourism does not give thought to the explicit learning process or consider factors such as internal motivation (Mitchell & Ziegler, 2013). Student motivation has been found to be at its highest when there is competence, autonomy, clear set goals, feedback, and affirmation from others (Hattie, 2008). Demotivation that is caused by conflicts with teachers or peers can have a negative impact on learning commitment and on the desire and power of feedback (Dornyei, 2001, as cited by Hattie, 2008). Therefore, this suggests that active participation and reviewing of goals can support learning and intrinsic motivation which broadens the behaviourist approach. The conscious-competence model (Howell, 1982, as cited by Cannon et al., 2010) highlights that feedback is important to explicitly demonstrate how individuals

can build on their skills and understanding. This being the case, suggests that conditioning behaviours and shaping responses may not be enough to explicitly build on an understanding of change. It has been suggested that the use of concepts such as punishment and rewards should not be seen as a solution (Woollard, 2010).

A comment made by a headteacher in the investigative report on alternative provisions stated that schools are becoming less inclusive due to the pressures of league tables (IFF Research Ltd et al., 2018). Pressures to attain and compete in league tables, therefore, focusing on outcomes rather than the process of learning, much like the objective behaviourist positions, may reinforce the application of such theories. Research has suggested that young people who disrupt the teaching and learning of others and therefore put the attainment and subsequent outcomes at risk may be disciplined or excluded (Nash et al., 2016). This may be a time when ISUs are provided as a response.

Young people who have had Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) may be unable to explain the reasons for their objectively viewed behaviour, and a behaviourist approach may not consider other relevant internal states. Trauma can impact the development of the brain, affecting self-regulation skills that are important for managing emotions and learning (Brunzell et al., 2016). A holistic and systemic approach must be taken to understand young people's experiences (Quinn et al., 2021). For example, research has found that school leaders recognise the importance of being curious about a young person's situation and building compassionate relationships (Quinn et al., 2021), providing additional considerations to behaviourist objectivity. However, the research also highlighted challenges to maintaining these approaches due to competing school demands and agendas of others (Quinn et al., 2021).

Self-regulation skills are needed to participate in a classroom, and research suggests that classrooms that prioritise relationships by providing consistent, proactive, and welcoming invitations to stay in the teacher-student relationship create safe opportunities for learning (Brunzell et al., 2016). Therefore, the use of ISUs that temporarily withdraw students from the classroom, may pose challenges to the relationship built with the class teacher. At present, there is a lack of evidence provided by schools to evaluate the impact of specific strategies such as ISUs as there are no formal evaluations (IFF Research Ltd et al, 2018).

Formal exclusions from schools are recorded and published annually (DfE, 2017a). Cole et al. (2019) claim that when the government work proactively to reduce school exclusion and supply funding for effective support, exclusions decline. Before policy changes were made in 2012, where there was a stronger focus on identifying needs and responding to them, permanent exclusions fell from 0.16% of the school population in 1997/1998 to 0.06% in 2012/2013 (Cole et al., 2019).

According to the National Statistics (2021), permanent exclusions and suspensions have been rising in secondary schools over the last ten years, with the figure at 0.13 per 10,000 pupils in 2010/2011 and 0.2 per 10,000 pupils in 2018/2019 for permanent exclusions. Suspensions have also risen from 8.34 per 10,000 pupils in 2010/2011 to 10.75 per 10,000 pupils in 2018/2019. The data available for the year 2019/2020 had been impacted by the national lockdown that started in March 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the data analysed within the autumn term of 2019/2020 noted that there was a 3% increase in permanent exclusions in secondary schools compared with the previous academic year. The data analysed for suspensions

in secondary schools during the autumn term 2019/2020 noted a 12% increase from the previous academic year. These figures suggest that formal exclusions are continuing to rise.

Persistent disruptive behaviour has been the most common reason for permanent exclusions and suspensions from 2014-2020 bar a slight decline in 2017-2018 and in the year that was impacted by Covid-19 (National Statistics, 2021). Persistent disruptive behaviour is described as challenging behaviour, disobedience, and persistent violation of school rules (DfE, 2017b). This shows that these are areas of challenge for schools and suggests that ISUs are likely to be used as another response to these behaviours. As there is no formal data collected on ISUs, there are no figures published to learn about trends or patterns of their use.

Current data on formal exclusions suggests that there are inequalities in exclusion rates that disproportionally affect particular groups of young people, which shows that people are being treated unfairly. Data has shown that boys have more than three times the number of permanent exclusions compared with girls (National Statistics, 2021b). Permanent exclusions and suspension rates were highlighted to increase with age, with the highest rates peaking at age fourteen years (National Statistics, 2021b).

There are further inequalities highlighted in the data. Exclusion rates are higher for those pupils eligible for free school meals, those with Educational, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (National Statistics, 2021b). A review of exclusions claimed that 78% of permanent exclusions were issued to pupils who had SEND, were identified as in need or were eligible for free school meals (Timpson et al., 2019). Pupils who

had all these characteristics made up 11% of permanent exclusions (Timpson et al., 2019). Further to this, Gypsy/Roma pupils had the highest rates of permanent exclusions and suspensions, and pupils of mixed White and Black Caribbean ethnicity had the second highest rate of permanent exclusion (National Statistics, 2021b). Heritage of Traveller or Irish backgrounds had the second highest rate of suspension (National Statistics, 2021b). While considerations of intersectionality are important, this will not be revisited in the scope of this thesis. The focus was on exploring the experiences of ISUs of all young people, given the limited research that currently exists.

Data such as this makes schools accountable for their actions and highlights potential problems that need further investigating and understanding. Ofsted's handbook states that inspectors will request information from schools about exclusions, students taken off roll, incidents of poor behaviour and use of internal isolation during an inspection (Ofsted, 2018). There is no other mention of this within the handbook as to the specific information they would want to see regarding "internal isolation". This highlights that ISUs are unmonitored and that there is minimal accountability held to schools for their use.

Disciplinary ISUs should be stated in the school behaviour policy, and it is recommended that they should only be used in the best interests of the child and other pupils (Ofsted, 2021). It is also noted that children's experiences of these areas are what matter (Ofsted, 2021).

2.3.1 How do in-school units operate?

The operation of these ISUs varies significantly in nature from supportive and reflective environments to exclusionary punishments and sanctions (IFF research et al., 2018; Timpson et al., 2019). Where the focus is on an

exclusionary punishment, key aspects of these internal exclusions often comprise isolating individuals away from their peers (Middleton and Kay, 2020). This extends to keeping young people during lunchtime, break times and at the end of the school day to prevent them from meeting their peers (Middleton & Kay, 2020). There is evidence to suggest that ISUs have also been used as a substitute for making referrals for alternative provisions, but in some cases, parents felt the support was not able to meet the needs of their children appropriately (IFF Research Ltd et al., 2018). This shows various uses of ISUs that do not always provide the appropriate support.

The guidance on exclusions (DfE, 2017a) does not reference internal exclusion. In comparison, guidance for formal exclusion provides duties of schools to detail the reasons for exclusion; the length of the exclusion; and to notify the parents of their right to address this with the governing board and how the pupil can participate in this process (DfE, 2017a). This highlights the rights that are given to young people who are externally excluded such as a defined ending and guidance to participate in the process. In addition, only the headteacher at a school can externally exclude young people on disciplinary grounds (DfE, 2017a) and suspensions can only be for a maximum of 45 school days in one year (School Discipline and Exclusions, n.d.). There are currently no rules or guidance about who has the authority to send pupils to attend ISUs, the maximum number of visits students can have, or defined endings to their visit. Timpson et al. (2019) made several suggestions to strengthen guidance on ISUs including an appropriate named body or person overseeing the units; clarification of the role of governors; the way that the school monitors the unit including the children accessing it with protected characteristics; procedures for review; and communication with parents/carers (Timpson et al., 2019). A

practice improvement fund was suggested to allow schools to share and develop best practices together that enable positive environments and good targeted interventions (Timpson et al., 2019).

The guidance for Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (DfE, 2016a) states that where “disruptive behaviour” (p.12) may be resultant of unmet educational or other needs, schools should consider multi-agency assessments for the pupil. The 2020-2021 figures highlighted that Autism was the most common type of need among pupils with EHCPs, and that speech, language and communication needs were the most common SEND need (National Statistics, 2021a). This suggests that young people need appropriate planning, intervention, and support to meet their needs. If ISUs are operated on a behaviourist principle, then there may not be any exploration of unmet needs. Behaviour is a function of communication reflecting the interaction between the individual and their environment (Lewin, 1938). This shows the importance of unpicking the behaviours to understand the difficulties.

2.4 The Current Context of in-school units

As the use of ISUs are continuing to grow (IFF Research Ltd et al., 2018), there needs to be stronger guidance supported by good governance (Timpson et al., 2019). ISUs should not be at the cost of a young person’s education (Timpson et al., 2019). There need to be targeted interventions informed by evidence of what works while considering the impact they have on staff, pupils and the future education and behaviour of the pupil placed in the unit (Timpson et al., 2019). The United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child [UNICEF] Article 12 says that every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all that can affect them and to have their views taken seriously

(UNICEF, 1989). The development of targeted support should include the views and experiences of young people.

As part of an independent review of behaviour in England (Bennett, 2017) the practice of ISUs was raised. There are some issues with this review which means we should interpret suggestions with caution. For example, the number of schools participating in this review was unclear as it states that visits to a "number" of schools were made, suggesting a lack of transparency in their methods. It also says that schools were selected for reasons that included being able to "sustain good cultures of behaviour for long periods" (p.11) without defining what this means.

Bennett (2017) referred to ISUs as 'internal inclusion units' stating that mainstream classrooms were not always the best place for needs to be met. Interestingly, ISUs have been referred to by Bennett (2017) as "inclusion units" although the aim of them is to remove the individual, which is a form of exclusion. Internal exclusion has been defined as separating a young person from learning alongside peers to other areas/rooms for extended periods (Middleton & Kay, 2020). Removing students away from their usual learning environment could have implications for their sense of belonging. School belonging is the extent to which students feel accepted, respected, included, and supported by others, particularly by adults in the school environment (Goodenow & Grady, 1993). Allen and Kern (2019) extend this to emphasise characteristics such as feeling accepted for strengths and difficulties and being actively involved in class activities. It adds that these characteristics are enabled by the school community. The independent review (Bennett, 2017) claims that removing a student should be seen as a "positive solution" (p.44) and that it can be temporary or for an extended period. This contradicts the

literature on the many impacts of exclusions and school belonging. In addition, the review stated that when teaching strategies used to deliver a lesson have been exhausted then it can be necessary to go somewhere where the needs and behaviour of the young person can be better provided for (Bennett, 2017). This conflicts with the SEND code of practice (DfE & DoH, 2014) which states that the class teacher is responsible for the educational learning of all students in the classroom. It may also pose difficulties for a sense of school belonging given that the student may not feel accepted by the teacher if they are removed, therefore damaging the student-teacher relationship (Allen & Kern, 2019). If relationships are impacted, it could cause further difficulties for students that have had ACEs, given the evidence that compassionate relationships are important (Quinn et al., 2021).

The independent review recommends that the DfE should consider funding schools to create further internal inclusion units, particularly in those schools with higher levels of challenging behaviour offering targeted and early intervention (Bennett, 2017). While the idea of early identification and targeted support could be seen as beneficial, Bennett (2017) fails to provide clarity and guidance about what this should look like in practice. For example, it suggests that what happens after being in internal inclusion units is important but then suggests that it may mean spending time away from peers, being supported by trained staff, or being formally excluded. Being isolated from peers or formally excluded continues to contradict the evidence base on the consequences and negative impacts of exclusions (e.g., Timpson et al., 2019; Middleton & Kay, 2020). If the approach of the ISU has not worked, it is likely that it has not identified or met the needs of the young person and therefore a formal exclusion will continue to leave needs unaddressed. Research suggests that

being separated from peers leads to feelings of isolation, loneliness, boredom, and rejection (Brodie, 2001 and Osler & Osler, 2005; as cited by Middleton & Kay, 2020).

In June 2021, the government launched a call for evidence on behaviour management strategies, ISUs, and managed moves. ISUs are referenced as “removal rooms” that temporarily place students in them for behaviour that is disruptive. Removal from classes ranges from brief periods to spending several lessons or longer outside of usual lessons (DfE, 2021). This vague language highlights a lack of clear guidance about procedures.

Since this review, the government set up a consultation to gather feedback and views on their proposed changes to the behaviour in schools and suspensions and permanent exclusion guidance (DfE, 2022b). The revised guidance is set out in four themes that look at creating and maintaining high standards of behaviour, responding after incidents of misbehaviour, preventing recurrence of misbehaviour, and responding to specific behavioural incidents. Removal rooms are defined as “where a pupil, for disciplinary reasons, is required to spend a limited time out of the classroom, at the instruction of a member of staff” (p. 11) (DfE, 2022b). It has encouraged the use of using these areas without specifying what is meant by a “limited time”. It states that removal should be used to restore order and take disruptive students to somewhere where learning can be continued in a managed environment, without mention of what this environment may look like.

In addition to the revised guidance on removal rooms, there are references to in-school behaviour units as an intervention to prevent the recurrence of misbehaviour (DfE, 2022b), which are important to acknowledge. When

students with SEND needs in mainstream settings work away from their usual class, this can be considered a form of internal exclusion (Middleton & Kay, 2020). Suggestions have been made to refer pupils to in-school behaviour units for intervention in small groups outside of usual lessons (DfE, 2022b). It further suggests that the curriculum should align to mainstream lessons and support reintegration, having a visible presence from school leaders to ensure that the units are part of the school and wider staff (DfE, 2022b). On this basis, it appears to suggest the use of removal rooms as a response to an incident of misbehaviour and an in-school behaviour unit to address the recurrence of misbehaviour. This revised guidance implies that students will be learning outside of their mainstream classroom, and considerations must be made about the implications of continuing to remove individuals from their usual environment. Guidance needs to be stronger as these also do not appear to have a definitive end time. In relation to learning support units, some successful features have been deemed to include a well-organised learning environment, thorough assessment and evaluations of pupils, and clear entry and exit criteria (Hallam & Rogers, 2008). These are some of the considerations that may need to be made to strengthen guidance.

The language of much of the available guidance for schools uses behaviourist underpinnings. For example, helping schools to restore order (DfE, 2022b) suggests that there needs to be some element of control. The behaviour and discipline in schools guidance (DfE, 2016a) suggests a range of rewards to reinforce good behaviour and sanctions for those who do not comply with the behaviour policy. Guidance based on behaviourist principles suggests the use of punishment and reward, without giving thought to internal thoughts and feelings (Woollard, 2010), therefore taking a reductionist approach. Schools and

policies are relying on a behaviourist underpinning that reduces the understanding of incidents to a consequential response (Woollard, 2010), therefore alienating context, reflections, and feelings about the situation. Ofsted (2021) highlights that all behaviour is a form of communication and that those who care for young people have a duty to understand what this is.

Timpson (2019) comments that when used appropriately, pastoral input can alter a young person's life. This suggests that there are many ways in which schools can help young people in a supportive way. It also highlights that pastoral input needs to be appropriate and therefore, we need a more robust evidence base about the use of ISUs.

2.5 Research into in-school units

A systematic search of key terms within the literature on ISUs was undertaken to find papers (See Appendix A). The research is discussed within eight themes that draw on other relevant theories and practices.

2.5.1 Nature of the room

Some research has raised the punitive nature of ISUs and suggested that they deny the rights of young people (Barker et al., 2010). There is an ongoing controversial debate about their use, and they have received press with headlines such as "'It's like being in prison': what's behind the rise in school exclusions?" (Harris, 2021). It has been suggested that sending pupils home via formal exclusion has been perceived by schools as a reward (e.g., Barker et al, 2010; Gilmore, 2013, Barker, 2019), perhaps indicating that ISUs could counter this. However, there is very limited research into ISUs, some of which contrasts with other research, so our understanding of the subject is still unclear.

Other research has found that the ISU offered a mediated intervention that was deemed fair by students (Gilmore, 2013). Similarly, Gilmore's (2012) earlier research noted that the ISU offered a chance to engage in good learning behaviours and that staff placed the focus of the ISU on promoting inclusion. Gilmore's research (2012; 2013) are both case studies on particular schools, which is important to consider as the protocols will be specific to that context. It was also not clear whether the case study schools were in the same setting.

In contrast, other research has found that ISUs have been designed and planned to focus on control and punishment (Barker, 2019). It has been argued that specific spatial arrangements create power, which regulates behaviour and identity (Barker et al., 2010). The ISU tended to have a small space in a dedicated area, with display boards used as dividers to stop communication and interaction with others, and sometimes pupils face a wall away from the teacher (Barker, 2019). It has been suggested that ISUs are a strategy that is not visible to others as the purpose appears to be about isolating individuals away from the rest of the school (Barker et al., 2010). It is important to consider that this research was also a case study conducted in one secondary school setting, which will have processes specific to that context. Research by this same author has found that ISUs are set up differently from other learning spaces reflecting a "care-less" (p. 1285) nature (Barker, 2019).

It has been suggested that ISUs are a different form of punishment to detentions as young people would not be with their peers (Gilmore, 2013), highlighting that they are separated from others. Removing young people from their peers and limiting interactions with others could socially exclude individuals and impact their sense of belonging. Some research noted resistance strategies employed by the young people in an attempt to try and

communicate with others when in the ISU, such as passing each other notes (Barker et al., 2010), showing that they want interaction.

Other research has suggested that there are full-time nurture facilities in place for some students (Power & Taylor, 2020). Although this is a different approach to the above description of an ISU, it highlights an alternative form of exclusion as they are separated from their mainstream class.

This highlights that the nature of the ISU is different across settings. The research conducted by Gilmore (2012; 2013) appears to be in the same educational setting. Similarly, research by Barker (2010; 2019) was conducted in the same academy school setting. While there may be some difficulties with generalisability, they do highlight different understandings of the nature in which ISUs operate. It shows that there are different values placed on the area by the staff working within that setting.

2.5.2 What happens in the in-school unit?

Some research has highlighted that ISUs restrict social interaction with peers and that they are supervised closely sometimes with a staff-student ratio of 1:1 (Barker et al., 2010). There are variations in the work that is undertaken by students when in the ISU. Some research has found that the timetable segregated the students in the ISU from the main school further by following a different timetable, emphasising the separation (Barker et al., 2010). Other research has found that some students continued their usual work and some students worked through pre-prepared packs (Power & Taylor, 2020). Additionally, some students participated in other curricula from that of their mainstream class on a part-time or full-time basis doing vocational and sporting

activities (Power and Taylor, 2020). This shows variation in ISU approaches to the educative opportunities provided to young people.

Research suggests that where ISUs were effective it was because the pupils were given time and space to reflect on their behaviours (IFF Research Ltd et al., 2018). For the most part, these ISUs appear to be based on behaviourism, which is underpinned by principles of a stimulus-response without consideration of internal mental states or consciousness (Woollard, 2010). In some cases, reflections on behaviour were encouraged but this also varied in approaches (Power & Taylor, 2020). For example, one participant noted being in a small cubicle to reflect on what had gone wrong, which was deemed as a less helpful strategy (Power & Taylor, 2020). Similarly, other research highlighted that ISUs offered time to reflect but did not specify how this was achieved (Gilmore, 2013). It has been suggested that a supervisor can enable students to reflect and develop new strategies to support their learning (Barker et al., 2010) although there was no elaboration on how this was achieved either. In Power and Taylor's (2020) research, one participant discussed the helpful nature of restorative practice approaches, which would have involved guided conversations with others and reflections on the incident, therefore broadening the behaviourist approach to a more interactionist approach. Gilmore's (2012) research also noted that some staff were trained in restorative justice approaches, showing that they are sometimes used as a form of support to guide conversations.

Part of some research has highlighted staff comments about an occasion where a young person had hidden in a cupboard within the room noting the experience as "comical" (p.383) (Barker et al., 2010). These appear to be behaviours that are exhibiting anxiety as they are reaching for ways to exit the room. It also

suggests that in this case, the staff member did not fully understand the function of this young person's behaviour, indicating that their needs were missed. However, other research has found that there was a range of pastoral care and support that followed the ISU, showing different support and understanding available (Gilmore, 2013). The details of this support were not stated.

2.5.3 Rules and amount of time spent in the in-school unit

Research findings have highlighted rules about students being escorted to the ISU, spending a longer day at school, and having reduced breaks during the day (Gilmore, 2012; Barker, 2019). Barker et al. (2010) found that young people were required to attend the ISU for reasons such as verbal abuse, persistent disruptive behaviour, and not following instructions from staff.

Power and Taylor (2020) found that the duration of internal exclusions differed. For example, some were stood in a corridor for up to five minutes, some were sent to an ISU for a lesson, and some were sent to the room for the full day if they were asked to attend twice in one day. This extended to a day or two if there was involvement in a behaviour incident. Gilmore (2012) found that students were unlikely to be in the room for more than three days but if they were there was pastoral support available. This shows that there are no clear defined endings.

2.5.4 Location and set up of the in-school unit

The psychology of place theory is important to consider here given the social connotations that can be associated with contexts (Canter, 1977). This theory argues that actions are made in relation to the interpretations people make about a context. The significance of small details such as the positioning of furniture or the name of an area can impact the way individuals understand and

make meaning of their experiences (Canter, 1977). For example, Barker et al.'s (2010) research likened the ISU they were researching to prisons because of the spatial strategies used.

There have been various locations identified for the use of ISUs which include isolation units with booths, large classrooms with tables and chairs, and separate buildings where students were educated due to unsuccessful interventions (Power and Taylor, 2020). Other areas have included rooms placed within the middle of the school and nearby areas of pastoral support (Gilmore, 2012). It seems appropriate to wonder about the meaning young people might make from being placed in areas that differ from their usual classroom setting.

Arrangements within rooms can produce areas of power and can influence the behaviour of students (Canter, 1977; Barker et al., 2010). Some research described the ISU to be an area where the supervisor had a full view of everyone within the room, which Barker et al, (2010) reflected as being part of a surveillance culture in school reinforcing an area of control. In some cases, ISUs have also been described as hidden, difficult to find, and with small glass panel windows on the door (Barker et al., 2010). This appears to reflect a distinctive separation from the rest of the school which could impact somebody's sense of belonging, particularly if they make negative interpretations about the space.

Barker et al.'s (2010) research showed that the ISU was hidden but it also highlighted that the design of a building could impact people's feelings. For example, the general design of the school building had many glass walls looking out onto communal spaces. This made some young people feel

watched by the staff who walked around corridors as they described the school as strict. This highlights the importance of psychology of place theory (Canter, 1977) as it suggests that young people may be making negative interpretations about the design of the school. It appears to continue Barker et al.'s (2010) theme of surveillance and control within the school and could have implications for those who are in trouble if this is observable by others, e.g., if young people are attending an ISU that is placed within a communal space.

2.5.5 Measuring the Effectiveness of the in-school unit

Behaviourist approaches are reductionist as they limit thinking about how to modify behaviour based on the use of rewards and punishments (Woollard, 2010) yet they are still used within policy, guidance, and school systems. The effectiveness of punishment has been doubted by behaviourists (Woollard, 2010).

Barker et al. (2010) stated that these units have a presence because of political pressures to raise attainment and consequently, they exclude perceived disruptive young people from public spaces during school hours. Similarly, Power and Taylor (2020) noted a system-level difficulty in the pressure schools feel to be inclusive without the expenses and resources to support them with this. This suggests that schools are using strategies to remove students from their mainstream classrooms without addressing underlying needs (Power & Taylor, 2020). If these ISUs exist on this basis, then there is no clear purpose of what the room aims to achieve.

There are systems in place that acknowledge the rates of exclusions which schools can be penalised for doing, therefore making schools less likely to exclude (Power & Taylor, 2020) and perhaps more likely to use ISUs. There are

no figures available about the presence of internal exclusion or any guidance for a model (Barker et al., 2010). There has also been research that suggests young people did not reflect on the reasons for their attendance in the ISU as some participants noted that they forgot about the experience when they left the area (Barker et al., 2010). This questions the effectiveness of their use. Power and Taylor (2020) claim that we need to know more about the effects of various forms of exclusion at the individual, institutional and systemic levels in addition to looking at official exclusion data.

Gilmore (2013) found that one school had reduced the number of suspensions and improved its attainment within four years. In comparison, Barker et al. (2010) found that the outcomes following time in the ISU were short-term and only partially successful as it was noted that the young people returned to their mainstream class acting similarly as before. Barker et al. (2010) highlight that these interventions may not be enough to address the underlying behavioural difficulties or special educational needs.

Whilst there were comments from participants about some pupils achieving more than they would usually within their mainstream class, Barker et al. (2010) suggest that this could be due to some coping strategies employed by the young people to make it through their day in the ISU. Gilmore (2013) found that students tended to accept the need for a disciplinary inclusion room and that the reasons for accessing this space were fair. Other research hypothesised that staff took a caring stance within the room when the disciplinary nature did not work (Barker, 2019). This suggests that the initial set-up was not always effective, and that support needs to develop to meet the needs of the young people accessing the ISU.

2.5.6 Pupil views about in-school units

There is a lack of research that specifically focuses on the voices of young people in relation to these ISUs. While some research has incorporated brief views on young people's experiences, this has not been the primary focus of the research. Gilmore's (2013) research which did focus on views of young people showed that there were peer influences on students in either helping students to avoid trouble or encouraging them to do things that may result in attendance in the ISU. Gilmore's (2013) research also found that some pupils commented on their ability to focus more on their writing when in the ISU and that students tended to agree that being at school was a better use of their time than being at home. However, some young people commented on not receiving help from teachers when in the ISU (Gilmore, 2013). Gilmore (2013) noted that student perspectives should mediate disciplinary processes at school.

2.5.7 Approaches used by staff within the in-school unit

Some research has reflected on the notion of care not being a typical priority within schools due to other political pressures (Barker, 2019). Other research has found that teachers within the ISU shaped their responses to behaviour difficulties using a more nurturing approach (Barker et al., 2010). For example, by matching the nature of the quiet room by rewording something or using a whisper to communicate instead of using a loud voice that they may have used in the mainstream classroom (Barker et al., 2010). Research that briefly sought the views of students has also highlighted a preference for adults who do not shout (Barker, 2019).

Some research has found that adults within the ISU use a caring and nurturing approach, which was also perceived as a mothering nature (Barker, 2019). Nurturing approaches included helping students to get through their day by

doing things such as playing relaxing music (Barker, 2019). Barker (2019) reflects on how a room of a disciplinary nature can be transformed into a space that provides care because of the staff member who operates it.

Research has also found that pastoral members of staff value an informal check-in with students in the ISU and that often involves parents as part of the inclusive policy (Gilmore, 2012). This highlights a team around the child approach which shows a good relationship between home and school. In some research, it was raised that pastoral staff members are trained in restorative justice approaches (Gilmore, 2012). This shows the importance of the pastoral staff members within schools who can share their knowledge and experience of working with young people and resolving difficulties effectively.

An interesting point raised by Barker (2019) was how spaces of ISUs can be reshaped by staff and students to find new purposes that were not initially planned. Staff who built understanding through their experiences of needs in a context such as poverty and family vulnerability were highlighted as a strength of the staff members that operated the ISU (Barker, 2019). It shows that staff have taken the time to get to know their students, accepted them, and want to offer support, which are all elements of a sense of school belonging (Allen & Kern, 2019). This demonstrates the importance of a caring and nurturing approach and the skills that can mediate experiences of getting through the day. It also highlights that staff can play a key role in improving the experience of ISUs for young people.

2.5.8 The Impact of Labelling

Barker et al. (2010) found that people described ISUs alike to prisons. Staff used the term “offenders” which may have reinforced this social construction

and perception of ISUs being a prison-like environment. This has important implications for the names that are used to refer to the ISU. For example, the Department for Children, Schools, and Families (DCSF) highlights that use of the term “seclusion” is not advisable as it legally means forcing somebody to spend time alone and against their will (DCSF, 2008).

Other research has found that students in the ISU applied labels to themselves based on the names they were called by others (Gilmore, 2013), which could have implications for their self-identity. People label themselves and others, choosing to reject, accept or add to those labels (Eyben & Moncrieffe, 2007). This means that when pupils are involved in an incident such as a fight, it increases the likelihood of being labelled (Pyne, 2019), suggesting that actions are not separated from the person.

A case study highlighted that labels influenced some teachers’ observations of behaviour, making them more likely to be in trouble (Wenham, 2020). Similarly, Gilmore (2013) showed some participants’ comments from young people about being treated differently after being in the ISU and feeling that staff noticed them more within the classroom increasing the likelihood of being sanctioned. This shows that young people’s behaviours are likely to be watched more closely following time in the ISU and that there may be an underlying assumption that the young people are going to misbehave, therefore increasing the likelihood of consequences such as ISUs. This would also impact somebody’s sense of belonging. Wenham’s (2020) case study highlighted that the young person spent most of an academic year in the ISU as teachers thought they would cause problems.

It is important to consider the implications of labels. Burr (2015) argues that language provides us with categorical systems which give meaning to our experiences. Therefore, our experiences are a product of language. The language used to describe behaviour and the names given to the ISUs will play a role in how somebody understands their experiences and what this means for their identity and their place within the school. Discursive positions during social interactions play a key role in our ability to negotiate identities for ourselves or our circumstances and this keeps our identity in constant flux (Burr, 2015). This suggests that self-identity can continually change and reflect the conversations or interactions we experience with others. Research has found that students applied attached labels as part of their identity and appeared to use this as a reason to explain their differences from others (Caslin, 2019). This suggests that individuals place value on the views that others have of them and can take on these labels that impact their self-identity and understanding of themselves.

Labels provide categories and boundaries that contribute to our social construction of the world (Eyben & Moncrieffe, 2007). O'Reilly (2007) highlighted that use of labelling within a therapeutic context such as stating that a child is "naughty" can locate difficulties within the child and make this feel unchangeable. It has been noted that if the description is used to label the actions rather than the child, it can be more effective to instigate change (O'Reilly, 2007) as it separates the behaviour from the individual. This raises questions about the language used to describe reasons for young people accessing ISUs. Labels that identify an individual rather than the actions of an individual could have implications on the young person's self-identity and limit the prospect of change in the future. This could have implications for someone's

self-identity and sense of belonging if they feel that they are othered by their teachers and peer group, with no way of improving their situation.

2.6 Implications for Professionals including EPs and Behaviour Specialists

Of the papers discussed that had researched ISUs, only one paper mentioned working with the LA. The paper stated that in Wales there is an encouragement to find alternative solutions to exclusion such as an internal exclusion or a managed move which is mediated by the LA (Power and Taylor, 2020). Research on ISUs has not highlighted any key contributions of the LA in supporting schools with behaviour difficulties. For example, professionals such as EPs or Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BESTs) have not been identified. LAs have received cuts to budgets and are financially stretched (Power & Taylor, 2020). This has had implications on resources available and how teams operate, leading to the introduction of traded EP services in some cases (Lee & Woods, 2017).

LAs have a role in monitoring school exclusions and a statutory duty in providing education to those who are permanently excluded (DfE, 2017a). LAs also have duties to involve children, young people, and their parents/carers in reviewing and developing provisions for those with special educational needs (the Children and Families Act, 2014). Given these statutory duties and the data that LAs collect on exclusions, there needs to be more understanding of the role that teams within the LA could have in working with schools to reduce exclusions, including their role in the use of ISUs.

The SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2014) names EPs as key professionals in supporting understanding and meeting the needs of young

people, yet there is limited research highlighting their role in reducing exclusions. It has been suggested that EPs need to highlight their skills in relation to the exclusions of young people (Bagley & Hallam, 2017). EPs can take a meta-perspective to help look at the wider system around the young person (Beaver, 2011). Two elements of the EP role include the psychological skills to enable engagement with others and build rapport while using the psychological knowledge that supports the sense-making of situations helping to develop interventions and promote change (Beaver, 2011). Wagner (2008) highlights that EPs use their consultative skills to provide time and space for professionals to have a reflective conversation and broaden schools' thinking to an interactionist approach thinking about the behaviours in context.

Historically, BESTs were established to offer a preventative approach to support young people in schools with emotional, behavioural and attendance difficulties (Sheppard & Clibbens, 2013). There appears to be limited research into more recent behaviour support teams within local authorities and the roles that they can offer. A key role of historic BESTs was to build good working relationships with schools (Sheppard & Clibbens, 2013), which could have had implications for mediating difficult conversations around exclusions and managing behaviour.

There is a need to understand how professionals within the LAs work with schools in relation to behaviour management to understand the reasons schools have for operating ISUs and how to make practice effective. Once we learn more about this, we can start to understand how this may impact young people by listening to their experiences.

2.7 Summary of Chapter

The prevalence of ISUs is increasing, particularly within secondary schools and academies (IFF Research Ltd et al, 2018). These areas are unmonitored therefore leaving schools unaccountable for their use. There is no guidance or available data about ISUs, and they appear to be an approach used because of the political focus on outcomes and closures of outside provision settings (e.g., Barker et al., 2010; Nash et al., 2016; Power & Taylor, 2020). There has also been a recent push for the use of ISUs following the independent review of behaviour in schools (Bennett, 2017). This negates the evidence base that exists on the negative and long-term consequences of exclusion.

There is very limited research on how schools are operating ISUs and from what is known, they range significantly in their approaches (Timpson et al., 2019). There is a lack of literature that prioritises the voices and views of young people. Additionally, there is a lack of research into the support that the LA can provide to schools. None of this research into ISUs has identified professionals such as behaviour support teams in mediating behaviour. We must build a more robust evidence base on the use of ISUs, to learn about their impact. To do this, we need to explore some of the ways in which schools operate ISUs and the support that is available from the LA to help them to manage behaviour. Then we need to learn from those young people that access the ISUs about their experiences to build our understanding of what works in practice.

Research Questions:

1. How do ISUs operate in secondary educational settings in the context of one LA?

2. What are the experiences and perceptions of young people attending ISUs?

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Overview

This chapter will outline the epistemological and ontological positions adopted. It will detail the research design, data collection, ethical considerations, analysis, and research integrity.

3.2 Epistemological and Ontological Position

The philosophical underpinnings such as epistemology states how we know when knowledge is valid and what counts as the truth (Packer & Goicoechea, 2010). Ontology captures the consideration of what exists, what is, and what it means for something/someone to be (Packer & Goicoechea, 2010). Theoretical positions are important considerations to ensure that others understand how this research has been interpreted and understood.

A social constructionist approach recognises that our knowledge of the world comes from social processes and interactions between people (Burr, 2003). The aim of this type of research stance is to gain a better understanding of a topic (Robson & McCartan, 2016). This research is focusing on the lived experiences of people that operate or access an ISU. There is relatively little research, data, or guidance about ISUs which suggests that they are a social construction in the way they are given purpose and meaning by schools. There is also a gap in the literature about the involvement of wider teams operating in local contexts with schools such as behaviour support teams. I wanted to understand how policy was enacted in schools and to do this, I needed to interview schools and the LA behaviour team to understand the relationship between the LA and schools, availability of support, whether ISUs operate, how they operate and reasons for having an ISU.

Robson and McCartan (2016) state that the interactions between people are what construct social properties. Meaning is therefore constructed as interpretations are made through interaction and the world is experienced as it is lived by the individual. It was important to understand the lived experiences of young people in ISUs as there is a lack of research into the views of young people in this area. A social constructionist approach listens to participants' views and experiences, which are a product of language and interactions.

3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 A Qualitative Design using semi-structured interviews

Given the nature of wanting to explore lived experiences and views of participants to learn about an under researched area, with a social constructionist underpinning, a qualitative research design was necessary. A qualitative study focuses on meanings and contexts (Robson & McCartan 2016), therefore allowing for rich detailed accounts from participants (Coolican, 2009).

The semi-structured interviews served as a checklist to guide topics of interest that needed to be covered (Robson & McCartan, 2016). An advantage of semi-structured interviews is that the wording of questions and the order in which they are asked can be adapted to fit each individualistic interview (Robson & McCartan, 2016) which allowed for the participant to lead on the information that they felt comfortable with sharing. Open-ended questions supported further probing and follow-up questions (Adams, 2015).

3.3.2 Two-Phase Design

I structured the data collection into two parts. Firstly, it was important to understand the wider approaches to behaviour in the LA and to then understand

exactly how ISUs operated in schools within the LA. There is a lack of literature about the role of wider LA teams in supporting schools with behaviour needs. As a trainee EP who works in a LA, I wanted to learn about the LA behaviour team's involvement and knowledge of ISUs to triangulate these views with schools and young people. LA and school interviews gave me a contextual overview of services available to schools for behaviour management. It also allowed me to explore what role the LA behaviour team might have in relation to ISUs. This formed phase one of the research. Phase two then focused in depth on the experiences of young people that drew on the knowledge and understanding gained from Phase one. For example, learning from young people about what the ISU looked like and where the designated space was located.

3.3.3 Designing the Interview Schedules

When interviewing adults, I started by asking them about their role and place of work before going into more detailed questions about their practice and ISU experience. Topics covered within the school staff interviews included asking about the ISU, the impact of attending the ISU, what happens next, and the layout of the area (see Appendix B). An example of a question I asked about ISUs was "tell me about your ISU". Prompts relating to this question included asking how it operates, how break times are spent, and how long somebody may spend in the ISU. The interview schedule questions were informed by the literature as ISU approaches vary significantly (IFF Research Ltd et al., 2018; Timpson et al., 2019). Therefore, the questions were kept of an open nature to hear about how the day runs and what the expectations are within the ISU. Some literature also highlighted the physical location of the ISU (e.g., Barker et al., 2010) that often separated young people from the rest of the school and

appeared to discourage conversations with those in the area. This made it important to hear about how schools had set up the area.

Topics covered within the interview schedule for the LA behaviour team included asking about the primary needs of young people in the LA, strengths and challenges amongst schools, LA perspectives on the use of ISUs, and support available in relation to behaviour and ISUs (see Appendix C). An example of a question I asked the LA behaviour team included, “how effectively do you think ISUs operate within the LA?” Prompting questions included asking about similarities or differences across schools and names of ISUs. The questions addressed in the interviews with LA staff were informed by my experiences in practice as there was no information about this from the reviewed literature.

My interviews with adults gave me a holistic understanding of the way ISUs operated and supported the development of questions for phase two. Topics included finding out what the name of the ISU was, reasons for attending and rules that applied within the area (see Appendix D). There was limited research into the views of young people regarding the ISU although some research briefly raised that the area made young people feel negative about themselves (Gilmore, 2013). Therefore, it was important to learn about young people’s experiences particularly relating to the thoughts and feelings they have when in the ISU. An example of a question I asked young people in relation to ISUs was, “can you tell me about the ISU?” Prompts relating to this included asking what activities happen in there and what the adults are doing within the area. To see how the interview schedules for each group were informed in more detail see appendix E.

3.4 Participants and Inclusion criteria

3.4.1 Recruitment

Phase 1 recruitment

I am a trainee EP on placement in the LA where I conducted the research. By conducting the research in one LA, it allowed me to gain a rich picture of the views and approaches held about ISUs and the support available in relation to behaviour management. It was practical as I had access to the contacts needed to reach the population.

Secondary school SENCOs were contacted in one LA by their link educational psychologist to introduce me as the researcher. Staff taking part from secondary schools were invited to join if they had some knowledge and/or experience in the way that their ISU operated within their setting. SENCOs referred me to the contact in their school that they felt fit this description.

Out of a possible eighteen schools, I had responses from a small number of schools, some stating that they did not operate these ISUs or that they were unable to participate due to demanding workloads, and some stating that they would like to participate. The total number of schools that participated was four. The role titles of participants included Deputy Head Teacher, Headteacher, Assistant Head Teacher, and SENCO.

Out of twelve behaviour team members within the LA, three signed up to participate stating that they had some knowledge or experience of working with secondary schools. Role titles included Behaviour Support Co-ordinator, Learning Co-ordinator, and Specialist Behaviour and Inclusion Manager.

Phase 2 recruitment

The schools that took part in the first phase, were informed of the second phase and those who were interested took part. Given the vulnerability of the young people, it was important to put in place some criteria for recruitment. I discussed with the school staff that the young people should feel comfortable speaking with me. O' Reilly and Dogra (2017) highlight key elements important for young people's consent and participation. These were the child's understanding of information, their ability to retain the information, their ability to make a balanced decision about whether to participate and to be able to communicate their wishes/decisions. Therefore, it was explained that those who had poor literacy or language skills may not be appropriate. In addition, it was discussed that those who were having a difficult time relating to any ongoing safeguarding concerns would also not be appropriate to participate.

I acknowledge that there are potential barriers when recruiting via gatekeepers, such as the SENCOs and pastoral staff who had responsibility for their students. These include potential biases such as their recommendations to work with particular individuals who they may perceive as cooperative and exclusion of those that may say negative things (O' Reilly & Dogra, 2017). However, the staff knew the young people well and identified them within the inclusion criteria, which I respected.

A total of eight young people took part across two different schools (i.e., four young people in each school). Five participants were male, and three participants were female. Two participants were in year 8, one was in year 9, two were in year 10, and three were in year 11.

3.4.2 Sample

Table 1 Details of Adult Participants

Role Title	**Setting**	**Summary of responsibilities (as described by the participant)**
Deputy Head Teacher	Mixed comprehensive school (Academy)	• Lead on behaviour and personal development, including rewards and sanctions • Work with external agencies and alternative provision settings • oversees careers and PSHE
Assistant Head Teacher	Mixed Comprehensive School (Academy)	• Has a role in the In Year Fair Access Panel, which is a LA process relating to the managed moves of students • Responsible for the education of young people on pupil premium • SLT link to year 10
Headteacher	Comprehensive Girls School	*Specific role duties were not shared but they shared previous experiences that relate to this role:* • Has had roles that include teaching, pastoral deputy, learning deputy, head of year, head of department and now headteacher
SENCO	Mixed Comprehensive School (Academy)	• Oversees the Learning Support Assistants and cover supervisors

		• Works collaboratively across the school with the pastoral managers and the heads of faculty
LA Behaviour Support Co-ordinator	LA Behaviour Team	• Co-ordinates transitions in the LA • Supports Behaviour Outreach Officers
LA Learning Co-ordinator	LA Behaviour Team	• Supporting staff with behaviour difficulties • Plan and deliver learning activities
LA Specialist Behaviour and Inclusion Manager	LA Behaviour Team	• Manages the behaviour team within LA

3.4.2.1 Pen Portraits of the Young People

Each participant has been given a pseudonym to maintain their confidentiality. Pen portraits have been provided to emphasise the voices and individuality of the young people who have shared their personal experiences.

Theo

Theo is in year 10. Theo feels that school is going “good” and enjoys PE, particularly at the secondary school level. Theo likes bikes, motocross, and fishing. Theo would like to join the army in the future. Theo feels that he has not been to the ISU many times but has been “quite a lot” in a previous setting. Theo mentioned that a reason he went to the ISU was for not doing homework because he “didn’t get it”.

Ben

Ben is in year 11. Ben feels that school is going “good” and enjoys PE, DT, and practical subjects. Ben also enjoys boxing and used to be part of a club. Ben still enjoys watching boxing. Ben also likes to go out with his friends. Ben feels that he has been to the ISU “a couple of times every year”. Ben feels that he has gone to the ISU for receiving a “small amount” of negative logs which include “not doing enough work” or “talking too much”.

Ella

Ella is in year 8. Ella feels that school is “going alright” and enjoys music, drama, history, and geography. Ella also likes football and has joined clubs including drama and majorettes. Ella feels like she has been to the ISU “a few times” and that missing detentions are the usual reason that she would go to the ISU.

Miles

Miles is in year 11. Miles feels that school is “going quite well” and hopes to pass his exams. Miles likes DT, history, and art. Miles enjoys playing video games and sometimes going out with friends. Miles feels that he has been to the ISU many times and that skipping detentions is the main reason why he goes there.

John

John is in year 10. John feels that school is “good”, and that maths is going well for him. John said that when he is calm, it is easier to find the answers. John also said that he enjoys PE and working with his peers. John likes football and supports a team. John said he likes to clean as he likes seeing things

“spotless”. John feels that he has been to the ISU many times “in the past”. John did not specify the reasons for which he had personally been to the ISU.

Louise

Louise is in year 11. Louise likes going to school to see her friends. Louise likes English and maths and enjoys writing stories and reading books. Louise also likes cooking, swimming, watching movies and spending time with her mother. Louise says she has been to the ISU twice and that one of the reasons was because she “kissed her teeth” at a teacher.

Katy

Katy is in year 9. Katy feels that school “is not good” because teachers don’t understand her. Katy likes coming to school to see her friends and engaging in practical outdoor activities. Katy likes shopping and going out with friends to get coffee. Katy also likes cleaning. Katy feels that she has been to the ISU “loads of times” for reasons such as not going to detentions, “bunking”, and “backchatting teachers”.

Fred

Fred is in year 8. Fred feels that school is going “good”. Fred likes seeing his friends at school and enjoys maths and art. Fred likes playing video games in his spare time. Fred feels that he has been to the ISU many times for “being bad”.

3.5 Procedure of Research

3.5.1 Pilot Study

Robson and McCartan (2016) recommend using a pilot study to allow for opportunities to run the research, identify problems and correct them using a

smaller scale sample. As this research focus was on hearing detailed accounts and experiences from a small number of participants to learn about how ISUs operate, a pilot study was not deemed appropriate.

Robson and McCartan (2016) also suggest that pilot studies can support the building of acceptance and trust so that participants feel comfortable participating. The timeline that I had to conduct a pilot study was also impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic which would have made it difficult to meet with young people face to face due to restrictions on social contact. I felt that an online meeting may have been perceived by young people as impersonal. I wanted to meet with young people in a setting where they felt comfortable and in person to facilitate familiarity and rapport building. When I was able to conduct interviews, I met face to face with young people. I provided time and reassurance about the interviews when explaining my research prior to the start of the interview, emphasising that there were no right or wrong answers and that I was interested in their views. The semi-structured interviews allowed me to probe and follow up on ideas brought forward by participants if there were any areas I had not asked about. I also asked whether there were any information participants wanted to add at the end of the interview questions. The interviews were received well by all participants and some of the young people commented on enjoying the experience.

While a pilot study would have sought feedback on questions asked during the interviews, I still encouraged verbal feedback about how participants found the questions and experience of the interview afterwards. A pilot may have highlighted other questions to explore which I acknowledge is a limitation. However, I felt it was also important to think about the associated ethical considerations with a pilot study such as the recognition of discussing sensitive

issues with young people that would not have contributed to the overall data collection.

Other reasons for deciding against a pilot study included that ISUs have varied approaches in different settings (Timpson et al., 2019). Therefore, questions developed based on the understanding of how one school operates its ISU may not have applied to another school.

3.5.2 Phase 1 Procedure

At this point of data collection, many schools were still following government guidance including the use of “bubbles” due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, these adult interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams to adhere to the guidance on social distancing and minimising the risk of transmission. Dates and times were arranged, and an online invite was sent out.

I introduced myself to the adults and checked that they were happy for the interview to be recorded. Interviews were recorded on a Dictaphone and notes were made at the time of the interviews. Interviews ranged from 38 minutes to 102 minutes in length.

Hart’s (1992) ladder of participation model suggests that the degrees of participation need to be higher than tokenism. While this model is about young people, it can still be applied to consider maximising the participation of adults. For example, I ensured that all participants were consulted and informed of the research. A participatory element of research is helpful when trying to understand habitual practice (Bergold, 2007 as cited by Bergold & Thomas, 2012), something which ISUs appear to have been based on. I frequently checked in with adults about my understanding of what they had said to

encourage more of their views. I also asked whether there was any other information they would like to add at the end of the interview to give them an opportunity for further participation. Participants were debriefed at the end of the interviews and thanked for their time. Adults later received copies of transcripts to check whether they wanted to add or remove any information shared, showing further value in their participation.

3.5.3 Phase 2 Procedure

I organised dates and times of interviews and schools arranged the room where the interviews took place for each young person. The link contact organised the interviews including arranging parental consent. Interviews carried out with young people were face to face. They took place in their school setting within a familiar room that was available such as a meeting room or empty classroom. A member of the school staff introduced me to the young people prior to the interviews. Interviews were recorded via a Dictaphone and interviews ranged from 13 minutes to 29 minutes in length.

I started by asking young people general questions such as what they like doing at the weekend to build rapport and get them used to answering my questions (O'Reilly & Dogra, 2017). Reflecting on the ladder of participation (Hart, 1992), I frequently used the participants' words to repeat back what they had said, to prompt the participants to elicit more of their views (Adams, 2015). It also allowed me to check in that I had understood what had been shared. I offered an opportunity to draw or create a mind map (e.g., see Appendix O) to tell me about their thoughts and feelings regarding the ISU. Engaging in an activity together built shared attention and interest. It also provided an alternative means for communication giving them a different way to express themselves.

Mind maps were looked at together with the young person so I could summarise and interpret the information back to them. This further encompassed a participatory research approach whereby interpretations were developed through interactions with the young person (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). Providing summaries also adopted a member checking approach at this time, ensuring that I had understood and interpreted their views in the way that they had shared them. There were occasions when the young people did correct me when I had misinterpreted something, which shows that they felt comfortable doing this and that my bias in assumptions or ideas was reduced at that time. Participants were asked about how they found the experience of the interview and debriefed at the end. I told them that I would share the findings at a later date with the link contact in the school if they were interested in hearing about the findings.

Table 2 Showing an example of a transcript where the young person corrected my misinterpretation of the mind map

(R)
Erm, well sometimes it was kind of like the best option, sometimes. Or like, maybe it was, like or you have, or you had no option, maybe.
(I)
So they felt that it was the best option.
(R)
Mm.
(I)
But that leaves you disappointed because they've not helped you maybe?
(R)

No, no, no, what I'm trying to say is like, I like, that your disappointed in yourself.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was granted by the Institute of Education (IOE) Ethics Committee, and this is also in line with the British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Human Research Ethics (The BPS, 2021a). Other ethical considerations have been made within the four domains of responsibility as identified by the BPS (2021b) as these are the principles that members should uphold in practice. These areas are respect, competence, responsibility, and integrity.

3.6.1 Respect

To protect the identity of the participants the LA has not been disclosed, nor have the names of schools, or participants. Any key identifying information such as school mottos was also removed in the interest of confidentiality. Adult participants are referred to by their role title and young people have been given pseudonyms.

Materials were developed for this study to ensure that consent was informed. Materials included information sheets for each audience about the purpose of the research and consent forms. Harcourt et al., (2011) state that trust and security are important factors to consider when asking someone to share their lived experiences. Prior to the interviews, I built rapport and gave time to brief participants on the research. There was also time for the participants to ask any unanswered questions. I thanked participants for taking part, to show that I valued their time and so that they felt listened to.

Pantell et al. (1982, as cited by O'Reilly & Dogra, 2017) highlight that young people's rights to speak are often restricted and that they usually must request adults to join conversations. The information sheets that I created for young people had more condensed information than that within the parental information sheet to make it more accessible. I consulted with young people of a similar age attending secondary schools to ensure its suitability for the target population. I amended this material in line with the suggestions made. For example, they asked what the references meant and were unsure what their purpose was. These were removed to provide a more succinct and clear information guide (see Appendix J).

All participants were reminded of their rights such as withdrawing at any time without reason, and that their views would be kept confidential. Interviews took place online for adults which meant that they were sat in familiar places in a quiet area. Interviews with young people took place on the school site in a quiet space. The familiarity of the location helped to create a safe space during interviews.

3.6.2 Competence

The BPS (2021b) states that competence is the ability to maintain high standards in professional work and to work within the limits of one's knowledge, skills, and training. Considerations should be made to ensure that skills in decision making and practicalities were made ethically (The BPS, 2021b). I have undertaken additional reading and engaged in university learning to build my understanding of ethical research (e.g., Harcourt et al., 2011; Robson & McCarton, 2016; O'Reilly and Dogra, 2017). I have also identified and discussed ethical issues with my supervisors, which contributed to the ethics forms (see Appendices K & L).

3.6.3 Responsibility

Recordings for all participants were used to transcribe the interviews and then they were deleted. Transcripts and other data were kept on a password protected computer. Any handwritten notes from interviews did not include any personal information. Reporting has also been kept anonymous so that there are not any identifiable characteristics of participants. Participants were briefed about the research prior to taking part by going through the information document. Participants were also debriefed at the end of the interviews.

In relation to young people, O' Reilly and Dogra (2017) highlight good practice in research with the importance of discussing the limits of confidentiality. I explained that in the event of a safeguarding issue, I would have a duty to disclose the relevant information to the designated safeguarding lead and follow any relevant policies and guidance. I also explained that this information would not be included in the research.

3.6.4 Integrity

Integrity encompasses being honest, truthful, and fair in interactions with others (The BPS, 2021b). The findings and work that I have produced are my own. Transcripts for adults were sent back to participants to ensure that they were happy with what had been shared. Consent forms stated that quotes may be used from interviews, which participants agreed to. Summaries were made frequently throughout the interviews with young people to ensure that I had understood what had been communicated. I have detailed the steps I undertook to analyse and interpret the data so that this process is also transparent for others.

3.7 Data analysis

Transcripts were completed using a software programme, Otter, to speed up the process of transcribing. I spent time reviewing these and making edits as there were mistakes throughout the transcripts. The recordings were listened to at least twice each to ensure that I was familiar with the data. Once I was content with the transcriptions, these were sent out to adult participants for comments, edits, and feedback. This helped me further to immerse myself in the data and be familiar with what had been shared. Thematic analysis was chosen as the method of analysing data because it promotes rich qualitative data of participants' accounts (Coolican, 2009). In addition, it emphasises participant experiences, therefore, promoting a social constructionist approach (Robson & McCarton, 2016). A thematic analysis approach was used to identify themes within data, which helps to organise and describe it in detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

A narrative analytical approach was considered for the young people's experiences. Narrative analysis refers to various methods for interpreting texts in story form (Riessman, 2008). It focuses on the social construction of a story and considers how and why the story is told (Earthy et al., 2016). However, the focus of this research was on exploring young people's perspectives of ISUs rather than understanding their life history, and so it was felt that a thematic analysis would be more appropriate. Thematic analysis is often used in young people's interviews as it takes the issues that the young person perceives as relevant (Joffe and Yardley, 2004, as cited by O'Reilly and Dogra, 2017).

3.7.1 Process of Analysis

Data were analysed using an inductive approach meaning that the process of coding happened without trying to make it fit into any preconceptions or

predetermined coding themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This research intended to understand the lived experiences of ISUs by listening to people's personal accounts, for which thematic analysis lends itself well. The data was thematically analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase guided approach. Other approaches were considered such as Boeije's (2002, as cited by Furgard et al., 2020) constant comparative method that compares ideas and relationships within transcripts and between them. However, this was more in line with a grounded theory approach. I felt that Braun and Clarke's model lent itself better to this research as the aim was to explore experiences and build an understanding of an under researched area rather than generate theory from the data. Ryan and Bernard (2003) also discussed the many ways that data can be searched for themes by noticing repetition, comparisons across data, or looking for missing data that is not discussed. Braun and Clarke's method encompassed an element of repetition in that it finds repeated patterns of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additionally, Braun and Clarke's approach guided me through each step.

Thematic analysis is an iterative process, and this has been a strength of the approach as it has allowed for a frequent revisiting of the analysis. My thematic analysis was supported by using the programme Nvivo to aid the process of coding and organising codes. This made it more accessible to reorganise codes and group them into one place.

Phase 1 familiarisation stage

The familiarisation stage started when I began listening to recordings and editing transcripts that had initially been transcribed by a programme. I included

pauses, and interruptions and noted inaudible information. They supported me in gathering some initial understanding of the ideas discussed.

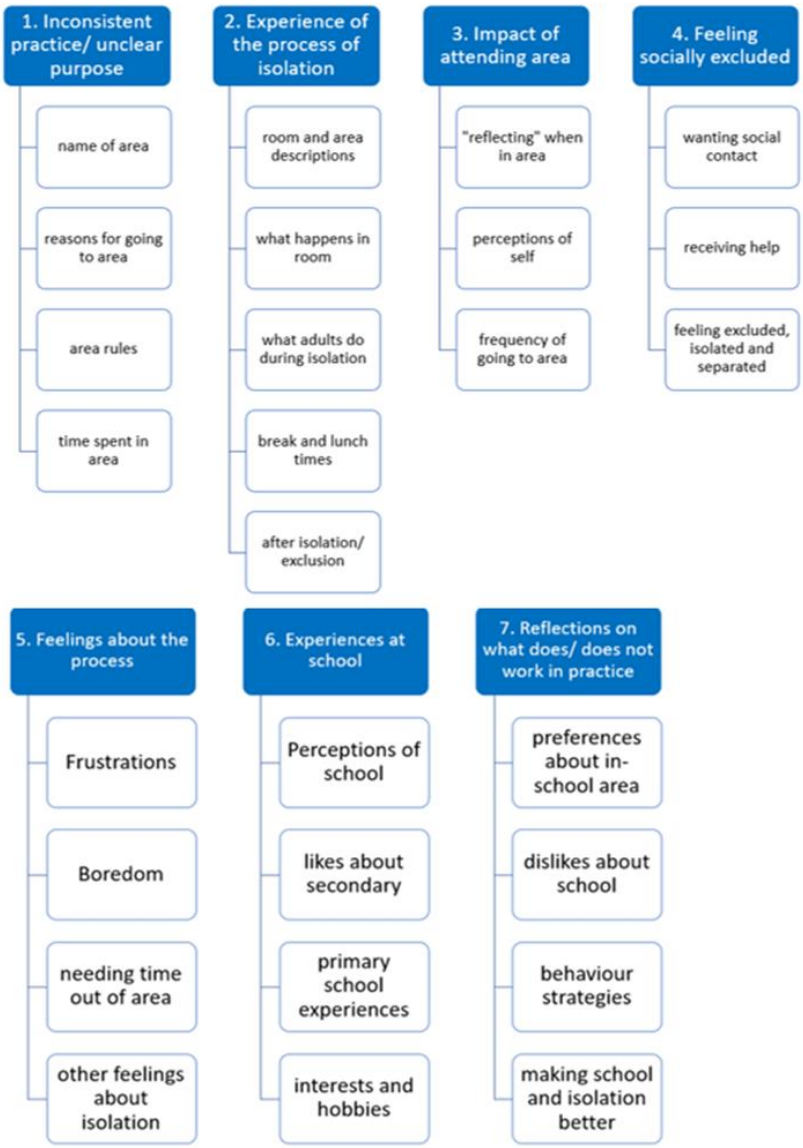
Phase 2 generating initial codes

Following this, I annotated the transcripts and kept annotations as broad as possible, largely using the participant's words to ensure that I kept the data as objectively as it was given in the interviews. This produced a large number of annotations which were then consolidated into clusters with common patterns. These patterns informed the codes that were created (see appendix Q and R for weightings given to codes).

Phase 3 searching for themes

Stage three consisted of grouping codes into subthemes. The subthemes were brought together based on similar topics discussed within the data. At this point, I printed my codes so that I could look at them by hand and physically manipulate them to group them into a potential theme, thereby searching for more meaningful patterns. Once I had done this, I made an on-screen representation of my potential subthemes. Codes are listed under an initial subtheme name. For example, in Figure 1, category three, "impacts of attending the area" was made up of the codes "perceptions of self", "reflecting when in the area", and "frequency of going to area".

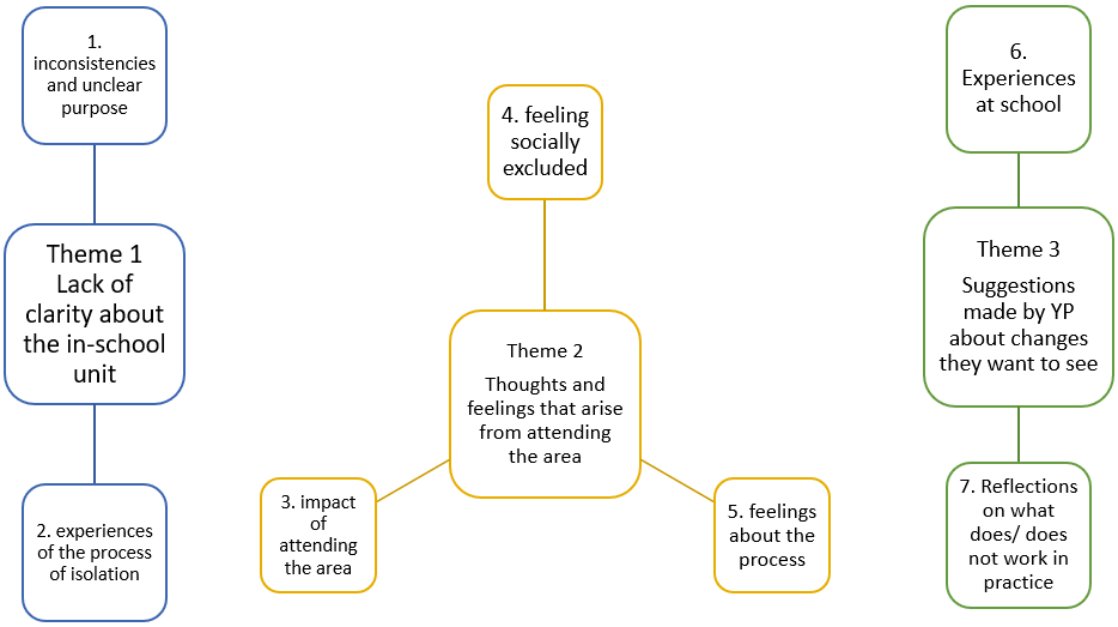
Figure 1 Grouping codes into subthemes



Phase 4 reviewing themes

I then reviewed subthemes and organised them into themes. I brought together subthemes that appeared to describe similar topics. For example, I thought that the categories in Figure 1 numbered 6 (“experiences at school”) and 7 (“reflections on what does and does not work in practice”) fit well together in thinking about suggestions for the ISU in future (see Figure 2).

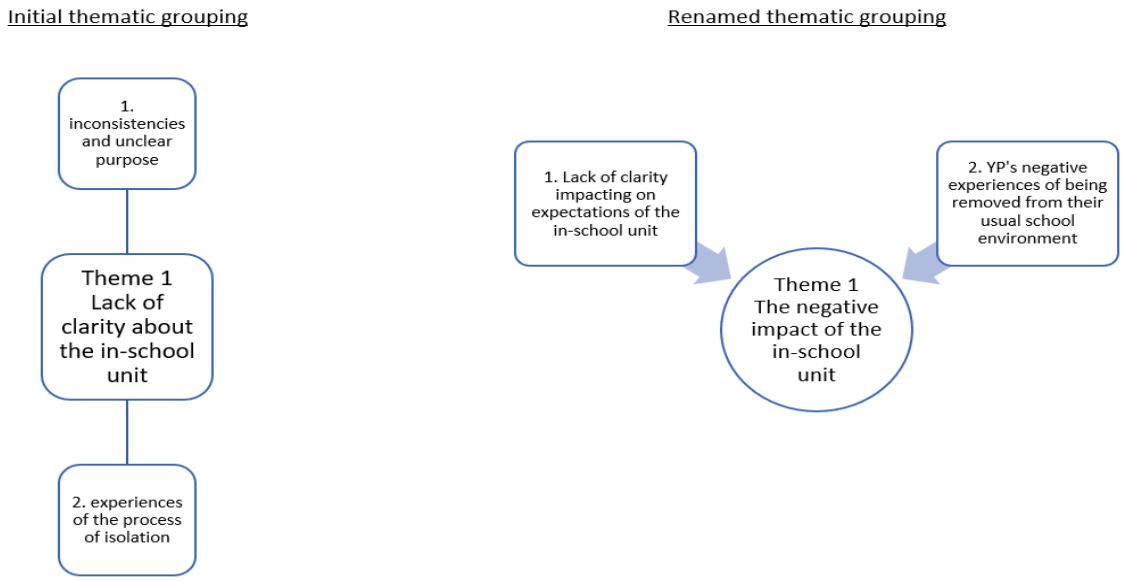
Figure 2 shows the thematic groupings before their final names developed



Phase 5 & 6 defining, naming themes, and producing the report

Phase five consisted of defining and naming themes. The subthemes were also renamed to strengthen their descriptions and the themes were defined to describe the data findings. For one example, see Figure 3. The themes became the overall description of analysis findings in answer to the research question. I have made use of verbatim quotes within the findings to illustrate themes. There are some expressions of grammar and words used that are wrong, but I felt it was important to be true to the words that young people said.

Figure 3 Example of Thematic Group with New Defined Names



3.8 Research Integrity

The terms validity and reliability are not commonly used within qualitative research due to the nature of non-standardised tools (Robson and McCartan, 2016). Terms such as credibility and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited by Robson & McCartan, 2016) are used instead. I will use the term "research integrity" to show the transparency of the steps I have taken in this research.

To overcome threats to the bias and rigour of this research, I have kept an audit trail of activities carried out including raw data and data analyses. I have saved several copies of my coding and data analysis on Nvivo to share how I approached each stage. I also have copies of documents with code names and re-groupings during the stage of searching for meaningful patterns and potential themes. Audit trails support the credibility of research (Ryan et al., 2007). Therefore, this will strengthen the transparency of the research to enable readers to understand what the interpreted analyses are based on (Yardley, 2008).

I used a member checking approach. Transcript materials were returned to adult participants for any comments, changes, or feedback, which demonstrated that I valued their contributions. This also provided an opportunity for participants to confirm they were happy with the information shared to be used in the data analysis. With the young people, I used a member checking approach in that I summarised key themes back to participants regularly from their responses, to check that I had understood what they had shared. This was particularly helpful when reviewing the mind maps as I was corrected by young people if my assumptions or ideas misinformed my interpretations of what they shared.

In addition, I had peer debriefing and support from other trainee EPs who supported me through the data collection process and thinking about the analysis. These conversations helped me to justify my decisions about grouping codes and sub-themes.

3.8.1 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is important for qualitative research as it acknowledges that the researcher has an influence on the data and interpretations (Yardley, 2008). By being reflexive, my hope was that it would increase the transparency of my research to circumnavigate some of the potential threats and biases.

Reflection is an important skill as it brings thoughts about lived experiences into consciousness (Mortari, 2015), therefore allowing someone to make meaning and interpretation from experiences. Supervision has been important throughout the process of conducting this research, particularly when analysing the data. This is a topic that I am passionate about, and I have conducted a small research project in a similar area previously as part of my university

requirements for training. The research supervisors asked questions reminding me to stay focused on the present research without bringing additional assumptions and ideas from previous research findings. These discussions helped to inform my reflections that I kept in a research journal. It kept me grounded to ensure that I was thinking about my ideas and asking myself questions, therefore reducing researcher bias by limiting misinterpretations.

3.9 Chapter Summary

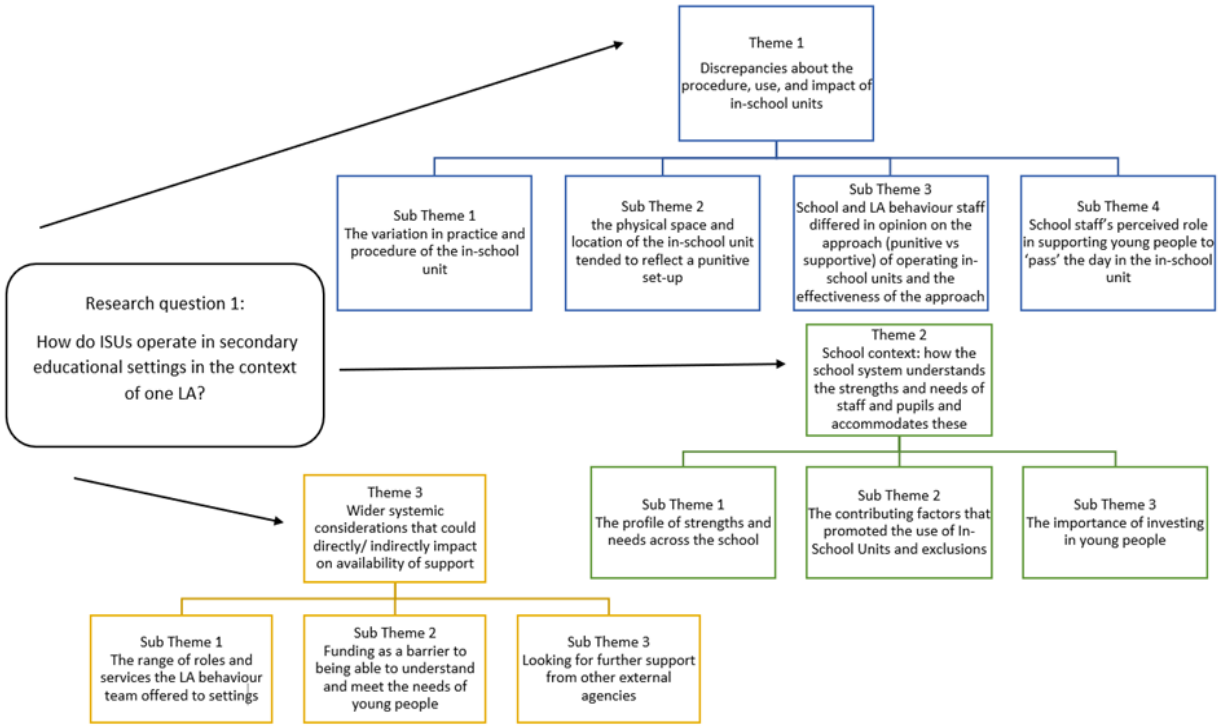
This chapter discussed the research design and details of the two-phase study outlining a social constructionist epistemological underpinning. Semi-structured interviews allowed for detailed accounts of an under researched area. The research procedure details how I went about approaching each phase of data collection to show the transparency of the methods. The first phase with adults sought to understand the approaches schools take to operating ISUs, and the support that is available from the LA behaviour team. The second phase with young people sought to understand their experiences of attending ISUs. Details of adult participants and pen portraits of young people have been added to emphasise their voices and presence within the research. Ethical considerations have been highlighted within the framework of the professional standards outlined in the BPS code of ethics (2021b). My approach to thematic analysis has been shared to demonstrate how I found my themes and steps to enhance research integrity were also discussed.

Chapter 4. How do in-school units operate in secondary educational settings in the context of one LA?

4.1 Overview

This chapter will provide the findings for the first research question which was to understand how ISUs operate.

Figure 4: Thematic map of school staff views and LA views



The thematic analysis identified three key themes from the data. Firstly, there were discrepancies about the procedure, use, and impact of ISUs. This had four subthemes which included the variation in practice and procedures of the ISU; the physical space and location of the ISU which tended to reflect a punitive set-up; school and LA behaviour staff differed in opinion on the approach (punitive vs supportive) of operating ISUs and the effectiveness of the approach; and school staff's perceived role in supporting young people to "pass" the day in the ISU.

Theme two was about the school context and how the school system understands the strengths and needs of staff and pupils and accommodates these. The subthemes from this were the profile of strengths and needs across the school; the contributing factors that promoted the use of ISUs and exclusions; and the importance of investing in young people.

Theme three was wider systemic considerations that could directly/ indirectly impact the availability of support. Subthemes of this included the range of roles and services the LA behaviour team offered to settings; funding as a barrier to being able to understand and meet the needs of young people; and looking for further support from other external agencies.

4.2. Theme 1: Discrepancies about the procedure, use, and impact of in-school units

There were key variations in the practice of how the ISU operated. For example, the name, designated space, and layout of the ISU were different between settings and tended to change within settings. There were different perceptions held by school staff and LA staff about the use and effectiveness of ISUs, particularly thinking about the nature of the approach (e.g., punitive vs reflective). The theme highlighted that schools had many personal and professional qualities that they used to support young people who had attended ISUs.

4.2.1 Theme 1 Subtheme 1: The variation in practice and procedure of the in-school units

There were variations in the staffing of the ISU as some said that there was not one person whose job it was to sit there, some said they use the SEND team, and some said that they used “high profile” teachers such as heads of

department. One school noted the importance of breaks for staff in the ISU, indicating the variation of staff members throughout the day.

> “we try and rotate as best we can we try and make sure that everybody gets a break” (SENCO)

Most schools said that students followed the work of their usual timetable that was sent by the class teachers. There was some variation in the activities received within one school as they sometimes had scenario-based work to support students in thinking about reflecting on incidents. This school also said that when there is staff availability, they worked one to one with students to help them complete activities.

> “…if the staff are free as they were this afternoon, then he worked one to one with a maths teacher 'cause he had maths, there was a maths teacher free. It was perfect, it worked. It doesn't always work like that. Sometimes I don't have anybody free and I can't assign anybody to him or her.” (Deputy Head Teacher)

There were variations in the use of the ISUs between schools for young people with SEND. For example, one school said that they have a SEND class where there were no booths and more support was available to help with work.

> “…they'll be given work like they would … anyway from their lessons…but it's easier to support the child in [the SEND class]. There's no booths that are kind of there” (Assistant Head Teacher)

Schools generally said that students tended to be in the ISU for one full day and for three days for more serious incidents. One school said that they had previously had a unit where students would be placed for extended periods of

time, showing the variation in practice across schools. While the days allocated depended on the severity of the incident, this was extended further if young people did not pass the day. This shows varied endpoints to the time spent there.

> "…if they don't complete any work, if they refuse to follow instructions, if they walk out, sometimes that happens, then that would be an occasion where they'd be asked to repeat the day." (SENCO)

The length of the school day when in the ISU also varied between schools and within schools. Some schools had a rule that students would leave later than the usual school finish time so that they did not walk home with peers. Others said that students would be in there for a full day and then may have one-hour detention after school, showing the varied approaches to how much time in a day someone spends in the ISU. One school reflected on its previous experience of a later finish time and that it did not work.

> "… in the past, we've tried …coming in late, going home… at different times. And that …usually brings a conflict…And you know all that hard work can be undone really quickly." (SENCO)

There were variations in where students spent break times. For example, break times were spent in the ISU or on duty with pastoral managers in the playground in silence. Every school said that break and lunch times for young people in the ISU were at different times from the rest of the school but there were variations in the rules at break and lunchtime. Some schools said that there were opportunities for students to talk, and one school allowed students to

play board games. Another school said that sometimes there would be pastoral conversations during these break times.

> “They’re allowed to talk and they would just sort of engage with a member of staff. Sometimes they get out board games, … we see they can't sit in silence all day. So it's [break time] an opportunity for them to chat.” (SENCO)

The ISU was used for various other activities such as facilitating mediations with staff and students to resolve difficulties and sometimes it was used as a station to separate young people. This was usually when there had been an incident such as a fight so that staff could investigate what had happened, and students could write statements.

> “…you're trying to put these people in to this room whilst you’re investigating what's gone on. So sometimes we use the room for that as well. So it’s just somewhere to station people for a time and that can be horrible visit.” (Assistant Head Teacher)

Procedures after the ISU were arbitrary, as schools stated that it was not done in a ‘structured way’. The use of word “depends” was used frequently by staff showing the varied responses following time in the ISU. For example, they stated that following time in the ISU depended on the reasons the young person was in there and depended on who had time to be involved.

> “…sometimes it will just depend on, sounds harsh, who's got the time to do it.” (Headteacher)

Schools said that students would go back to mainstream classes, as usual, the next day, if the ISU had worked well. Parental meetings were mentioned, and

pastoral managers made phone calls to families updating them on their child's progress. Updates to families were not something that happened in every school. One school mentioned the use of restorative meetings occasionally. Report cards were cited as one formal procedure after being in the ISU.

> "I think generally what you'll notice after the isolation is because they are then straight on report, it's highly unlikely that that report isn't passed. It's a lot of goods and outstandings …They may be overly communicative with members of staff… they may really not raise their head at all for quite a long time after that" (Deputy Head Teacher)

There was not always a formal follow-up or reintegration for young people. Schools referenced check-ins with students as something that might happen following time in the ISU.

> "…it might be that … depending on the situation, it might be that their head of year or their form tutor …would … be aware, they would also have a conversation the next day… have a good day. I'm always on the gate every morning, so as they come past …the next day, I pull them aside, 'right, let's have a good day today. If there's a problem, come back and see me', … to show … that positive relationship." (Headteacher)

There was one school that spoke of a formality which was an exit interview comprising of 6-7 questions asking about their experience in the ISU, reflections on an incident and their peers, and how they felt about going back to class the next day.

4.2.2 Theme 1 Subtheme 2: the physical space and location of the in-school unit tended to reflect a punitive set-up

The ISU was referred to by a range of names such as “the Isolation Room”, “Iso”, “Reflection Room”, “the Hub”, “internal isolation” “the Inclusion Room”, “internal exclusion” and “outside my office”. This was the case across schools. While the main name was “reflection” in some cases, the name was still used interchangeably to include another reference that indicated it was a punitive area. For example, using the word “isolation” to describe what the area is for.

> “…so we have an area called the reflection room. That's … like our internal isolation space.” (SENCO)

One of the school staff members said that they had not thought about the name of the ISU before, which shows that they had not thought about the connotations of the descriptions they use.

> “What do we refer to it as? That's really interesting… we just say so you’re gonna be outside my office.” (Headteacher)

ISUs had a range of designated areas that included being outside of offices and classes, reflecting a public display of being in trouble. Some schools described ISUs as being distant from the rest of the school, therefore separating those in trouble from everybody else. Both scenarios may have implications for young people’s sense of belonging. One school had the potential for other rooms to be used in addition to the original ISU. A reflection was made about the ISU being on a corridor:

> “it's very public as well, whereas you could be in the isolation room 18 months ago and nobody would know you were there, apart

> from your mate, saying well where is so and so today?" (Deputy Head Teacher)

The designated space of an ISU changed frequently and part of this was due to the Covid-19 pandemic as schools needed a well-ventilated space. For example, some ISUs were held in the dining hall and in the library. Comments were made about the need for it to be in a central place, which may have emphasised the number of people noticing someone who was in the ISU and therefore in trouble.

> "…and I think we quickly worked out and quickly realized and that's why it moved to the library to be honest with you because we needed it in a central place, we needed it where there were lots of eyes and people would routinely walk in and out of there on senior team walkarounds or walk-throughs." (Deputy Head Teacher)

The room arrangements of the ISU appeared to be set up to reflect a punitive nature. Some noted there was a window on the door, and some said they kept the door open so that it was not windowless, indicating that they were kept out of sight from the rest of the school. Schools said that desks faced the walls and were spread apart from one another to discourage conversations, and sometimes there was a combination of desks facing towards walls and towards the front of the room, which is different to the setup of a usual classroom. One school felt it was more relaxed for pupils when faced down a corridor rather than towards a wall. Some described the room as small, while others described brighter and larger spaces with views out of the windows backing onto gardens

and fields. One room was described as holding booths with blue screens between each space that were given names such as ‘Booth A’.

> “… the way it’s set up, it's been purposely set up in the booth area. So students can’t distract each other in that moment of reflection that they should be …involved in” (Assistant Head Teacher)

The expectation placed on young people to reflect on incidences that had gotten them into the ISU appeared to be common across schools. It was interesting that there were comments made by staff about not being distracted during reflection as it indicates that this is an activity that can be done independently. Schools' understanding of reflection and how to achieve this needs to be explored and supported as it is a socially constructed phenomenon given meaning through language (Burr, 2015). This would help to better define what is understood by “reflection” and what it entails.

It is also interesting that there were no agreed outcomes discussed to measure whether reflection had been successful. For example, EPs could negotiate outcomes to measure impact using approaches such as target monitoring evaluation, whereby targets are set and baseline, expected outcomes, and post-intervention ratings are identified (Beaver, 2011). This would support the process of measuring the impact of reflection against the agreed outcomes.

4.2.3 Theme 1 Subtheme 3: School and LA behaviour staff differed in opinion on the approach (punitive vs supportive) of operating in-school units and the effectiveness of the approach

LA members reflected on ISUs from what they had seen in practice. They noted the perceived punitive approach of how students were “put there” and sat in

silence with no support to help them. They said that there is usually a member of the senior leadership team (SLT) in attendance and that the focus appeared to be getting young people to complete their work set by the class teacher. They said that some schools appeared to run interventions but for the most part, the ISU was about providing respite for the class.

> "…it is just to keep them [in school] and get them to complete their work and give the class respite" (LA Learning Co-ordinator).

The LA reflected on how ISUs are not explicitly discussed and that staff often hear about them "retrospectively", which made the areas difficult "to vet".

> "…the more conversation you have with a child, the more you start to hear about what that room looks like and … what kind of goes on in there" (LA Specialist Behaviour and Inclusion Manager).

The data showed that there was a discrepancy between schools about whether the ISU should have a punitive or reflective nature. For example, schools reflected on why they thought ISUs worked well as punishment.

> "…as a means to be able to improve low level disruption and low level problems, it's good, as a punishment." (Assistant Head Teacher)

Further punitive actions included detention at the end of the day in the ISU. This could have further implications for students:

> "…what we found in the isolation room is…cos we have the buses that take the kids home, it's a real pain if the kids get a detention after school, so say if they get 30-minute detention or an hour detention after school, they have to then find a different route to

> get home. Which, you know, I think is quite a bonus for us as a school, if it works as a punishment." (Assistant Head Teacher)

LA staff felt that the perceived punitive nature of ISUs was not helpful and that they were missing support and opportunities to understand what the difficulties were. There was a clear discrepancy between what their idea of support should look like compared with what they had seen in schools.

> "…I don't think they [ISUs] support, it's a punishment ... It's not finding out why they're there…what happened, hearing their voices… helping them move forward" (LA Behaviour Support Co-ordinator)

There were strong opinions held by the LA staff about the impact of ISUs. Members of the LA stated that these areas did not work and had minimal impact.

> "…I can't say that it [ISUs] improves it [behaviour] unfortunately. I do feel as though it's … to the child's detriment and we know vaguely from … data and historic information that actually that child is more on a … negative pathway looking to things like county lines, prison involvement… young offenders, youth … issues." (LA Specialist Behaviour and Inclusion Manager)

School staff noted that some pupils had mentioned they don't like attending the ISU, that it was boring, and one school said that it could make students apprehensive and scared at the situation. This suggests that there is a punitive approach within ISUs. However, school staff thought that the quiet nature of the ISU may be appealing for some students when completing their work.

One school noted that the ISU was a serious consequence and that it tended to be young people attending who were not having one-off incidents. This suggests that the punitive approach is not effective. In terms of the impact that they have and the need for using an ISU, one participant shared the following:

> "… I think an isolation room is only a good idea because you don't have enough bodies around school, or money to be able to actually put in the things that you need like an Ed Psych" (Assistant Head Teacher).

This suggests that the use of ISUs as punishment is used because schools feel that they have no other option. Similarly, another school member said that they felt ISUs were necessary, but not sure what the impact was. A reflection was made about the perception others may hold about the function of the ISU.

> "…from an adult point of view, people feel that a child had a consequence. I think they … feel that it's been dealt with." (SENCO).

A Deputy Head also reflected and said that there would only be so far punishment would go before the need to educate the young person. There was also some unclarity about the impact and use of a reflective environment. It appeared that there should be a punishment in the ISU and then perhaps the option of receiving support elsewhere.

> "…there is a very definitive difference between being put in the isolation room and support. So the isolation room is reflection and … and then the support comes outside the isolation room. Soon as you run that isolation room in a really supportive manner, it falls apart because … you get students who want to go to the isolation

> room to see a particular teacher … and it loses that … grandeur of … "you're in trouble now". (Assistant Head Teacher)

Views about the approaches that work and when to have conversations with students differed. In reference to exclusions, a Headteacher said that they would prefer to internally exclude a young person than externally exclude as they would ensure that conversations were happening throughout the day with the young person. Another school said that when students are excluded whether that be internally or externally, they felt the students would learn that schools hold no power except the power to take them out of school via permanent exclusion.

4.2.4 Theme 1 Subtheme 4: School staff's perceived role in supporting young people to 'pass' the day in the in-school unit

School staff showed a sense of trying to understand the needs of young people and recognised that everyone needs tailored support to meet their needs. Schools placed importance on unpicking difficulties while providing reassurance and care. They highlighted the importance of needing to move forward from difficulties as quickly as possible to protect relationships.

> [it is important] "… for the child to feel that … there is a way back, and that you are not still cross with them. And they have been forgiven, and the slate is wiped clean, and they can move on. And I think that is so so important. (Headteacher)

School staff valued student-teacher relationships, with some noting they were a real strength within the school. One school recognised that having familiar adults who had good relationships with the young people in the ISU was important, particularly for helping them to pass the day.

There were many personal qualities identified deemed as necessary to support young people, particularly those within the ISU. For example, being calm and friendly were some traits named. Some shared how they encourage friendship groups to reintegrate their peer following time in the ISU, particularly when there had been a weekend between the time away from peers and joining the usual classes again. This indicates an understanding of the young person's sense of belonging.

> "… I've got a boy at the moment, … he's got two days of isolation, … by the time he sees his friends again at school on Monday, it will have been five days since he spoke to them…I will certainly …check-in with his friends before break time on the first day and say … make sure you integrate said student back into the group as quickly as you can." (Deputy Head Teacher)

There was a sense of pressure that school staff put on themselves to get things right every time, indicating that they wanted to help students. They recognised that reflection was a difficult thing to engage in, particularly when emotions were heightened. Schools noted approaches such as the use of a different voice and a different physical environment when having a difficult conversation. Schools highlighted the importance of explaining reasons for students attending the ISUs to ensure an understanding of fairness.

> "We find that children that struggle to settle is usually when they feel like …they can't understand why they're there, they don't understand the consequences of what has happened… I think so much is about the fairness, and if children feel that they've been treated fairly" (SENCO).

All schools discussed their flexibility to support young people to pass the day in the ISU. For example, recognising when support was needed could have implications for the student passing the day.

> "…where it starts to go wrong is where some work is sent down for the student to complete, particularly in key stage four and there isn't the level of expertise or knowledge to direct the student when they need some help." (Deputy Head Teacher)

While schools spoke of the importance of having a conversation with young people following time in the ISU, there were challenges to this. Frustrations about the amount of teaching time and the pressures of fitting everything in were shared, indicating that they wanted to provide further support.

> "If staffing is available, … we would normally like a child to have the opportunity to talk through why they've been placed in the reflection room … [there is] not always a lot of time, to be honest. It very much depends on what's going on" (SENCO).

4.3 Theme 2: school context: how the school system understands the strengths and needs of staff and pupils and accommodates to these

This theme highlighted that schools valued the strengths of their staff and pupils. It highlighted the investments that they made in young people to promote key skills and values. In addition, it highlights the behaviour management strategies used to meet the needs of young people, which included the use of the ISU.

4.3.1 Theme 2 Subtheme 1: The Profile of Strengths and Needs across the School

Schools shared the number of students they had on roll and the demographics of the populations, which varied in size. Where schools were smaller in pupil size, they commented on the strong relationships between staff and students. Two schools noted that students attended from all over the LA. Three of the four schools were mixed comprehensive academies, one was a girls' comprehensive school.

Some schools discussed their views on gender, particularly noting that there were more boys in year groups and that often there were more difficulties with boys in relation to behaviour. For example,

> "…some of the year groups we work with maybe 70% of them are boys … on our SEND list" (SENCO)

Every school highlighted their school motto and associated school ethos, showing pride in what they offer. In relation to demographics, one reflected on adaptations made to using a sporting status within the school tag line:

> "However, because we've got that predominantly white working-class boy, in the school, we were attracting a particular type of student because of the sports status, and so we very purposely took the sport status away." (Assistant Head Teacher)

When thinking about the strengths and needs of the school, references to Ofsted were made which indicated some of the pressures schools feel. For example, Ofsted ratings were mentioned with one school hoping to become an outstanding school over time. Another school noted that they were being "candid" with their words when speaking during this research interview and that

they would not speak that way to Ofsted. This suggests that there are some issues that are not being addressed and that perhaps schools feel unable to voice their difficulties.

> "I'm being very candid with this, by the way, so … if you were Ofsted, I wouldn't be sitting there … saying that to them, but you know, for me, you can help your students only so far with the resources that we have in school." (Assistant Head Teacher)

School staff also spoke highly of the strengths of their young people which included their high aspirations, academic attainment, their welcoming nature, and peer-to-peer relationships, showing a sense of pride in their students.

> "…I think relationships between each other, so peer to peer relationships are very strong, I think communication is a strength. I think empathy is a strength." (Deputy Head Teacher)

Similarly, the strengths of staff were shared which included collaborative working, adaptable approaches, and high pastoral expectations. Teaching qualities were also a strength for schools.

> "…staff are committed they're hard working. And it's a lovely community to be part of. And I think the girls really benefit from that because they get that care and that love and that warmth." (Headteacher)

4.3.2 Theme 2 Subtheme 2: The contributing factors that promoted the use of in-school units and exclusions

One school discussed the confidence they had in their trust policies when operating an ISU as there was the consistency of use across these schools.

Others discussed how policies about when to send students to the ISU were more ambiguous to allow for subjective decisions, suggesting an increase in the likelihood someone may attend the ISU.

> [we] " … made the policy very ambiguous … because there's some times when you have to write down the incident, it wouldn't sound quite as bad as the incident was, if you see what I mean, so it's up to the heads of year, SLT and heads of department, whether or not that student goes into isolation, and they'll make that judgement call whatever that is" (Assistant Head Teacher)

Boundary setting was referenced by all schools as a method of setting standards and managing behaviour expectations. It appeared that where expectations were not met, this would result in attending the ISU, particularly when new expectations were being introduced. LA members stated that when there are mixed messages for young people, this can be where difficulties start. This emphasises that expectations need to be clear, consistent, and well understood by young people so that they know what is expected of them. One school spoke of raising pastoral expectations and the increased use of ISUs in the beginning.

> "…if you raise the bar of what's acceptable and … what's going to be punished … you've got … demonstrate what is going to be challenged … you lay your line in the sand and you don't deviate from it, which is where a lot of your initial isolation will come from." (Deputy Head Teacher)

Reasons for young people attending the ISU were said to fit under a broad umbrella of failing to comply with school rules. Explicit reasons for failing to

comply with rules included fighting, swearing, peer relationship issues, not turning up to detentions and having several ‘on-calls’ throughout the day. On-calls were where a member of staff was called to speak with students for disruptive behaviour and then taken to the ISU if this behaviour continued.

> “… we have an on-call system. So if a child is not complying, then a member of staff might do an on-call, if a child was to get several on-calls during the day, they might get placed in the reflection room” (SENCO)

There was an indirect impact of Covid-19 on the number of external exclusions. One school said that external exclusions were more frequent during the peak of Covid-19 as they did not have other options such as the ISU. ISUs were affected by bubbles and social distancing during that time. This suggests that ordinarily, ISUs are used as a step before external exclusions and gives an indication of the frequency of their use.

> “We did use external exclusions a bit more at that time as well because you just were out of options” (Assistant Head Teacher)

Where ISUs were less successful and behaviour difficulties continued within the ISU, all schools said that students would be formally excluded.

> “…I think if there is a, repeat, then effectively that could lead to sort of an exclusion for persistent disruptive behaviour” (Headteacher)

As the protocol appears to be sending students with behaviour difficulties to the ISU, there needs to be more support for young people, particularly if it does not appear to be affecting change. One of the schools said that the protocol upon

returning to school after a suspension would be to attend the ISU on the first day. Other behaviour strategies included the use of managed moves to offer a "fresh start" for pupils who had a longer "conduct log".

4.3.3 Theme 2 Subtheme 3: The importance of investing in young people

All schools spoke of promoting their values in their students which took form in several ways such as teaching about friendships and how to treat one another. This was delivered across whole school curriculums via PSCHE programs, gospel readings and assembly themes.

> "…the assembly themes will be based around usually religious festivals or saints or gospel readings or the way of treating each other. But there will always be that … sense of community." (Headteacher)

They talked about the importance of building a community and there were also investments in offering opportunities for charitable work.

> "…we'd run [a] program which is about awareness of issues within the local area and social action and raising money for those charities that help with for example, homelessness or food poverty, bed poverty and … we get the give back from the students because we invest so much of our time and efforts in terms of providing them with the opportunities for personal development." (Deputy Head)

In addition to promoting values, schools also spoke about the investments they made in young people by demonstrating the number of extracurricular clubs available.

> "…we have a high proportion of sports, … football is our main sport in school, …we have cricket and other sports as well. Um, drama … STEM things [Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths] … someone started a chess club, and … the World of Warcraft club … which was quite cool for some … of the kids" (Assistant Head Teacher)

Form time was also cited as important for young people as it offered mentoring opportunities. Schools also spoke of their key links to universities, apprenticeships and sixth forms.

> "… We've got links because of our sponsors … but we've also got really strong links to [a named] University. So again, there would normally be lots of trips [to the] University." (SENCO)

One school trained young people to be anti-bullying ambassadors which they believed was a reason why the number of students attending the ISU and the number of students being given external exclusions had fallen.

> "…the anti-bullying ambassadors have been a Godsend really because they've been trained, …and … they've been superb in terms of dealing with … any kinds of issues where confidentially they can report them to staff, and it's actually quite a preventative tool because they kind of can see things happening in the classroom that sometimes we won't know about until the incident happens. So I mean, they've been another reason why isolations have dramatically fallen at the school along with externals." (Deputy Head Teacher)

Pastoral support was also offered as a form of investment, which included school counsellors, mentoring projects, and behaviour interventions.

> "…We have lots of mentoring programmes across the school… [and] we have a counsellor in school every single day." (SENCO)

Schools also invested in staff, which would impact the support available for pupils. For example, the importance of training for a range of needs that could support young people was raised.

> "…the pastoral coordinator here [has] been on mental health awareness courses so she's had training in counselling and mentoring." (Deputy Head Teacher)

4.4 Theme 3: wider systemic considerations that could directly/indirectly impact the availability of support.

This theme encompasses the wider systemic considerations impacting the support available to schools and young people. It highlighted the range of services provided by the behaviour team within the LA and captured other external agency input. There are also considerations given to the barriers to receiving support, which included staffing and funding issues, as well as overwhelmed external agencies.

4.4.1 Theme 3 Subtheme 1: The range of roles and services the LA behaviour team offered to settings

The LA behaviour team offered support for vulnerable groups of young people transitioning from year six to year seven and with transitions when there had been a managed move. They identified their roles in planning and delivering learning activities for young people who were not able to access the learning in class and not receiving the teaching input that they should be. They also shared

their role in visiting schools weekly and working with both adults and young people for periods of time. Staff members had expertise and training in areas that included Team Teach, working with Teaching Assistants and Midday Assistants, and restorative justice approaches.

The behaviour team members championed their role in advocating for the young person and being their voice. They talked about conveying the young person's narrative in the way that the young person would like to be seen.

> "…the values that we hold is very much, we're very conscious of the young person's narrative, having their voice heard." (LA Learning co-ordinator)

The LA behaviour members also said they enjoyed working holistically and systemically to ensure that it was a team approach to supporting a young person. Other systemic work included supporting schools with writing behaviour policies. The LA team said that they enjoyed working with schools as they were open to change, suggestions, and training.

> "… [The] LA … has a very holistic approach to their young people. The schools are really, really open to change and suggestions and trainings." (LA Learning co-ordinator)

The LA members all said that they would not be typically working with schools in relation to ISUs unless there was a student that they were involved with who had been attending one. The LA behaviour team were then sometimes able to mediate the relationships between the young person attending the ISU and the school staff.

> "…it's only if we're working with that student prior and then they've …had an internal exclusion to the unit. If that happens, we go into that unit and we will work with some in that unit… actually, they'll ask us to take them into another room and work with them cos it's in silence in that room… you normally hear that they have a disagreement with the teacher if there's … particular personality clashes or peer clashes. So then we then share that information back with school, see what we can put in place if it's a peer relationship." (LA Behaviour Support Co-ordinator)

There was another incident shared by a LA team member about their experience of working with ISUs. Again, they noted how they had learned about the ISU's existence following conversations with young people and then addressed it with the school directly. This was another role that the LA team were able to have.

> "There [was]… a primary school …that we know was using a particular room and was almost holding children there…so we really had to bring in a lot of legislation and prove and show the danger there as well. So following that, that room doesn't exist anymore, which is really positive. But it's all of the sort of I guess little illegal niche rooms that we hear about. But as soon as we hear about them, we do our best to address them with the school and it's conversations that I have with the head teachers and … thinking about their stance as an organization." (LA Specialist Behaviour and Inclusion Manager)

The LA behaviour team also noted the comprehensive list of multiagency

working to encourage referrals to external support when needed and signpost to other services. This also included considerations for making applications for an education, health and care needs assessment. In addition, they discussed their role in working with families which they felt was important as they acknowledged the impact of behaviour difficulties on parents and therefore the need to support them.

> "… the impact on having a young person that presents with challenging behaviour for parents is huge. And I think that's one thing that sometimes schools don't always appreciate … [so] we come in and … we work very much … [with] the child and the family as a big picture. And I think that is a strength" (LA Learning Co-ordinator)

Relationship building was an important role in the behaviour team's work, particularly when working with parents to ensure that they felt included in decision making. They offered parent coffee mornings as an alternative method of support for managing behaviour that challenges.

The LA behaviour team kept data on formal exclusions, managed moves, and referrals to their service. They did not have any data on ISUs as they noted that schools would not have to share this information. The LA used the data held on formal exclusions to observe patterns that may indicate further services and support needed by schools in relation to managing behaviour and reducing exclusions.

> "…for us it would be more about looking at that school [data] and how we provide proper support to them [if] we see that you've had, you know 10 fixed term exclusions this year… that you've had lots

> of pupils referred to us higher than usual, let's … look at the training options for you. So how can we avoid this? How can we make sure the numbers are lower? How can we keep these children in school?" (LA Specialist Behaviour and Inclusion Manager)

4.4.2 Theme 3 Subtheme 2: Funding as a barrier to being able to understand and meet the needs of young people

Schools discussed barriers impacting the resources available to support young people. These generally included limited funding, which subsequently impacted staffing and caused frustrations for school staff in being able to meet the needs of every young person.

> "…our staffing is very tight…we've got a counsellor. But the counsellor can only work two days a week and its the only counsellor that we have. So she must see, ten to fifteen students a week. And it's just, you can feel it is not enough … so those things, to me are our weaknesses." (Assistant Head Teacher)

There was a sense from schools that they felt they were letting students down due to not having the resources to be able to understand what the young people's difficulties were.

> [There is not] "someone that can actually unpick this problem, do home visits, be really involved in that student for a big period of time, to … fix the problems or help and to understand what even the problems are" (Assistant Head Teacher).

Funding was linked as a barrier to receiving additional resources, but this also applied to accessing the behaviour services within the LA. The LA highlighted

that they were not a statutory organisation and that secondary schools and academies had to opt-in and pay for services. They noted that unfortunately, many of the secondary schools and academies did not opt-in. This would mean that schools are missing out on this range of service offers, and therefore opportunities to understand and meet the needs of young people.

> "…academies would have to … make that separate payment … they just don't opt in for it, unfortunately … the schools that do benefit from a lot of support throughout the year [and] …they have the luxury of having everybody in the team at their … hands if they want to. But … it comes back to money unfortunately" (LA Specialist Behaviour and Inclusion Manager)

When the LA behaviour team were bought in, they felt that referrals were sometimes made as a tick box exercise to show that support had been attempted. They felt that sometimes this was because schools had located the difficulties within the young person rather than thinking about the context and support, which others could provide, which would have implications for funding.

> "…they make a referral because I feel that it's almost a tick box exercise. But they don't really want to be open to change because they see it as the young person's problem, and not necessarily the adults working with that young person." (LA Learning Co-ordinator)

4.4.3 Theme 3 Subtheme 3: Looking for further support from other external agencies

Schools spoke of their attempts to seek support from external agencies in addition to that of the LA behaviour team. Where schools recognised that the

ISU was not effective in meeting young people's needs, they sought to find somebody that could help them in understanding what their needs were.

> "…if you've got a student who's in there [the ISU] every other week, something's not working. And we understand that. So then you try to get counselling for the student and try to get someone or we try to employ this person to help them and… we just can't quite get that piece of the puzzle right" (Assistant Head Teacher)

Similarly, in relation to the number of agencies that some young people were referred to, some schools described it as a tick box exercise to find the right person. There was not always a specified person to oversee this, which showed that teams were not always linking together to evaluate what was effective support.

> "…there's some children we feel go into crisis, and then they're referred to every agency and nobody's really kind of looking at which ones are working and which ones are actually necessary" (SENCO).

Schools identified local programmes and alternative provisions as a source of support in some cases, particularly for those young people at risk of exclusion. These groups sometimes extended to supporting young people at the weekends.

> "…. Some of our trickiest students who are getting support weekly from that [local mentoring project group], … links up with them doing activities at the weekends … because that's where they end up getting themself into trouble is if … they're not occupied." (Headteacher)

Schools described how referrals to services such as social care, early help teams, and CAMHS were at a peak, particularly following the Covid-19 national lockdown and return to schools. Schools highlighted the difficulties relating to how overwhelmed CAMHS was with referrals at present.

> "…the amount of erm referrals that that are being completed, the amount of agencies that were needed to … involve at this current time, is probably at a peak … And at the higher level, CAMHS are being overwhelmed with referrals." (Deputy Head Teacher)

One school said that they tried to ensure that there was in-house school support to make up for CAMHS not being in a position to support them. This shows that schools are trying to manage the roles of other services in some cases and are therefore lacking wider support.

> "…we'd try and use sort of in-house things ourselves as well, because obviously, the wait for CAMHS is, is quite a long one." (Headteacher)

One school suggested that supervision from the LA for school staff would be valuable and important for particular members such as DSLs. This school also highlighted the educational psychology team as being a source of support. In this research, there were no other references to making use of the EP team which is interesting to hold in mind and wonder why this may be.

4.5 Summary of Chapter

In seeking to understand how ISUs operate in secondary educational settings, the data has provided three key themes. These highlighted the discrepancies in the procedure, use and impact of ISUs. There were variations in practice including the designated space of the ISU and there were different opinions

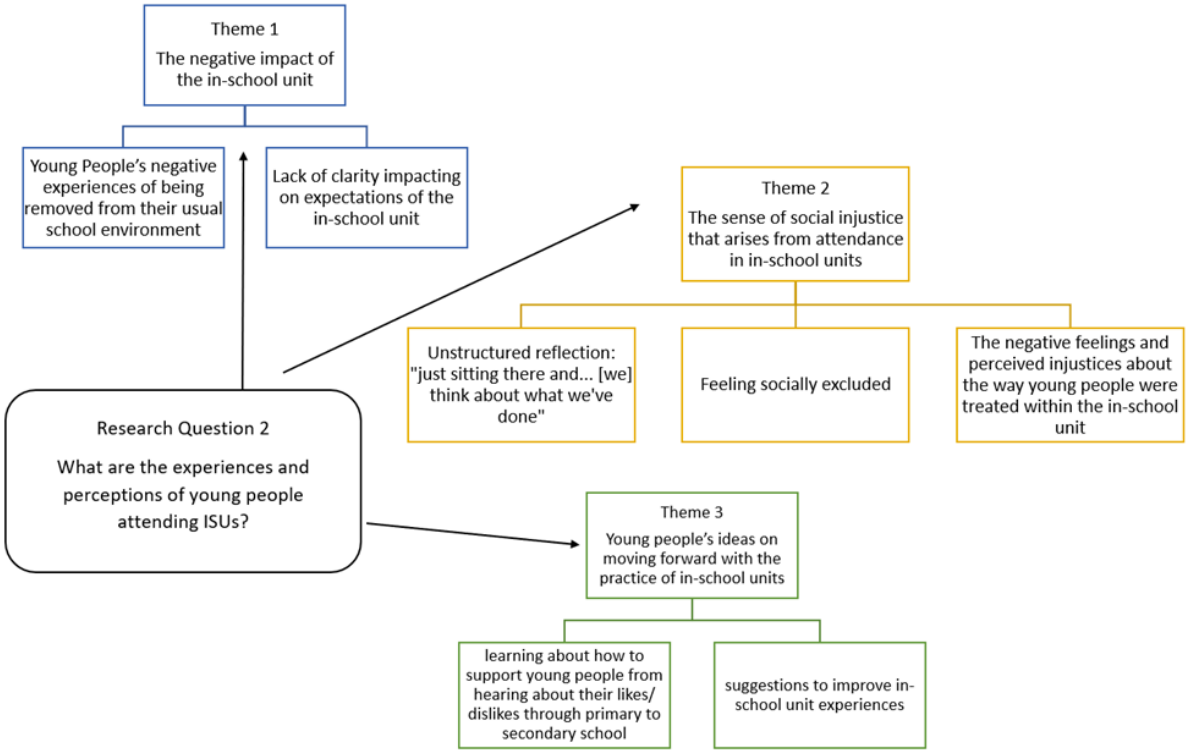
held about the perceived punitive function and its effectiveness. Some felt that the consequence indicated the situation had been dealt with and others felt there needed to be more exploration about the incident that led to attending the ISU. It also highlighted the strengths and needs of schools and the approaches taken to accommodate these such as the values promoted in young people and the use of ISUs to manage behaviour difficulties. Finally, it highlighted the wider systemic considerations impacting on support available such as the range of services the LA behaviour team offered, and barriers to accessing further support such as the lack of funding. Further to this, it highlighted the efforts schools are making to request support for young people from other agencies without knowing which ones would be most appropriate in meeting their needs. Use of ISUs may increase if difficulties proceed to manifest themselves as behaviour that challenges or “failure to comply with school rules”.

Chapter 5: What are the experiences and perceptions of young people attending in-school units?

5.1 Overview

This chapter provides the findings for the second research question which was to understand the experiences of young people who attend ISUs.

Figure 5: Thematic map showing young people's experiences



Three themes were found in the data analysis. The first theme was about the negative impact of the ISU. The subthemes from this were the young person's negative experience of being removed from their usual school environment, and the lack of clarity impacting on expectations of the ISU. The second theme was a sense of social injustice that arose from attending ISUs. Subthemes from this were the unstructured reflection, feeling socially excluded, and the negative feelings and perceived injustices about the way young people were treated within the ISU. The final theme was about young people's ideas on moving

forward with the practice of ISUs. Subthemes were about learning how to support young people by hearing about their likes and dislikes through primary to secondary school and suggestions to improve the ISU experience.

5.2. Theme 1: The negative impact of the in-school unit

This theme captured the effects of being removed from the usual school environment relating to undesignated spaces, the perceived punitive setup of the area, and the separate physical location from the rest of the school. It also highlighted the inconsistent practice of the ISU, particularly regarding the rules and time spent there.

5.2.1. Theme 1 Subtheme 1: Young People's negative experiences of being removed from their usual school environment

Young people had experienced changes in the environment of ISUs. This was the case in both schools from the sample of young people interviewed. Areas included the library, the hall, empty classrooms, and corridors.

> "… there's multiple places I think … [it] used to be … a library…then before that it used to be like a room upstairs". (John)

Young people's experiences of the set-up of the ISU had also changed, and this had implications for their perceived social inclusion within the school. For example, young people had experienced a range of perceived punitive setups including being at desks facing walls, being in cubicles, and being outside of the senior leadership team's offices on a corridor. In some cases, young people described the ISU as small, and the locality of this area within the school felt distant from the other classrooms, therefore separating them from the rest of the school.

> [It is] "quite far away down the hallway". (Miles)

When an ISU was not in one designated space and instead used available empty classrooms, young people needed to move around the building to locate another space when the original area was needed by others. For example, when the empty classroom was due to be used by a subject class, the students and staff in the ISU would need to locate another available room. This could have implications on the young people's sense of belonging as they have not been given a designated space to work and have had to accommodate everybody else's needs. It could also suggest that not much thought had gone into the young person's place within the school on that day. Similarly, when the ISU was in a corridor and more than one pupil was attending, the young people were separated into different corridors, isolating them from their peers to stop them from being able to speak.

> [if] "…there's a couple people in there [ISU], then you'd move around [the corridors] because there's only one desk outside an office" (Theo)

Other negative experiences included being escorted around the school building. Young people were told to sit down in the reception area at the start of the day and were spoken to about the reasons they would be attending the ISU. Young people were escorted to the ISU by a member of staff, indicating that they were not trusted to go there alone.

> "…we get told to sit down there [the reception seating area] and they'll tell us … we're in there [the ISU], and why we're in there and then we'll just wait until we come and get collected by the teachers whose up there." (Miles)

When in the ISU, all the young people said that the expectation was to complete work as usual but on their own.

> "…you're just out of class, do classwork but not in the actual classroom with everyone else". (Theo)

Negative experiences and frustrations were shared about adults' availability when in the ISU in relation to completing work. In some cases, young people appeared to feel frustrated that they were given work that was not checked by staff, and that they were left unsupervised.

> [the office door] "it was closed and there was no supervisor really because they had lessons to teach …so they don't even see what I'm doing... they give us work to do … but like they don't check it … see if we've done it" (Louise)

When the ISU was supervised, the young people commented on the willingness of the staff to help them when they needed it, however, the young people did not always want to ask for help. This indicates the negative feelings about being in a perceived punitive environment and needing to ask for help from somebody you are in trouble with.

> "…say you don't understand the work, I do normally ask the teacher but sometimes I don't ask, an I just sit there annoyed…I don't know. I just don't want to turn around and ask the teacher for help." (Miles)

Other negative experiences occurred when young people experienced a change in staff throughout the day in the ISU. Staff asked students why they were in the ISU, to remind the young people to think about the incident again.

> “when a new teacher comes in, they’ll normally ask us why we're in here. It basically just gives us a reminder. Makes us thinking about it again”. (Miles)

Young people were removed from their peers during break times and lunch times as they stayed in the ISU or stood on duty with senior leadership members. Every young person shared how they had their lunch before or after the usual lunchtime for the rest of the peer group and that they were usually supervised by an adult during this time. This suggests they were not allowed to have the freedom other peers had at break times.

> [we are] “taken down about 5-10 minutes before… to go and get food, which is nice, because you get to stretch your legs”. (Miles)

Procedures that followed the ISU relating to this theme of negative experiences included going on report for behaviour monitoring by every subject teacher for each lesson, and sometimes a meeting with parents. This would have implications for how the young person felt as everyone would be watching them and talking about their behaviour difficulties.

> “…mum had to sign …a letter to say that I’ve done … the three days” [and this was] “to … tell them that like it's been complete the punishment”. (Ben)

5.2.2 Theme 1 Subtheme 2: Lack of clarity impacting expectations of the in-school unit

There were several names used to refer to the ISU indicating a lack of clarity about what the expectations of the area were. This was the case between schools and within schools. For example, names of the room and references to it were used interchangeably with names including “the hub”, “isolation”, “Iso”,

“reflection room”, “internal exclusion”, and “base”. This is demonstrated by Ella who refers to the room as the “exclusion room” and then highlights the unclear functions or expectations of the ISU by using the words “isolation” and “reflect”.

> “… if you're bad in the exclusion room … you get put in another day of isolation until you reflect on what you've been doing” (Ella)

There was a general lack of clarity about the range of reasons you could be asked to attend the ISU. The young people thought that reasons might include being “bad” or “naughty”, fighting, verbal abuse, or being involved in an incident outside of school while wearing a school uniform. Young people were sometimes able to articulate the reason for their attendance when there was a recurrence of the incident such as missing detentions.

> “I would assume its [reasons for attending the ISU] like for like, having a fight or something. … arguing with a teacher or being rude to a teacher. I'm not sure. I'm just assuming that …I'm normally in there for missing a detention. So I'm not really sure what other ones are for”. (Ella)

There was of lack of clarity about rules when in the ISU as they were not always consistent. Some said that they did not know what the rules were, some said they had not been explained to them before, and others said they were self-explanatory.

> “…I don't think I've ever got told the rules, it’s one of those that’s sort of self-explanatory being in isolation.” (Ben)

There was unclarity about the length of time a young person spent in the ISU. While the number of days depended on the severity of the incident, this could

be increased based on disruptive behaviour within the ISU as young people could be asked to repeat the day. There were warnings about this in some cases.

> "…they do warn you about that [being disruptive] quite a few times. It's not where you're disruptive once and you get put in it [the ISU] again, you do get warned…You get like three warnings". (Miles)

A defined ending for the time of the school day when in the ISU was also not always clear. Some young people had to stay in detention at the end of the day, but it appeared that they were unclear as to whether this was the case. Staying in detention after being in the ISU would prolong their day of being in trouble.

> "…obviously when it's home time, you leave obviously, you leave when everyone else leaves, but they have to check if you're on a detention list or not… If you're not, you can just go." (Katy)

5.3 Theme 2: The sense of social injustice that arises from attendance in in-school units

Although young people knew they were supposed to reflect on incidences, the process of how to do this was not made clear. Consequently, there were recurrences of the behaviour and therefore more visits to the ISU. This questions the effectiveness of current practice. This theme also encompassed feelings of social exclusion and perceived social injustices as a result of attending the ISU.

5.3.1 Theme 2 Subtheme 1: Unstructured reflection: “just sitting there and… [we] think about what we’ve done”

One of the key findings was that there appeared to be an expectation on young people to reflect on the behaviours that had led to attendance in the ISU.

> “…you have to reflect on the behaviour that got you into the room” (Fred)

Reflection requires several skills. The ability to adopt another person’s perspective develops later than emotional empathy for others (Decety & Holvoet, 2021). The theory of mind bridges the gap between observable behaviour and the understanding that other people are intentional and thinking beings (Leudar & Costall, 2004). This means that an individual can understand the mental state of themselves and of others making inferences about behaviours that are not directly observable (Leudar & Costall, 2004).

Some of the young people did not know how adults helped them to reflect. Reflections appeared to happen independently and unstructured. Young people’s reflections entailed questioning themselves about why they did something and making statements that they should not do it again.

> “You’re thinking about why, obviously, why you're in there, why did I skip the detention? And not to do it again.” (Miles)

As young people’s skills in areas such as the theory of mind develop, they can engage and connect with other people’s emotional experiences without feeling overwhelmed themselves (Decety & Holvoet, 2021). Therefore, to reflect on incidences of behaviour, young people need the skills to understand how they felt, how their actions may have impacted others, and understand how the situation may have been perceived by somebody else. In the present study,

none of the young people explicitly knew what it meant to engage in meaningful reflection. Statements were made independently without exploration of how to address the difficulty or relate to others.

> [I think] “about … like [how to] try and knock down my behaviour to not go in there again, but I do [go into the ISU again, just] …not on purpose” (Ella)

It suggests that this way of reflecting is not effective and could have implications on the young person’s self-esteem if they do not understand why they are continuing to be in trouble. Similarly, Miles continued to encounter the ISU because of missing detentions and described the input he had experienced in relation to resolving and reflecting on the issue. This input appeared to not have been collaborative or structured as Miles stated that he had another detention that afternoon for skipping one the previous day.

> “…the head teacher, put us all in a room, like everyone that skipped it and moaned at us. And then we got …put back into reflection … and then … I've got a 20-minute [detention] tonight cos, I went out of a 40 minute [detention] last night”. (Miles)

Others spoke of conversations with the headteacher before going into the ISU. Some young people felt that this supported their reflection although they commented that the issue had just gone away, suggesting there was no conscious understanding of how or why.

> “you never make that mistake again” … “the issue just goes away after” … “when it's done, you feel like, oh yeah. Done now. Issue’s done. And there’s nothing else, that’s kind of it.” (John)

In relation to the expectation to reflect in the ISU, Ben said that there is not much “real experience” and that you just need to complete the work. Sometimes there were meetings with parents and SLT to discuss incidences of behaviour difficulties, although it was not clear whether there was a structured reflection to include the young person’s perspective or whether they were just given information about being in the ISU and needing to change their behaviour.

> “…depends how like bad the situation is but then you'd like go and see the head teacher have a conversation or a meeting with your mum and dad… they just sort of talk to you about your behaviour issues and what you need to improve on … like, why you’re in there and all that.” (Ben)

Where unstructured reflection appeared to work less well, young people could acknowledge a behaviour change but did not indicate why or how this had happened. This suggests that some of the young people had placed value on themselves based on the comments and labels made by others, instead of feeling empowered by learning how to manage their behaviour independently via successfully structured reflection.

> “I was in trouble quite a lot before…Christmas and … I turned myself around, I changed a bit… that’s what the teachers have been saying anyway”. (Ben)

Similarly, Katy talked about how staff visited her when she was “naughty”. Katy appears to have applied this label to herself, which may have been a result of language others have used. The experience that Katy describes suggests that others are in control of how to manage Katy’s behaviour rather than offering opportunities for Katy to reflect on a situation in context and think about how to

adapt her responses. This could have implications on perceived labels that others hold, such as feeling that she cannot be “controlled”.

> “…the teacher in there, didn't know how to like, control me. So they had to call walkabout [members of staff circulating the school for an oversight of behaviour] on me and the teacher will sit in, like, next to him and looking at me …and tried to give him advice on how we could handle me in class… and then they were both … talking about me.” (Katy)

5.3.2 Theme 2 Subtheme 2: Feeling socially excluded

A significant subtheme was the feeling of being socially excluded. Every young person said that the rules of the ISU were that you were not allowed to speak.

> “You can’t leave, you can't talk other than break and lunch I’m pretty sure” (Fred)

There were attempts to stop interaction with others that were also in the ISU in some cases, suggesting that there was no social contact allowed.

> “there's been times like where me and my mates have been in isolation at the same time, but they put us around the different … corridors like all around the school. So there's no way of us talking to each other”. (Ben)

Some young people explicitly said that break time was their time and that they should be allowed to talk and not have to work. Some young people said that they talked to others in the ISU during this time. All young people were taken to break and lunch at different times so that they did not “mix” with other students,

indicating that they were socially excluded. Those who were not with others in the ISU felt that break times were boring and appeared to be lonely.

> [It's] "Boring. Don't do nothing. Don't see no one. Don't talk to no one. It's not great." (Ben)

There was a sense of feeling socially excluded and othered, which could have impacted a sense of school belonging.

> "when the isolation was outside someone's office, when the students are passing, going to their next class, they'll be talking about you." (Louise)

Some factors such as receiving help from adults countered the sense of feeling isolated. Ella and Miles said that the teachers would notice if you indicated that you wanted help and that they were good. The young people demonstrated wanting social contact which was further evident when Ben noted the following:

> "…even if there's one [person], like I've been in there before where there's just you and a teacher, and I find that a lot better than sitting in there just on your own…I'd usually sort of find a way to talk to 'em. Something like to sort of pass the time." (Ben)

The young people wanted to speak to others and to know someone was nearby. Some young people said that it depended on which teacher they were placed with and how "nice" they were as to whether they would speak to you. Wanting to talk to others is demonstrated by Katy:

> "we work on our own, but obviously, … we still speak to each other, and we still like to talk …even though we're not meant to." (Katy)

Although young people wanted social contact, it appeared they felt compelled to stay quiet.

> “sometimes people try to speak to me but I don’t really wanna speak to them and get in trouble with them for having a conversation…it is hard. But I just like don't listen, and just do your work”. (Ella)

When other people outside of the ISU approached the area to speak to the staff or students in there, they were sent away, therefore separating those in the ISU from everybody else and highlighting the social exclusion. This had implications for the young people’s feelings as they were kept in a room away from others.

> “… it can be quite boring [in the ISU] with …not having other people like you are in a lesson because you're by yourself and don't get to talk … unless you're talking to a teacher… [I] sometimes get a bit more annoyed cos you can hear everyone talking outside, like hanging around with their mates and you're just stuck in the room”. (Miles)

The young people described themselves as being “bad” for talking and expressed that they wanted to work and talk with another person. Young people shared their desperation of wanting social contact with somebody. In some cases, adults were not often available to those in the ISU, to provide any support, indicating that young people were socially excluded.

> “I rarely see the teacher like, if I do see them, they’ll be in the office with the door shut or … walking around the building or teaching or whatever. They rarely be with you”. … “just anyone like I'll take anyone to talk to throughout the day.” (Ben)

5.3.3 Theme 2 Subtheme 3: The negative feelings and perceived injustices about the way young people were treated within the in-school unit

Young people felt bored when they were in the ISU. They fell asleep, made plans for when they got home, and clock-watched. Young people were frustrated by the length of time that they sat in the ISU bored, particularly when there was detention at the end of this too.

> "as you've already sat there all day, you're bored and then you've gotta sit there for like another, normally over an hour". (Miles)

Similarly, Ben shared the following,

> "I have been in isolation before and then they made me do like an hour and a half detention afterwards". (Ben)

Frustrations were shared about the experiences of being in an ISU. These included comments about not having help with work from teachers when needed.

> "…if you don't understand it [the work], then it's pretty much tough". (Ben)

In some cases, there were indications of unfairness where young people felt unable to complete their work due to missing out on the learning in class while in the ISU. This is related to a theme of perceived injustice and may have implications for their self-esteem.

> "…children love to … be interactive with the teachers. And if you don't know what I'm learning, …sometimes they give us work that they're doing that day. But I haven't learned it, … and then I end up doing nothing. But when the teacher that's supervising will say,

> ‘why are you doing nothing?’ …You've got nothing to say cos we, just like, can't do that much stuff on your own, if you don't know it.” (Louise)

There was also a sense of injustice and frustration about the reasons for being sent to the ISU.

> “I got sent in there [ISU] because I had nails on before…I feel like, having nails won’t affect my learning, I feel like I’m not meant to have em on but I’m like, I don't think I should be getting sent in there for nails or eyelashes. I just think that’s a bit dumb… I just feel like isolation should be … a bit more like, you shouldn't be getting sent in there for that.” (Katy)

Similarly, Ben shared frustrations about receiving negative logs that resulted in attending the ISU. Negative logs were recorded behaviours by subject teachers for reasons such as not working and talking “too much”. This suggests a sense of perceived injustice.

> “they’re basically taking you out of education for that, so they’re telling you that you're not doing enough work, but then putting you in a room on your own, with no one to help you, like, [it] don't really make sense. I mean I can see how it makes sense when you actually do something like fighting, for example, because obviously, that's to teach you a lesson. But it’s a bit like I don’t know how to explain it, it’s just it’s like punishing you with the same thing you’ve already done.” (Ben)

In addition to the frustrations experienced about the ISU, some of the young people felt the same about the procedures that followed. For example, there

was a behaviour report system where behaviour was graded for every lesson by each subject teacher over a period of several weeks. The report system had a grading approach for behaviour rating from A, which was ‘excellent’ to D, which is ‘needs to improve’. Young people appeared to feel that this was unfair because teachers were specifically watching those on report. They felt that teachers were likely to provide a negative grade for something such as talking, which other peers would not have received the same consequence for because they were not on a report. Recordings of incidences such as talking could result in extending the length of time on the report.

> “it's like, I'll get in trouble for it because I'm on report but anyone else who are talking because there's like nothing, nothing to record it and they don't really get in trouble.” … “and like the teacher will give me a C. And I would have failed that week, just for that. And it’s like, for 15 minutes …I've done all them … hour long lessons. And I've been getting A's and B's and then I get C for 15 minutes like just for talking or something…and it just seems to …drag on for ages.” (Ben)

Other negative feelings shared by the young people about being in the ISU included feelings of disappointment and exhaustion. There were comments made in some cases about not wanting to come to school the next day. The words “scared” and “traumatising” were also used to explain feelings within the ISU.

> “…I’m also scared… I don’t like being in isolation… when you're told [to go to the ISU, you wonder] … what have I done?” (Louise)

In addition, the young people spoke of needing time away from the ISU.

> "…being in that one room all day. I feel like I'm just locked up in a cage" … "if there's people with anxiety or bad like mental health problems, they might get like … overwhelmed in there…or like maybe ADHD or like autism might get like overwhelmed. And I just feel like, they should be like more careful with them." (Katy)

5.4 Theme 3: Young people's ideas on moving forward with the practice of in-school units

This theme captured what young people like and dislike about school. It raised the preferences that they have for attending the ISU and the changes that they would like to see.

5.4.1 Theme 3 Subtheme 1: learning about how to support young people by hearing about their likes/dislikes through primary to secondary school

The young people gave their views on what they liked and disliked about primary school and secondary school, which gave a better understanding of their experiences. For example, in primary school, young people enjoyed more freedom and limited consequences for behaviours that would now get them detention or time in the ISU.

> [you did not] "get detention if you don't do homework… or isolations or anything really… get away with most stuff as well". (Theo)

There were also positive views about being able to stay in one classroom with one class teacher in primary school as some said they had a better routine. This suggests that some young people preferred being with one class and one teacher, finding it difficult to manage changes.

> "… everything was just like a routine in primary school but in secondary school it's just different …So like, all different classes" (Katy)

At secondary school, young people disliked the pressures of exams and the revision in preparation for these. Young people did not like experiencing detentions or attending the ISU. Experiences could be used to learn about future support. For example, some young people disliked shouting, especially when perceived to be "unnecessary", which shows that this may not be the most effective way to communicate difficulties.

> "…in my math class yeah, I was just sitting there, yeah, I asked what to do and she [the teacher] shouted at me." … "I don't like shouting. It just puts me off and it like, it scares me sometimes. I don't know why. I don't like shouting." (Ella)

Katy felt misunderstood at secondary school, and this may have implications for Katy's sense of belonging. This shows the importance of relationships with teachers, which in this case, Katy felt like she did not have.

> "I just feel like no …teachers understand me …schools just like a prison for me. … I just don't like it." (Katy)

Some young people preferred the nature of secondary school as subject lessons were more specialised and offered more equipment, particularly in lessons like DT. Experiences at secondary school were that teachers were "nice" and that they gave the young people more independence. They shared that they enjoyed being able to set their own goals. It shows that young people liked being independent, responsible and being given the trust to jointly set targets.

> [At secondary school, I like that] "…you got to be a bit more reliable with yourself… set your own goals, like, and there's no one to tell you what you can and can't do like. You got to actually think of it your own way." (Ben)

All the young people were articulate about what subjects they liked at their current secondary school. The young people liked different subjects which highlight that they have different skills and interests. For example, some specified liking physical and creative subjects such as PE and art, whereas others expressed an interest in creative writing in English and problem-solving subjects like maths. Skills in these areas could be used as motivators for learning in other subject areas.

Generally, the young people commented on secondary school being "alright", indicating that they were content at school. Young people valued additional opportunities that school could offer.

> "it's not all about learning school, like it's like, trying to make new friends and like be you." (Ella)

Young people articulated their dislikes about behaviour strategies used within their secondary educational settings which included behaviour report systems. There were different levels of report requiring different members of staff to have oversight. According to the young people, reports were signed three times per day (break time, lunchtime, and after school) by staff and later signed by parents. Reports could be given for uniform issues and no homework. This suggests that young people may feel monitored by everybody and that others have low expectations of their future behaviour. It appeared that reports were not viewed as helpful by the young people.

> "… if you're not on report, you normally get put on report or if you're already on report, you go up a report like so it's worse… the one I'm on… you've gotta report to head teacher or the deputy head for three days, three times a day." (Ben)

5.4.2 Theme 3 Subtheme 2: suggestions to improve in-school unit experiences

Young people were articulate about preferences for learning in the ISU in some cases. Comments were made about preferring the area when friends were also in the ISU, indicating a desire to belong or feel connected to others.

> "…I don't really mind [being in the ISU] when my friends are in there though." (Fred)

There were preferences shared about the quiet nature of the ISU and the teachers present. Young people found it easier to focus on work.

> "… it's quiet, and you get to focus on your work, I'd rather be in there than be in normal classes to be honest… It is actually quite calm there, I enjoy it". (Ella)

Other preferences about the ISU included having easier work, getting out of "boring" lessons, being able to sleep, having time to yourself, and not feeling "surrounded" by a lot of people. This indicates that needs are not always met or understood in the classrooms, which could lead to difficulties resulting in ISU attendance.

> "…sometimes if I'm not meant to be in there [ISU], I like it, …sometimes if I've got a really terrible lesson or if … I'm not in a

> good mood, I like to go in there [ISU] because it's just like quiet". (Katy)

The young people were incredibly reflective and articulate about what could improve ISUs and schools generally. Young people spoke about the consequences of being disruptive in class and being sent to a room for one hour as a circuit breaker. This was a different room to the ISU as it had a shorter defined time period, which could have implications on future policies of ISUs relating to the length of time of attendance.

> "… if you've been really disruptive in class, you get put in [a named] room. So you're taken out of your lesson after you get a red card and you get put in there for an hour." (Miles)

Suggestions to improve ISU experiences included having a bigger area with more space so there were fewer distractions. Other suggestions included being allowed to be with people, and work together to learn with peers. There were also comments about being allowed to speak.

> "…to make the room better… I don't think that they should like silence you…I feel like … they're teaching us like to work like independently but like sometimes… you need people to work." (John)

There were reflections made on the rules of ISUs and reasons for attending. Young people raised issues such as the perceived "silly" reasons they must attend ISUs and that it should only be used when it is to teach people a lesson, which is related to a sense of social justice. There were also suggestions made to be allowed time out of the ISU.

> “I want them to actually send people in there who actually deserve it. Like, don't be putting someone in there …just for something silly… actually put someone in there if you mean it” … “I'd really like to change like the rules because … I just don't think if you’re in that room you should get like excluded for like walking out, cos I feel like when we we’re in that room … you should be able to have like a bit of timeout out of that room”. (Katy)

There were strong views held about whether ISUs should have a place within the school. Louise expressed wanting to remove ISUs and replace it with a punishment that was less “severe”.

> “I wouldn’t want to make it better I wouldn't want … there to be [an] isolation at all…if you’ve done something bad you should be punished [but] not like severely like that. I think that you should have a detention at the end of school. And I don't think they should separate you from the classroom, because you're missing out on things. And you're being separated from your friends.” (Louise)

There were suggestions made about having more staff available to provide support and interaction while also making work relatable to class. This shows that the young people care about the education they are missing out on.

> [to have] “a teacher in there at all times, something just a bit more interactive, … not like something that's going to be fun or something that's going to amuse you just … something that ain’t out of a textbook, something that links back to work that you're doing in class”. (Ben)

Ben shared further thoughts on how to make school better generally. This offered insight into the importance of relationships, social interaction, and a desire for teachers to show a “human” side.

> [I would] “Definitely make some of the teachers a bit more … human. If you get what I mean. Like I've got a good few teachers … [but] to get someone to like you or to get someone to actually do what you want, you've gotta properly get to know them and properly like be human with ‘em, and have a laugh with them like. Obviously you’ve gotta be professional and that but don't just be a robot.” (Ben)

5.5 Summary of Chapter

The data has presented three key themes for consideration. It highlights the negative impacts of being in ISUs such as the experiences of being removed from the school society, which could impact on a young person’s sense of belonging. There was a lack of clarity about expectations of the ISU because names of the area, designated spaces and rules were not always consistent or clear. It also highlighted the sense of social injustice that arose from attending ISUs. The unstructured use of reflection had implications in some cases for young people taking on labels held by others and there were recurrences of the behaviour with subsequent visits to the ISU. This questions the effectiveness of current practice. It also raised issues of social exclusion and other negative impacts such as feeling stuck in the area. Finally, it highlights suggestions for moving the practice of ISUs forward. Preferences of the ISU such as the quiet nature were shared and thoughts about the space, rules and staff availability were raised to improve the experience.

Chapter 6. Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the findings answering the research questions with consideration given to the available literature. The strengths and limitations of the current research are considered with thought given to potential future research. It explores the implications for future professional practice and policymakers. Then it outlines the next steps, reflexivity, and conclusions of the research.

6.2 How do in-school units operate in secondary educational settings in the context of one LA?

One of the themes in answer to this question was discrepancies between the procedure, use, and impact of ISUs. These schools appeared to use ISUs as exclusionary punishments (IFF Research Ltd et al., 2018) isolating individuals away from peers (Middleton & Kay, 2020). There were variations of ISUs in practice. For example, not every ISU was permanently staffed by a member of the school team and there were no consistent procedures that followed. Clear structure and consistency are needed for providing expectations of behaviour to improve outcomes. The ISU provided a consequence for perceived behaviour difficulties, giving other adults the perception that the incident had been dealt with. It highlights that the ISUs are operating on a behaviourist principle which alienates the context of behaviour and the young person's internal thoughts and feelings about what happened (Woollard, 2010). It is important to remember that behaviour is a function of communication (Lewin, 1938) and schools have a duty to understand what is being communicated (Ofsted, 2021). Schools also have a responsibility to identify needs that include mental health difficulties and support them by creating a safe environment (DfE, 2018). A response that

provides a sanction and no exploration of needs could lead the young person to feel misunderstood and rejected (Munn et al., 2000), therefore having implications for their sense of belonging.

There was an uncertainty about the impact of ISUs to help young people develop their behaviour. Schools thought that they worked well as punishment for low-level disruptions, but they could not explain why this was. One school raised that the ISU was only a good idea because there was not enough staff or funds to put things in place that were needed such as an EP. The LA felt that there was no clear intervention strategy and that the ISUs did not prioritise hearing the views of young people. From what schools said, it was evident that students often returned to the ISU, which questions their effectiveness and function. In line with other research (Barker et al., 2010), it indicates that underlying needs have not been addressed. Therefore, the ISUs do not appear to have offered meaningful intervention leading to positive change.

When behaviour difficulties continued in these areas, young people were formally excluded and, in some cases, placed on a managed move. Given the literature on the negative consequences of external exclusion (e.g., Timpson et al., 2019; Middleton & Kay, 2020), it is interesting that ISUs appear to encourage the use of internal exclusion. Formal exclusions that follow time in the ISU, suggest that schools are not sure how to manage behaviour difficulties and are repeatedly using exclusion as a response without getting the outcome they hope for. Schools need to take ownership of managing behaviour to reduce exclusions by seeking to understand what the function of the behaviour is communicating. This research found that in some cases, the procedure for the first day following an external exclusion was spent in the ISU. There could be further negative consequences for young people if schools persist with this

response to behaviour as they will not understand what their needs are, and young people may continue to be misunderstood.

It is important to draw on the findings relating to schools' expectations of young people to reflect on their behaviour, as some acknowledged that punishment only goes so far. ISUs were often designed so that reflection was not disturbed by social interaction. While there is limited research about the use of reflection in ISUs, previous research briefly raised that the use of restorative conversations was more helpful as it provides structured guidance rather than thinking independently about what went wrong (Power & Taylor, 2020). In relation to learning, we know from the conscious-competence model (Howell, 1982, as cited by Cannon et al., 2010) that accurate feedback is important to explicitly highlight how we can adapt and build on our understanding of a skill. A behaviourist response that provides a sanction will not teach somebody how to reflect and adapt their behaviour, which could leave someone feeling misunderstood and their needs unmet. Reflection needs guidance from adults to facilitate conversations with young people to help them make meaning of their experiences. Restorative approaches encourage conversations to understand the actions of one's behaviour and move forward (Restorative Justice Council, n.d.). Conversations with adults will also open discussions to explore incidences of behaviour difficulties in context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In one case, the ISU was not supervised by an adult. In addition, conversations such as these were not prioritised in schools as they often depended on the time staff had to offer. This shows that opportunities for support, meaningful interaction and understanding of needs are being missed within the current practice of ISUs.

The second theme was about how the school understood the strengths and needs of individuals and accommodated them. Schools had a good overview of the statistics within their setting such as the number on roll, whether their rate of EHCPs and pupil premium was in line with the average figure for the LA and their progress 8 scores. This indicates that schools are used to producing facts and figures about their school in relation to their attainment and have high expectations of pupils. One school noted that they wanted to become an outstanding school as recognised by Ofsted, while another school spoke openly during their interview stating that they would not share things in the same way with Ofsted. This indicates that schools are feeling pressured to attain and are unable to voice the difficulties/pressures that they are facing.

In line with other findings (e.g., Nash et al., 2016), when young people were not meeting school expectations, such as disrupting the learning of others, they were likely to be sent to the ISU. This may further reflect the political pressures on schools in relation to attainment (Nash et al., 2016). Some schools used external exclusions as a response to disruptive behaviour during the Covid-19 pandemic as they felt that they did not have the option of the ISU, which shows that ISUs is used as a delay to formal exclusion (Middleton & Kay, 2020). While research shows that removing young people from the environment will not help them to address underlying needs (McCluskey et al., 2016), ISUs are seemingly continuing to do this. Subsequently, this impacts the opportunity to understand the difficulties and prevent further exclusions, showing the limitations of ISUs.

The third theme highlighted wider systemic considerations that could impact the availability of support. For example, the LA behaviour team had a range of services that they offered to schools in relation to managing behaviour. These varied from systemic work looking at policy and training for schools, to an

individual level working with young people. When the LA had knowledge of the existence of ISUs, they made it their role to investigate their function with schools. This highlights a key role of the LA in relation to exclusions, something that is missing from the literature. These findings suggest that the LA provided the school with opportunities to reflect on their responsibilities, consider relevant legislation and guidance, evaluate the impact of ISUs, and think about alternative solutions.

LAs have received budget cuts (Lee & Woods, 2017; Power & Taylor, 2020) which have led to the development of traded services. Funding was also a barrier for schools in accessing LA behaviour involvement as many secondary schools and academies did not buy into it. This could indicate that LA behaviour support was not prioritised by schools. This indirectly impacts the ISUs because schools are not working with the LA and therefore conversations about their impact are being missed. It may also indicate that the LA need to be more proactive in advertising its services so that schools see the value of purchasing this.

Funding was a barrier to accessing other support for many schools and they highlighted that there was nobody to unpick problems, understand them or resolve them. This highlights that schools feel unable to do this which could reflect the limited free time they have, or their understanding of how to approach this. For example, by highlighting that there is nobody to “fix” the problems, it is locating the difficulties within the young person, removing personal responsibility, and subsequently providing the view that they are helpless to support it. The use of ISUs will reinforce the narrative that punishment will correct the behaviour (Woollard, 2010). This suggests that schools need

empowering to use the resources and skills they do have in managing behaviour. This could be a role for the LA.

6.3 What are the experiences and perceptions of young people attending in-school units?

One theme in answer to this research question was the negative impact of the ISU. Young people were removed from their usual school environment, and they had experienced various settings utilised as the ISU including the hall and the library. In some cases, the use of empty classrooms was employed but when the room was needed, young people had to move around to find another available area. Similarly, if there was more than one person in the ISU when this was in a corridor, then young people had to move to another corridor to be separated from their peers. This could have implications for the young people's sense of belonging as there was no designated space for them to work. While some of the changes in designated space had occurred due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it does highlight that an ISU has not always been planned or designed to have a clear function. If these are used as a removal space, and in some cases, with limited adult support, then they could be at the cost of the young person's education which goes against other recommended guidance and findings (e.g., DfE, 2016b; Timpson et al., 2019).

The second theme encompassed the sense of social injustice that arose from attending ISUs. Young people spoke of an expectation to reflect on their reasons for attending the ISU, yet the young people were separated from their peers, in some cases unsupervised, and did not have any guidance about how to achieve this. Young people said they did not know how adults helped them to reflect, some said there was no experience in the ISU, and others appeared to think that reflection meant making statements in their mind to not repeat the

incident again. Many young people often returned to the ISU for the same reasons, indicating that difficulties had not been resolved and that the unstructured reflection was not effective. This raises questions about the effectiveness and whether the ISU is a good use of young people's time. Exclusions do not model pro-social skills or support the understanding of how to repair relationships (McCluskey et al., 2016). This suggests that difficulties need to be addressed and the process of resolving this needs to be made explicit. There was very little reference to how reflection is supported within the papers found on ISUs but one highlighted that use of restorative approaches was more helpful than being alone (Power & Taylor, 2020). Although the school staff spoke of young people reflecting in the ISU, and one mentioned restorative conversations as a follow-up procedure, young people's views did not match this. This shows that more support is needed to teach reflective skills. In addition, young people need to be supported to generalise and apply their reflections and skills to future incidences to reduce the number of visits to the ISU.

When reflections appeared to not work so well, young people seemed to make sense of their selves and their experiences based on the views of others. For example, in one case, they acknowledged their behaviour changes without indication of how they managed this. In other cases, they referred to themselves as being "naughty" or "bad", which could reflect the language used by others (Burr, 2015) as they may have attached these labels to themselves to explain their difficulties (Caslin, 2019). It is important to separate the behaviour from the young person, so they feel able to instigate change (O'Reilly, 2007) and avoid being labelled. Structured reflection guided by an adult may counter some of the

impacts of labelling, making young people feel empowered and in control of their actions to achieve their preferred futures.

In line with other research (e.g., Barker et al., 2010), young people were socially excluded from others and wanted interaction. The young people were separated from their peers all day, having break times and lunchtime at different times of the day and in some cases having detention at the end of the day. Internal exclusions occurring during the school day reduce opportunities to interact with peers and build connections, which negatively impacts their relationships with peers and adults (Middleton & Kay, 2020) and could have implications for their school belonging. Receiving help from adults when in the ISU appeared to counter some of the sense of social exclusion, but some young people did not always want to ask for help, and some young people were not always supervised. The DCSF guidance suggests that ISUs should provide supervised education to secure improvements in behaviour (DCSF, 2009) although it has been identified that in some cases, ISUs are not staffed (e.g., Timpson et al., 2019). Young people without full-time supervision are isolated which further ostracises them from the rest of their peers who are guided and taught by teachers.

The third theme showed young people's ideas on improving experiences of ISUs, which is something that previous literature has not identified. ISUs should be based on evidence of what works and consider the impact on pupils and staff with the future education and behaviour of the young person (Timpson et al., 2019). Recent consultations have taken place to seek feedback on the use of ISUs (DfE, 2022b) though it is unclear whether young people were invited to participate in this. Young people's views matter as they have first-hand

experience of accessing ISUs, and the impact they have on them, yet there is limited research into listening to young people regarding this area.

One consideration to note was the range of names and references to the ISU that often reflected a punitive label such as “internal exclusion room” or “isolation”. One young person preferred the term “reflection” which raises considerations about the name of the area and the connotations associated with this. Language can impact the labels people attach to themselves (Caslin, 2019) so it is important that behaviours are separated from the person so that needs can be understood in the context of their environment (Lewin, 1938). Thought should be given to the name of ISUs to reflect an optimistic or positive name that indicates working towards a progression of developing skills. This could reframe the way that the ISU is perceived by others.

Young people were incredibly articulate about their preferences for learning. Although ISUs were not conducive to learning, young people liked the quiet nature that provided them with the time and space to focus on their work. They also liked that there were fewer people in the ISU environment compared with the usual classroom which could sometimes feel overwhelming. This shows that these young people were able to highlight their needs, and this could have implications for supporting their learning. For example, ensuring that young people can access a safe space to regulate their emotions when feeling overwhelmed and then continue with their learning.

Although there were some preferences for the ISU, young people wanted inclusion within the school. They wanted the ISU experience to be interactive, in the company of friends, have time to work with others and engage with work that linked back to the class curriculum. Additionally, they wanted to be

understood by teachers and to build positive relationships with them. This relates to the understanding of school belonging where students feel accepted, respected, and cared for (Allen & Kern, 2019). This shows that young people care about their education and that they want support from their teachers. Student-teacher relationships have been found to support learning (Hattie, 2008) therefore showing the power of fostering relationships to build on skills. ISUs need to ensure that young people are receiving their rightful education and are being supported to achieve their full potential. Being in an environment that discourages social contact and limits opportunities for interaction does not achieve this. This brings us back to question what ISUs are offering to young people.

6.4 Summary of discussion

The findings of the present study addressed the gap in the literature on how the LA can work with schools to reduce exclusions and manage behaviour, how ISUs are operating in some schools and shares the views of young people who have experienced the ISU.

Variations in the operation of ISUs were highlighted with the designated area changing location. This was due to a trial-and-error approach in individual schools and more recently, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and measures taken for social distancing. ISUs were operating in larger communal spaces such as the school hall and the library during the pandemic. Others were operating in corridors, which some schools maintained after the advice on social distancing had been removed. ISUs were also within rooms that were set up differently from classrooms. When the young people experienced the ISU as a corridor, they did not like that everyone who walked by would know they were in trouble. This appeared to be a public sanction strategy that made young people feel

uncomfortable. In addition to the variation in location, there was also a range of names that people used to refer to the ISU. Language and labels shape an individual's self-identity (Burr, 2015) which can have implications for a sense of belonging (Allen & Kern, 2019). It is important that more thought is given to the name of the ISUs in future.

Days spent in the ISU could be extended if the young person did not pass the day, and in some cases, they were formally excluded. Exclusions do not model pro-social skills nor is there evidence that it sends messages about what positive behaviour looks like to young people (McCluskey et al., 2016). Excluding young people from their classes or their school may send messages that nobody has time to understand their difficulties, which could lead to feelings of rejection. In one school, students spent their first day in the ISU following an external exclusion, which indicates that schools are continuing to operate their ISUs and management of behaviour on a reductionist approach.

A strong evidence base is needed on the effectiveness of ISUs as there did not appear to be any measure of impact. Adults and young people spoke of students attending the ISU more than once, and usually for the same reasons. This shows that underlying needs are not being understood or met, which questions the functionality of ISUs. Reflection was one strategy highlighted by schools and young people when visiting the ISU, but there was not always time for adults to support young people with this, so it was not consistent. Young people did not appear to understand how to approach reflection, which highlights more support is needed. Making the time to reflect with young people is important to show that they are a priority within the school and to ensure that they have understood how to adapt their behaviour and generalise these skills to future incidences.

The LA behaviour team shared an example of a time they had challenged a school about using an ISU, providing time for conversations to reflect on legislation and alternative solutions. The LA behaviour team said that they took on this role when they found out about their existence within schools. This highlights a role for the LA in supporting schools to manage behaviour and reduce exclusions. The LA behaviour team offered a range of services that included supporting behaviour policies and working with young people. However, the LA behaviour team said that funding was a barrier for secondary schools and academies as they did not often opt-in to pay for their service.

All young people said they wanted interaction and some highlighted that they were missing out on work within their usual classroom. This shows that they care about their education and feel that they are not being supported to reach their full potential, something to which they are entitled (DfE, 2016b). The young people talked about wanting relationships with teachers and valuing those that were nice to them. This shows that schools are in a good position to provide support and guidance to young people in relation to behaviour. Allen and Kern (2019) found that student-teacher relationships in secondary schools were the biggest influence on belonging even when compared with parent and peer relationships. This highlights the important role teachers have in supporting young people at school. The young people were articulate and have given suggestions for improving ISUs, which could create a more socially just school experience. These have implications for future practice.

6.5 Strengths and Limitations

This research explored how ISUs operate in secondary educational settings in the context of one LA. ISUs have received a lot of press that promotes divisive opinions in recent years stirring some debate (e.g., Staufenberg, 2018;

Titheradge, 2018; The Guardian 2020; Harris, 2021). This may explain why a small number of schools agreed to participate in this research. There were also comments from school staff about the potential difficulties of arranging interviews with young people as they said there was no guarantee that they would not have been excluded. This highlights how important this research is, particularly in hearing from young people.

Ryan et al. (2007) refer to generalisability as the “transferability” of how the research can fit within other contexts. Although it was a small sample, Ryan et al. (2007) say that transferability is increased when the results are meaningful for others. I would argue that the findings share relevance and meaning for reflecting on the current practice of ISUs and thinking about the future. The research has shown the barriers to reflective practice and working with LA behaviour teams. It has also shown the negative impacts young people experience when they feel unsupported and separated from the rest of the school.

It is acknowledged that there were a small number of young people who participated, who were selected by adults. This could have raised some bias from gatekeepers regarding the access I was given to individuals and their perceptions of what participants may say (Robson & McCartan, 2016). I also acknowledge the exclusion of some young people such as those with language needs and those vulnerable groups who had ongoing safeguarding concerns perhaps relating to ACEs. School staff were in the best position to put young people forward who they thought would feel comfortable in participating and had the skills to understand and consent to the research. As an EP service, there are good relationships and trust between practitioners and schools, and this is something that I valued. I trusted and respected the decisions made by schools

in relation to those young people chosen to participate as we all have a duty of care.

I appreciate that consent from adults being gained prior to that of the young person may have been an issue (Robson & McCartan, 2016). In seeking to overcome this bias, prior to interviews I explained the purpose of my research and gave the opportunity for young people to agree to continue or withdraw from taking part. I also engaged in rapport building with individuals by starting by asking them questions about their likes and interests (O'Reilly & Dogra, 2017). I wanted to empower young people to make their own decisions and I think that is a key strength of this study.

As Pantell et al. (1982, as cited by O'Reilly and Dogra, 2017) highlighted, often young people feel that decisions are made for them. I made my research collaborative to promote their voices and gave young people a platform for their voices to be heard, which is a real strength of this study. I checked in with young people about my interpretation of their mind maps and frequently repeated information back to the participants during interviews to ensure I had understood and offered an opportunity for them to correct me. This supports the credibility of the research by reducing researcher bias and misinterpretations.

The young people were interested in my research and wanted to know why I was there to learn about their experiences. One of the young people asked whether I would be working in the ISU to help make the space better. I explained that I wanted to provide an opportunity to share experiences and that I would write about it for people to read and listen to. The young people were incredibly articulate throughout the interviews and were able to share many ideas about their interests, their education, and suggestions to improve the

practice of ISUs. This shows that they want their experiences to be meaningful and that they value their education.

The findings offer insight and understanding into an under researched area about ISUs and the impacts they can have on young people. It also offers thought into the role that the LA can have in supporting schools to reduce exclusions. Although the sample was small and within one LA the findings are still useful for consideration in other contexts (Yardley, 2008).

6.6 Implications for EP practice

The findings indicate that there are several implications for EP practice. EPs need to have a more prominent role in working preventatively and proactively with those identified as being at risk of exclusion.

Schools were operating ISUs built on a behaviourist underpinning. EPs are well positioned to work with schools using skills such as consultation to broaden people's thinking to an interactionist approach, therefore, moving away from a within-person hypothesis (Wagner, 2008). Bronfenbrenner's ecosystems theory (1979) shows that several interconnected systems can impact an individual. Schools need support to unpick some of the difficulties and problem solve how they can support. This will encourage schools to think about what can be adapted within the environment and what resources are available, strengthening the understanding of needs and therefore how to meet them effectively. It could also impact the way that schools write their behaviour policies.

A lack of funding (Lee & Woods, 2017) and high statutory demands (Lyonette et al., 2019) are some of the difficulties EPs are facing, in addition to the value that SENCOs have for the traditional role comprising of individual assessment

(Ashton & Roberts, 2006). In this research, seeking support from the EP team was only referenced once. It was also raised that ISUs were only a good idea because schools do not have the resources needed such as an EP. This suggests that EPs need to be better at sharing their high level of training, expertise and potential for impact relating to the exclusions of young people (Bagley & Hallam, 2017) so that their time is prioritised in areas such as this. EPs need more of a role in this area and there needs to be systemic working to empower schools to utilise the resources they do have so that they feel equipped to manage behaviour effectively.

School staff spoke about using scenario-based questions and restorative conversations to support reflection when there was time, but young people did not know what they needed to do to reflect. Schools need support to structure reflection for young people, and time needs to be prioritised for this. Research on EP perceptions of ISUs appears to be that these areas do not address the cause of the difficulty (Golding, 2021), indicating that there needs to be more meaningful interaction. EPs have the knowledge to identify needs and plan interventions (Bagley & Hallam, 2017). This could include engaging young people in reflection using solution-focused approaches, restorative conversations, cognitive behavioural approaches, and motivational interviewing techniques (Reynolds, 2021).

Schools relayed facts and figures about their setting including their progress 8 scores. There was also a comment about not speaking to Ofsted as openly as they spoke during their interview. This suggests that schools are under pressure to meet expected standards and are unable to provide honest opinions about the difficulties that they are facing. EPs can offer containment as they have the skills to establish relationships with teachers that can reduce stress (Waite,

2014). This could increase the teacher's capacity to manage behaviour that challenges. EPs can support the emotional wellbeing of adults and in turn promote inclusion (Waite, 2014). This could reduce the likelihood of a young person being asked to attend the ISU.

Young people wanted to be included in their school community as their suggestions for improving ISU experiences were about being supervised, interacting with peers, and linking work back to their class. This shows that young people feel they are missing out on these experiences, which has implications for the quality of the education they are receiving.

A final consideration for the role of EPs is one of unpicking labels. Labelling of actions was used frequently such as "good", "bad", "naughty" and "control". For example, young people said that they were "naughty" for talking or that they could be in trouble for being "bad". These may be reflective of the labels that others have used. EPs are well placed to develop a shared understanding of a young person's needs and explore such labels (Wagner, 2008). It is also important that young people understand what these labels mean so that difficulties can be reframed. For example, talking does not make somebody "bad", and there may need some explanation about the context in which they are speaking to teach about implicit social rules such as turn-taking in conversation.

Table 3 Summary of short- and long-term suggestions for EPs

Suggestion: EPs need to continue to promote the value of consultation.
Short-term actions:

• EPs can continue to challenge the thinking of others e.g., broadening views to unpick difficulties that are understood in context of the young person's situation, and encouraging schools to think about what can be adapted within the environment and what resources are available. **Long-term actions**: • Encouraging schools to buy into consultations focused on meeting particular needs rather than individual young people and regular reviewing of what is working well.
Suggestion: EPs need to promote their skills and training that could enable them to work proactively with schools supporting young people at risk of exclusion.
Short-term actions: • EPs could provide training on understanding and supporting young people with behaviour that challenges. **Long-term actions**: • EPs could work with schools to develop behaviour policies and share good practice examples at wider networking opportunities e.g., conferences.
Suggestion: There needs to be more funding for EP services.
Short-term actions: • Prioritisation of funding and workloads • Advertising services in relation to behaviour management to educational settings for additional funding in traded LAs. **Long-term actions:**

- Engaging in active discussions and research to present to policymakers on the scope and benefits of EP work.

Suggestion: EPs need to support identification of needs and planning of interventions e.g., in reflections.

Short-term actions:

- Continue facilitating planning meetings with schools to identify areas of strengths and needs and then plan to support them.
- Contract with schools what “reflection” means and what it may entail.
- Continue to support schools with provision maps and evaluation of interventions.

Long-term actions:

- Modelling/training in engaging young people in reflection using solution-focused approaches, restorative conversations, cognitive behavioural approaches, and motivational interviewing techniques
- Broadening behaviourist approaches to interactionist approaches. E.g., rather than making statements about a behaviour e.g., “not to do it again”, be curious and ask questions about what was happening, how could things be different etc.

Suggestion: EPs should continue to offer support and containment to school staff.

Short-term actions:

- Continue offering containment in established relationships with school staff.

Long-term actions:

- To set up regular opportunities for coaching school staff, providing supervision, or establishing support groups perhaps in the form of solution circles.

Suggestion: EPs should continue to promote young people's views regarding the policy and practice of ISUs.

Short-term actions:

- To continue to encourage pupil participation in all aspects of work that involve the young person.

Long-term actions:

- To provide opportunities for young people to work with school staff to develop ISU policy and practice. E.g., this research highlighted young people wanted to be supervised, be allowed to interact with peers, and engage in work that linked back to the curriculum. There could be systemic projects (e.g., appreciative inquiry) facilitated by EPs that support conversations about these issues.

Suggestion: EPs should continue to unpick labels and reframe the needs of those young people at risk of exclusion.

Short-term actions:

- To continue unpicking labels during consultations about young people and encouraging staff to separate the behaviours from the person.
- To reframe the labels as areas of need that provide context and understanding of difficulties.

Long-term actions:

- To support schools through training to adapt the language they use to describe incidences of behaviour that challenges so that labels are not attached to young people.

It is acknowledged that these suggestions may face some challenges to action. EPs can continue building relationships with young people, families, and educational settings, and much of our work depends on our ability to negotiate our work effectively (Beaver, 2011). Good working relationships have been found to be the most valued aspect of an EP role (Lee & Woods, 2017), which suggests that it is an influential factor in achieving satisfactory outcomes in our work (Beaver, 2011).

It is also important to consider that the role of the EP is continually under scrutiny by the central government, and there is a need for the profession to demonstrate positive outcomes while being cost-effective intervention agents (Beaver, 2011). This in combination with a cut to funds presents difficulties in terms of what has been constituted as good value for money and quality service e.g., price and availability vs pace of work completion (Lee & Woods, 2017). It may also depend on what views are held by school staff such as SENCOs in terms of their understanding of what the EP role can offer and their historic preference for individual assessment of pupils (Ashton & Roberts, 2006). As has been suggested before, EPs need to continue to share their high level of training, expertise, and potential for impact to support those at risk of exclusion (Bagley & Hallam, 2017). EPs also have a role in initiating conversations about exclusions to listen to the language that positions young people as benefitting from marginalisation while in ISUs and to challenge these discourses (Faure Walker, 2021). EPs can negotiate work with schools to use their skills in

solution-oriented approaches to use appreciative inquiry that can help schools to identify and analyse the best of their experiences (Wagner, 2008). This could extend to including the views of young people as they have helpful experiences that adults could learn from.

6.7 Implications for policymakers, LA behaviour specialists, and schools

The ISUs appeared to employ behaviourist approaches using principles of a stimulus-response nature, therefore reducing understanding of behaviour to that of using rewards and punishments without consideration of inner mental states (Woollard, 2010). This was likely to have been influenced by policies and guidance that suggest the use of punishment for those pupils that “behave badly” and are “disruptive” (e.g., School discipline and exclusions guidance N.D.; DfE, 2016a). The research highlighted that young people attending the ISU tended to not be there for a one-off incident, which raises the question about the impact of the ISU.

Given the context of Bennett’s (2017) suggestion to fund ISUs, particularly for schools with higher levels of behaviour that challenges, and the proposed revisions to the behaviour in schools, and suspensions and permanent exclusion guidance (DfE, 2022b), it appears that there is an argument for the continued and developing use of ISUs. This being the case, there needs to be thought given to the approach and purpose of ISUs and how the space could be utilised to have a meaningful impact on staff and students. This extends to the name of the ISU. When school staff reference the unit, it should have positive connotations to reframe people’s mindsets about its function. School staff spoke highly of their teams, and of their own skills and characteristics that could support young people. Timpson et al. (2019) highlighted that pastoral input can change a young person's life when done in an appropriate way. Schools need

support from the LA, such as the behaviour team, to teach young people about reflective skills. The research from Reynolds (2021) suggests that this could be in the form of restorative approaches, cognitive behavioural approaches, solution-focused approaches, and motivational interviewing techniques.

The use of ISUs may exist due to the political pressures on outcomes. When behaviour was not meeting school expectations, young people were likely to attend the ISU. This did not always help the situation, as schools said that there were often repeat incidences. Schools need support from the LA to explore different solutions to managing and understanding behaviour. Repeated attendance to ISUs and formal exclusions that follow ISUs when things do not improve are indicating that they are not supporting or addressing the needs of young people. Young people appeared to label themselves as being “bad”, reflecting internalisations of interactions (Burr, 2015). Schools need support to separate young people from their behaviour and avoid the use of labels that could impact an individual’s self-esteem. This is something that the LA behaviour team could provide training and support for.

The use of ISUs was not always transparent to the LA behaviour team. When the team learned of their existence through conversations with young people or observations in practice, they were able to open discussions with schools about this. This shows a key role in relation to support schools can receive from the LA that may reduce the use of ISUs and subsequent exclusions. It highlights an area that the LA can provide ongoing support when schools trial using approaches different to that of the ISU. As funding for this service was a barrier, particularly for secondary schools and academies, this suggests that the LA needs to be better at advertising their skills in relation to this area, so that schools see the value of buying into the service.

Young people made suggestions to improve the ISU experience, which included having a larger space, being allowed to talk, work with others, and being able to leave the room. They also highlighted that break times are important to them and that they do not like being kept away from their friends. Further to this, young people have placed importance on the relationships that they build with teachers. It is important that schools have staff with availability to work with young people in a supportive manner. Hattie's (2008) meta-analyses of effective teaching and learning showed that where there were person-centred teachers, there was more engagement, respect, fewer resistant behaviours, and higher achievement outcomes for young people. No studies have found that exclusion "sends a message" (p.535) to other young people about good behaviour (McCluskey et al., 2016) and there is no evidence base to suggest that current ISU practice is effective. Young people accessing the ISU need support and intervention to deter them from future formal exclusions, which can have implications on their attainment (Timpson et al., 2019), criminal involvement (e.g., Timpson et al., 2019; Middleton & Kay, 2020), relationships with others (McCluskey et al., 2016), and on their emotional wellbeing and mental health (Middleton & Kay, 2020). These young people need a meaningful intervention that promotes positive change and schools need stronger guidance and support to achieve this.

Table 4 Summary of short- and long-term suggestions for policymakers, LA behaviour specialists, schools, and other professionals

Suggestion:	The understanding of behaviour needs to be broadened from a behaviourist approach to an interactionist approach.
Stakeholder:	Policymakers

	Schools EPs
Short-term actions: • EPs need to continue to challenge the thinking and understanding of behaviour to broaden the context. **Long-term actions:** • Research and debates need to be encouraged and shared with policymakers to demonstrate the impact of interactionist approaches that challenge people to deepen thinking and reflect on events rather than accepting objective behaviours at face value.	
Suggestion:	There need to be clear outcome measures to evaluate ISUs as an intervention.
Stakeholder:	Policymakers Schools
Short-term actions: • Schools need to record outcomes and take pre- and post-data about the ISU as an intervention to measure the impact. **Long-term actions:** • There needs to be guidance for schools that states a need for clear criteria for entry/exit protocols of ISUs to hold schools accountable for ensuring this is consistent. • There needs to be data collection on the use of ISUs.	
Suggestion:	There needs to be more consideration given to the purpose and space of ISUs to ensure a meaningful impact for staff and students.

Stakeholder:	Policymakers Schools
Short-term actions: • There need to be considerations made about the setup and location of the spaces utilised as ISUs so that young people can feel motivated and engaged with learning. **Long-term actions:** • There needs to be a clear rationale for the function and use of ISUs that incorporates support to help young people reflect on incidences of behaviour that challenges and open discussions with staff to consider their difficulties in the context of their individualistic experiences.	
Suggestion:	ISUs need to be named and positioned as areas that can facilitate positive change.
Stakeholder:	EPs Schools
Short-term actions: • To encourage schools to change the names of their ISUs and support them with a name that can promote positive connotations. **Long-term actions:** • There needs to be encouragement and awareness nationally of the benefits of solution-focused approaches.	
Suggestion:	Schools need support to teach young people about reflective skills.
Stakeholder:	LA behaviour specialists
Short-term actions:	

- LA behaviour specialists should continue to work with schools on a case-by-case basis encouraging approaches that support reflection.

Long-term actions:

- LA behaviour specialists should work with schools systemically to build policies/strategies on reflection so that approaches used are consistent within schools.

Suggestion:	ISUs in policy and practice need to be more transparent particularly for supporting professionals.
Stakeholder:	Schools

Short-term actions:

- Schools need to ensure there is detailed information about the use of ISUs in their behaviour policies.

Long-term actions:

- Schools need to share information about their policies for behaviour with professionals such as behaviour specialists/EPs to encourage conversations about review.

Suggestion:	Consideration needs to be given to the pressure placed on schools to achieve outcomes.
Stakeholder:	Policymakers

Short-term actions:

- Schools need reassurance and support from others (e.g., EPs) to ensure that progress of pupils is measured against their individualistic pupil data as opposed to where they should be nationally. This will help to demonstrate a graduated approach to measuring needs, supporting, and reviewing provision.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Long-term actions:
• Policymakers need to be aware of the focus on attainment and the pressure it puts on schools. There needs to be reassurances and focus on the process of learning as opposed to outcomes.</td></tr>
<tr><td><u>Suggestion</u>:</td><td>Schools need support to explore different solutions to managing and understanding behaviour.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Stakeholder:</td><td>LA behaviour specialists</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Short-term actions:
• LA behaviour specialists need to advocate their services in behaviour management and continue to encourage conversations with their key link professionals in schools about what approaches are working well/less well.
Long-term actions:
• Schools will have the funds or have prioritised spending to buy into more behaviour support services.</td></tr>
<tr><td><u>Suggestion</u>:</td><td>Rules of the ISU need to adapt to reflect some of the changes that young people would like e.g., having a larger space, being allowed to talk, being able to work with others, being supervised by staff, and being able to leave the room.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Stakeholder:</td><td>Schools
Policymakers
LA behaviour specialists
EPs</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Short-term actions:</td></tr>
</table>

- Schools need to have conversations about current practice and hear ideas about changes to ISUs from young people.

Long-term actions:

- Schools need to consider making the area a safe space, that is conducive to learning and can accommodate the strengths and needs of individuals.
- Schools need encouragement from policymakers to review practice so that they are held accountable for doing this regularly and with the appropriate group of people to support.

Suggestion:	Schools need stronger guidance and support for using ISUs.
Stakeholder:	Policymakers

Short-term actions:

- Schools can develop/strengthen their policies and guidance on the use of ISUs involving outside agencies, young people, parents etc.

Long-term actions:

- There needs to be further research into the use of ISUs to develop a more robust evidence base on what works in practice. Policymakers can then advocate key findings from evidence-based research.

There may be some barriers to overcome to action these suggestions. When a new government started in 2010, changes were made to the focus placed on schools to prioritise attainment and outcomes, diverting attention from identifying and supporting the needs of those at risk of exclusion (Cole et al., 2019). The ecosystems theory highlights how interconnecting systems can impact one another (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), in this case demonstrating how changes in national government can indirectly impact pupils at school based on the understanding and values promoted by others. Funding has also been

impacted which has limited the amount of spending LAs and educational settings have available to purchase additional resources such as EPs (Lee & Woods, 2017) and behaviour specialists. There needs to be continued demonstration through research to share understanding about the importance of identifying, understanding, and meeting young people's needs.

Research has highlighted that to ensure the use of ISUs is critically examined, it would be helpful if schools could take data on those pupils that access the ISU, what the time spent there involves, and the review processes in place (Faure Walker, 2021). It also suggests that this data should be collected locally and nationally to improve accountability for the use of ISUs (Faure Walker, 2021). It is acknowledged that the process of change takes time, however, the recent research on ISUs, including the present research, highlights that ISU interventions need to be meaningful, evaluated, and processes need to be made accountable (e.g., Reynolds, 2021; Faure Walker, 2021; Golding, 2021). This will ensure that ISUs have a robust evidence base that allows for positive change.

6.8 Future research

Future research could consider a wider sample of schools and LAs to understand how others are using and operating ISUs. It could also investigate more views of young people, as these are the individuals that are experiencing these areas. Timpson et al. (2019) highlighted that ISUs need to develop targeted support for pupils that are informed by evidence and that consider the impact on staff, pupils and the future education and behaviour of the pupil. There needs to be a better research base evidencing the impact and effectiveness of approaches used in ISUs. This research found that although

there is an underlying assumption that young people should reflect on their behaviour, the young people were not aware of how to do this effectively.

Future research could develop the interview schedules used in the present research to encompass questions about the understanding and practice of reflection. Explicit questions may ask what participants understanding of reflection is, and how they support young people to reflect. There may also be questions about how they evaluate progress and the impact of reflections. Other interview questions may seek to explore how spaces have come to be set up in the way that they have, which takes the psychology of place theory into consideration (Canter, 1977). There were some responses from participants about how different areas had been trialled, but questions may ask participants to reflect on what has informed their decisions to create the space in the way that they have. The young people's perceptions were that the ISU was a punishment and that you were not allowed to talk or leave the area. The general understanding was that you had to work, without support in some cases. Developments of questions with young people may also want to explore what they have learned from the ISU experience and how effective they feel the experience had been.

Future research could explore EP views of ISUs and what they perceive their role to be. There could be some exploration around teaching reflective skills perhaps in the form of action research or appreciative inquiry. It would also be helpful to find out about other services that LAs provide in relation to behaviour management. Further to this, the views of parents would also provide an understanding of the support they receive in relation to helping their children at school. In this research, schools said that parents were contacted for meetings about their child's behaviour and to inform them of the reasons for attending the

ISU. The LA said that they actively involved parents to encourage joint working and form a team around the young person. Future research may want to consider how schools and parents could work together to understand behaviour difficulties and problem solve for solutions.

6.9 Next steps

This thesis will be presented to Trainee EP colleagues to share the findings and implications for practice. It will also be shared with the LA that this research took place by inviting the behaviour team that was involved, and other interested professionals within the LA that this research has implications for, such as EPs.

The research findings will be disseminated to the schools and the young people that participated. Other schools that are interested can be invited to hear about the research. The information for young people will be presented in a leaflet form detailing the information in an accessible format. This is something that schools will be able to pass on to young people.

6.10 Conclusion

This research sought to understand how ISUs operate in secondary educational settings and considered the behaviour support available from the LA. This built a contextual understanding of what is offered within the LA and the relationship between the LA and schools.

ISUs appear to be operating on a behaviourist underpinning which reduces understanding to simple consequences such as the use of rewards and sanctions. The evidence suggests that at present, the impact of ISUs is minimal as often young people return to the area for the same reasons. Schools need support to broaden their understanding to an interactionist perspective, one which considers the behaviour in the context of their situation (e.g., Lewin,

1938; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). EPs are well placed to do this using their skills in consultation.

The LA showed their role in challenging schools' assumptions of ISUs and finding alternative ways to manage behaviour, however, not many secondary schools paid for these services. This shows a key role that the LA can have in supporting schools to reduce exclusions but will need a stronger emphasis on their service offer to ensure schools see the value of this and buy into it.

There was an assumption that young people should reflect on their behaviour and although some schools used activities such as scenario-based work and restorative conversations, this did not happen consistently. Young people did not appear to know how to reflect, as there was no structure, which suggests schools need support to implement this.

This research also sought the views of young people about their experiences of ISUs, which is something that is lacking in the existing literature. Young people have shared their experiences and highlighted valuable considerations about ISUs. Young people enjoyed the quiet nature and space to regulate their emotions, but they also had wishes to interact with others, engage in learning that relates to class, and have support from their teachers. All of these should be in place for young people to receive the education that they are entitled to and deserve. Additionally, some highlighted the importance of needing a break from the environment as the ISU may be overwhelming for those with SEND or mental health difficulties, which suggests that the current practice of ISUs does not meet the needs of young people.

Schools are in a good position to build positive relationships with young people. This is something that young people wanted, which further highlights their value

and desire to belong at school, which the current practice of ISUs will not achieve. If ISUs must continue to operate, given the recently proposed guidance (DfE, 2022b), then there are many implications for EP practice, LA behaviour teams, schools, and policymakers to ensure that ISUs are a positive, meaningful, and constructive experience. It is particularly important that as EPs, we support young people's views to be shared. In this research, a young person asked me about what I was going to do with the information they had shared during interviews, and whether I would be helping to make the ISUs better. This has further challenged me to think about how I can promote young people's participation, and how we as a profession should be accountable for our actions in doing this. Young people need to continually be given opportunities to share their views and experiences of ISUs and behaviour policies. This may take form in EPs facilitating systemic projects using appreciative inquiry approaches with schools and young people. This way we can continue to develop policy and guidance collaboratively including the input of those who experience these areas and can help us to evaluate policy, practice, and outcomes.

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Appendices

Appendix A Literature Search

A systematic search of the literature was conducted on the following databases: EBSCO/ ERIC, Ovid/ PsycINFO, and SCOPUS. To ensure that relevant government policy, data and legislation was included, a search of key internet websites was also conducted. As there is a large number of names that represent “ISUs” a range of terms were used in the hope that it would maximise the number of literatures returned. Key terms searches were as follows:

1. “Isolation room”
2. “Internal inclusion”
3. “Internal exclusion”
4. “Inclusion room”
5. “Internal inclusion unit”
6. “Internal exclusion unit”
7. “Internal inclusion room”
8. “Internal exclusion room”
9. “Seclusion”
10. “In-school Units”

The search returned 11 relevant findings but some of these were copies of each other. The total number of final papers was 6 and these are all discussed within the literature review. Inclusion criteria included those that were based in the United Kingdom and post 2010. The search term “seclusion” mostly returned papers of a psychiatric nursing nature which were excluded. Some databases returned copies of the final papers that were used.

Appendix B Interview Schedule for School Staff

Contextual semi-structured interview questions for school staff

Key

- Main question
- Follow up question/ prompts.

1) Tell me about your school.
    a. School ethos?
    b. Staff turnover?
    c. Curriculum/ extra activities offered?
    d. School interests?
    e. Main areas of strength and need amongst staff or pupils
2) Tell me about your role.
    a. How long have you worked here?
3) Tell me about your in-school behaviour area.
    a. How does it operate?
        i. How long is somebody in the room for?
        ii. How are break times spent?
    b. What interventions are on offer?
    c. What type of work happens in this area?
        i. What is the routine?
    d. What is the impact for pupils?
        i. Why might this be?
    e. What is this area called (verbatim/ in policy)?
    f. How has this area evolved? i.e. How long has this procedure been in place?
    g. How were the rules established?
4) What impact does attending here have on behaviour/ what do they notice about YP behaviour as result of attending?
5) Is there any parental involvement in this process?
6) Which staff members participate in operating/ overseeing the in-school behaviour area?
    a. How do staff come to be involved?
    b. What experiences do they have in working with the in-school behaviour area?
7) What is the process for returning back to mainstream class?
8) Tell me about the layout of the room
    a. Where is the room situated within the school?
    b. Windows/ table plan/ where teacher is sat/ which staff etc
9) How many people could be in the in-school area at one time?
10) If attending the in-school behaviour area works well for YP, what happens next?
11) If attending the in-school behaviour area works less well, what happens next?
12) How has the area/ rules been affected by Covid-19?
13) Which agencies are you in consultation/ involved with for the YP?
14) What support is on offer for staff who work with the in-school behaviour areas?
15) Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Appendix C Interview Schedule for LA Behaviour Staff

Key

- Main question
- Follow up question/ prompts.

Contextual semi-structured interview questions

1. Tell me about your team.
   a) ethos?
   b) Staff turnover?
   c) Curriculum/ activities offered to schools?
   d) Interests amongst the team?
   e) Main areas of strength and need amongst staff
2. Tell me about your role.
   a. How long have you worked here?
3. What are the primary needs for children and young people in the LA?
4. Are there any particular challenges/issues among schools?
   a. Strengths among schools?
5. What are the LA perspectives on the use of ISUs?
   a. Can you tell me about any guidance or policies the LA has on ISUs?
6. How effectively do you think these operate in the LA?
   a. Are there any similarities across school?
   b. Are there any differences across schools?
   c. Verbatim/ in policy names for these areas?
7. What type of data is collected by the LA in regards to behaviour incidents/management?
   a. What data is there for internal exclusions?
   b. How does the LA use the data?
8. What support does the LA give to schools in relation to behaviour/ ISUs?
9. How does behaviour management/ incidences of recorded behaviour compare with other LAs?
10. In your experience, what impact does attending ISUs have on behaviour/ what do they notice about YP behaviour as result of attending?
11. Is there any parental involvement with your team/ in the process?
    a. What about when LA are involved with YP/ room?
12. What is the process for supporting schools/ young people to return to mainstream class?
13. In your experience, which staff members usually participate in operating/ overseeing the in-school behaviour area?
    a. In your experience, how do staff come to be involved in those areas?
    b. What experiences do they have in working with the in-school behaviour area?
14. Have you noticed anything different about behaviour/ management of behaviour since the Covid-19 pandemic?
15. Which agencies are you in consultation/ involved with for supporting schools and the YP?
16. What support is on offer for staff in LA?
17. who work with the in-school behaviour areas?

Other potential questions

18. How have these area/ rules been affected by Covid-19?
19. Is there anything else that you would like to share?
20. Tell me about your knowledge and experience of in-school behaviour areas.

Appendix D Interview Schedule for Young People

Key

- Main question
- Follow up question/ prompts.

Rapport building questions may include:

1. How is school going?
2. Which subjects do you like?
3. What hobbies do you enjoy?
4. How long have you been at the school?
5. What did you like/ dislike about primary school?
6. What do you like/ dislike about secondary school?

Questions specifically about the ISU

I understand that sometimes you go to the ISU [name room]. Would you be able to tell me about your experiences of the room?

I am here to learn more about the "ISU" (named room).

1. Can you tell me about the room? What sort of things to you do in there? What activities? Can you describe some of the activities that you do? Do the teachers help you with these activities? Do you work on your own in the room or do you do some work in groups?
    a. What is it called?
    b. Does it have any other names?
    c. What are the rules in this room?
    d. What are the adults doing in the room?
2. What are the students doing in the room?
3. Have you been there many times?
4. What reasons would you go there for?
5. Would you like to draw a picture of how you feel when you're in the room?
    a. Follow up discussion about details on drawing
    b. How does it feel when you get there?
6. How long would you spend there?
7. What happens after you have been in the room?
8. What would you do to make this room better?

Appendix E Tables showing development of interview schedules

Schools Interview Schedule

Questions (clustered into categories)	What informed the questions?
1) Tell me about your school. 2) Tell me about your role. 12) How has the area/ rules been affected by Covid-19?	These were questions to understand the context of the school and the participant's role and to learn about how the pandemic had impacted the school.
3) Tell me about your in-school behaviour area. 6) Which staff members participate in operating/ overseeing the in-school behaviour area? 7) What is the process for returning back to mainstream class? 8) Tell me about the layout of the room 9) How many people could be in the in-school area at one time?	These questions were informed by the literature. Barker's (2019) research highlighted that the adult in the ISU was someone of a caring nature. Other research noted that a qualified teacher staffed the ISU (Gilmore, 2013), and senior leadership team members (Barker et al., 2013). Gilmore (2013) noted that pastoral care and support was available for students after attending the ISU. There was not much information about what it entailed so it was important to seek young people's views on this. Some literature highlighted the physical location of the ISU (e.g., Barker et al., 2010) that often separated young people from the rest of the school and appeared to discourage conversations with those in the area. This made it important to hear about how schools had set up the area. It was identified in some research that staff to student ratios were 1:1 to support learning (Barker et al., 2010), and in other settings that there could be 7 young people (Power & Taylor, 2020). There was a lack of clarity about how many people may access the ISU at one time so it was important to find this out from schools.
4) What impact does attending here have on behaviour/ what do they notice about YP behaviour as result of attending? 10) If attending the in-school behaviour area works well for YP, what happens next? 11) If attending the in-school behaviour area works less well, what happens next?	Given that there is no model or guidelines about ISUs, they appear to be context specific. It was therefore important to ask schools about their observations/data of young people accessing ISUs to learn about perceived effectiveness, and protocols that followed in different scenarios (e.g., if the ISU supported young people, or if it did not).

5) Is there any parental involvement in this process?	The literature made references to parental involvement so I wanted to ask schools about their contact with parents. Gilmore (2012) found that parental involvement was important in development of the inclusive policy. Barker (2019) interviewed parents as part of their research and one parent comment said that the ISU member of staff was encouraging of their child. Barker et al.'s (2010) research also included interviews with parents Gilmore (2013) found that there were parent meetings before and after attending the ISU.
13) Which agencies are you in consultation/ involved with for the YP? 14) What support is on offer for staff who work with the in-school behaviour areas?	My practice and understanding of the role of an EP informed these questions as I thought about the role of an EP in offering support, containment, and supervision. It made me curious about who is available to support staff in relation to their experiences of behaviour management. I also know from my work and experiences that there is often a team around the child/young person approach and that schools have a duty as stated by the SEND Code of Practice to ensure that appropriate referrals are made to support young people. E.g. 6.21 says "Persistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviours do not necessarily mean that a child or young person has SEN. Where there are concerns, there should be an assessment to determine whether there are any causal factors such as undiagnosed learning difficulties, difficulties with communication or mental health issues. If it is thought housing, family or other domestic circumstances may be contributing to the presenting behaviour a multi-agency approach, supported by the use of approaches such as the Early Help Assessment, may be appropriate. In all cases, early identification and intervention can significantly reduce the use of more costly intervention at a later stage."
15) Is there anything else that you would like to share?	To ensure that participation was maximised and offering opportunities to share further information I may not have asked about

LA Interview Schedule

Questions (clustered into categories)	What informed the questions?
1. Tell me about your team. 2. Tell me about your role. 3. What are the primary needs for children and young people in the LA? 4. Are there any particular challenges/issues among schools? 7. What type of data is collected by the LA in regards to behaviour incidents/management? 8. What support does the LA give to schools in relation to behaviour/ ISUs? 9. How does behaviour management/ incidences of recorded behaviour compare with other LAs? 11. Is there any parental involvement with your team/ in the process? 12. What is the process for supporting schools/ young people to return to mainstream class? 14. Have you noticed anything different about behaviour/ management of behaviour since the Covid-19 pandemic? 17. who work with the in-school behaviour areas? 18. How have these area/ rules been affected by Covid-19? 20. Tell me about your knowledge and experience of in-school behaviour areas.	These were questions to understand the context of the LA team, the participant's role, support offered to educational settings/families, and whether they had involvement in ISUs. They also gave some background information on the needs they usually support in relation to behaviour that challenges, which was helpful to build context of needs within the area. It was also helpful to ask about any changes experienced in relation to needs or management of behaviour following the Covid-19 pandemic.
5. What are the LA perspectives on the use of ISUs? 6. How effectively do you think these operate in the LA?	This was unanswered by the literature and so it was helpful to learn whether there was a team consensus of ISUs or whether the members of LA had personal/professional views about them.
13. In your experience, which staff members usually participate in operating/ overseeing the in-school behaviour area?	These were informed by experiences in practice. As there is not much research on ISUs and there are varied findings about their use (e.g. nurturing vs exclusionary), it was helpful to hear from outside perspectives what they had seen in practice.
15. Which agencies are you in consultation/ involved with for supporting schools and the YP?	SENCOs have a role to liaise with other professionals regarding young people's needs as stated in the SEND Code of Practice. I also knew from my work experiences that the team had engaged in

	multidisciplinary and multiagency team working.
16. What support is on offer for staff in LA?	This was informed by my experiences of practice and joint team working/supervision opportunities. I wanted to learn about how this team were supported.
19. Is there anything else that you would like to share?	To ensure that participation was maximised and offering opportunities to share further information I may not have asked about

Young people Interview Schedule

Questions (clustered into categories)	What informed the questions?
1. How is school going? 2. Which subjects do you like? 3. What hobbies do you enjoy? 4. How long have you been at the school? 5. What did you like/ dislike about primary school? 6. What do you like/ dislike about secondary school?	Literature says that it is important to build rapport with young people and ask them questions that slowly build to understanding more about experiences (O'Reilly & Dogra, 2017). It was also helpful to build a profile of these young people, which informed the pen portraits in the present research.
1. Can you tell me about the room? What sort of things to you do in there? What activities? Can you describe some of the activities that you do? Do the teachers help you with these activities? Do you work on your own in the room or do you do some work in groups? 2. What are the students doing in the room? 4. What reasons would you go there for? 6. How long would you spend there? 7. What happens after you have been in the room?	These questions were informed by the literature. The papers identified that young people often engaged in school work (Barker et al., 2010), sometimes pre-prepared packs, or sporting and vocational activities (Power & Taylor, 2020). It was helpful to learn about the activities provided while in the ISU. Literature had differing findings about the help or type of support young people received from adults in the area (e.g. Gilmore 2013 vs Barker 2019). Therefore it was helpful to ask the young people about their experiences of what the adults were doing in the room. Some literature highlighted the physical location of the ISU (e.g., Barker et al., 2010) that separated young people from the rest of the school and appeared to discourage conversations with those in the area. This made it important to hear about how schools had set up the area. Literature cited reasons for attendance to ISUs which included verbal abuse, persistent disruptive behaviour, and failure to follow instructions from staff (Barker et al., 2010). In the present research, reasons cited by staff were of similar reasons and so it was

	important to ask about the young people's understanding of reasons that you may be asked to attend the ISU. Gilmore (2013) noted that pastoral care and support was available for students after attending the ISU. There was not much information about what it entailed so it was important to seek young people's views on this.
3. Have you been there many times? 5. Would you like to draw a picture of how you feel when you're in the room?	Asking about the frequency of attending the area came from adult interviews with school staff as they had mentioned that often it was the same young people returning to the area. This was to find out about young people's personal experiences and perceptions of attending the ISU. These had not been addressed in existing literature. There was limited research into the views of young people regarding the ISU although some research briefly raised that the area made young people feel negatively about themselves (Gilmore, 2013). Therefore, it was important to learn about young people's experiences particularly relating to the thoughts and feelings they have when in the ISU.
8. What would you do to make this room/experience better?	This was something that had not been asked previously and was helpful to ask in thinking about the continued argument for their use and development of practice that listens to young people's views.
Is there anything else that you would like to share?	To ensure that participation was maximised and offering opportunities to share further information I may not have asked about

Appendix F Information sheet and consent form for school staff

Participant Information Letter

Dear _____

My name is Lianne Lusted, and I am a 2nd year trainee at the Institute of Education, University College London. As part of my Doctoral training, I am carrying out a research project to explore school staff and young people's perceptions/ experiences of ISUs.

Phase 1 – Contextual Interviews with Secondary School Staff to learn about the in-school areas that are operated in their educational setting

I would like to invite you to take part in this research, where you will be interviewed to explore **your experiences and knowledge of the ISU at your educational setting.** Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being carried out and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to discuss it with others, if you wish. Please contact me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like any further information. Thank you in advance for taking the time to read this.

Purpose of the research

The purpose of this research is to explore your experiences and knowledge of the way that the ISU operates at your school. ISUs are the areas used by secondary schools that are accessed by students with behaviour that challenges or are at risk of exclusion. This research will explore how different schools use them.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to take part because you have some knowledge and experience of ISUs within your educational setting and the way in which they operate in your school. Your views will help to develop an insight into how these areas are operating in practice.

Do I have to take part?

The answer is no, participation is voluntary. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can withdraw at any time without needing to explain your decision. Any data collected before your withdrawal will not be included in the study.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to be part of this research, we will agree a time, date and appropriate place for you to be interviewed. Interviews may take place via an

online platform or via telephone. Interviews are not expected to last longer than **40** minutes, however, the time is dependent on how much information is shared.

With your permission, all interviews will be recorded and transcribed. All transcripts will be anonymised and stored on a password protected electronic device. Copies of transcripts will be provided so that participants can check for accuracy and agree with information shared.

The findings will be discussed with my research supervisors. You will have the opportunity to receive feedback about the key findings from this research when it has been conducted.

What do I have to do?

Please contact me (contact details are provided below) to indicate your intent to participate, then interviews will be arranged, and you will sign a consent form prior to the interview.

What are the possible disadvantage and risks of taking part?

My hope is that you will be comfortable talking about your experiences and knowledge of the ISUs in your setting. However, you will only be expected to discuss information you feel comfortable about. If at any stage you do not feel comfortable with the questions or feel uncomfortable with the setting and wish to stop, you will be able to do so.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The research findings will contribute to the professional knowledge base about ISUs to support developing practice.

What if something goes wrong?

If you wish to raise a complaint at any point during or after the research, please visit the following web page for further information:

- https://www.ucl.ac.uk/joint-research-office/studies-progress/research-complaints-and-incidents

Alternatively, complaints can be emailed to (removed for purpose of dissemination)

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information I collect from you during this research project will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications. The recorded interviews will not be shared with the other participants. Transcripts will be anonymised.

The audio recordings of the interview will be used only for analysis. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

Recorded records will be held and analysed by myself and will be appropriately destroyed when they have been transcribed. Anonymous transcripts will be kept

until the end of my course of study and then destroyed. Only anonymised information will be shared with research supervisors.

What will happen to the results of the research?

I will be writing a thesis with my research findings and this will be submitted as part of the course requirements for my doctoral studies. You will be given a summary report of the findings of this research. Results could also be presented at conferences.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research forms part of the Doctorate in Professional Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology course at the Institute of Education, University College London. This research is not funded.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

The research has been ethically approved by the University College London Research Ethics Committee, which also fulfils the BPS criteria for ethical research.

Data Protection Privacy Notice

The controller for this project will be University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Officer provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at (removed for purpose of dissemination)

This 'local' privacy notice sets out the information that applies to this particular study. Further information on how UCL uses participant information can be found in our 'general' privacy notice:

For participants in research studies, click here

The information that is required to be provided to participants under data protection legislation (GDPR and DPA 2018) is provided across both the 'local' and 'general' privacy notices.

The lawful basis that will be used to process your personal data is: 'Public task' for personal data.

Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project. If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide we will undertake this, and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact UCL in the first instance at (removed for purpose of dissemination)

Further information: Contact Details

Researcher: Lianne Lusted (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

Contact details: (removed for purpose of dissemination)

Appendix G Information and Consent form for LA staff

Participant Information Letter

Dear _____

My name is Lianne Lusted, and I am a 2nd year trainee at the Institute of Education, University College London. As part of my Doctoral training, I am carrying out a research project to explore school staff and young people's perceptions/ experiences of ISUs.

Phase 1 – Contextual Interviews with Local Authority Staff to learn about behaviour support and knowledge/ experience of in-school areas that operate in educational settings

I would like to invite you to take part in this research, where you will be interviewed to explore **your experiences and knowledge of ISUs in educational settings across the borough.** Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being carried out and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to discuss it with others, if you wish. Please contact me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like any further information. Thank you in advance for taking the time to read this.

Purpose of the research

The purpose of this research is to explore your experiences and knowledge of the way that ISUs operate in schools. ISUs are the areas used by secondary schools that are accessed by students with behaviour that challenges or are at risk of exclusion. This research will explore how different schools use them.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to take part because you have some knowledge and experience of ISUs within educational settings and the way in which they operate in schools. Your views will help to develop an insight into how these areas are operating in practice.

Do I have to take part?

The answer is no, participation is voluntary. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can withdraw at any time without needing to explain your decision. Any data collected before your withdrawal will not be included in the study.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to be part of this research, we will agree a time, date and appropriate place for you to be interviewed. Interviews may take place via an

online platform or via telephone. Interviews are not expected to last longer than **40** minutes, however, the time is dependent on how much information is shared.

With your permission, all interviews will be recorded and transcribed. All transcripts will be anonymised and stored on a password protected electronic device. Copies of transcripts will be provided so that participants can check for accuracy and agree with information shared.

The findings will be discussed with my research supervisors. You will have the opportunity to receive feedback about the key findings from this research when it has been conducted.

What do I have to do?

Please contact me (contact details are provided below) to indicate your intent to participate, then interviews will be arranged, and you will sign a consent form prior to the interview.

What are the possible disadvantage and risks of taking part?

My hope is that you will be comfortable talking about your experiences and knowledge of the ISUs in your setting. However, you will only be expected to discuss information you feel comfortable about. If at any stage you do not feel comfortable with the questions or feel uncomfortable with the setting and wish to stop, you will be able to do so.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The research findings will contribute to the professional knowledge base about ISUs to support developing practice.

What if something goes wrong?

If you wish to raise a complaint at any point during or after the research, please visit the following web page for further information:

- https://www.ucl.ac.uk/joint-research-office/studies-progress/research-complaints-and-incidents

Alternatively, complaints can be emailed to (removed for purpose of dissemination)

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information I collect from you during this research project will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications. The recorded interviews will not be shared with the other participants. Transcripts will be anonymised.

The audio recordings of the interview will be used only for analysis. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

Recorded records will be held and analysed by myself and will be appropriately destroyed when they have been transcribed. Anonymous transcripts will be kept until the end of my course of study and then destroyed. Only anonymised information will be shared with research supervisors.

What will happen to the results of the research?

I will be writing a thesis with my research findings and this will be submitted as part of the course requirements for my doctoral studies. You will be given a summary report of the findings of this research. Results could also be presented at conferences.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research forms part of the Doctorate in Professional Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology course at the Institute of Education, University College London. This research is not funded.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

The research has been ethically approved by the University College London Research Ethics Committee, which also fulfils the BPS criteria for ethical research.

Data Protection Privacy Notice

The controller for this project will be University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Officer provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at (removed for purpose of dissemination)

This 'local' privacy notice sets out the information that applies to this particular study. Further information on how UCL uses participant information can be found in our 'general' privacy notice:

For participants in research studies, click here

The information that is required to be provided to participants under data protection legislation (GDPR and DPA 2018) is provided across both the 'local' and 'general' privacy notices.

The lawful basis that will be used to process your personal data is: 'Public task' for personal data.

Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project. If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide we will undertake this, and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact UCL in the first instance at (removed for purpose of dissemination)

Further information: Contact Details

Researcher: Lianne Lusted (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

Contact details: (removed for purpose of dissemination)

Appendix H Consent Form for School staff and LA staff

Institute of Education

UCL

Phase 1: Contextual Interviews to explore in-school units
Participant Consent Form

If you are happy to participate in this study please complete this consent form by ticking each item, as appropriate, and return to the researcher:

1) I confirm that I have read and understood this information sheet. ☐

2) I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions, and have had these questions adequately answered. ☐

3) I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. ☐

4) I know that I can refuse to answer any or all of the questions and that I can withdraw from the interview at any point. ☐

5) I agree to being interviewed. ☐

6) I agree for the interview to be recorded, and that recordings will be kept secure and destroyed at the end of the project. I know that all data will be kept under the terms of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). ☐

7) I agree that small direct quotes may be used in reports (these will be anonymised). ☐

Name:.....

Signature: ..... Date: .....

Name of researcher: Lianne Lusted (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

Signature: Date: 26/02/2021

Appendix I Information sheet for parents/ carers of young people

Participant Information Letter

Dear _____

My name is Lianne Lusted, and I am a 3rd year trainee educational psychologist at the Institute of Education, University College London. As part of my Doctoral training, I am carrying out a research project to explore school staff and young people's perceptions/ experiences of ISUs.

Interviews with young people about ISUs

I would like to invite your child to take part in this research, where they will be interviewed on two occasions in a 1:1 session about **their experiences of the ISU at their educational setting.** Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being carried out and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to discuss it with others, if you wish. Please contact me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like any further information. Thank you in advance for taking the time to read this.

Purpose of the research

The purpose of this research is to explore young people's experiences of the ISU that operates at their school. The experiences they share will help to build an understanding of young people's views about these areas and the type of support that they would like.

Why has my child been chosen?

Your child has been chosen to take part because they have some knowledge and experience of accessing these ISUs within their educational setting. The young people's views will help to develop an insight into their experiences of ISUs.

Does my child have to take part?

The answer is no, participation is voluntary. If your child does decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can withdraw at any time without needing to explain your decision. Any data collected before your withdrawal will not be included in the study.

What will happen if my child takes part?

If you agree for your child to be part of this research, a time, date, and appropriate place for meeting with the young people will be agreed with the school. The 1:1 sessions with the young people will not be expected to last longer than **20-30** minutes each.

The findings will be discussed with my research supervisors. The full report will be written into a thesis and there may be opportunities to further share this in presentations and conferences. You will have the opportunity to receive feedback about the key findings from this research when it has been conducted. All data will be confidential so that nobody is identifiable from the write up/ sharing of findings.

What do I have to do?

If you are happy for your child to participate, please sign the consent form. Your child son/ daughter will also be asked to sign a consent form when they meet with me for the first time too. If you have any questions, please contact me on the details provided below.

What are the possible disadvantage and risks of taking part?

My hope is that your child will be comfortable talking about their experiences of the ISUs in their setting. However, they will only be expected to share information they feel comfortable about. If at any stage they do not feel comfortable with the questions or wish to stop, they will be able to do so.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The research findings will contribute to the professional knowledge base about ISUs to support future practice.

What if something goes wrong?

If you wish to raise a complaint at any point during or after the research, please visit the following web page for further information:

- https://www.ucl.ac.uk/joint-research-office/studies-progress/research-complaints-and-incidents

Alternatively, complaints can be emailed to (removed for purpose of dissemination)

Will my child's taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information I collect from your child during this research project will be kept strictly confidential. They will not be identifiable in any reports or publications. The recorded interviews with your child will not be shared with the other participants. Transcripts will be anonymised. Recordings will be destroyed after they are transcribed, and anonymised transcripts will be kept for 10 years in line with UCL policy. All data will be kept under the terms of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Only anonymised information will be shared with research supervisors and other audiences.

What will happen to the results of the research?

I will be writing a thesis with my research findings, and this will be submitted as part of the course requirements for my doctoral studies. You will be given a summary report of the findings of this research. Results could also be presented at conferences.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research forms part of the Doctorate in Professional Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology course at the Institute of Education, University College London. This research is not funded.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

The research has been ethically approved by the University College London Research Ethics Committee, which also fulfils the BPS criteria for ethical research.

Data Protection Privacy Notice

The controller for this project will be University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Officer provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at (removed for purpose of dissemination)

This 'local' privacy notice sets out the information that applies to this particular study. Further information on how UCL uses participant information can be found in our 'general' privacy notice:

For participants in research studies, click here

The information that is required to be provided to participants under data protection legislation (GDPR and DPA 2018) is provided across both the 'local' and 'general' privacy notices.

The lawful basis that will be used to process your personal data is: 'Public task' for personal data.

Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project. If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide we will undertake this, and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact UCL in the first instance at (removed for purpose of dissemination)

Further information: Contact Details

Researcher: Lianne Lusted (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

Contact details: (removed for purpose of dissemination)

Appendix J Consent Form for parents/ carers

Institute of Education

UCL

Interviews with young people about in-school units

If you are happy for your child to participate in this study, please complete this consent form by ticking each item, as appropriate, and return to the researcher:

1) I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet. ☐

2) I confirm that I have discussed this with my child. ☐

3) I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions, and have had these questions adequately answered. ☐

4) I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. ☐

5) I know that my child can refuse to answer any or all of the questions and that they can withdraw from the interview at any point. ☐

6) I agree to my child being interviewed. ☐

7) I agree for the interview with my child to be recorded, and that once recordings are transcribed into text they will be destroyed. Transcripts will be kept for 10 years in line with UCL policy. I know that all data will be kept under the terms of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). ☐

8) I agree that small direct quotes may be used in reports (these will be anonymised). ☐

Name of Young Person:.....

Name:.....

Signature: ..... Date: .....

Name of researcher: Lianne Lusted (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

Signature: Date: 05/12/2021

Appendix K Information sheet and consent form for young people

Interviews about in-school units

About me

Hello! My name is Lianne, and I am training to be an educational psychologist. An educational psychologist is somebody that works with schools, families, and young people. I am carrying out some research into in-school units and would like your help.

What are in-school units?

In-school units are those areas that schools temporarily place students when there has been a difficulty.

Why have I been asked to participate?

- I would like to learn about your experiences of accessing these rooms.

What do I need to do?

I will visit you once and we can have a conversation around your experiences at school such as what you like/ dislike.

What are the benefits of taking part?

- You will have the opportunity to share your views and be heard.

Your Rights

- You do not have to take part if you would not like to.
- You can withdraw your participation at any time without reason.
- Should you wish to withdraw after the interview, you can let your parent/carer know and they have the contact details to let me know.
- Anything that you share will be kept confidential which means nobody will know that it was you who has taken part.

I have read and understood the information on this sheet ☐

I give my consent to take part ☐

Name _____

Date _____

Appendix L Ethics consent form for Phase 1 Data Collection

Institute of Education

UCL

Doctoral Student Ethics Application Form

Anyone conducting research under the auspices of the Institute of Education (staff, students or visitors) where the research involves human participants or the use of data collected from human participants, is required to gain ethical approval before starting. This includes preliminary and pilot studies. Please answer all relevant questions in simple terms that can be understood by a lay person and note that your form may be returned if incomplete.

Registering your study with the UCL Data Protection Officer as part of the UCL Research Ethics Review Process

If you are proposing to collect personal data i.e. data from which a living individual can be identified **you must be registered with the UCL Data Protection Office before you submit your ethics application for review**. To do this, email the complete ethics form to the UCL Data Protection Office. Once your registration number is received, add it to the form* and submit it to your supervisor for approval. If the Data Protection Office advises you to make changes to the way in which you propose to collect and store the data this should be reflected in your ethics application form.

Please note that the completion of the UCL GDPR online training is mandatory for all PhD students.

Data Protection Office. Once your registration number is received, add it to the form* and submit it to your supervisor for approval. If the Data Protection Office advises you to make changes to the way in which you propose to collect and store the data this should be reflected in your ethics application form.

Please note that the completion of the UCL GDPR online training is mandatory for all PhD students.

Section 1 – Project details

a. Project title: Phase 1 Contextual Interviews to explore in-school units
b. Student name and ID number (e.g. ABC12345678): Lianne Lusted [redacted]
c. ***UCL Data Protection Registration Number:** [redacted]
    a. Date Issued: 12/03/21
d. Supervisor/Personal Tutor: Lynne Rogers & Melernie Meheux
e. Department: Psychology and Human Development
f. Course category (Tick one):

PhD	☐
EdD	☐
DEdPsy	☒

g. **If applicable**, state who the funder is and if funding has been confirmed. N/A
h. Intended research start date: January 2020
i. Intended research end date: July 2021
j. Country fieldwork will be conducted in: United Kingdom
k. If research to be conducted abroad please check the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and submit a completed travel risk assessment form (see guidelines). If the FCO advice is against travel this will be required before ethical approval can be

granted: *UCL travel advice webpage*

l. Has this project been considered by another (external) Research Ethics Committee?

Yes ☐
External Committee Name: Enter text
Date of Approval: Enter text

No ☒ ***go to Section 2***

If yes:

- Submit a copy of the approval letter with this application.
- Proceed to Section 10 Attachments.

Note: Ensure that you check the guidelines carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the National Research Ethics Service (NRES) or Social Care Research Ethics Committee (SCREC). In addition, if your research is based in another institution then you may be required to apply to their research ethics committee.

Section 2 - Research methods summary (tick all that apply)

☒ Interviews
☐ Focus Groups
☐ Questionnaires
☐ Action Research
☐ Observation
☒ Literature Review
☐ Controlled trial/other intervention study
☐ Use of personal records
☐ Systematic review **– if only method used go to Section 5**
☐ Secondary data analysis ***– if secondary analysis used go to Section 6***
☐ Advisory/consultation/collaborative groups

Please provide an overview of the project, focusing on your methodology. This should include some or all of the following: purpose of the research, aims, main research questions, research design, participants, sampling, data collection (including justifications for methods chosen and description of topics/questions to be asked), reporting and dissemination. Please focus on your methodology; the theory, policy, or literary background of your work can be provided in an attached document (i.e. a full research proposal or case for support document). *Minimum 150 words required.*

There has been a rise in fixed period exclusions and permanent exclusions since the academic year 2010/2011 (Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England, 2020). Secondary school permanent exclusion figures appear to have risen since 2012/2013 and secondary school fixed period exclusions have been rising since 2013/2014 (Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England, 2020).

One initiative that schools have taken to support pupils at risk of exclusions is to temporarily withdraw them from the usual school routine and operate an internal inclusion unit (IFF Research et al, 2018). Schools are permitted to have policies that allow them to place 'disruptive' students in an area separate to other students for a period of time (Department for Education, 2016).

Timpson (2019) claims that stronger guidance is needed such as an appropriate named body or person overseeing the units; clarification of the role of governors; the way that the school monitors the unit including the children accessing it with protected characteristics; procedures for review; and communication with parents/ carers. Therefore, the rationale for this research is to explore the differences in how in-school units are operated.

Phase 1: Contextual Interviews with SENCOs/ Pastoral Staff

I am currently working in a local authority as a trainee educational psychologist. Participants will be SENCOs/ pastoral staff from a range of schools in this local authority. I will conduct semi-structured interviews to find out more about how in-school units operate in various settings. These interviews will be vital in providing an understanding about current practice in schools so that there is some context to explore prior to seeking the views of others i.e., children and young people.

It is important to find out more about these rooms as there is limited research into this area and limited guidance as to how they should operate. Therefore, this will build some understanding of how schools in one local authority use these areas. It will also provide some context for me to consider how to pursue exploring the views of others.

Contextual interviews will happen on one occasion only. It will build an understanding of how different schools operate these rooms and whether they choose to operate them at all.

The second phase of this research will take place later, for which a second ethics application will be made.

Section 3 – research Participants (tick all that apply)

☐ Early years/pre-school
☐ Ages 5-11
☐ Ages 12-16
☐ Young people aged 17-18
☒ Adults please specify below
☐ Unknown – specify below
☐ No participants

Adults working in secondary schools such as pastoral staff or SENCOs that operate in-school units to support young people with behaviour that challenges and/ or are at risk of exclusion.

Note: Ensure that you check the guidelines carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the National Research Ethics Service (NRES) or Social Care Research Ethics Committee (SCREC).

Section 4 - Security-sensitive material (only complete if applicable)

Security sensitive research includes: commissioned by the military; commissioned under an EU security call; involves the acquisition of security clearances; concerns terrorist or extreme groups.

a. Will your project consider or encounter security-sensitive material?
   Yes* ☐ No ☐
b. Will you be visiting websites associated with extreme or terrorist organisations?
   Yes* ☐ No ☐
c. Will you be storing or transmitting any materials that could be interpreted as promoting or endorsing terrorist acts?
   Yes* ☐ No ☐

* *Give further details in* ***Section 8 Ethical Issues***

Section 5 – Systematic reviews of research (only complete if applicable)

a. Will you be collecting any new data from participants?
   Yes* ☐ No ☐
b. Will you be analysing any secondary data?
   Yes* ☐ No ☐

* *Give further details in* ***Section 8 Ethical Issues***

If your methods do not involve engagement with participants (e.g. systematic review, literature review) ***and*** *if you have answered* ***No*** *to both questions, please go to* ***Section 8 Attachments.***

Section 6 - Secondary data analysis (only complete if applicable)

a. Name of dataset/s: Enter text
b. Owner of dataset/s: Enter text
c. Are the data in the public domain?
   Yes ☐ No ☐
   If no, *do you have the owner's permission/license?*
   Yes ☐ No* ☐

d. Are the data special category personal data (i.e. personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation)?
   Yes* ☐ No ☐

e. Will you be conducting analysis within the remit it was originally collected for?
   Yes ☐ No* ☐
f. **If no**, was consent gained from participants for subsequent/future analysis?
   Yes ☐ No* ☐
g. **If no,** was data collected prior to ethics approval process?
   Yes ☐ No* ☐

* *Give further details in* ***Section 8 Ethical Issues***

If secondary analysis is only method used ***and*** *no answers with asterisks are ticked, go to* ***Section 9 Attachments.***

Section 7 – Data Storage and Security

Please ensure that you include all hard and electronic data when completing this section.

a. Data subjects - Who will the data be collected from?
   Data will be collected via semi-structured interviews from school staff such as pastoral members/ SENCOs
b. What data will be collected? Please provide details of the type of personal data to be collected
   The participants will be asked for their role title i.e. SENCO/ Pastoral member of staff. The interviews will gather detail about how the school use an ISU and this will be within the main report findings. Information about how the school operates an ISU will not contain any details that make them identifiable within

the research report and dissemination. The names of these rooms will be collected, as part of my research is to see how they are named due the variability of these. Data will be pseudonymised in line with GDPR regulations so that the processing of personal data can no longer be attributed to a specific data subject without the use of additional information. E.g. names of schools will be replaced with codes.

Is the data anonymised? Yes ☐ No* ☒

Do you plan to anonymise the data? Yes* ☒ No ☐

Do you plan to use individual level data? Yes* ☐ No ☒

Do you plan to pseudonymise the data? Yes* ☒ No ☐

** Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues***

c. **Disclosure –** Who will the results of your project be disclosed to?

Reporting and dissemination: Reporting and dissemination will be anonymous and ensure confidentiality so that the schools, local authority and individuals cannot be identified from the report.

Disclosure – Will personal data be disclosed as part of your project?

No

d. Data storage – Please provide details on how and where the data will be stored i.e. UCL network, encrypted USB stick**, encrypted laptop** etc. The data will be stored on the UCL research network. Access is given by a password and email account login so data is secure.

*** Advanced Encryption Standard 256 bit encryption which has been made a security standard within the NHS*

e. **Data Safe Haven (Identifiable Data Handling Solution)** – Will the personal identifiable data collected and processed as part of this research be stored in the UCL Data Safe Haven (mainly used by SLMS divisions, institutes and departments)?
Yes ☐ No ☒

f. How long will the data and records be kept for and in what format?
Voice recordings can be deleted after they have been transcribed to a satisfactory standard. Anonymous transcriptions will be kept for 10 years in line with the UCL policy and will be stored on a password protected UCL research portal.

Will personal data be processed or be sent outside the European Economic Area? (If yes, please confirm that there are adequate levels of protections in compliance with GDPR and state what these arrangements are)
N/a

Will data be archived for use by other researchers? (If yes, please provide details.)
N/a

g. If personal data is used as part of your project, describe what measures you have in place to ensure that the data is only used for the research purpose e.g. pseudonymisation and short retention period of data'.
Data will be pseudonymised in line with GDPR regulations to ensure that the processing on personal data can no longer be attributed to a specific data subject without use of additional information. Participants from different schools will be given a code so that no names are taken of the individual or of the educational setting. The local authority in which the educational settings operate will not be named.

* *Give further details in* ***Section 8 Ethical Issues***

Section 8 – Ethical Issues

Please state clearly the ethical issues which may arise in the course of this research and how will they be addressed.

All issues that may apply should be addressed. Some examples are given below, further information can be found in the guidelines. *Minimum 150 words required.*

- Methods
- Sampling
- Recruitment
- Gatekeepers
- Informed consent
- Potentially vulnerable participants
- Safeguarding/child protection
- Sensitive topics
- International research
- Risks to participants and/or researchers
- Confidentiality/Anonymity
- Disclosures/limits to confidentiality
- Data storage and security both during and after the research (including transfer, sharing, encryption, protection)
- Reporting

- Dissemination and use of findings

Methods & Sampling

This will be a qualitative piece of research.

Participants: Participants will be school staff (e.g. SENCOs and pastoral members) who have knowledge of the ISUs and the way in which they operate.

Information will be gathered via semi-structured interviews (please see attached) via online platform such as Microsoft teams, via telephone or face to face (dependent on restrictions as a result of Covid-19).

Data will be pseudonymised in line with GDPR regulations to ensure that the processing on personal data can no longer be attributed to a specific data subject without use of additional information. Participants from different schools will be given a code so that no names are taken of the individual or of the educational setting. The local authority in which the educational settings operate will not be named.

Recruitment

I will be using opportunity sampling to recruit participants. Participants will be informed of the research and given the opportunity to express interest. The participants will be from schools in one local authority in which I am currently on a learning placement with as a trainee educational psychologist. The EP team and I have the details of the designated points of contact (often the SENCO) in all schools of this local authority as these are the people we work with. The schools will be informed of my research and intended contact with them via their link EP in advance of me making contact with them to introduce the research. Schools that I am linked to will hear about the research from me. This will be via email and then potential participants will be given the opportunity to make a phone call / online call if there are any questions or desire to discuss this further.

Participants will be SENCOs/ pastoral staff from secondary schools and will be selected if they express interest and have knowledge/ experience of their ISUs.

Emails to SENCOs may consist of the following:

> *"Dear XX,*
>
> *I wanted to inform you of my research that I am conducting on exploring ISUs. I am looking for schools to take part in some interviews to further my understanding in the way that they are operated in educational settings. I would be very grateful if you could look at the attached information letter with more information. If this research is of interest to you and you would like to consider taking part, please contact me via email. From here we can arrange an opportunity to discuss the research and answer any questions you may have before deciding to sign the consent form.*
>
> *If you have any questions, please ask. Thank you for your time in reading this."*

Gatekeepers

There is no obligation for anybody to participate and there are opportunities to withdraw. The EP team will assist me in making the first point of contact with secondary schools if they are linked to the school. This will be to introduce me to the SENCO. As a trainee EP working for this service, I will then contact the school via email initially and offer further discussion via phone/ online call (i.e. Microsoft Teams).

Informed consent

I have created a form to explain the research and one to gather informed consent from participants. These outline the rights of the participant which I will highlight verbally again. Participants will be reminded of their right to withdraw. The participants will be interviewed to explore how their ISUs are used. Participants will be informed that the interviews will be about how the units are used so that they can decide whether this is something that they would like to participate in. There will be an opportunity for participants to ask questions prior to giving informed consent and again after interviews. Participants will be allowed to withdraw after the interview without reason if this is something that they wish to do.

Sensitive topics

Participants will be informed of the research before they agree to give their informed consent. This will allow participants to decide whether this is a research activity they would like to engage with or not. Participants do not have to answer any question that they feel uncomfortable with. The interview questions will be asking participants about their job role and how the ISUs operate.

Confidentiality

To ensure confidentiality there will be no reference to where I am on placement in order to keep the local authority unidentifiable.

Semi-structured interviews will be recorded and then analysed when all interviews have been conducted. Transcripts will be provided to participants to allow them to ensure their views are accurate and that they are happy with the data that has been collected. This will ensure that I have noted down the information correctly and allow an opportunity to hear any further feedback from participants. Data from within transcripts will be referred to within the analysis of the report and findings. The transcripts will be anonymised so that any mention of names/ geographical area/ names of settings or rooms will be removed.

Names will not be mentioned or reported as data will be pseudonymised to produce a code for schools. Job titles will be used but under a generic label of SENCO or School Pastoral Staff – whichever the person identifies with. I will respect the privacy of all responses.

Data storage and security both during and after the research (including transfer, sharing, encryption, protection)

Data will be shared with my research supervisors. Copies of transcripts will be stored electronically on the UCL research system, which is password protected. Voice recordings will be deleted after they have been transcribed. Anonymous electronic

data (transcripts) will be kept for 10 years in agreement with UCL policy. Transcripts can be shared with participants if they request a copy of their interview. Transcripts will not be shared amongst other participants. The research will refer to data from within transcripts but this will all be anonymised.

Reporting

Reporting will be anonymous so that it is not possible to identify an individual or setting. Reporting of the research will be in my interim project report that will form part of my thesis.

Dissemination and use of findings

Findings will be written into a thesis, but all data will be confidential to respect the privacy of the participants and settings in which they work. The final research may also be presented at conferences or to the local authority in future to share findings.

Please confirm that the processing of the data is not likely to cause substantial damage or distress to an individual

Yes ☒

Section 9 – Attachments. *Please attach the following items to this form, or explain if not attached*

a. Information sheets, consent forms and other materials to be used to inform potential participants about the research (List attachments below)
   Yes ☒ No ☐

   Information sheet

   Consent Form

   Questions for interviews with school staff

b. Approval letter from external Research Ethics Committee Yes ☐
c. The proposal ('case for support') for the project Yes ☐
d. Full risk assessment Yes ☐

Section 10 – Declaration

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the information in this form is correct and that this is a full description of the ethical issues that may arise in the course of this project.

I have discussed the ethical issues relating to my research with my supervisor.
Yes ☒ No ☐

I have attended the appropriate ethics training provided by my course.
Yes ☒ No ☐

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge:

The above information is correct and that this is a full description of the ethics issues that may arise in the course of this project.

Name Lianne Lusted

Date 11/12/2020

Please submit your completed ethics forms to your supervisor for review.

Notes and references

Professional code of ethics
You should read and understand relevant ethics guidelines, for example:
British Psychological Society (2018) *Code of Ethics and Conduct*
Or
British Educational Research Association (2018) *Ethical Guidelines*
Or
British Sociological Association (2017) *Statement of Ethical Practice*
Please see the respective websites for these or later versions; direct links to the latest versions are available on the Institute of Education Research Ethics website.

Disclosure and Barring Service checks

If you are planning to carry out research in regulated Education environments such as Schools, or if your research will bring you into contact with children and young people (under the age of 18), you will need to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) CHECK, before you start. The DBS was previously known as the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). If you do not already hold a current DBS check, and have not registered with the DBS update service, you will need to obtain one through at IOE.

Ensure that you apply for the DBS check in plenty of time as will take around 4 weeks, though can take longer depending on the circumstances.

Further references

Robson, Colin (2011). *Real world research: a resource for social scientists and practitioner researchers* (3rd edition). Oxford: Blackwell.
This text has a helpful section on ethical considerations.

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Student name: Lianne Lusted

Student department: Psychology and Human Development

Course: DEdPsy

Project Title: Phase 1 Contextual Interviews to explore ISUs

Reviewer 1

Supervisor/first reviewer name: Lynne Rogers

Do you foresee any ethical difficulties with this research?

No, all issues have been addressed.

Supervisor/first reviewer signature: Signature removed for purpose of dissemination

Date: 17th March 2021

Reviewer 2

Second reviewer name: Melernie Meheux

Do you foresee any ethical difficulties with this research?

No, all issues have been addressed.

Second reviewer signature: Signature removed for purpose of dissemination

Date: 25th March 2021

Decision on behalf of reviewers

Approved X

Approved subject to the following additional measures

Not approved for the reasons given below

Referred to the REC for review

Points to be noted by other reviewers and in report to REC:

Comments from reviewers for the applicant:

Once it is approved by both reviewers, students should submit their ethics application form to the Centre for Doctoral Education team: (removed for purpose of dissemination)

Appendix M Ethics consent form for Phase 2 Data Collection

Institute of Education

UCL

Doctoral Student Ethics Application Form

Anyone conducting research under the auspices of the Institute of Education (staff, students or visitors) where the research involves human participants or the use of data collected from human participants, is required to gain ethical approval before starting. This includes preliminary and pilot studies. Please answer all relevant questions in simple terms that can be understood by a lay person and note that your form may be returned if incomplete.

Registering your study with the UCL Data Protection Officer as part of the UCL Research Ethics Review Process

If you are proposing to collect personal data i.e. data from which a living individual can be identified **you must be registered with the UCL Data Protection Office before you submit your ethics application for review**. To do this, email the complete ethics form to the UCL Data Protection Office. Once your registration number is received, add it to the form* and submit it to your supervisor for approval. If the Data Protection Office advises you to make changes to the way in which you propose to collect and store the data this should be reflected in your ethics application form.

Please note that the completion of the UCL GDPR online training is mandatory for all PhD students.

Section 1 – Project details

a. Project title: Phase 2 Interviews with young people about in-school units
b. Student name and ID number (e.g. ABC12345678): Lianne Lusted [redacted]
c. ***UCL Data Protection Registration Number:** [redacted]
    a. Date Issued: 17/12/2021
d. Supervisor/Personal Tutor: Lynne Rogers & Melernie Meheux
e. Department: Psychology and Human Development
f. Course category (Tick one):

PhD	☐
EdD	☐
DEdPsy	☒

g. **If applicable**, state who the funder is and if funding has been confirmed. N/A
h. Intended research start date: January 2022
i. Intended research end date: July 2022
j. Country fieldwork will be conducted in: United Kingdom
k. If research to be conducted abroad please check the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and submit a completed travel risk assessment form (see guidelines). If the FCO advice is against travel this will be required before ethical approval can be

a. granted: *UCL travel advice webpage*
b. Has this project been considered by another (external) Research Ethics Committee?

Yes ☐
External Committee Name: Enter text
Date of Approval: Enter text

No ☒ ***go to Section 2***

If yes:
- Submit a copy of the approval letter with this application.
- Proceed to Section 10 Attachments.

Note: Ensure that you check the guidelines carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the National Research Ethics Service (NRES) or Social Care Research Ethics Committee (SCREC). In addition, if your research is based in another institution then you may be required to apply to their research ethics committee.

Section 2 - Research methods summary (tick all that apply)

☒ Interviews
☐ Focus Groups
☐ Questionnaires
☐ Action Research
☐ Observation
☐ Literature Review
☐ Controlled trial/other intervention study
☐ Use of personal records
☐ Systematic review **– if only method used go to Section 5**
☐ Secondary data analysis ***– if secondary analysis used go to Section 6***
☐ Advisory/consultation/collaborative groups
☐ Other, give details: Drawings may be provided by the young people

Please provide an overview of the project, focusing on your methodology. This should include some or all of the following: purpose of the research, aims, main research questions, research design, participants, sampling, data collection (including justifications for methods chosen and description of topics/questions to be asked), reporting and dissemination. Please focus on your methodology; the theory, policy, or literary background of your work can be provided in an attached document (i.e. a full research proposal or case for support document). *Minimum 150 words required.*

Context

There has been a rise in fixed period exclusions and permanent exclusions since the academic year 2010/2011 (Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England, 2020). Secondary school permanent exclusion figures appear to have risen since 2012/2013 and secondary school fixed period exclusions have been rising since 2013/2014 (Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England, 2020).

One initiative that schools have taken to support pupils at risk of exclusions is to temporarily withdraw them from the usual school routine and operate an internal inclusion unit (IFF Research et al, 2018). Schools are permitted to have policies that allow them to place 'disruptive' students in an area separate to other students for a period of time (Department for Education, 2016). These areas will be referred to as ISUs.

Timpson (2019) claims that stronger guidance is needed such as an appropriate named body or person overseeing the units; clarification of the role of governors; the way that the school monitors the unit including the children accessing it with protected characteristics; procedures for review; and communication with parents/ carers. Therefore, the rationale for this research is to explore the differences in how ISUs are operated and the impact that they have on young people.

Phase 1: Contextual Interviews with SENCOs/ Pastoral Staff

I am currently working in a local authority as a trainee educational psychologist. Participants in this first phase were SENCOs/ pastoral staff from a range of schools in this local authority as well as adults supporting behaviour within the local authority. I conducted semi-structured interviews to find out more about how ISUs operate in various settings and how the local authority works to support schools in managing behaviour. These interviews supported my understanding about current practice in schools so that there is some context to explore the views of children and young people.

It was important to find out more about these rooms as there is limited research into this area and limited guidance as to how they should operate. It built some understanding of how schools in one local authority use these areas. It provided some context for me to consider how to pursue exploring the views of young people.

Phase 2: Interviews with young people about ISUs

Participants will be young people attending secondary schools in this local authority. I have made contact with the schools already for the first phase of research which was

to interview staff members. This has helped me to gain a contextual insight into how some schools are operating these areas. Therefore, I have already built rapport with these schools and have told them about the intentions of the study.

I want to seek the views of those young people who are accessing these areas to learn about their experiences. Young people's voices are important, and they should be at the centre of any decision that is made regarding their education (SEND Code of Practice, 2015). I want to provide an opportunity for young people to elicit their views and to feel listened to.

I would like to visit up to 4 young people in year 8 and 9 in 2 schools. I work with these schools and have therefore been around the school building. I will attend the school to work in an area where young people notice me to build their familiarity with seeing me in their school. I will visit the ISUs and take field notes while again increasing the likelihood for young people to see me around the school. This will support an extended period of rapport building in a naturalistic way. I will visit the young people holding an individual interview. At the end of the interview, I will check with the young people that I have understood the key themes of discussion. They will be semi-structured interviews with some rapport building questions to start with. Hearing their views will build some further understanding of the impact of ISUs. As part of the interview, there will be an opportunity for participants to draw a picture about the way that they feel about their time in the ISU. This will allow me to ask some follow up questions about their drawing and will provide another option for the young people to express themselves.

Reporting and dissemination

The data will be pseudonymised so that no data subject will be identifiable to the reader. Findings will be reported within a thesis project as part of my university programme requirements. There are also opportunities for me to present this research to audiences at events such as conferences in the future.

Section 3 – research Participants (tick all that apply)

☐ Early years/pre-school
☐ Ages 5-11
☒ Ages 12-16
☐ Young people aged 17-18
☐ Adults please specify below
☐ Unknown – specify below
☐ No participants

Young people in year 8 and 9 in secondary schools who have accessed ISUs.

Note: Ensure that you check the guidelines carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the National Research Ethics Service (NRES) or Social Care Research Ethics Committee (SCREC).

Section 4 - Security-sensitive material (only complete if applicable)

Security sensitive research includes: commissioned by the military; commissioned under an EU security call; involves the acquisition of security clearances; concerns terrorist or extreme groups.

a. Will your project consider or encounter security-sensitive material?
   Yes* ☐ No ☐
b. Will you be visiting websites associated with extreme or terrorist organisations?
   Yes* ☐ No ☐
c. Will you be storing or transmitting any materials that could be interpreted as promoting or endorsing terrorist acts?
   Yes* ☐ No ☐

* *Give further details in* ***Section 8 Ethical Issues***

Section 5 – Systematic reviews of research (only complete if applicable)

a. Will you be collecting any new data from participants?
   Yes* ☐ No ☐
b. Will you be analysing any secondary data?
   Yes* ☐ No ☐

* *Give further details in* ***Section 8 Ethical Issues***

If your methods do not involve engagement with participants (e.g. systematic review, literature review) ***and*** *if you have answered* ***No*** *to both questions, please go to* ***Section 8 Attachments.***

Section 6 - Secondary data analysis (only complete if applicable)

h. Name of dataset/s: Enter text
i. Owner of dataset/s: Enter text
j. Are the data in the public domain?
   Yes ☐ No ☐
   If no, *do you have the owner's permission/license?*
   Yes ☐ No* ☐

k. Are the data special category personal data (i.e. personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation)?
   Yes* ☐ No ☐

l. Will you be conducting analysis within the remit it was originally collected for?

Yes ☐ No* ☐

m. **If no**, was consent gained from participants for subsequent/future analysis?
Yes ☐ No* ☐

n. **If no,** was data collected prior to ethics approval process?
Yes ☐ No* ☐

* *Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues***

*If secondary analysis is only method used **and** no answers with asterisks are ticked, go to **Section 9 Attachments.***

Section 7 – Data Storage and Security

Please ensure that you include all hard and electronic data when completing this section.

h. Data subjects - Who will the data be collected from?
Data will be collected via 1:1 semi-structured interviews with young people.

i. What data will be collected? Please provide details of the type of personal data to be collected
The participants will be in year 8 or year 9. The school may be asked for the number of attendances/ last occurrence of attendance the young people have had in the ISU. In the 1:1 meetings, there will be opportunities for drawing activities. Information shared by the young people will not contain any details that make them identifiable within the research report and dissemination. Data will be pseudonymised in line with GDPR regulations so that the processing of personal data can no longer be attributed to a specific data subject without the use of additional information. E.g. names of young people will be replaced with codes.

Is the data anonymised? Yes ☒ No* ☐

Do you plan to anonymise the data? Yes* ☒ No ☐

Do you plan to use individual level data? Yes* ☐ No ☒

Do you plan to pseudonymise the data? Yes* ☒ No ☐

** Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues***

j. **Disclosure –** Who will the results of your project be disclosed to?

Reporting and dissemination: Reporting and dissemination will be anonymous and ensure confidentiality so that the schools, local authority, and individuals cannot be identified from the report. Pseudonyms will be used to further protect the identity of individuals.

Findings will be reported within a thesis project as part of my university programme requirements. There are also opportunities for me to present this research to audiences at events such as conferences in the future. Findings will

also be shared with participants at the end of the research period should they be interested.

Disclosure – Will personal data be disclosed as part of your project?

No

k. Data storage – Please provide details on how and where the data will be stored i.e. UCL network, encrypted USB stick**, encrypted laptop** etc. The data will be stored on the UCL research network. Access is given by a password and email account login so data is secure.

*** Advanced Encryption Standard 256 bit encryption which has been made a security standard within the NHS*

l. **Data Safe Haven (Identifiable Data Handling Solution)** – Will the personal identifiable data collected and processed as part of this research be stored in the UCL Data Safe Haven (mainly used by SLMS divisions, institutes and departments)?
Yes ☐ No ☒

m. How long will the data and records be kept for and in what format?
Recordings will be deleted once transcripts have been made. Transcripts will be kept for 10 years in line with UCL policy.

Will personal data be processed or be sent outside the European Economic Area? (If yes, please confirm that there are adequate levels of protections in compliance with GDPR and state what these arrangements are)
N/a

Will data be archived for use by other researchers? (If yes, please provide details.)
N/a

n. If personal data is used as part of your project, describe what measures you have in place to ensure that the data is only used for the research purpose e.g. pseudonymisation and short retention period of data'.
Data will be pseudonymised in line with GDPR regulations to ensure that the processing on personal data can no longer be attributed to a specific data subject without use of additional information. Participants from different schools will be given a code so that no names are taken of the individual or of the educational setting. The local authority and the educational settings that the young people attend will not be named.

* *Give further details in* ***Section 8 Ethical Issues***

Section 8 – Ethical Issues

Please state clearly the ethical issues which may arise in the course of this research and how will they be addressed.

All issues that may apply should be addressed. Some examples are given below, further information can be found in the guidelines. *Minimum 150 words required.*

- Methods
- Sampling
- Recruitment
- Gatekeepers
- Informed consent
- Potentially vulnerable participants
- Safeguarding/child protection
- Sensitive topics
- International research
- Risks to participants and/or researchers
- Confidentiality/Anonymity
- Disclosures/limits to confidentiality
- Data storage and security both during and after the research (including transfer, sharing, encryption, protection)
- Reporting
- Dissemination and use of findings

Methods

This will be a qualitative piece of research.

Participants and recruitment: Participants will be young people in secondary schools and selected via opportunity sampling. I will work with the two SENCOs/ pastoral staff that I already have contact with to identify 4 pupils in year 8 and 9 at each school who have accessed the ISU. I acknowledge that the schools are gatekeepers and some considerations for this are discussed below. I will have discussions with schools about the students who would be likely to take part in this research. Anyone that is perceived to be vulnerable will not be included.

Data will be pseudonymised in line with GDPR regulations to ensure that the processing on personal data can no longer be attributed to a specific data subject without use of additional information. Participants will be given pseudo names so that no names are taken of the individual or of the educational setting. The local authority in which these young people attend school will not be named.

Gatekeepers

The schools are gatekeepers. I will work with the SENCOs/ pastoral staff to identify young people that could take part in the research. Any young person that is perceived

to be vulnerable will not be included. Some criteria to support the decision-making process in selecting young people will include those that have experienced the ISU and have good language skills. The two schools that I intend to visit are settings that I am already working with and have built good rapport. I have also therefore been visible within the school to build the young people's familiarity with me.

Informed consent

I have created an information sheet to explain the research to young people's carers/ parents. There will be a contact email address on the sheet for any queries they may have. This will be accompanied with a consent form. The contact with parents/ carers and information will go through the school as this is the usual way that the educational psychology team would receive referral forms to work with young people.
In addition, I have created a young person friendly information sheet about the research to share with the young people. I will also ask the young people verbally whether they agree to participate prior to taking part. This way, I can ensure I have their assent and therefore their willingness to participate. There will also be an option to sign the young person information sheet. O' Reilly and Dogra (2017) state that key elements of consent to consider when conducting research with young people include the child's understanding of information, their ability to retain the information, their ability to make a balanced decision about whether to participate and to be able to communicate their wishes/ decisions. This will also be taken into account when making a decision with the school staff about the young people who will participate. Young people will be informed of their rights to withdraw at any stage without reason if this is something that they wish to do. We will look over the information sheet before the interview together and I will leave it in front of them as a reminder during the interview should they wish to withdraw. Participants will also be reminded that they do not have to answer any question that they feel uncomfortable with. Following the interview, participants will be given a copy of the information sheet with details on how to contact me to withdraw their participation should they wish to do so.

Confidentiality

To ensure confidentiality there will be no reference to where I am on placement to keep the local authority unidentifiable.
Data from drawings and transcripts will be referred to within the analysis of the report and findings. The data will be anonymised so that any mention of names/ geographical area/ names of settings or rooms (when very unique) will be removed. I acknowledge that there may be individual's experiences discussed such as events that have happened in their life. I will ensure that any specific information is removed to protect their identity. I also acknowledge that there will be discussions about procedures used in schools for operating an ISU. If any specific information that is shared could identify the setting this will be discussed with supervisors about the best way to remove these characteristics while retaining some of the data.
Names will not be mentioned or reported as data will be pseudonymised to produce a code for schools. I will respect the privacy of all responses.

In the event of a safeguarding issue, I would disclose the relevant information to the designated safeguarding lead, following any relevant policies and guidance. This information would not be included in the research. Confidentiality will also be discussed with young people acknowledging my duty to safeguarding concerns.

Data storage and security both during and after the research (including transfer, sharing, encryption, protection)

Anonymised data will be shared with my research supervisors. Copies of any drawings and notes will be stored electronically on the UCL research system, which is password protected. Anonymous electronic data will be kept for 10 years in agreement with UCL policy.

Reporting

Reporting will be anonymous so that it is not possible to identify an individual or setting. Reporting of the research will be in my thesis as part of my doctoral programme requirements.

Dissemination and use of findings

Findings will be written into a thesis, but all data will be confidential to respect the privacy of the participants and settings in which they are educated/ work. The final research will also have opportunities to be presented at conferences or to the local authority in future. Findings will also be shared with participants if they express interest in this.

Please confirm that the processing of the data is not likely to cause substantial damage or distress to an individual

Yes ☒

Section 9 – Attachments. *Please attach the following items to this form, or explain if not attached*

e. Information sheets, consent forms and other materials to be used to inform potential participants about the research (List attachments below)
   Yes ☒ No ☐

   Information sheet for parents/ carers

   Young person friendly information sheet/ consent form

   Parent/ carer consent Form

   Young Person Interview Schedule

f. Approval letter from external Research Ethics Committee Yes ☐
g. The proposal ('case for support') for the project Yes ☐
h. Full risk assessment Yes ☐

Section 10 – Declaration

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the information in this form is correct and that this is a full description of the ethical issues that may arise in the course of this project.

I have discussed the ethical issues relating to my research with my supervisor.
Yes ☒ No ☐

I have attended the appropriate ethics training provided by my course.
Yes ☒ No ☐

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge:

The above information is correct and that this is a full description of the ethics issues that may arise in the course of this project.

Name Lianne Lusted

Date 05/12/2021

Please submit your completed ethics forms to your supervisor for review.

Notes and references

Professional code of ethics
You should read and understand relevant ethics guidelines, for example:
British Psychological Society (2018) *Code of Ethics and Conduct*
Or
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Or
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Student name: Lianne Lusted

Student department: Psychology and Human Development

Course: DEdPsy

Project Title: Phase 2 Interviews with young people about ISUs

Reviewer 1

Supervisor/first reviewer name: Lynne Rogers

Do you foresee any ethical difficulties with this research? No. All ethical issues have been addressed.

Supervisor/first reviewer signature: Signature removed for purpose of dissemination

Date: 4th January 2021

Reviewer 2

Second reviewer name: Melernie Meheux

Do you foresee any ethical difficulties with this research? No

Second reviewer signature: Signature removed for purpose of dissemination

Date: 4th January 2021

Decision on behalf of reviewers

Approved x

Approved subject to the following additional measures

Not approved for the reasons given below

Referred to the REC for review

Points to be noted by other reviewers and in report to REC:

Comments from reviewers for the applicant:

Once it is approved by both reviewers, students should submit their ethics application form to the Centre for Doctoral Education team: (removed for purpose of dissemination)

Appendix N Transcript Example of Young Person (Miles)

(I)

So first of all, could you tell me a little bit about how school is going for you?

(R)

Er, school is going quite well. I am hoping to pass these exams, but lessons are alright.

(I)

Good. What subjects do you like?

(R)

Err, I do enjoy doing resistant materials. History's fun. And art. They're the main three.

(I)

History, art. And what was the first one sorry?

(R)

Resistant materials.

(I)

Resistant materials.

(R)

Mhmm.

(I)

And what is that?

(R)

Like DT so it's still working.

(I)

So something quite practical?

(R)

Yeah, I do like practical.

(I)

Oh nice, and history and art? Yeah?

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

Erm, what hobbies do you enjoy doing either inside or outside of school?

(R)

Erm, I do love like playing games. I don't really do many hobbies.

(I)

Sort of like video games, do you mean?

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

Erm, do you sort of any sort of like going out with friends or?

(R)

Yeah we do go out sometimes.

(I)

Yeah.

(R)

… but not re - people don't really want to go out too often.

(I)

Mm. So lots of playing video games.

(R)

Yeah. A lot of people just wanna do revision.

(I)

They want to do revision?

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

So you're preparing for your exams well, then.

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

Okay. Erm, how long have you been at this school?

(R)

Erm, since year 7. So it'll be like four and a half years by the time we leave.

(I)

Okay. So you're year 11 now, is that right?

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

Okay. And what did you like about primary school?

(R)

Erm. I don't know. I didn't enjoy primary school as much as secondary.

(I)

Okay.

(R)

I prefer secondary over primary.

(I)

What didn't you like about primary?

(R)

I don't know. It just like, I didn't like being in the same classroom. Because I rather it wher you have your different subject teachers in secondary because they specialise in that subject.

(I)

Okay.

(R)

… so it's better.

(I)

you've kind of answered my next question that I was gonna ask you what you like about secondary. So you like that they're a bit more specialist?

(R)

Yeah, the specialist in the subject. And there's like more subjects. And like with DT they have more equipment that we can use compared to primary which you couldn't really do DT.

(I)

Yeah. That's good. So you like that it's more specialist the teachers, there's more subjects, and there's more equipment? Yeah?

(R)

Mm. And is there anything that you dislike about secondary school?

(R)

No, not really. I like it a lot better than primary.

(I)

That's nice to hear. Okay. And so yeah, I'm here to learn a little bit more about your internal exclusion room.

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

So can you tell me a little bit about what the room looks like and where is it within the building?

(R)

It's a small room like the one we're sitting in now.

(I)

Okay.

(R)

It's got like three tables in, one person per table.

(I)

Mhm.

(R)

But you basically just sit and do get your work done, quite quietly, and the teacher watches you from the other table.

(I)

Okay. And what else is the teacher doing? While they're in that room?

(R)

Erm, they do work and help out other teachers.

(I)

Is it the same (teacher) - sorry.

(R)

No, they switch between teachers yeah. They pass on work as well.

(I)

Okay, so they help you get work, they do their work, and they help other teachers? Yeah?

(R)

Yeah and if we need help they'll help us as well.

(I)

Okay. And is it usually the same member of staff in the room all day?

(R)

Erm. No, they will normally switch it around quite a few times.

(I)

Okay. Um, and what kind of things are the young people doing in the room?

(R)

Erm, just get on with our work really, you're sent your work by your teacher and you get on with it.

(I)

Okay. Is there anything else that happens in the day?

(R)

Er, not much, we get taken down for break and lunch before, so we don't obviously, mix with many other students. We're taken down about 5-10 minutes before…

(I)

Okay.

(R)

… to go and get food, which is nice, because you get to stretch your legs.

(I)

Yeah. (pause) So that's for both break and lunch. So you can get snacks at break time as well, can you?

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

And that's five minutes before the usual break time.

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

Okay. And do you work on your own? Or do you work in groups?

(R)

Err, work on our own, but if we need help the teacher will help us as well.

(I)

Okay. And is that the same for the other people all the other students sitting in the room?

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

You're all doing your work? Yeah. Okay.

(R)

It’s a lot easier for them to send - our teachers to send us work now

(I)

Okay.

(R)

… so it's helpful.

(I)

And you say that the teachers are able to help you with your work if you’re stuck?

(R)

Yeah they are good, they help us.

(I)

Erm, so, you said, it's called the internal exclusion room. Is it called any other names?

(R)

Er, we we call it the reflection room.

(I)

Okay. Which one, would you prefer me to use?

(R)

Er, reflection.

(I)

Reflection.

(R)

Yeah that’s what we call it.

(I)

So it's called the reflection room…

(R)

It only got changed to the internal exclusion recently.

(I)

Oh, did it? So that's a new name?

(R)

Yeah. It used to be called just isolation, or just a reflection room. That's what they called it.

(I)

So it was isolation, then it then reflection room and then internal exclusion room.

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

Okay. We'll call it reflection room for now then. Erm, so what are the rules in the reflection room?

(R)

Er, you can't talk, you don't turn around, you just get your work done.

(I)

So you can't talk. Don't turn around and get your work done. Yeah?

(R)

Mmhm.

(I)

Okay. Um, and have you been there many times?

(R)

Err, yeah. I normally get put in there for skipping detentions.

(I)

What other reasons can you go in there for?

(R)

Um, for fights, Um, if you've been <u>really</u> disruptive in class, you get put in somewhere called the [NAMED room]. So you're taken out of your lesson after you get a red card and you get put in there for an hour.

(I)

And what happens in the [NAMED room]?

(R)

Erm, it's like the same as reflection, but you're only in there for that lesson that you got sent out.

(I)

Okay.

(R)

Or, people can be put in there all day. But that's normally what the reflection room's for.

(I)

Okay. Um, and so yeah, I was just gonna ask so how long is spent in the reflection room?

(R)

The day.

(I)

The day.

(R)

If you were disruptive in there, you get put in there for another day.

(I)

Okay.

(R)

And they do warn you about that quite a few times. It's not where you're disruptive once and you get put in it again, you do get warned.

(I)

Okay.

(R)

You get like three warnings.

(I)

So you get three warnings and if that happens again, then you go back in the next day.

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

And what sort of - do you go there first thing in the morning or the some point through the day?

(R)

Yeah, you usually go in through the door our pastoral manager just sits us down out there

(I)

Mhmm.

(R)

And then we wait. We wait to be taken up.

(I)

When you say they sit with you, what are they doing when they sit with you?

(R)

Er, we get we get told to sit down there and they'll tell us like we're in there, and why we're in there and then we'll just wait until we come and get collected by the teachers whose up there.

(I)

Okay, so they talk to you about why you're in there and then you're collected. Okay, and what happens after you've been in the room?

(R)

Erm, if you was good, you just next day just go back to lessons like normal.

(I)

okay. (pause) And then, so what I'm going to ask now if it's okay. Erm, I want to ask how you feel when you're in the reflection room? And if you're comfortable, would you be able to kind of put that into a drawing or a mind map or something? About maybe some of the feelings or the thoughts that you have while you're in the room?

(R)

Mm.

(I)

Are you comfortable doing that?

(R)

Yeah. I just don't know what to write.

(I)

Well, so when you first get when you're first sat down out there, how are you feeling when you know you're about to go into isolation?

(R)

Erm, sometimes annoyed.

(I)

Okay.

(R)

Cos like you don't really get to see anyone for the full day.

(I)

Yeah.

(R)

It can be quite boring sometimes.

(I)

Mm. So that's, that's a word you could put down if you wanted to. Annoy annoyed or annoying. I can't remember what you said now sorry.

(R)

Yeah, annoyed.

(I)

So annoyed, because you know, you won't see anyone.

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

You also said boring. Was that right?

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

So you can add that on there if you'd like to. Um, what do you mean when you say boring?

(R)

Er, cuz it can be quite boring with like not having other people like you are in a lesson because you're by yourself and don't get to talk or like, unless you're talking to a teacher.

(I)

(long pause) Okay, so we've got annoyed, we've got boring. How are you feeling sort of around your break times and lunchtimes?

(R)

Erm, you (laughs) sometimes get a bit more annoyed cos you can hear everyone talking outside, like hanging around with their mates and you're just stuck in the room (laughs)

(I)

Mm. And is anyone able to, does anyone pass the room that you're sat in?

(R)

Erm, it's quite far away down the hallway. If someone does, you will normally just hear them talkin and they go. If someone does approach the rooms, like to talk to the teacher, they normally get sent away.

(I)

Okay. So there's nobody else really coming to or from the room other than the teachers…

(R)

Other than the teachers yeah.

(I)

Yeah. Okay, so that's even sort of more annoying when it's break time and you can hear people talking together.

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

And what happens at the end of the day, do you go home at the same time as everyone?

(R)

Erm, with the year sevens, eights and nines, we get split up differently.

(I)

Okay,

(R)

Year 10s and 11s go at ten past, and then I think the year seven, eight and nine go at, I think five to.

(I)

Okay. And that's usual, across the school day anyway.

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

So you will still be going home at about 10 past.

(R)

Yeah. Or if we have a detention, we - it's on a list at the end of the day.

(I)

Okay.

(R)

And we get taken down to the, our room, that our year is.

(I)

So you can have a detention after …

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

… your period in reflection room.

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

Is that all the time?

(R)

Erm, it depends what you're in there for.

(I)

Mm.

(R)

If you're in there for skipping detentions…

(I)

Yeah.

(R)

… you'll probably have it at the end of the day. The one you skipped.

(I)

Okay

(R)

But you'll have it longer.

(I)

And I don't know if, have I asked you this already? What other kind of, oh yeah you did tell me about what reasons you can go there for. So you said fights being disruptive, and skipping detentions. Is there anything else?

(R)

Erm, you can go in there for swearing. Erm, I, I don't really know cos I don't go, I, the main reason I go in there was for skipping detentions.

(I)

Mm. And has anyone spoken with you about the reason you skipped attentions?

(R)

Erm, yeah.

(I)

Has anything helped?

(R)

Yeah, the head teacher, put us all in a room, like everyone that skipped it and moaned at us. And then we got to put back into reflection and all that and then they're just I've got a 20 minute tonight cos erm, I went out of a 40 minute last night.

(I)

Right. Okay. And how do you feel when you know you've got a detention at the end of your reflection room as well?

(R)

(laughs) You can be, you can get quite aggravated.

(I)

Yeah?

(R)

As you've already sat there all day, you're bored and then you've gotta sit there for like another, normally over an hour.

(I)

Mm. Is that a word you can add on to your mindmap, aggravated? So you've got aggravated annoyed and boring. If you could make the room better, or the experience of the reflection better, what would you do?

(R)

Erm.

(I)

What would you change?

(R)

Maybe a little bit bigger a room?

(I)

Mmhmm. Why would that be good?

(R)

Cuz it's quite stuffed in there. Especially when you got like four other, three other students as well.

(I)

Yeah. Is it often that there's other students in there?

(R)

Yeah, it's not normally you, there's always other students in there.

(I)

And does it change if it was just you and a teacher in there, would it be different, what happens in the room compared to if it was …

(R)

Erm. Yeah. People get bored and make noises and be like distracting.

(I)

And how does it make you feel when people are making noises and being distracting?

(R)

I think it’s quite annoying sometimes, I just try to block it out and get my work done.

(I)

You try to block it out?

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

Is there anything that you're thinking about while you're in the room?

(R)

You’re thinking about why, obviously, why you're in there, why did I skip the detention? And not to do it again.

(I)

Yeah. And does anyone have that conversation with you about what you've been thinking about?

(R)

No, not really.

(I)

No. (pause) Okay, I'm just gonna check I’ve asked everything I wanted to. Erm..

(R)

We normally get reminded why we're in there as well.

(I)

Okay, what point do they do that?

(R)

Erm, like, when a new teacher comes in, they’ll normally ask us why we're in here. It basically just gives us a reminder. Makes us thinking about it again.

(I)

Okay, and how and what does that do for you?

(R)

Er, it just makes you think about it and, I don’t know, helps you reflect on what you've done.

(I)

And again, it's - that reflection is happening in your head. Is that right?

(R)

Yeah

(I)

Or you're speaking to someone about it?

(R)

In your head.

(I)

In your head, okay. Is there anything else that would be helpful for me to know to learn about the reflection room or what happens?

(R)

Don’t think so.

(I)

No? Can I just have a look at your mindmap if that's okay, just gonna check that I've understood everything. So you've got that things feel boring. And you was relating to not having anyone to kind of talk to, erm sort of just sitting by yourself unless you’re able to talk to a teacher.

(R)

Mm.

(I)

Erm, feeling quite annoyed about lots of things really so that you're not going to see anyone that you can hear other people when they're out at Breaktime and lunchtime.

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

Um, and again, sort of feeling quite aggravated erm when you know, you've got to stay later. Because you've already been bored all day and then you've got to stay for that other maybe hour or something after.

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

Er and feeling quite frustrated. What do you feel frustrated at?

(R)

Erm, just that, you get like, say you don't understand the work, I do normally ask the teacher but sometimes I don't ask, an I just sit there annoyed.

(I)

Mm. What stops you from asking?

(R)

I don’t know. I just don't want to turn around and ask the teacher for help.

(I)

Mm. So are you facing away from the teacher?

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

So facing towards the back of the room or the front of the room where do you face?

(R)

Erm, we don't face towards the door. So teacher's in the back corner where you are.

(I)

Yeah.

(R)

There's one table there. The doors there.

(I)

Okay.

(R)

And then like there's one, I normally sit on the table there.

(I)

Okay

(R)

One table there, there's one behind me and there's one on the right there.

(I)

Right. Okay. So you've got to kind of turn round and make it known that you need some help. Is that what you're saying?

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

Okay.

(R)

If you do put your hand up though, the teacher would notice.

(I)

Okay. Is there anything else you feel that you'd like to share?

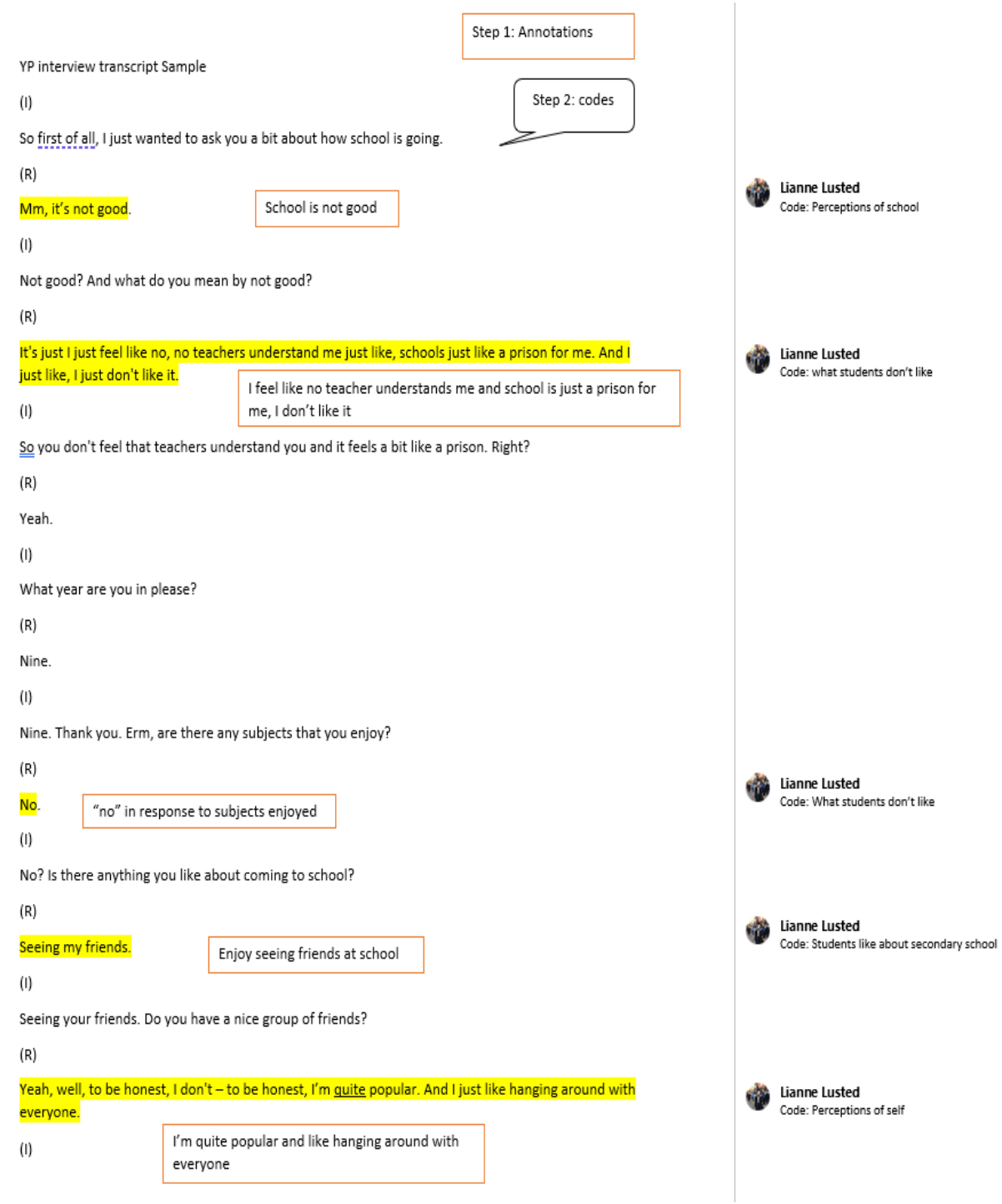
(R)

No.

(I)

Okay, I'll end the recording then if that’s ok with you.

Appendix O Sample of Coding



Mhmm.

(R)

So I do. I do have a main main group of friends, but I just hang out with like, whoever I want really.

I have main group of friends but hang out with whoever I want

Lianne Lusted
Code: Perceptions of self

(I)

Hmm. That sounds nice. Um, what hobbies do you enjoy? either in school or out?

(R)

Erm, I like cleaning ...

I like cleaning

Lianne Lusted
Code: interests and hobbies

(I)

Mhmm.

(R)

And ... I don't know what type of hobbies there is.

(I)

Is there anything you enjoy doing in your spare time?

(R)

Well I like shopping.

I like shopping

Lianne Lusted
Code: interests and hobbies

(I)

Yeah.

(R)

I like, going out for like Starbucks and stuff.

I like going to Starbucks

Lianne Lusted
Code: interests and hobbies

(I)

Oh, nice. So those kind of like coffee catch ups or dates with friends and things?

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

Yeah. Coffees at Starbucks, shopping and cleaning. That sounds nice. Is there anything else you'd add to that?

(R)

Erm, I don't know. I don't like know the difference between, like, erm hobbies or things I like.

(I)

Kind of both really. Yeah, I would say things that you like doing. I mean, if hobbies sometimes refer to like clubs and things you might go to, but if a hobby for you is going out shopping with your friends, well that's something you'd like doing as well, isn't it?

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

So that sounds like a nice list there. So how long have you been at this school?

(R)

Um, since year seven.

(I)

Since year 7. This is your third year here then?

(R)

Yeah.

(I)

Yeah, and what did you like about primary school?

(R)

Erm, you could just do whatever you wanted to. (pause) And like (pause) they don't really tell tell you off that much.

Liked primary that you could do what you want and they don't tell you off much

Lianne Lusted
Code: Primary school experiences

(I)

Hmm.

(R)

And like obviously it's just so different in here to primary, and oh yeah I liked it in primary and you just get put to like stay with one teacher and one class.

Liked primary with one teacher and one class

Lianne Lusted
Code: Primary school experiences

(I)

Mm.

(R)

And yeah, and you got to like everything was just like a routine in primary school but in secondary school it's just different.

Liked primary was a routine but secondary school is different

Lianne Lusted
Code: Primary school experiences

(I)

Yeah.

(R)

So like, all different classes, different …

Secondary school is different as it has different classes

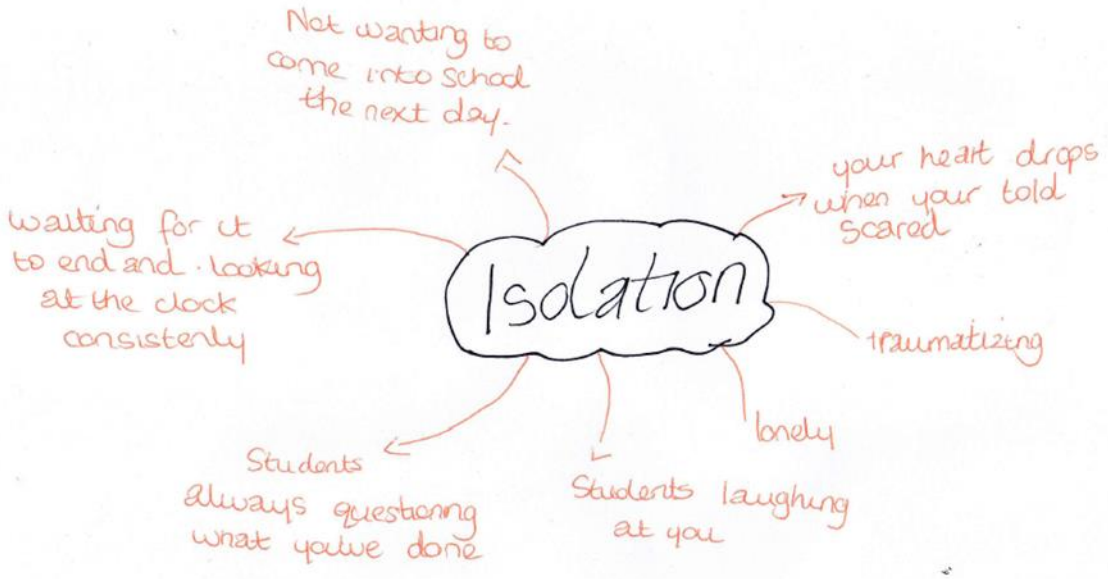
Lianne Lusted
Code: what students don't like

(I)

Different teachers as well, then?

(R)

Appendix P Mind map example of young person



Appendix Q Table Weightings of coding for adults

Theme (adults)	Subtheme	Codes	Frequency of Code	Number of times participants that referenced this
Theme 1 Discrepancies about procedure, use, and impact of ISUs	Theme 1 Subtheme 1 The variation in practice and procedure of the ISU	ISU/ isolation room rules	5	P1 (2) P3 (3)
		mediation	5	P1 (5)
		Times of day	7	P1 (1) P2 (2) P3 (2) P4 (2)
		break times	14	P1 (6) P2 (2) P3 (2) P4 (4)
		what day consists of	28	P1 (3) P2 (4) P3 (9) P4 (12)
		after isolation	42	P1 (28) P2 (3) P3 (6) P4 (5)
		time spent in ISU/isolation	26	P1 (9) P2 (3) P3 (6) P4 (8)
		Interactions with staff	15	P1 (4) P2 (7) P3 (2) P4 (2)
	Theme 1 Subtheme 2 The physical space and location of the ISU tended to reflect a punitive set up	Area of isolation	47	P1 (15) P2 (4) P3 (11) P4 (17)
		Room arrangement/physical surrounding	23	P1 (1) P2 (4) P3 (10) P4 (8)
		name of area	8	P2 (1) P3 (3) P4 (2) P5 (1) P7 (1)
		number in area	10	P1 (3) P2 (3) P3 (2) P4 (2)
		perception of pupil experiences	34	P1 (8) P2 (3) P3 (7)

				P4 (6) P5 (6) P6 (1) P7 (3)
		measuring impact	34	P1 (2) P2 (3) P3 (12) P4 (9) P5 (3) P6 (3) P7 (2)
		needs of area	22	P1 (5) P3 (8) P4 (6) P5 (1) P7 (2)
		benefits of area	6	P1 (2) P2 (1) P3 (3)
		punishment vs reflection	48	P1 (9) P2 (5) P3 (23) P4 (2) P5 (5) P6 (2) P7 (2)
		outside perspectives of area	26	P5 (11) P6 (5) P7 (10)
		nurture (outside experiences of other practice)	13	P5 (6) P6 (5) P7 (2)
	Theme 1 Subtheme 4 School staff's perceived role in supporting young people to 'pass' the day in the in-school unit	'Completing' isolation	15	P1 (9) P3 (1) P4 (5)
		understanding needs	25	P1 (12) P2 (8) P3 (3) P4 (2)
		relationships	28	P1 (15) P2 (9) P3 (1) P4 (3)
		time for supporting emotional needs	21	P1 (1) P2 (3) P3 (13) P4 (4)
		staff characteristics	29	P1 (12) P2 (10) P3 (2) P4 (5)
		staff involved in ISU	18	P1 (2) P2 (2)

				P3 (4) P4 (10)
		communicating difficulties	24	P1 (15) P2 (5) P4 (4)
Theme 2: school context: how the school system understands the strengths and needs of staff and pupils and accommodates to these	Theme 2 Subtheme 1 The Profile of Strengths and Needs across the School	demographics	25	P1 (3) P2 (5) P3 (9) P4 (8)
		number on roll	8	P1 (5) P2 (1) P3 (1) P4 (1)
		Ofsted	8	P1 (6) P3 (2)
		school ethos	12	P1 (3) P2 (2) P3 (5) P4 (2)
		(thoughts on) inclusion	5	P1 (1) P2 (1) P4 (2) P7 (1)
		attainment	17	P1 (6) P2 (4) P3 (5) P4 (2)
		school roles and time in post	28	P1 (9) P2 (7) P3 (8) P4 (4)
		Strengths of YP	18	P1 (7) P2 (5) P3 (2) P4 (4)
		Why staff are valued	24	P1 (9) P2 (8) P3 (2) P4 (3) P7 (2)
	Theme 2 Subtheme 2 The contributing factors that promoted the use of in-school units and exclusions	behaviour difficulties	77	P1 (22) P2 (8) P3 (9) P4 (15) P5 (11) P6 (3) P7 (9)
		policy and procedures	32	P1 (24) P2 (1) P3 (5) P4 (1) P5 (1)
		reasons for ISU/isolation	18	P1 (4)

				P2 (4) P3 (5) P4 (5)
		staff decisions	3	P3 (1) P4 (2)
		managed moves	9	P3 (9)
		external exclusions	21	P1 (2) P2 (7) P3 (7) P4 (2) P5 (1) P6 (1) P7 (1)
		boundary setting	43	P1 (16) P2 (17) P3 (6) P4 (4)
	Theme 2 Subtheme 3 The importance of investing in young people	whole school approaches (e.g. assembly)	11	P1 (7) P2 (1) P3 (1) P4 (2)
		school run interventions	21	P1 (5) P2 (3) P3 (6) P4 (7)
		career support for YP	8	P1 (5) P4 (3)
		strategies to support YP	14	P1 (12) P3 (1) P4 (1)
		extra-curricular activities	17	P2 (2) P3 (7) P4 (8)
		emotional support	9	P1 (4) P2 (2) P3 (1) P4 (2)
		SEN support	3	P2 (1) P3 (2)
		Form	3	P2 (2) P4 (1)
		in school support (for staff)	21	P1 (10) P2 (6) P3 (4) P4 (1)
Theme 3: wider systemic considerations that could directly/indirectly impact on the availability of support	Theme 3 Subtheme 1: The range of roles and services the LA behaviour team offered to settings	LA roles & time in post	52	P5 (17) P6 (17) P7 (18)
		LA to school support	50	P1 (1) P2 (1) P5 (9) P6 (20) P7 (19)

		ethos & values of LA team	10	P5 (6) P6 (1) P7 (3)
		Advocating for and supporting YP	23	P5 (8) P6 (8) P7 (7)
		trained staff	6	P5 (2) P6 (1) P7 (3)
		behaviour data/ referrals/ feedback	10	P5 (3) P6 (2) P7 (5)
		LA support for families	16	P5 (6) P6 (5) P7 (5)
		multidisciplinary and multiagency working	20	P5 (2) P6 (11) P7 (7)
		in LA support	17	P5 (3) P6 (4) P7 (10)
	Theme 3 Subtheme 2: Funding as a barrier to being able to understand and meet the needs of young people	Funding	15	P2 (4) P3 (4) P7 (7)
		needs of school	15	P1 (3) P2 (1) P3 (1) P4 (7) P5 (1) P7 (2)
		limited resources	15	P1 (1) P3 (11) P4 (3)
		staff retention and turnover	10	P2 (3) P3 (3) P4 (2) P7 (2)
		barriers to behaviour support	10	P5 (1) P6 (1) P7 (8)
		policy/ data/ guidance on ISU/ isolation	13	P1 (4) P5 (3) P6 (3) P7 (3)
	Theme 3 Subtheme 3: Looking for further support from other external agencies	Social care	1	P4 (1)
		CAMHS	4	P1 (1) P3 (1) P6 (1) P7 (1)
		no. of agencies involved	18	P1 (9) P2 (2) P4 (6)

				P5 (1)
		referrals	8	P1 (5) P2 (1) P4 (2)
		alternative providers	8	P1 (1) P2 (1) P3 (2) P6 (4)
		Other borough support	9	P2 (3) P3 (2) P4 (1) P6 (2) P7 (1)

Appendix R Table Weightings of coding for young people

Theme (Young people)	Subtheme	Codes	Frequency of Code	Number of times participants that referenced this
Theme 1: The negative impact of the in-school unit	Theme 1 Subtheme 1: Lack of clarity impacting on expectations of the in-school unit	name of area	18	YP1 (1) YP2 (2) YP3 (3) YP4 (4) YP5 (3) YP6 (1) YP7 (2) YP8 (2)
		reasons for going to area	25	YP1 (6) YP2 (4) YP3 (3) YP4 (3) YP5 (4) YP6 (1) YP7 (1) YP8 (3)
		area rules	15	YP1 (1) YP2 (2) YP3 (2) YP4 (2) YP5 (3) YP6 (1) YP7 (2) YP8 (2)
		time spent in area	30	YP1 (4) YP2 (3) YP3 (4) YP4 (6) YP5 (3) YP6 (4) YP7 (2) YP8 (4)
	Theme 1 Subtheme 2: Young People's negative experiences of being removed from their usual school environment	room and area descriptions	41	YP1 (4) YP2 (8) YP3 (9) YP4 (5) YP5 (5) YP6 (6) YP7 (3) YP8 (1)
		what happens in room	38	YP1 (5) YP2 (3) YP3 (6) YP4 (5) YP5 (6) YP6 (3) YP7 (6)

				YP8 (4)
		what adults do during isolation	27	YP1 (3) YP2 (1) YP3 (4) YP4 (8) YP5 (2) YP6 (3) YP7 (4) YP8 (2)
		break and lunch times	24	YP1 (3) YP2 (7) YP4 (1) YP5 (6) YP6 (5) YP7 (1) YP8 (1)
		after isolation/ exclusion	20	YP1 (4) YP2 (4) YP4 (1) YP5 (4) YP6 (1) YP7 (4) YP8 (2)
Theme 2: The sense of social injustice that arises from attendance in in-school units	Theme 2 Subtheme 1: Unstructured reflection: “just sitting there and… [we] think about what we’ve done”	"reflecting" when in area	21	YP2 (2) YP3 (8) YP4 (5) YP5 (5) YP8 (1)
		perceptions of self	9	YP2 (3) YP5 (3) YP7 (3)
		frequency of going to area	12	YP1 (2) YP2 (3) YP3 (2) YP5 (1) YP6 (2) YP7 (1) YP8 (1)
	Theme 2 Subtheme 2: Feeling socially excluded	wanting social contact	22	YP1 (1) YP2 (9) YP4 (6) YP5 (2) YP6 (1) YP7 (2) YP8 (1)
		receiving help	19	YP1 (1) YP2 (1) YP3 (6) YP4 (6) YP5 (1) YP6 (1) YP7 (1) YP8 (2)

		feeling excluded, isolated and separated	7	YP1 (2) YP2 (1) YP4 (1) YP5 (2) YP6 (1)
	Theme 2 Subtheme 3: The negative feelings and perceived injustices about the way young people were treated within the in-school unit	Frustrations	28	YP1 (2) YP2 (12) YP3 (2) YP4 (4) YP5 (1) YP6 (3) YP7 (2) YP8 (2)
		Boredom	16	YP1 (7) YP2 (3) YP4 (4) YP5 (1) YP6 (1)
		needing time out of area	6	YP4 (1) YP7 (5)
		other feelings about isolation	12	YP1 (1) YP3 (1) YP5 (3) YP6 (3) YP8 (4)
Theme 3: Young people's ideas on moving forward with the practice of in-school units	Theme 3 Subtheme 1: learning about how to support young people from hearing about their likes/dislikes through primary to secondary school	primary school experiences	19	YP1 (4) YP2 (3) YP3 (3) YP4 (1) YP5 (4) YP6 (1) YP7 (3) YP8 (2)
		likes about secondary	35	YP1 (2) YP2 (2) YP3 (8) YP4 (9) YP5 (5) YP6 (5) YP7 (3) YP8 (1)
		Perceptions of school	12	YP1 (3) YP2 (2) YP3 (3) YP4 (1) YP5 (1) YP7 (1) YP8 (1)
		interests and hobbies	22	YP1 (3) YP2 (2) YP3 (2) YP4 (2)

				YP5 (4) YP6 (4) YP7 (4) YP8 (1)
		behaviour strategies	28	YP1 (9) YP2 (10) YP3 (1) YP4 (2) YP7 (6)
		dislikes about school	15	YP1 (1) YP2 (1) YP3 (4) YP6 (5) YP7 (3) YP8 (1)
	Theme 3 Subtheme 2: suggestions to improve in-school unit experiences	preferences about in-school area	16	YP1 (2) YP3 (10) YP7 (3) YP8 (1)
		making school and isolation better	21	YP1 (3) YP2 (3) YP3 (4) YP4 (1) YP5 (5) YP6 (1) YP7 (3) YP8 (1)