Identifying barriers and facilitators for educational inclusion for young people who offend

Jenny O'Carroll

Institute of Education, University of London

Doctorate in Professional Educational Child and Adolescent Psychology

Abstract

This study is an investigation into the barriers and facilitators for youth offender's engagement in education using both quantitative and qualitative methods.
The population was youth offenders in one inner London Local Authority (n=283) identified by professionals working within the Youth Offending Service (YOS).

The current study was a mixed methods design divided into two phases. Phase 1 reports descriptive statistics from available data from Asset and other data sources available to the YOS for the youth offender population. Phase 2 involves semi structured interviews to seek the views of YOS workers (case officers, speech and language therapists, CAMHS staff, education staff, training and employment case officers, n=7), stakeholders within the education or training setting where youth offenders attend (teachers within mainstream, specialist, PRU and training provisions, n=7) and youth offenders themselves (n=7) to identify the barriers and facilitators for youth offenders engaging in education.

The quantitative data indicated the sample mainly comprised of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) young people (n=259), male (n=212) aged 14-16 year olds (n=155). The majority of school aged young people were educated at the PRU and the majority of young people above school age had no provision recorded, followed by being in alternative education or training.

The qualitative data was interpreted through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's Eco-Systemic model and identified barriers and facilitators at each level of the system; professional interviews indicated barriers of a fragmented system, poor communication between the multiple professionals involved, disparity in data collection, difficulties with working with parents and unidentified SEN.

Throughout both sets of interviews a common thread of relationships was identified as a barrier and potential facilitator where a strong supportive network is seen as protective factor for young people. This study reinforces the idea that services can improve when there is a good and coherent professional system with effective working relationships, as these are key in supporting this vulnerable young group of people. The Educational Psychologist is well placed to provide a supportive role at all levels of the system to support and improve educational outcomes for youth offenders.

Declaration and Word Count

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Word count (exclusive of appendices, list of references):   37, 064 words.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father. I miss him every day and I am filled with sadness that he never saw this process through to its completion. He was so proud that I started this journey, and his support, love and encouragement got me this far. I hope I make you proud Dad.

Acknowledgements

On a professional level, I would like to thank my colleagues in the Youth Offending Service for their time, support and participation in the project, and to the young people for their time and willingness to share their experiences.

I would also like to thank all my colleagues in the Educational Psychology Service for their ongoing support and encouragement. I would like to express appreciation to my tutor Sharon Synmoie for her interest, support and encouragement throughout the journey.

I would also like to thank Jane Hurry and Vivian Hill at the Institute of Education for their guidance, support and wise words.

Finally I would like to thank my family and friends, in particular Sara Northey for her advice, time and practical assistance, and to my partner Duncan for his patience, encouragement, support and tolerating me throughout this long journey.

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Abbreviations

ADHD   Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

CAMHS   Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

CBT   Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

EP   Educational Psychologist

ETE   Education, Training and Employment

FTE   First Time Entrants

LA   Local Authority

LEA   Local Education Authority

NEET   Not in Education, Employment or Training

PEP   Principal Educational Psychologist

PRU   Pupil Referral Unit

SDQ   Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

SEN   Special Educational Needs

SEND   Special Educational Needs and Disability

SES   Social Economic Status

SEU   Social Exclusion Unit

YJB   Youth Justice Board

YJMIS   Youth Justice Management Information System

YJS   Youth Justice System

YOS   Youth Offending Service

YOT   Youth Offending Team

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 will give a rationale to the study and its relevance to the role of the educational psychologist working with youth offenders. It will finally detail the structure of the remaining chapters in the thesis.

1.2 Rationale

Young people who have been involved in offending are at high risk of social exclusion as adults. Research has identified that raising the educational attainment of young people who offend promises to be one of the most effective means of reducing the risk of offending (Youth Justice Board, 2003a).

Young people disengaged from education are much more likely to be involved in anti-social behaviour and criminal behaviour. Research has shown that young people not attending school are more than three times as likely to offend than those attending school, although the causal relationship of the two factors is not clear (Graham and Bowling, 1995). Further research shows a strong link between permanent exclusion and offending behaviour but again questions whether exclusion has an independent effect on offending or if offenders are more likely to be excluded (Home Office, 1997; Audit Commission, 1996).

One third of youth offenders are not in full time education or have no access arranged (House of Commons, 2011). Furthermore, the House of Commons (2011) reported that the Youth Justice Board (YJB) still knows little about the relative

effectiveness of interventions with young offenders.

Once a young person is known to the Youth Justice System, following committing a crime (of which the minimum age in England is set at 10 years of age), then the young person is referred to the Youth Offending Team in the area that they reside for support with addressing their offending behaviour and to reduce reoffending.

A body of literature has grown to bring about wider change in recognition of systemic failure and social policy reform for Looked After Children (DfES, 2000; DfES, 2003; DfES 2006; DfES 2007; DoH & DfE, 2009; DfE 2010; DoE, 2011; DoH & DfE, 2014) but not for the Youth Justice System (YJS). It has been reported that there is virtually no cross-pollination between education and youth justice (YJB, 2006). This is concerning on two levels; one being that in the UK, policy requires at least 90% of youth offenders to be in suitable full time education, training or employment (OLAS, 2004) and secondly; research indicates proportionately high levels of learning difficulties amongst the youth offending population (Farrington, 1996; Harrington and Bailey, 2005; Hughes, Williams, Chitsabesan, Davies and Mounce, 2012). 25% of young people in the YJS are known to have a special educational need and 46% are rated as underachieving at school (Berelowitz, 2011). Figures from the Department of Work and Pensions (2012) report that 64% of young men permanently excluded from school have committed a criminal offence, compared to 31% of non-excluded young men and around 60% are functioning at FE level 1 or below in literacy and numeracy.

Just prior to the body of literature growing for Looked After Children following concerns of educational underachievement for this group, the researcher worked as an Education Caseworker for LAC in an inner London borough for over ten years. At

the start of this professional career, little was known about the young people's educational needs in this borough, and furthermore, no systems were in place to address this, similar to the current case with young people in the YJS. Over the years, as statutory policies took place for LAC, numerous changes evolved in local authorities practice; virtual schools were set up, schools had a designated teacher responsible for LAC pupils, Personal Education Plans were a statutory requirement to be completed twice a year by agencies around the child, and funding was in place to assist with educational support relevant to the individual pupil. It could be argued that young people within the YJS are at a similar place to young people who were LAC some fifteen years ago, but little has changed in policy practice to improve and support educational needs and outcomes within the YJS. This was a major consideration and motivating factor in undertaking research in this area.

Education can be an issue for many youth offenders. Some will be disaffected, some will have their education disrupted by their offending, some may have Special Educational Needs (SEN) issues or will be classified as Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET). From the perspective of the education providers, mainstream educators may be reluctant, or feel unable to work with YOT and workers in the YOT may find it difficult to work with young people who are NEET.

1.3 Relevance to educational psychologists working with youth offenders

The potential barriers for young offenders engaging in education can be linked to their educational under achievement, limited and accurate information being gathered on their educational needs and wider systemic issues.

Youth offenders should then be a prominent population for Educational

Psychologists (EPs) to work with but there is little research detailing the work of EPs

in Youth Offending Teams (YOTs). Farrell, Woods, Lewis, Rooney, Squire and

O'Connor (2006) found that only 39% of Principal EPs indicated that they had an EP

working with YOT but a further 62% said that EPs should be involved. The services

that EPs provide for any group of young people with learning and behavioural needs

are arguably more relevant for young people in the YJS, who may be at greater risk

of already being disengaged from mainstream services. Indeed, the Chief Executive

of the Youth Justice Board, Lin Hinnigan, a former EP states:

*"I would love to see EPs embedded in YOT advising on accessing appropriate
educational placements and on interventions for children on the edges of offending
behaviour". (Personal communication, 14.10.13).*

Having an EP in such a role could evidence that ministers are serious about trying to

put education at the heart of youth custody. As there is convincing evidence

suggesting that the best guarantee of social inclusion is education, (Lipsey, 1995;

McGuire, 1995) the overall aim of the research study is to identify the reasons for

educational underperformance and explore how to increase young offenders

successful participation and reintegration back into education. This will be explored

from the young people known to the YOS within 1 inner city London borough.

Therefore the research questions are:

RQ1. What are the educational needs, uptake and educational provision for youth

offenders within the local authority?

RQ2. What are barriers and facilitators of educational inclusion and engagement

from different stakeholder's perspectives?

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The literature review is divided into 3 chapters. Chapter 2 discusses the links between youth and offending: the risks and protective factors. It explores theories of adolescence and the development of autonomy during this stage for young people and how this can be a positive stage but may also present a risk of transgression. The chapter also examines how education can be a protective factor but can be problematic for some young people who may face multiple risk factors in their lives. Societal views of youth are considered and the chapter concludes with a discussion of how this developmental life stage occurs at a time when education, employment and training decisions are being made with significant implications for future plans into adulthood. Chapter 3 discusses the factors that are associated with being barriers for adolescents engaging in education and being at risk of involvement with the youth offending service. The chapter concludes with the educational issues and needs of youth offenders.

Chapter 4 explores the youth justice landscape in the UK, discussing what interventions work with the youth offending population and the links between Educational Psychologists and youth offending teams.

Chapter 5 details the research design and how data was collected using a mixed methods design. The process of thematic analysis is discussed and the ethical considerations given throughout the study.

Chapter 6 details the results from phase 1 and phase 2 of the study.

Chapter 7 draws conclusions from the results of the study and the links to previous research. It discusses the limitations of the study and professional recommendations for future work and developing the role of educational psychologists working with youth offenders.

Chapter 2: Youth and Offending: Risks and Protective Factors

The aim of the following three chapters is to provide a broad overview of adolescence, offending and why education may be an issue for young people who offend. This was considered important in acknowledgement of the fact that educational needs should not be seen in a vacuum. Adolescence is a time of many changes, in terms of physical and psychological factors, which coincide with educational transitions when important decisions about future plans are made e.g. choosing GCSE's, deciding whether to remain in education or take up vocational or employment options post 16. Education is important, and increasingly young people need to complete their secondary school education if they are to succeed in future life chances. But education can be an issue for some young people, and even more so for young people within the youth justice system, therefore Chapter 2 focuses on this life stage and the risks involved with disengaged students, as well as the protective factors of remaining engaged within education. Chapter 3 focuses on wider systemic issues and theories surrounding factors that are known to increase the risk of young people becoming involved with crime, as it is important to acknowledge that multiple barriers may need to be addressed with young people and their families if we are to be successful with implementing interventions to aid educational inclusion and avoid offending behaviour. Chapter 4 provides an overview of the youth justice landscape to explore what is currently known about youth offenders within the UK and their engagement with educational interventions and educational psychologists. This broad overview of literature fulfills the aim of trying to further determine how educational psychologists may work with youth offending teams due to acknowledging the complexity and numerous factors that are involved

for young people at this stage of their lives. An EBSCO host search was undertaken on two occasions, the first in November 2014, followed by a search in January 2016 to find relevant literature in the more exhaustive search in the area, which was more central to the study, e.g. education for youth offenders. The keywords of "youth" OR "juvenile" OR "teenage" OR adolescent", AND "offenders" AND "education" were used. At this stage 926 articles were found. To narrow this down for more relevance to the study, a search limit of research undertaken from 1990 to 2016 was applied, alongside a focus on youth offenders and education within the UK. 57 articles were then found. Searches of the more peripheral areas were intended to provide breadth but not depth on the more systemic factors such as gang involvement and parental factors and youth offenders.   These headings for the peripheral areas were gained as the study progressed and from the themes occurring from the interviews. The reference list grew from my own reading and consulting with people knowledgeable in the area such as my tutors and professionals working within the YOS e.g. linked to CAMHs or gang prevention work. Google searches for the Youth Justice Board publications and statistics were hand searched throughout the study.

2.1 Theories of adolescence

Youth overlaps with the term childhood as human rights and other legal frameworks define a child as anyone under the age of 18, and the United Nations defines youth as persons between the ages of 15-25 years, although this definition varies between studies and across cultures (Brown, 1990). In order to aid the understanding of adolescence it is helpful to consider a number of theories at this stage of development to which we can attach our interpretations throughout the study.

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Across the lifespan offending has been shown to peak at the age of 17 years, massively decreasing by the time offenders reach their late 20's (Farrington, 1986; Soothill, Ackerley and Francis, 2004). It is important to consider why this might be such a time of increased risk: a number of different explanations have been proposed.

Some historical theories (for instance Hall (1904), Erikson (1959) and Marcia (1966)) focused on adolescence as a time of 'storm and stress' and identity development. Marcia suggested that adolescents might spend time in a state of 'moratorium', whilst they are allowed to experiment with a variety of identities, which only becomes resolved later.

More recently, brain imaging studies have suggested that adolescence is a time of significant neurological development and that the frontal lobes continue developing well into a person's 20s. It has been proposed therefore that young people may be more likely to take part in risky behaviours, act impulsively and be harder to engage in longer term problem solving (Steinberg, 2007). In some young people these factors may be compounded by other risk factors in their lives. It is therefore important to consider the physical, psychological and contextual issues that place some young people more at risk of disengagement from education and being involved with crime during this life stage.

The Focal model suggests that the adolescent is the agent in their development but that they cope and manage the transitions by dealing with issues one at a time (Coleman, 1974). This provides a flexible approach of development with different relationships and different problems coming into focus at different times and being

dealt with at different stages. Research by Simmons and Blyth (1987) reflected similar studies at that time that the notion of timing was critical in the sense that adolescents can cope with issues when they happen one at a time, and a greater number of transitions to be dealt with will result in an increased possibility of poor academic performance and low self-esteem.

However, it is important to acknowledge that most young people have the resources or circumstances to enable them to manage issues and transitions, and not all transitions take place in a linear form.

The model of adolescence as a time of crisis and as a deficit model has been challenged. The majority of young people do get on well with their parents and cope well with difficulties at this time (Siddique and D'Arcy, 1984). In the early 1990's, framed by the developmental systems theories, a new vocabulary for discussing youth was emerging. The theories had a focus on plasticity which led to assessing the potential for change at the time of adolescence, where resources youth had could be developed and not just seen as problems that had to be managed (Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2003).

Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, Phelps et al. began a study in 2002 to explore the empirical status of the Positive Youth Development (PYD) perspective. PYD has a number of ideas; the strengths of the youth are aligned with the resources present in the key contexts of adolescence development e.g. school, home and community, therefore positive development will occur over time. Aligning individual strengths and contextual resources across key settings of youth development.

The five Cs – Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character and Caring were hypothesised as a way of conceptualizing PYD. The 5Cs were linked to the positive outcomes of youth development programmes. Pittman, Irby and Ferber (2001) suggested that promoting positive development in adolescents was the best means to prevent problems in adolescent behaviour such as aggression, drug use, and unsafe sexual behaviour.

Replacing the deficit view of adolescence with PYD enables a focus on all adolescents as having strengths and aligning the strengths with the developmental assets present in their social and physical ecology. Their model of PYD, mutually influential,

person   ⬅   ➡   context relations, the development of the 5Cs and the attainment in adulthood of an "idealised" status.

Although the deficit and positive psychology models differ in how they propose changes in adolescence to adulthood should be approached, they agree that many changes occur during this transition. One example of this may be reduced parental control.

2.2 Development of autonomy during adolescence

Autonomy and the development of independence could be seen as key tasks for all adolescents to achieve. Many variables could influence how this journey is achieved: family circumstances, ethnicity, cultural, social and economic opportunities within the environment can all play a part. Early views of adolescence independence

were influenced by psychoanalytic theory where emotional disengagement from parents was fundamental to become a mature adult. However empirical work from the 1960's showed that autonomy is possible without disengagement from parents. Youniss and Smollar (1985) discussed a situation where parents and adolescents maintained close ties and worked together to redefine their relationship, calling this stage interdependence, as the young person developed their individuality without separation. Grotevant and Cooper (1986) talk of connectedness, where the young person remains connected to the family whilst also moving towards individuation. However, not all adolescents are close to their families. There is some evidence to suggest that higher degrees of emotional autonomy may be associated with behavioural difficulties, although the methodology of some of these studies has been questioned (e.g. Goossens, 2006).

This would suggest that connectedness to parents may be a protective factor against behavioural difficulties. This period of development as teenagers gain independence, is a time of increased vulnerability for disengagement from education and social exclusion. Research suggests this vulnerability may be heightened when teenagers do not have connectedness with parents. Whilst increased autonomy allows young people to develop their own identity and independence, autonomy also brings increased opportunity to transgress. For instance, with an increased risk for drug and alcohol use, truancy, school exclusion and drop-out.

2.3 Engagement in education as a protective factor

Engagement with school is a protective factor on many levels; it can reduce risk factors during adolescence of gang involvement, substance misuse and school dropout as it promotes engagement with prosocial institutions and engagement with school (Morrison, Robertson, Laurie and Kelly 2002). Student engagement has also been consistently linked to positive outcomes in young people and adolescents in academic outcomes and social competency (Eccles, 2004; Portes, 2000; Skinner and Pitzer, 2012).

Skinner and Pitzer (2012) conceptualize school engagement as the outward manifestation of motivation. They argue that models of motivation share core features with engagement where the psychological processes underlying it are energy (effort, enthusiasm, and vigour), purpose (interest, focus and concentration) and durability of human action (absorption, determination and persistence). This model includes the emotional and cognitive processes involved with engagement as well as behavioural processes.

The Self System Model of Motivational Development (Reeve, 2002) provides an additional view to Skinner and Pitzer that integrates the important outcomes of engagement. This model is built on Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self Determination Theory which asserts that people are intrinsically motivated and have basic needs for relatedness, competence and autonomy. Reeve's development of relatedness from the Self Determination Theory is that the basic needs have to be met by social

activities and engagement with others around them. If these needs are not met then people withdraw and become disengaged by acting out or withdrawing.

These models stress the importance of supportive interactions with teachers, peers and parents to engage with the learning process. Teacher support given in a caring and close relationship has been shown in many studies as an important predictor of student engagement (Brewster & Bowen, 2004).

Considering these models from the perspective of the current study, it is possible that many youth offenders may not have the features necessary to engage with education as stated by Skinner and Pitzer, (2012). For example, they may find it difficult to concentrate or be enthusiastic about the work. Additionally, many youth offenders may not feel connected to their teachers or peers and therefore lack the relatedness stated in the Self System Model as a key feature for engagement. This may also be related to their attachment style: for further discussion of this please see Chapter 3. Deci and Ryan (1985) suggest that competence is a primary intrinsic need and that people strive to understand what is needed to experience the desired outcome. However, some young people may have anxieties about not being able to do things well, resulting in another reason for disengagement. A further complexity is that adolescence occurs at a time when most young people are engaged with education and starting to make choices for their future occupational journey. Disrupted education or educational disengagement at this time is a significant risk factor, particularly for youth offenders.

Skinner and Pitzer (2012) argue that the motivational model can be used as a framework to enhance student engagement. However, this model tends to

emphasise the individual young person's level of motivation and therefore neglects to take into account the multiple systemic factors which might also affect a young person's motivation and capacity to engage. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory (1979) asserts that development is the interaction between the person's environment and the developing person. For young people, the family, neighbourhood and school environments are fundamental for shaping development and Bronfenbrenner uses the notion that systems overlap and interact and are generally consistent within society. These models therefore do not consider the variety of factors, which may affect a person's development, and hence their engagement as suggested by Bronfenbrenner.

Bronfenbrenner's theory of human development is a theory that was in a continual state of development from 1977 until his death in 2005. Earlier models of his theory gave prominence to the aspects of the context; the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem in a person's development.

MACROSYSTEM
Attitudes and ideologies of the culture

EXOSYSTEM

MESOSYSTEM

Industry

Social services

MICROSYSTEM

Family

Peers

INDIVIDUAL
(sex, age, health, etc.)

School

Church

Mass media

Health services

Neighbors

Local politics
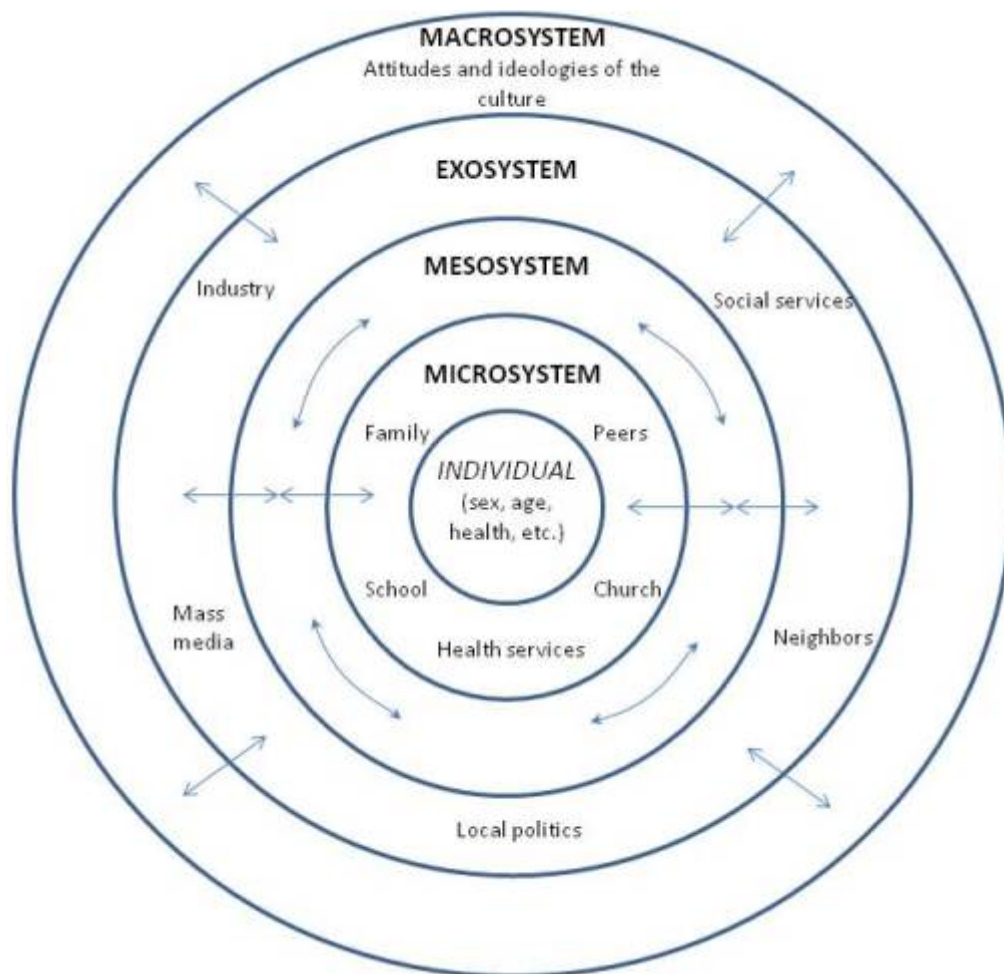
Figure 3.1: Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979)

However, Bronfenbrenner rose to criticisms for discounting the role the person plays in his or her own development and for focusing too much on context by revising and extending his theory to stress an ecological theory of person-context interrelatedness. (Bronfenbrenner, 1989, 1999). His later versions of his theory would explain the *processes* of human development and that the connection between some aspects of the context or some aspects of the individual and an outcome of interest are *proximal processes* as the key factor in development. This later model would include a key essence of his theory to be describes as Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT). (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994).

Process is considered the primary mechanism in development as human development takes place through processes of reciprocal interactions that become progressively more complex between an evolving biopsychological human organism and the surrounding people, objects and symbols in its immediate environment. Person is where Bronfenbrenner acknowledged the biological and genetic aspects of the individual as well as personal characteristics that the individual brings with them to any social situation. Personal characteristics include age, gender, skin colour etc. as well as resource characteristics which will include mental and emotional resources such as past experiences, skills and intelligence and also social and material resources such as access to food, housing, caring parents, educational opportunities etc. Finally, force characteristics are included such as motivation, persistence and temperament, which Bronfenbrenner uses to explain why two children who have equal resource characteristics may have different developmental outcomes if one is motivated to succeed on tasks more than the other. Therefore, this part of his later theory includes the notion that the individual can play a role in changing their context e.g. by changing their environment by a desire to do so. Time plays a crucial role in this theory as it acknowledges that developmental processes can vary according to the specific historical event that occurs at the stage of the developing individual. A person can experience the same event differently if they experience it a different point in their life stages.

Therefore, this study bases its research on Bronfenbrenner's ecological model as it aims to acknowledge the interactions among personal characteristics, context and time to describe the complexities involved for young people who have offended to engage successfully with education.

2.4 Associations between youth and offending

Moffitt (1993) proposes an interesting dual taxonomy "life course-persistent' theory and "adolescence-limited" theory to explain why the prevalence and incidence of offending occurs during adolescence, peaking at age 17, but by the age of 20, the number of offenders decreases by 50%, and by age 28 almost 85% of former youth offenders have stopped offending (Farrington, 1986; Graham and Bowling, 1995; Moffitt, 1993). Consensus appears to have followed Farrington's (1983) findings that it is a temporary increase in the adolescence peak of people involved in anti-social behaviour and not a temporary acceleration in offending by individuals. Social influences such as seeking social status through anti-social behaviours are thought to be common during adolescence (Monahan, Steinberg, Cauffman and Mulvey, 2009). Moffitt argues that a large group of people take part in anti-social behaviour during adolescence only or "adolescence limited' (AL), but a very small group of people continue their offending behavior throughout adult life and this group's anti-social behaviour was evident and stable from early childhood. The concept of a 'life course-persistent group' (LCP) is drawn from Moffitt's (1991) longitudinal Dunedin study of a representative cohort of 1,037 children aged 3-21 years where violent offences at 18 years of age accounted for 25% of LCP to 8% of AL. This research was further supported by longitudinal data such as Robbins (1966, 1978) where adults with anti-social personality disorder also had conduct disorders as children. The persistence of anti-social behaviour is argued to be in the interactions between the child's neuropsychological vulnerabilities and criminogenic environments. However, the adolescent onset age group of anti-social behaviours may have longer

lasting adult consequences; a longitudinal study of 411 London boys aged 8 years at the start of the study (Nagin, Farrington and Moffitt, 1995) found that as adults (followed up to 46 years) this group continued to commit undetected crimes though their work life and close relationships were not affected.   Whilst there is empirical evidence to support Moffit's classification, perhaps it is inaccurate to imagine that the adolescent limited onset group have completely typical trajectories into adulthood.

Moffitt's theory fails to explain why some adolescents do not break the law and furthermore, theories of offending which focus upon the identification of risk factors from infancy onwards carry with them a risk of 'self-fulfilling prophecy' whereby those individuals labelled as 'high risk' may develop offending behaviours at least partly in response to society's expectations of them to do so.

2.5 Perceptions of youth: impact of stigma

The importance of society's expectations of youths shouldn't be overlooked. Negative expectations or perceptions are likely to result in disengagement from society. Research by Bawdon (2009) showed that over half of stories about teenage boys in the National UK media over the year 2008 were about crime, with common terms used such as 'hoodie', 'louts', 'heartless', 'evil' and 'feral'. It also revealed that the best chance a teenager had of receiving sympathetic coverage was if they died.

The absence of the young person's voice has been a criticism of most qualitative research, but the Inventing Adulthoods study (Henderson, Holland, McGrellis, Sharpe and Thomson, 2007) adopted a biographical approach that followed 62

young people over a 10 year period using interviews, focus groups, diaries and questionnaires to provide data on how their lives and how they negotiated changes and transitions. One message from this study was that youth policy focused on adult concerns (drugs, violence, health and education) which differed from the young people's concerns, who voiced mobility, belonging, home and sociality as areas of relevance to them. A further message showed that young people are motivated to invest in areas of their life where they receive acknowledgement for competency and recognition for achievement and the importance of possessing capital as they seek adult status (Thomson et al., 2004).

A practical danger of the currency of negative perceptions of youth is that it may undermine inclusion in mainstream educational provision.

2.6 Adolescence and transitions in education, employment and training

Adolescence is characterised by transition. Early experiences can shape the transition and is underpinned by continuity from childhood, but education, training and employment is a key transition for young people. Gaining qualifications is becoming increasingly important for transition to a secure adult life and becoming socially marginalised is heightened with limited job prospects following weak basic education (Bynner, 2004, Parsons & Bynner, 1999).

Longitudinal data discussed by Schoon (2003) focuses on the importance of around 16 years of age as a key transitional time as important decisions about futures are made. Bloomer and Hodkinson (2002) describe young people aged 16-18 years as being at a critical stage of human growth and development in their working lives. As

this period coincides with the peak age for offending of 17 years, it is important to consider the relationship between the two: a young person who is involved in offending at this age may find that their education and employment choices become drastically limited in comparison to their non-offending peers.

So far, this review has shown that adolescence is perceived within the literature as a time of considerable change and development, although there is some disagreement about whether it can be considered to be a time of 'crisis'. We have also seen evidence that societal perceptions of youth can have an influence upon behaviour and the opportunities that young people are given, and that young people who offend may find it harder to negotiate the educational transitions, which occur in adolescence. A key concept, which could be seen to overlay all of these issues, is social exclusion. This can be defined as:

> *A shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low income, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.*
>
> *(SEU, 1998)*

Research shows that young people who are socially excluded have a greater risk of offending, but also that those who offend are also more likely to be excluded from mainstream society. The direction of causality is unclear, likely reciprocal.

Since 1997 New Labour prioritized education and crime as policy reforms, with a focus on education and training to reduce social exclusion. The Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) was set up to achieve lower long term unemployment, less crime, better health, better qualifications and the SEU (1999) reported that fewer young people

were leaving full time education to enter employment, 23% of 16 year olds in full time work in 1989 to 7% in 1997.

Initiatives were set up to tackle truancy, school exclusions and training for 16 and 17 years olds with the implementation of the Connexions Service to provide support to engage young people most at risk of social exclusion into education, training or employment.

Although there has been a change in economic climate since New Labour, and a coalition government came into office, similar trends can be seen with the new legislation of Children and Families Act (2014), Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND, 2014) and SEND Code of Practice (SEND COP, 2015). The new legislation is aimed at reducing social exclusion and preventing NEET for young people aged up to 25 and recommends a multi-agency approach to successfully transition young people into education, training or employment. The social and political agenda is aimed at supporting transitions for young people into work, apprenticeships or education. Indeed, the current agenda for the Conservative Party is to stop benefits or the newly named 'youth allowance' for young people aged 18 or over who have been out of education, training or employment for 6 months, and to involve them in voluntary work (Cameron, D, comments made in Parliament, Feb 2015).

There is a shift in the current climate with increasing numbers of young people aged 16 to 24 in full time education which has more than doubled over the last 30 years, 42% at the end of 2013 up from 17% in 1984 (Office National Statistics, 2014).

Although education funding changed which saw a stop to student grants and an introduction of tuition fees, this growing number may reflect the declining employment opportunities following the economic downturn in 2008.

Changes in legislation means that from 2015, young people have to be participating in full time education or training, accessing training via an apprenticeship or engaged in full time work until their 18th birthday (Education and Skills Act, 2008). Potential difficulties may arise if work opportunities are not available in the current austerity climate or if the arrangements are not of sufficient quality to engage some problematic cohorts of young people but are seen as a mandatory containing period rather than a meaningful opportunity.

Education and training is also identified as an approach to reduce offending (Lipsey, 1995; McGuire, 1995). Research has consistently shown that young people in the YJS have lower attainments in literacy and numeracy (Farrington, 1996; Rutter, Giller and Hagell, 1998). The ECOTEC (2001) UK survey of youth offenders in custody reported that 51% were below level 1 in Further Education levels in literacy and 52% in numeracy. Hurry, Brazier and Moriarty (2005) reported that 57% of youth offenders supervised in the community were below level 1 in literacy and 63% in numeracy.

Weak basic skills can increase the chances of social marginalization as it can make it more difficult to secure employment. Therefore, changes in legislation have also targeted youth offenders to ensure that 90% of young offenders are in suitable full time education, training or employment (OLAS, 2004). The YJB (2006) study

reported that 35-45% of young people in the YJS are in full time education, training or employment at any given time.

However, the association between poor education, no qualifications and offending is not as linear as this suggests as many other explanations may be relevant. Individual factors and social factors such as Socio Economic Status (SES) and parenting create a complex relationship and it is difficult to determine the cause and effect. Longitudinal data can help to explore whether educational issues predate psychological problems and offending, but the complexity of variables involved result in uncertainty as to the effect of intervention. Therefore, EPs can play a valuable role in working with youth offenders in relation to identifying educational needs and issues and assisting professionals with gaining an understanding of the developmental and psychological factors involved to help them better understand the challenging behaviours or needs of the young people.

This chapter has explored theories of adolescence and the development of autonomy; and how this can be a positive stage but may also present a risk of transgression. Furthermore, education as a protective factor was discussed but how education can be problematic for some young people who face multiple risk factors in their lives. Therefore the potential barriers for young offenders engaging in education can be linked to their educational underachievement, limited and accurate information being gathered on their educational needs and wider systemic issues. Some of the wider systemic issues that can be a barrier for young people will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Issues for young people accessing education, training and employment

The empirical evidence demonstrates that there are significant factors that increase the risk of young people becoming involved with crime such as attachment and relationships/parenting difficulties, becoming a Looked after Child (LAC), mental health issues, substance misuse, special educational learning needs and that interacting systems can be barriers for young people who have offended to engage back into education (Hayward et al., in McGuire, 1995). Young people involved in persistent offending are considered to be the most vulnerable and therefore understanding the wider systemic factors is important in trying to implement interventions to avoid offending and to increase inclusion (Soloman, 2010).

3.1 Parenting and attachment

Home environments should provide young people with shelter, warmth, stability and meeting physical and emotional needs until they are independent. Attachment theory, first proposed by Bowlby (1951), provides a framework for making sense of emotional functioning and behaviour. It provides a model to explain that the relationship formed in infancy with the primary caregivers can affect subsequent behaviour and relationships. Gerhardt (2004) argues that as the brain is a social organ, our mental and physiological systems are developed in relationships with other people. Therefore, highly elevated incidences of social and emotional difficulties amongst youth offenders may be a result of early relationship experiences. Therefore, some family configurations are risk factors for offending. According to attachment theory young people who have experienced disrupted

attachment may make forming relationships with teachers more challenging (Gerhardt, 2004). Attachment theory therefore explains how difficult early relationships can lead to poor relationships with teachers and school disengagement which are both more prevalent with the youth offending population.

Smith and Farrington (2004) looked at delinquency of children aged 12 and 13 years and found that delinquency was significantly related to family relationships and controls, with a strong association with lower levels of parental supervision and delinquency.

Adolescent neglect is a growing area of study. The Rochester Youth Development Study (Thornberry, 2010) demonstrated negative outcomes specifically for neglect in adolescence:

"Maltreatment which begins during adolescence is more damaging than maltreatment which started and ceased during childhood. It leads to involvement in criminal behaviours, substance misuse, health-risking sexual behaviours and suicidal thoughts. Neglect during adolescence is as damaging as other forms of maltreatment, increasing risk of arrest, offending and violent crime (late adolescence)/the risk of arrest and drug use (early adulthood)."

However, policy, research and practice has mainly focused on the early years outcomes of neglect and there is little effective professional response in adolescence neglect. A new study from the Children's Society (2016) explored Adolescent Neglect in England and the consequences involved using the data from the Office of National Statistics which included over 50,000 children being involved with surveys, focus groups and interviews. Overall findings reported that half of the 14-15 years olds in the study reported they were supported in physical care and supervision but

less than a third were supported with education or emotional support. The study reports that neglected teenagers do worse with less parenting input equating to poorer outcomes for example smoking/drinking, education and health. The importance of emotional support was emphasised for this age group. However, this study recognises that the term 'neglect' can lack clarity in terms of its definition and conceptualisation. Research into adolescent neglect would suggest that the impact of parenting is a prevalent issue beyond early attachment. Neglect during adolescence is likely to cause many behaviours associated with youth offending for example substance misuse or becoming involved with a negative peer group suggesting a correlation between adolescence neglect and youth offending.

3.2 Gangs and Adolescence

Youth gangs have gained increasing attention during the last decade, with youth surveys across the UK reporting that 2 to 7% of 10-19 years olds report being a member of a gang. Research has consistently shown a link between gang membership, antisocial behaviour and offending (e.g. Thornberry et al., 2003). Gang membership may lead to increased exposure to antisocial peers and delinquent values (Medina, Cebulla, Ross, Shute and Aldridge, 2013) and may also lead young people to view antisocial behaviour or offending as better ways to obtain money and status than through education and training (Welham, 2012).

Factors leading young people into gangs are reported to be early parental neglect and abuse, parental violence and drug addiction. (HM Government, 2011). Gang membership is also more prevalent in areas of high socio-economic deprivation,

unemployment and single parent families (The Centre for Social Justice, 2009) and may also be affected by racial inequality and ethnic oppression (Hagedorn, 2008).

Palmer (2009) found that in areas of London many young people join a gang for protection when wanting to go out. She states that "postcode violence" is felt to be very prevalent. It is likely that postcode violence will have an impact upon whether or not young people feel able to travel safely to particular areas, for instance for educational provision. This could be a significant limiting factor for some young people in accessing education or training and may limit professionals in the educational provisions they can offer.

3.3 Looked After Children

Looked After Children (LAC) come into contact with the youth justice system at a higher rate than the general population: 7.3% compared to 3% of all children and young people (NACRO, 2012). However, LAC are not a homogenous group and many young people in the care system do not offend, resulting in a complex link between care status and offending.

Historically under the Children Act 1989, children became looked after by local authorities via a care order, which places the child to the compulsory care of a designated authority. The other route into care is via voluntary agreement from the birth parent, who maintains parental responsibility (Department of Health, 1989). Since 2003, all Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children have routinely become looked after under Section 20 and under the LASPO Act 2012 young people are also

become looked after when they have been given a custodial sentence or on remand to a local authority.

A survey by Summerfield (2011) reported that over a quarter of young men and over half of young women in custody have been in care and Hazel et al. (2002) reported that 41% had been in care from her sample of 336 young people.

LAC in custody have more complex needs than their peers; a thematic inspection of prisons (2011) showed that LAC were more likely to have substance misuse, emotional and mental health problems on arrival. LAC may have experienced a number of risk factors e.g. past abuse, attachment difficulties, care and school placement moves that make them vulnerable. Darker, Ward & Caulfield (2008) undertook a quantitative study over 6 local authorities and found that children in care who offended were also more likely to have non-attendance at school, conduct disorders and drug use. These factors were found to be more prevalent in the LAC group than the general population, but these factors may be exacerbated by being taken into care or experiencing transitions.

LAC also have a number of professionals working around them, and when they enter the YJS, more professionals become a part of this group. As highlighted from the Inventing Adulthood study, LAC may have even greater difficulty trusting and working with adults, and attachment theory may also be a helpful framework in understanding the difficulties these young people face in being able to form relationships (Gerhardt, 2004).

A great deal of policy reform has been established over the years in response to the recognition of systemic failure and poor educational outcomes for LAC. (DfES, 2000; DfES, 2003; DfES 2006; DfES 2007; DoH & DfE, 2009; DfE 2010; DoE, 2011; DoH & DfE, 2014). The Care Matters Green and White Papers (DfES, 2006; DCSF, 2007) put forward recommendations directly related to enhancing educational outcomes for this group of young people which included a statutory role for each school to have a designated teacher responsible for LAC, and a Personal Education Plan to be completed every 6 months by core professionals, corporate parent and young person to ensure that educational needs are being met and supported with financial backing. Although systemic difficulties within the care system have been shown to contribute to poor educational outcomes for LAC, the importance of placing a strategic focus on improving educational attainment within a statutory framework is seeing progress with twice as many LAC achieving five or more GCSE's at grades A*-C from 2001 to 2009 figures (DCSF, 2010). Therefore, it could be argued that youth offenders may also face many systemic difficulties in their lives that can impact on their educational experiences and outcomes but they do not have the statutory policy reforms in place.

3.4 Mental Health and emotional well-being

Emotional well-being and mental health needs impact on many developmental areas of a young person's life and young people who have problems in these areas are over represented in the YJS. Data collected over the last twenty-five years shows an increase in emotional well-being problems and mental health needs of children and young people (Maxwell et al. 2007), although there is a debate regarding the extent

to which this represents an actual increase in mental health difficulties, or can be attributed to increased diagnosis or reporting.

'Mental health problems' is a broad definition which recognises that many people can experience mental distress but this is not necessarily an illness. Common mental health problems affect around 1 in 10 people at any time cover anxiety, depression, or feelings of panic (Mental Health Foundation, 2006). There is often a stigma with talking about mental health difficulties, which can result in people not seeking help when they are experiencing difficulties.

Mental health needs are considered to be particularly high in adolescents who have offended or are at risk of offending. Research commissioned by the Mental Health Foundation (2002) looked at studies across the US and the UK and found that mental health problems were prominent with young people in the YJS, particularly for those in custody, and that there was an imprecise detection of mental health disorders and problems. Stallard, Thomason and Churchyard (2003) reported that 56% of their sample had significant mental health needs which potentially needed further assessment and treatment, and Anderson, Vostanis and Spencer (2004) reported that 76% of their YOT cohort had emotional problems and 44% had scores indicating a potential mental health problem. Different terms and definitions are used and it may be that entering the custodial system may alone trigger the onset of a mental health problem. Both studies also reported that young offenders tended to use professional services to support their health needs in times of a crisis rather than in a preventative way, and the Youth Justice Board reported that 25% of young people known to YOT had never seen a GP.

Concerns arose from research showing that although a higher proportion of young offenders have mental health needs, these needs are often unmet. Barrett, Byford, Chitsabean and Kenning (2006) and Harrington and Bailey (2005) suggested that the needs are not recognised by professionals working with them. However, Naylor, Lincoln and Goddard (2008) found that the young people had an initial resistance to referral and identified commitment and respect, flexible and outreach appointments and personal relevance and clear explanations of the service to be influential in providing a system that engages young people with mental health services.

A study by Walsh, Scaife, Notley, Dodsworth and Schofield (2011) approached 66 youth offenders in the UK and found that the SDQ (Goodman, 1997) and interviews showed a high level of need across all 5 subscales of emotional, symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer problems and prosocial behaviour. 73% of those sampled preferred to go to a family member, namely mum, to talk to about mental health concerns, rather than seeking professional support. The study showed that provision to meet the mental health needs of their YOT population was not an issue, but that young people accessing services was due to psychological, social, structural and cultural barriers and the expressed need for confidentiality and trust.

Barnados (2010) researched the need for early intervention to protect vulnerable children from entering the youth system and found that the majority of young people preferred to be labelled as an "offender" rather than have the stigma of a mental health need.

The connection between offending and mental ill health is complex, but the findings from Green, McGinnity, Meltzer, Ford and Goodman (2005) suggests that mental ill health and poverty, disadvantage, lone parenting and inconsistent parenting are strongly associated, which are also risk factors for offending.

3.5 Substance Misuse

The prevalence and frequency of alcohol and drug use increases during adolescence. Many factors have been linked to adolescence drug use including family conflict, family drug use, peer pressure, poor decision-making, low self-esteem and social deprivation (Rutter and Smith, 1995).

While much substance use may be experimental, for some young people the use can become problematic. A longitudinal study following adolescence through the 1990's found that drug use had become normalized amongst young people (Measham, Newcombe and Parker 1994; Parker, Aldridge and Measham 1998) and a follow up study by Parker, Williams and Aldridge (2002) showed that increases in the ease of availability of cannabis and the acceptance of cannabis use was evident. Goulden and Sondhi (2001) reported that the use of cannabis was enhanced for young people aged 12-16 years who truanted or were excluded from school.

Drug classification and criminalisation is controversial story and there is differing evidence as to the long-term effects of cannabis use. Recent reports in the media about the strength of cannabis now being sold is creating further anxiety about the

health effects and research has shown links with psychosis in genetically vulnerable individuals, which may also increase the likelihood of offending (Arsenault, Moffitt and Caspi, 2002).

The use of heroin and cocaine is reported to be relatively small for under 18's, with 5% reported to be involved (NHS, 2008).

A summary of the research on the links between crime and drug use found clear evidence of association (Bennett and Holloway, 2005), although the direction of causality is unclear. Rutter, Giller and Hagel (1998) propose 3 mechanisms operating: individual characteristics (e.g. impulsiveness and lower IQ), environmental characteristics (e.g. low parental supervision and harsh parenting) and being disinhibited on drugs. These factors make youths more likely to commit crimes and subsequently if they become habitual users, to commit crimes to pay for the drugs. Bean (2008) proposes 3 main hypotheses about the relationship between adolescent substance use and offending behaviour:

- Drug use causes crime.

- Crime leads to drug use.

- Drug use and crime have a common origin (indirect link but common causes such as poverty, social exclusion and individual factors may be evident).

These hypotheses are not mutually exclusive and there may be some truth in each of them. However, the evidence does suggest that young people who offend are also more likely to abuse drugs, itself a barrier to re-integration into education, training and employment. Bennett, Holloway and Farrington (2008) also found that the strongest association was between crime and heroin and crack cocaine, but less so for cannabis.

3.6 Educational issues and needs of youth offenders

Youth offenders are a heterogeneous group and therefore there is a wide range of educational provision for this population which includes mainstream schools, specialist provisions such as a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or schools or units for special educational needs in terms of social, emotional and mental health needs, learning or speech and language needs and Further Education Colleges.

As discussed earlier, findings have consistently shown that young people in the criminal justice system tend to have lower literacy and numeracy attainment (Farrington, 1996; Rutter, Giller and Hagell, 1998). Weak basic skills can result in difficulties in securing employment and becoming socially excluded (Bynner, 2004) and that this can be a complicating factor for people deciding whether to desist from criminal activity (Sampson and Laub, 1993). However the conclusion that low attainment is the cause of offending is overly simplistic, as underlying difficulties at a social and individual level could lead to a young person not attaining in school. Systemic factors such as parenting style, the influence of anti-social peers and detachment from education may all increase the risk of offending behaviour as previously discussed. Other specific factors related to neurodisability suggest an increased likelihood of offending behaviour including: hyperactivity and impulsivity, cognitive and language impairment, alienation and poor emotional regulation. All of these factors may also be associated with a detachment from education or low educational attainment (Office for Children's Commissioner, 2012).

Daniels et al. (2003) literature review explored the association between exclusion

from school and offending behaviour. The proposal from this review was that a return to school could reduce offending. Research into links between education and offending has shown 3 main items to be:

1. Detachment from education.
2. Impact of custodial sentences.
3. Educational underachievement, in particular with literacy and numeracy.

Detachment from Education

A significant factor in offending behaviour, of particular relevance to the current study, is detachment from education (Pritchard, 2001). The Social Exclusion Unit (1999) found that young people excluded from school during the last two years of compulsory schooling were two and a half times more likely not to participate in education, training or employment during the next two years than their peers who were not excluded. Once young offenders have become detached from education and training, it is extraordinarily difficult for them to get back into it (Youth Justice Board, 2004). Therefore a two- year research study was commissioned by the YJB to strengthen the evidence base to identify the scale and reasons of young people detached from education and the effective means to reconnect them (YJB, 2006). This research evidence showed that:

- Only 35% to 45% of young people in the YJS were receiving full time education, training or employment.
- The difficulty staff had with accessing suitable full time education, training or employment for young people; 28% had no provision arranged at all.
- Particular barriers linked to accessing full time education were found in young people who had been in care, had literacy or numeracy difficulties, had

previous convictions, were aged 16, female, the subject of serious disposals or more likely to reoffend.

- Only half of statutory school age young people were receiving full time education.

The young people in the research identified these barriers to education:

- Lack of qualifications.

- Having a criminal record.

- Bullying/influence of school/difficult relationship with teachers.

- Excluded from school/truanting due to bullying or to be with friends.

This research also found that the 'system' is not able to cater for young people easily, which identifies that the interactions of systems can also put further barriers in the way of young people who have been excluded and their return to education. Improved communication between agencies and joint working, alongside a holistic assessment approach to address welfare issues in parallel to education was also highlighted. This perhaps demonstrates a cultural shift away from locating the problem within the individual by instead focusing on the structural difficulties such as course admissions and sentences not being synchronized and finding suitable provision regardless of the notion of a right to education (YJB, 2004). Furthermore, the improved communication between agencies has long been a concern from successive reviews such as The Laming Report (2003; 2009) which all detail the lack of multiagency working and information sharing. The key aim of the SEND reforms (SEND, 2014) is to improve the collaboration and communication between all services that support children and young people and their families, requiring Health and LA to work across their service boundaries and practices to harness, strengthen

and bridge their resources and partnerships to promote and improve achievement and well-being. However, this legislation is for young people who have recognised, identified and severe SEN, and for the youth offending population this is still a concern with unidentified SEN.

It has been recognised that the education and training needs of school age offenders is complex (DfES, 2006). Over the past decade the attempts to reduce offending behaviour of adolescents has included looking at practice within secondary schools which includes reducing exclusion and non-attendance. A study of 56 youth offenders excluded from school found that school exclusion does not immediately place the young person into offending behaviour, and the study suggests that more emphasis in needed on supporting parents during their child's exclusion (Hodgson and Webb, 2005). A number of the young people who were grounded and had increased levels of parental supervision whilst in exclusion also had limited potential to be involved in criminal activities. Their data also suggested that where parents did not sanction their child over a permanent exclusion from school they were more likely to offend. This supports findings from other studies (Farringdon, 1994; 1996; Sampson and Laub, 1993) that ineffective parental supervision is associated with youth offending. Furthermore, there was a high incidence of family poverty and connections with the Criminal Justice System; 36 young people in the sample reported living with a relative/parental partner who had been arrested, and 70% had social care involvement.

This study further highlights that exclusion from school and offending behaviour is complex, but that detachment from education is a risk factor for vulnerable young people.

"Most young offenders understand that qualifications, skills and jobs can help them break the cycle of crime, but many face barriers to living crime-free." (DfES, 2006, p26).

The former Home Secretary David Blunkett told an Annual Youth Justice Board Conference (2004) that the education system was not being used effectively enough to engage youth offenders. He reported that there was a tension between raising targets to increase attainments and the wider community engagement agenda and these were key reasons why the inclusion strategy was failing. A study by Nottingham Trent University (YJB, 2006) revealed that fewer than half of head teachers and only a quarter of classroom teachers believed that mainstream schools were a suitable option for youth offenders when released from custody. This contrasted with views from further education colleges where two thirds of their managers said they could offer suitable provision and welcomed more involvement with YOTs. The study reported that colleges are more receptive to work with youth offenders as they do not have the same pressures as mainstream schools.

This may highlight a relationship between the pressures that mainstream schools face when working with challenging pupils and the potential stigma attached to youth offenders engaging in mainstream education. It is interesting whether the pressure faced by schools over the previous few years has also seen teachers reporting an increase in challenging behaviour seen in schools. The Association of Teachers and Lecturers reported that 90% of 844 teachers surveyed said they had dealt with challenging or disruptive behaviours of pupils over the last year, and 62% said there were more children with emotional, behavourial and mental health problems than two years ago (BBC news, 2013). The survey reports that disruptive classroom behaviour was worsening and teachers and support staff needed better training to help deal with challenging children. 35% of teachers reported they did not get any

training in how to deal with disruptive, challenging or violent students. The Union reported that funding cuts to local services resulted in schools having to deal with children's problems without any help.

However, the Government changes in legislation on exclusions (DfE, 2012) resulted in teachers having more powers to deal with pupils with challenging behaviour, as pupils displaying disruptive or violent behaviour can be removed with force by teachers from the classroom, and schools can exclude a pupil and the decision cannot be reversed from an appeals panel. Furthermore, in 2016, the Education Secretary Nicky Morgan issued the White Paper *Educational Excellence Everywhere* (2016) detailing an aim for all schools to become academies by 2020. Although at the time of writing it is unclear whether this will proceed as originally planned. This may cause some concern with schools moving away from the LA regulating provision with a potential risk to develop a two tier system within education settings. However, guidance such as *Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools* (DfE, 2015) provides guidance to schools to highlight and promote school's proactive role in early intervention and support for children and young people with mental health and/or behavioural difficulties supported by a network of professionals working within Health, LA and the community. Therefore, schools may feel the tension between being able to support such pupils or excluding.

Boxford's (2006) UK study explored the different risk and protective factors within the school context of youth offending. This self-report survey of 3103 Year 10 pupils in Wales across 20 state secondary schools found protective factors for youth offending including attendance at a well-organised school with an inclusive ethos. A weak association with family socio economic status and neighbourhoods with

offending was found, however, pupil's view of school context was strongly associated with offending in school. Although the findings of this study are complicated it does highlight the risks and complexities schools manage, and the vulnerabilities some young people face in school such as their peer group, school climate and ethos. However, criticism of this study could be argued to be in the difficulty of separating school and neighbourhood contexts. The study does however put into the equation that schools can be both a protective and risk factor for offending behaviour for some young people.

Furthermore, research has shown that it is not just exclusion from school that has a link with offending. The Audit Commission (1996) reported that half of truants offend, but only one quarter of non-truants do, and that three quarters of excluded pupils offend, but only one third of those who are not excluded offend. Similarly, Reid (1999) reported that truancy is the greatest single predictor of juvenile and adult crime, with two thirds of young offenders beginning criminal activity whilst truanting.

However, there is little research into what interventions work with education engagement with youth offenders (Prior & Mason, 2010).

Impact of custodial sentences

Research has also shown the impact of not being in engaged in education has on the court system. Graham (1988) discussed potential processing bias, as providing magistrates with more information on educational issues such as poor behaviour or non-attendance could have a negative impact upon sentencing. Youth Offending teams conduct assessment of young offender's needs but a third of assessments and resulting sentence plans were judged to be of insufficient quality by her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (House of Commons, 2011).

Educational achievement

The YJB widely acknowledges that a number of young people within the YJS will have a Special Educational Need (SEN) (YJB, 2006). However, there is a limited evidence base regarding the educational attainment of young people in YJS and the overall evidence of effectiveness remains patchy in this area. It is under-researched and weakly monitored by Local Authority and central government (Ofsted, 2004).

As previously discussed, a UK survey from ECOTEC (2001) found that 51% of young people in a custodial setting were below Level 1 in literacy, which is the level expected for an 11 year old. However, this does mean that 49% are not working at this level, and could therefore be age expected or above.

A difficulty in gathering accurate educational information may be seen in the data collection system within the YOS. All YOT workers use a national assessment tool called Asset (YJB, 2003) to identify the needs of each young person, as they become known to the service. This tool is used to identify risks that the young person may pose and to identify any problems that led to the offending behaviour. The results then identify any specific programme or intervention that is required to address the needs and reduce repeat offending. The gathering of education information within this overall assessment is detailed over one quarter of a page of a 78-page document. The details of SEN entail whether a statement of SEN has been issued, but not of other stages of SEN, and doesn't require other professionals' involvement such as an EP to be taken into account, although the worker can provide information in the box.

The Youth Justice Board (2006) study of a sample of Asset information provided on

the SEN status of young people found that where information had been completed 25% reported a Statement of SEN was present of which 75% actually had a Statement of SEN. The Welsh Assembly Government (2009) reported that this discrepancy was due to the YOT practitioners completing Asset having limited expertise in SEN and identifying young people's needs in a subjective way.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner (2011) became concerned that considerable numbers of young people in custody may have undiagnosed neurodevelopmental disabilities which may contribute to the behaviours that led them to offend. They argue that early assessment; identification and treatment could therefore potentially divert affected young people from the criminal justice system.

Table 3.1: Rates of neurodevelopmental disorders in young people (Children's Commissioner, 2012).

	Population	YP in custody
Learning disabilities (IQ<70)	2-4%	23-32%
Dyslexia	10%	43-57%
Communication Disorder	5-7%	60-90%
ADHD	1.7-9%	12%
ASD	0.6-1.2%	15%
Traumatic Brain Injury	24-31.6%	65.1-72.1%

| Epilepsy | 0.45-1% | 0.7-0.8% |
| Foetal alcohol syndrome | 0.1-5% | 10.9-11.7% |

Snowling et al., (2000) assessed 91 male offenders aged 15 to 18 in a young offenders institution found that 43% of the sample had dyslexia, compared to 10% of the general population. However, dyslexia is a controversial term and different practitioners can have different assessments and interpretations of diagnosis. This was demonstrated within Snowling's population when the specific identification of difficulties to be in 'phonological processing' was presented as the key classification to determine dyslexia, then only 39% of the sample had the diagnosis.

Evidence from Snow & Powell (2005) suggests that youth offenders are also at risk of having unrecognised language impairments. Further research from Bryan, Freer & Furlong (2007) screened communication and language skills in youth offenders and reported that most would need Speech and Language therapy in order to benefit from interventions that were verbally mediated. The link between unrecognized speech and language impairments and the barrier this can create for accessing education and intervention has now been recognised by the YJB with the updated AssetPlus tool. From March 2015 all young people are to have screening questions using a Speech, Language, Communication and neuro-disability screening tool. However, judgments are to be made based on observations of the young person at the time of questioning and any further action required will depend on services available in the team and local area. This may again disadvantage some young people, or leave some needs still unidentified if behaviour at the time of assessment

is misunderstood, or if services are unavailable.

One of the major potential weaknesses of longitudinal studies and youth offending is the emphasis upon individual characteristics with less emphasis upon social, political, cultural and environmental factors, with the exception of socio-economic status. Another difficulty in studies is that record keeping and detailed tracking of education is impossible for youth offenders (Ofsted, 2004).

This chapter has discussed the factors that are associated with being barriers for adolescents engaging in education and being at risk of involvement with the youth offending service. Therefore, we have seen there is a link between poor attachment, LAC, mental health, substance misuse and SEN, so, young people who offend can be seen as being multiply disadvantaged and there are many possible areas for intervention. Some of these interventions will be discussed in Chapter 4, as the youth justice landscape and youth offending teams working with other professionals such as EPs will be discussed.

Chapter 4: UK Youth Justice Landscape

4.1 Overview

In England and Wales the Youth Justice System (YJS) works to prevent offending and re-offending by young people under 18 years of age. The minimum age of criminal responsibility in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is set at 10 years (CIVITAS, 2012). The YJS is structured differently to the adult system to address the needs of young people and is far smaller than the adult system (YJB, 2013).

The overall number of young people in the YJS has continued to decrease over recent years in terms of reductions of young people entering the system for the first time and those receiving custodial sentences, and there has been a decline in re-offending rates. Since the year ending March 2015 there have been 57% fewer young people under age of 18 in custody and 67% fewer coming into the YJS (YJB, 2016). Criminal convictions are dropping overall in the UK and in the US.

4.2 Data

The latest data comes from the 2014/5 financial year from the YJB 2016 National Statistics.

94,960 of young people aged 10-17 years were arrested which accounts for 10% of the population of England and Wales of that age. Around 60% of these arrests resulted in convictions (98, 837). In 2014/15 the number of first time entrants (FTEs) to the YJS fell by 9% from the previous year to 20,544. The Ministry of Justice has commissioned an analytical project to further understand the drivers behind the fall in youth FTEs with findings yet to be published.

A substantive outcome is a pre-court or court disposal, and 37,946 young people

received this in 2014/15. 30, 960 were sentenced and the average population of young people in custody (under 18) was 1,037. Re-offending rates for young people has generally been increasing since the year ending March 2008. However, particular reductions have been seen amongst young people with no previous offences and those receiving pre-court disposals.

4.3 Flows through the Youth Justice System

Not all young people who come into contact with the police will formally enter the YJS, as some will be diverted through a Triage scheme or restorative justice programme (as shown in Figure 4.1; YJB, 2016). However the current number of young people diverted from the YJS is unknown. Therefore arrest figures are higher than disposals figures as some young people will have no further action taken against them, are found not guilty or the case will be dropped. Although the exact figures of young people going through Triage is unknown, an evaluation by the Home Office (2012) found that:

> "*The majority of young people in contact with Triage schemes were male, white and around 15 years of age. They were most commonly arrested for theft, violence, criminal damage and public disorder, most often these young people had no previous convictions.*" (Home Office, 2012, p6).

Chart 4.1: Flows through the Youth Justice System

Recorded crime: 3,718,043 (1)

Young people diverted from formally entering YJS (2)not known

Young people formally dealt with by the YJS: 71,918

Young people arrested (2012/13): 94,960

Defendants proceeded against: 43,148

Out of court disposals: 26,025

Young people given community sentences by the courts: 21,203

Youth Cautions (3): 20,080

Young people given other court sentences: 7,923

Penalty Notices for Disorder (4) given to young people: 400

Young people given custodial sentences: 1,834

Average population in custody: 1,037

Average custodial sentence length: 14.9 months (5)

Notes on flow chart: (1) Includes adults and young people. Age of offenders is not known when crimes are reported to police.

(2) The number of young people diverted from formally entering the YJS through schemes such as Triage is not currently known.

(3) Reprimands and final warnings were replaced by youth cautions for offences committed from 8th April 2013.

(4) Penalty notices for disorder should no longer be available for persons under 18 from 2013.

(5) Average custodial sentence length is for indictable offences only.

4.4 Demographics of young people in the Youth Justice System

The figures from the Youth Justice Management Information System (YJMIS, 2013) are of the demographic characteristics of young people with a proven offence and disposals given.

Overall, 81% were male and 77% aged 15 years or older. Most (81%) came from a White ethnic background.

Chart 4.2: Age and gender of young people receiving a substantive outcome, 2012/13.
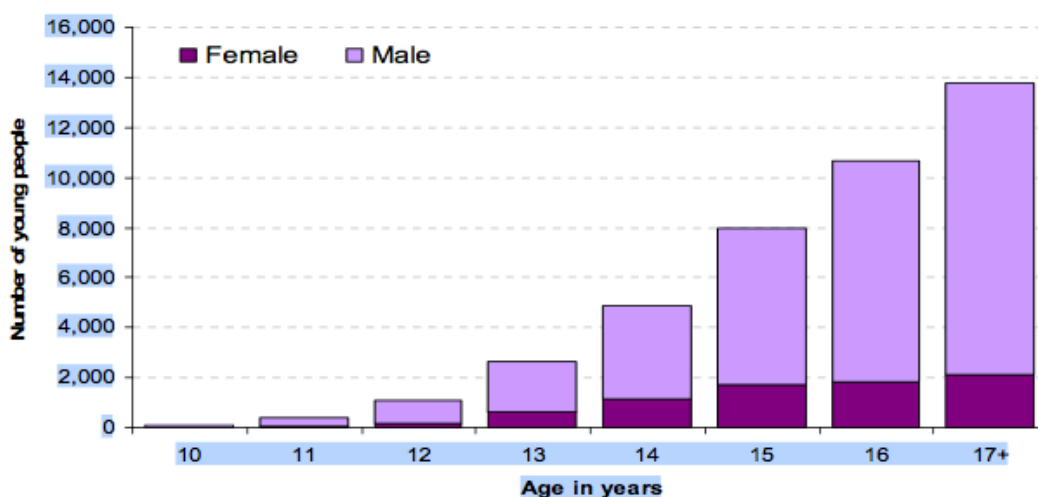
Table 4.1: Age and ethnicity of young people receiving a substantive outcome, 2012/13.

	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17+	Total
				Age in years					
Asian	*	6	27	92	233	437	587	789	2,174
Black	*	29	68	206	466	720	1,042	1,393	3,928
Mixed	*	10	49	127	217	323	371	483	1,583
Other	*	*	9	14	38	56	73	121	316
Unknown	6	16	39	94	179	247	331	438	1,350
White	170	427	1,301	2,678	4,926	7,839	9,713	12,817	39,871
Total	**188**	**491**	**1,493**	**3,211**	**6,059**	**9,622**	**12,117**	**16,041**	**49,222**
Share	0.4%	1.0%	3.0%	6.5%	12.3%	19.5%	24.6%	32.6%	

* Less than five cases.
Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Proven offences: In 2012/13, 77% of proven offences were committed by young people aged 15 years and over with 23% committed by young people aged 10-14 years.

Males accounted for 82% of these offences with 18% females. 82% were from a White ethnic background.

Chart 4.3: Proven offences by young people, 2012/13
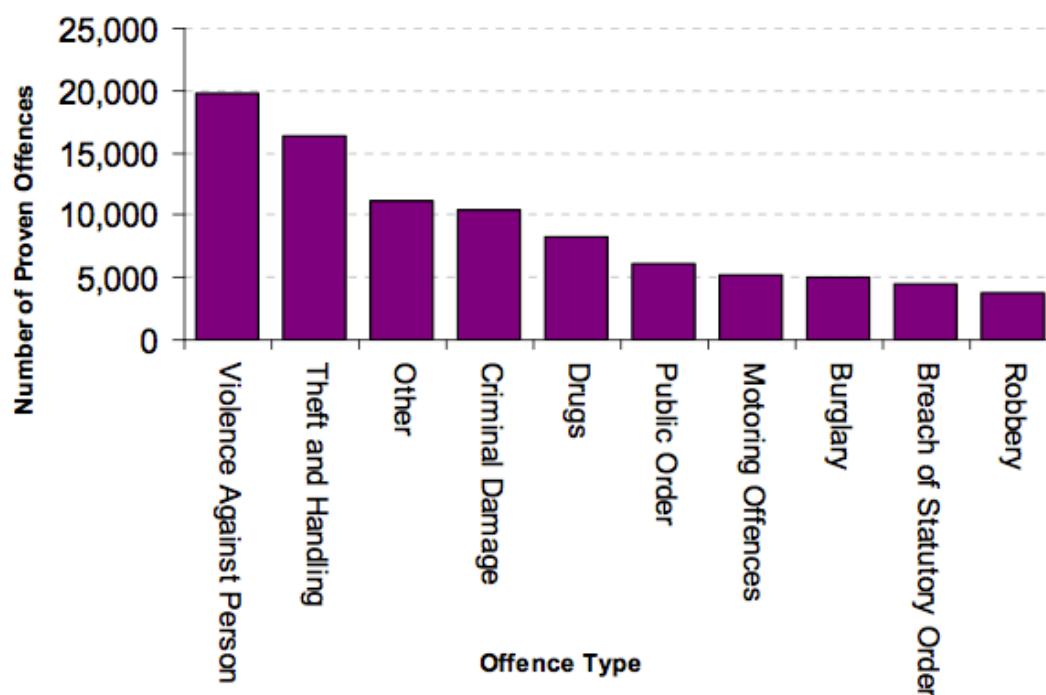
Young people in custody: In 2012/13 there were 1,544 young people aged 18 years and under in custody. This has fallen by 49% since 2002/03. Thirty one per cent were held in custody for robbery, 23% for violence, 17% for burglary and 7% for breach offences. Ninety five per cent of young people held in custody were male and 96% were aged 15-17 years. 59% of young people in custody were from a White ethnic background, with 21% from a Black ethnic background. This compares to 81% and 8% respectively on the overall YOT caseload, suggesting more severe sentencing dispositions for Black youth offenders.

Criminal Histories of Young People: There has been a steady increase year on year of the number of people sentenced with numerous previous offences. Young people being sentenced are more prolific in their criminal history and there is a reduction in FTEs to the YJS. Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) may be working with fewer young people but they are more serious in terms of their previous offending.

4.5 Youth Offending Teams

Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are multi-agency professional teams set up as part of the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998 to be established in every local authority (LA) between 1998 and 2000 in England and Wales. YOTs were to be the key service to support young people who were known to the Youth Justice System, to address their offending behaviour and aimed at reducing reoffending. Furthermore, YOTs have a role in working with young people to prevent offending by working with those identified at risk of becoming offenders. The multi-agency teams are separate from the courts and police but usually a part of the Local Authority and can consist of professionals from police, education, health, social care, probation, housing and drug and alcohol workers (GOV.UK, 2012).

4.6 Education workers and YOTs

The multi professional team within the YOT should have at least one education worker. The YJB (2011) outlines guidance to education workers within YOTs and describes the focus to be working alongside YOT caseworkers to develop strategic links to enable youth offenders to access mainstream provision. Therefore the role of the education worker is linking with education services and not to deliver education interventions to young people as the YJB emphases that the local authority has the statutory duty to provide education and has the resources to do so.

However, the education worker does not require a background within education. Talbot (2010) found that 23% of respondents said that their YOT team has one member of their staff qualified in SEN, although the exact qualification was not

mentioned. EdComs (2008) research suggested that the reason why the YJB (2006) discrepancy in figures of 25% of young people perceived to have SEN when 75% actually had a statement of SEN, is in part due to YOT staff having a lack of expertise and understanding of SEN when completing Asset. The Welsh Assembly Government (2009) supports this finding in their study of interviews with YOT managers who reported that YOT practitioners may not have expertise in SEN when completing Asset and therefore any support needs were based on workers perception and subjective views. Therefore a significant number of young people within the youth justice system may have unidentified learning needs.

4.7 Educational Psychologists working with YOTs

The literature so far indicates that YOT staff may lack the experience to identify and address needs of SEN with the young people they work with, therefore Educational Psychologists (EPs) would seem ideally placed to work as a part of the YOT multi-agency team. Farrell et al. (2006) found that 62% of Principle EPs (PEPs) said that their EPs should be involved with YOTs but only 39% of PEPs reported that EPs were involved.

Talbot (2010) study found that 34% of YOTs said they had access to an EP but furthermore only 1 in 10 of the YOTs reported that a service level agreement was in place to formalise this. The YOT team having indirect access to an EP was explained with a proportion of the youth offenders in schools having access to the EP via the school, however the difficulty came with older youth offenders aged 17 plus.

Farrell et al. (2006) found the work of EPs involved with YOTs varied greatly including assessment, intervention and advice, therapeutic work and training for YOT staff. However the YOT managers saw the role of EPs providing the specialist knowledge more beneficial than the YOT staff becoming SEN experts:

> *"As a model, rather than training all YOT staff in being experts in assessing young people; half a day per week of access to an educational psychologist in the Local Education Authority (LEA) is so valuable. Any member of the YOT staff that has a concern can go along and discuss it and get access to advice." (p35, Talbot, 2010).*

4.8 Educational Interventions with Youth Offenders

As detailed in Chapters 2 and 3, multiple factors can affect some young people being involved with crime, and each young person's case will be different. Therefore it seems appropriate that a detailed assessment of individual needs is important to provide an intervention tailored to the young person's needs rather than a 'one size fits all' approach (Bailey and Scott, 2008). A holistic assessment was highlighted as essential by the *Key Elements of Effective Practice* (YJB, 2008) as issues for young people such as education, training and employment, substance misuse or mental health needs are dimensions of interrelated problems and therefore cannot be addressed in isolation.

As previously discussed, youth offenders tend to have a higher rate of low educational attainments with poor basic skills in literacy and numeracy, therefore targeting an intervention to improve their education seems appropriate. However, there is a limited evidence base regarding educational interventions for youth offenders and the best methods for improving literacy and numeracy with young

people who were previously hard to engage with mainstream education (Stephenson, 2007). A number of research studies have tried to measure the effectiveness of educational intervention programmes, but have been heavily critiqued for poor research design (Hayward, Stephenson & Blyth, 2004).

One case study (Hayden, 2007) looked at a multi-agency project in one large urban authority to address the educational needs of youth offenders (10-17 years of age) in the community. Twenty nine offenders assessed to have a range of SEN were offered a programme to support their educational needs and thus reduce offending behaviour. Many reasons were given as to why only five young people stayed on the programme and self-reported to no longer offend, which highlights the complexities and range of issues involved. The majority of young people were found to have a high level of SEN which had not been met within educational settings, only four of the young people were in mainstream school and half had various exclusions from schools. A larger proportion (80%) had family and personal relationships risk factors, half had social care involvement, several were LAC, 75% had drug and alcohol common use and generally families were unable or unwilling to support the young person with engaging with the programme. Some young people also had various movements in and out of the area either by family decision to live with another member of the family, to move away from peers, LAC placed out of the area or missing young people. The study reported that the family lives were so chaotic that attendance at an educational programme was not sustainable, along with high levels of SEN and problems with education prior to the programme not being fully recognized. A highly skilled individual approach and support with the family was viewed as necessary. Of the five young people who remained in the programme, good family support was in evidence. The difficulty the programme faced was

finding an appropriately skilled member of staff to provide such support with funding pressures. Furthermore, many of the YOT staff reported the pressure to refer young people to the programme due to the short term funding for the study and to make it justified, which may have led to inappropriate referrals and a need to put the young people into the programme.

Hurry, Brazier and Wilson's (2008) study on improving the literacy and numeracy of youth offenders found that from the 149 sample size, most came with a negative education history with 44% completing school and 65% having no qualifications. Their results suggest that educational intervention did improve basic skills but there was no real evidence as to whether an intervention such as discrete basic skills programme offers gains over a vocational intervention. Therefore the improved outcome could be seen from the young person's participation in an intervention. Another important finding from this study was that the youth offenders were reluctant to attend basic skills programmes and preferred to participate in employment or vocational training. An earlier study by Hurry, Brazier and Moriarity (2005) provided evidence that literacy and numeracy skills of youth offenders in the community could be improved by attending a programme, if they attended for 14 weeks or more. However, low attendance was considered a major barrier as it was difficult to keep the students engaged as the majority had previous negative school experience, housing difficulties, drug use and a limited supportive network. However, the highly individualised and multi-faceted programme was seen as effective as it addressed pastoral and educational needs through practical and work related means, and if they did make improvements in literacy and numeracy then this was associated with a reduction in re-offending.

Furthermore, this study commented on how the majority of offenders did not respond well to a reliance on worksheet and paper based teaching and learning style of intervention. Similar practice has also been observed by The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI, 2004) where little variety in teaching methods was used to engage offenders in their learning programme. Self-Regulated Learning (SRL), first introduced by educational psychologists Corno and Mandinach (1983), details how learners are active and not passive in their learning, and that learning involves both cognitive and emotional components. A meta-analysis of intervention studies by Hattie, Biggs and Purdie (1996) confirm the effectiveness of teaching methods, which encourage SRL, and is a framework that could be considered particularly important for adolescent learners as they bring their own experiences and ideas to their learning.

Lipsey (1995) meta-analysis of 400 studies of programmes for youth offenders suggested the following characteristics of good programmes:

- Multi model.
- Programmes based in the community.
- Interventions that focus on the young person's behaviour and skills.
- Participatory methods rather than loose or didactic/inflexible methods.
- Provision of 100 or more contact hours, delivered at two or more contacts a week.

This is therefore consistent with the SRL framework with educational interventions focusing on the person's skills in either vocational or academic areas and enabling active learning and engagement.

Interventions given to the young person should be developed with increasing

knowledge of the young person's needs, but as previously discussed, accurate

information is not always gathered. Educational Psychologists could take a

prominent role in assisting with this and advising and providing relevant

programmes.

This chapter has explored the youth justice landscape in the UK and what

interventions work with the youth offending population and the links between

Educational Psychologists and youth offending teams.

4.9 Conclusions

The Youth Justice Board places importance on education and training to reduce

repeating offending behaviour among young people, supported by a range of

evidence. However as the research has shown, there are many potential barriers for

young people engaging in education.

Using Bronfenbrenner's Framework can assist with exploring multiple factors that

lead some young people into crime, and the interacting systems which can be

barriers to their engagement in education. The influences explored in these chapters

can be mapped on to various levels of Bronfenbrenner's framework. When systems

at all levels of the framework are at odds with each other, negative outcomes for

youth offenders will be increased. The literature also details that there are a

significant number of young people in the youth justice system who have identified or

unidentified SEN. The implications of this is increasingly recognised in a number of

areas for young people such as a greater risk of social exclusion, increased

likelihood of a custodial sentence and a difficulty to provide an appropriate intervention to engage young people and provide support to address and reduce offending behaviour.

The current study aims to look in greater depth at education provision for youth offenders within one Local Authority, and the issues perceived by the various stakeholders, posing the following research questions:

RQ1. What are the educational needs, uptake and educational provision for youth offenders within the local authority?

 RQ2. What are the barriers and facilitators of educational inclusion and engagement from different stakeholder's perspectives?

Chapter 5: Method and Methodology

5.1 Overview

The aim of this study is to identify the educational needs and associated provision of youth offenders within one local authority, to explore young people's perceptions and experiences of the barriers and facilitators for educational inclusion and engagement, and to gain the views of professionals working with youth offenders.

Educational data was collected within the YOS and professionals working with youth offenders in the Youth Offending Service in an inner city London Borough were invited to take part, along with professionals working in educational and training provisions where youth offenders attend, and young people known to the Youth Offending Service.

The context of the study is borough X YOS, situated within a diverse inner city London local authority. It is one of the most densely populated inner London boroughs. The borough has a low percentage of people with an English only identity and the proportion of white British people has decreased from 50% to 39% in the last ten years (2011 census). It has the highest proportion in the country of people from multiple mixed ethnic backgrounds and the proportion of mixed race people has gone from 4% to 7%. 58% of the child population belongs to Black and Minority Ethnic communities compared with 38% of the general population of the borough. Approximately 150 languages are spoken in the borough: after English the main languages spoken are Portuguese, Yoruba, French, Spanish and Twi. Poverty and deprivation are also significant issues in the borough, with the CYPP partnership reporting that 20% of the boroughs households earn below 60% of the UK median

income; around 16% of under 15's receive free school meals and 18.7% of working age people receive benefits which places the borough on the Index of Multiple Deprivation as one of the most deprived boroughs in London and in the top 20 most deprived in England.

There are approximately 283 young people known to Borough X YOS, with 85% being male, and 88% from a BME background, compared to 82% from a white UK background in the national average. Borough X YOS has a huge concern with gang involvement and serious violent crime.

A mixed method approach is used as combining quantitative and qualitative methods is suitable for this study as Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) appropriately state, "A tenet of mixed methods research is that researchers should mindfully create designs that effectively answer their research questions." (p20). In this study a qualitative approach was the main approach used to explore the perceptions and experiences of the barriers and facilitators for educational inclusion from different stakeholder's perspectives (RQ2). A quantitative approach was also used to compare and discuss these findings in relation to statistics gathered within the local authority YOS (RQ1).

Qualitative research is useful in illuminating the experience and interpretation of events by participants (Gubrium and Sankar, 1994) and enables the generation of descriptions of complex phenomena (Chenail and Maione, 1997). Quantitative research places emphasis on the measurement and analysis of data to seek explanations and predications that will generate to people and places and that the research is independent of the researcher (Creswell, 2003). Therefore the meaning

created and uncovered from the quantitative research is objective from the collected data. In this study, whilst collecting quantitative data was useful in documenting the education provision in the borough, it was anticipated that it would be incomplete and the validity may be questionable.

Therefore, a mixed method approach has been used in this study, as it is the most appropriate method to answer the research questions. This section of the chapter will detail the limitations and strengths of both quantitative and qualitative paradigms and how the collection of data was approached in a systematic way (Gray, 2009), how participants were identified and recruited and how the data was collected and analysed.

5.2 Research Design

The research is a case study of one inner London Local Authority, borough X Youth Offending Service (YOS) and was conducted in two phases. The first phase reports descriptive statistics from available data from Asset and from the YOS Management Report, which covers Research Question 1.

The second phase covered Research Question 2 and involved semi-structured interviews with professionals who work in the YOS of borough X, other stakeholders in the educational or training settings where the young people attend and a sample of young people known to the YOS.

Mixed method approaches have been used in research in some part to researchers recognising the limitations and strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). Qualitative research aims to describe and explain a

pattern of relationships, which is achieved with a set of conceptually specified analytic categories (Mishler, 1990). However, it can be limited in its ability to generalise its findings to a larger population but has been given merit in bringing meaning and accounts of lived experiences (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). In this study the qualitative approach enabled different perspectives of people knowledgeable in terms of education provision to be captured, and therefore would supplement the available quantitative data and to illuminate understanding of the issues. Quantitative research offers the potential to capture the broad picture in terms of the uptake and range of education and information on the needs of the young people. Combining the methods can illuminate the strengths from each approach and minimize limitations to effectively answer the research questions and to provide more than perspective in which to analyse the topic and a method for triangulating data (Creswell, 1994).

As mixed methods design is still evolving as a research method, Creswell et al. (2003) define it as; "a mixed methods study involves the collection or analysis of both quantitative and/or qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of the data at one or more stages in the process of research. (p12).

5.3 Philosophical underpinnings and Epistemological position:

Quantitative and qualitative paradigms have been viewed by some researchers to come from two incompatible philosophical orientations. Quantitative methods have been drawn from the positivist/empiricist approach, and qualitative method from the

constructivist/phenomenological approach (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Howe (1988) argues that the two paradigms are compatible with the shift to a pragmatism paradigm.

Pragmatism and mixed methods has several key points outlined by Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) as:

a) Pragmatism supports the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods in the same research study. Pragmatism rejects the either/or dichotomy.

b) Pragmatist researchers consider the research question to be more important than either the method they use or the paradigm that underlies the method. The research question predominates.

c) Decisions about the use of mixed methods, qualitative methods, or quantitative methods depend on the research question and the stage of the research process.

d) Pragmatism avoids the use of metaphysical concepts such as "truth" and "reality" that have caused much debate and at times division. (pp.22-30).

5.4 Mixed method design

A notation system designed by Morse (1991) is often used by researchers conducting a mixed method design, which contains four different approaches:

Approach   Type

QUAL + quan   Simultaneous

QUAL ➔ quan   Sequential

QUAN + qual   Simultaneous

QUAN ➔ qual   Sequential

A + sign is used to denote that the collection of quantitative and qualitative data was obtained simultaneously. An ➔ indicates that one form of data followed the other. The capital letters used indicate where the major emphasis of data collection was founded. The two types of designs are either simultaneous where the data is collected at the same time, or sequential where one form of data was collected before the other.

Creswell et al. (2003) identify six types of mixed methods designs: Sequential Explanatory; Sequential Exploratory; Sequential Transformative; Concurrent Triangulation; Concurrent Nested, and Concurrent Transformative.

Sequential Explanatory will be described as it best suits the methodology used in this design. It involves the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data.

Quan ➔ Qual
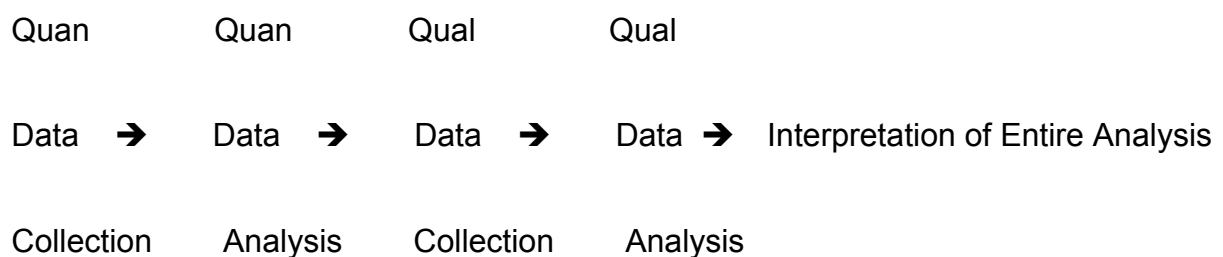
Quan   Quan   Qual   Qual

Data ➔   Data ➔   Data ➔   Data ➔   Interpretation of Entire Analysis

Collection   Analysis   Collection   Analysis

In this design, equal priority is given to the two phases and the data is integrated during interpretation. The quantitative data is collected first, followed by the qualitative data and collection and analysis. In the interpretation phase of the study the qualitative findings are commented on as to how they have helped to elaborate on or extend the quantitative results. In this study, the quantitative data was collected first to help inform targeting of the participants for the qualitative stage. The interpretation of the qualitative findings is commented on to extend and elaborate on the quantitative data.

Another methodology is the Sequential Transformative and this will be briefly described to explain why it was felt this was not the appropriate design for this study. Either data can be collected first and a theoretical perspective such as a conceptual framework guides the study:

Quantitative ➜ Qualitative

Vision, Advocacy, Ideology, Framework

In this design, equal priority is given to the two phases and the data is integrated during interpretation. The perspective is more important in guiding the study and the primary purpose is to "employ the methods that will best serve the theoretical perspective of the researcher...(it) may be able to give voice to diverse perspectives, to better advocate for participants or to better understand a phenomenon or process that is changing as a result of being studied" (Creswell, 2003, p.216). However, it can be difficult to compare the two types of data as well as resolve discrepancies if they arise. The sequential or concurrent structure is used as a means of organising the content of the study, but at the end a section may advance an agenda for change or reform that has developed as a result of the research. Although Bronfenbrenner's

framework is used as a perspective to organize the study, it is not more important in guiding the study and is used to best suit the theoretical perspective of the researcher. Furthermore, the two sets of data are not compared with each other but used to further elaborate and extend findings between the data sets.

5.5 Phase 1 Quantitative Data Collection

Descriptive statistics were gathered from two data sources, the YOS Management Report and the Asset. The YOS Management Report is a public domain record and was accessed during my visits to the YOS team from the Data officer. Data collected from the anonymized records from Asset focused on the educational statistics gathered over a quarterly period. The Asset form is approved by the Youth Justice Board and is a structured assessment tool used by YOT's on all youth offenders. The assessment covers 16 core profile domains including family and personal relationships, education, training and employment, lifestyle, substance misuse and motivation to change to name a few. The YJB are clear in the Asset guidelines that although Asset provides a structure for recording and analysing information, it should not be used as an interview schedule. Therefore, as the assessment requires information to be gathered and a series of judgments made about the young person, establishing a relationship with the young person is deemed essential and the Asset is therefore usually carried out by the YOT worker. However, as YOTs are multi disciplinary, members of staff with specialist knowledge in particular sections, e.g. mental health or education, can assist with the completion of Asset, however, this has received much debate and criticism as previously discussed in Section 4.6. This information is collected by the YOS each quarter and sent to the Youth Justice Board. In terms of this study, and to answer RQ1, the data

from the Asset form was only in relation to the section on Education, Training and Employment. The reliability and validity of this information will be discussed in Chapter 6. In this study, this data was collected first to provide an overview of where the young people attended provisions to help target participants to obtain relevant participants perspectives and experiences to inform the next stage of data collection. As the overall research design is a case study, the quantitative data is used to seek elaboration, illustration and enhancement and clarification of the results with results from the other method (Onwugbuzie and Leech, 2006). The quantitative data can be seen in Chapter 6.

5.6 Phase 2 Qualitative Data Collection

The qualitative part in the research methodology was used to gain an exploration of the young person's experiences and views of education, as well as the adults who support them with this process.

5.7 Participants

The initial point of contact was the manager of the YOS team who subsequently moved into another role; therefore some time lapsed before a meeting was arranged with the new YOS manager. This was then followed by a meeting with the YOS Education manager and the two Education, Training and Employment Officers in the YOS. The aim was to provide them with the information sheet (see appendix 1), gain interest and to gain access to the wider YOS workers. The Education case officers and their manager all expressed an interest and the opportunity was given to deliver a research presentation to the whole YOS to gather participants from within the service and for them to assist with identifying and recruiting young people into

the study.

There are 45 workers within the multi-disciplinary YOS, including case officers, CAMHS workers, Speech and Language therapists, substance misuse workers and social workers. There is currently no EP working within the YOS, however several years ago an EP was seconded to the YOS from the borough's EPS but this post was never replaced following the loss of the worker. All of the professionals were given the professional's information sheet and the information sheet for the young people (see appendix 2) so they could discuss with their clients to gain interest. From this presentation, the idea of working within the YOS service on a number of days was suggested as this allowed the opportunity for me to interview workers within the service and to meet with young people as they met with their case officers on duty visits. This presentation also gained the interest of other professionals within the service, such as CAMHS workers and case officers who approached me with an interest in taking part.

The researcher worked in the YOS for four days, and this provided the opportunity to set dates for interviews with some young people where the case officer knew interested young clients were to meet with them.

The participants that took part from within the youth offending service are shown in the table below:

Table 5.1 Professional participants within YOS

Number of participants	Profession within YOS
1	Case Officer
2	Speech and Language Therapists
1	CAMHS worker
2	Education, Training and Employment Officer
1	YOS Manager

Other participants in the educational or training settings where the young people attend were identified once the data gathering stage was underway. The data from Phase 1 from the Asset form gave the numbers of young people in different settings, and therefore purposeful sampling was used to approach teachers in the PRU (as the largest % attended there), teachers in mainstream school, special school and colleges. The education officers in the YOS provided contact details of professionals they work with in those settings, and EPs within the local authority were approached so they could also inform their secondary schools, 6th forms and colleges of the research.

Participants working with youth offenders in educational and training settings are shown in the table below. All were sent the information and consent sheet in advance of the interview.

Table 5.2 Professional participants within education, employment or voluntary

Number	Profession
2	Mainstream school teacher
1	Teacher in the PRU
1	Teacher in a College
1	Headteacher in Specialist School (EBD)
1	Training Provider
1	Mentor for Youth Offenders (External agency)

The sample of young people in the study used purposeful sampling using an opportunistic technique for in depth case studies of seven participants aged from 15 to 17 years old. Young people were accessed from a range of education settings they attended, including the Not in Education or Training (NEET) cohort by informing case officers and teachers interviewed of this intention.

Following on from the research presentation, one case officer informed the researcher of dates and times when she was meeting her clients in the office and had gathered an interest from the young person of taking part in the research. This secured two interviews.

Another way of trying to access young people was to sit within the YOS office on four occasions. The YOS team was informed in advance of the dates that this would

happen, so that the opportunity of interviewing some young people as they attended the officer for duty visits on those days could be undertaken. On two such occasions, the young person didn't turn up for their duty visits and subsequently their interview for the research. However, this approach secured three interviews.

The third way of trying to access youth offenders for the research was undertaken after the interviews with professionals. For example, asking the PRU professional (as the statistical data showed the largest population of young people to be based there) if she could approach youth offenders attending the provision from borough X and ask if they wanted to take part in the research, following which, they could be interviewed at their setting on a future arranged date and time. This approach secured two youth offenders to be interviewed at their college.

Characteristics of the young people who took part in the study are detailed in the table below. The case officers received verbal consent from their clients and their parents (if the young person was aged under 16 years old) prior to me meeting with them, and I went through the consent form with each young person at the time of interview.

Table 5.3 Young people participants

	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Parental/Care details	Provision	SEN
P1	F	15	White British	Was previously LAC, returned to mother Section 20	Tutoring 2 days, alternative provision 3 days. Permanently excluded from mainstream	No Statement
P2	M	15	Black Caribbean	Lives with mother and father	Mainstream school	Not known
P3	M	15	Black Caribbean	Lives with Gran, social care involvement	Year 11 in college. Permanently excluded from mainstream	No Statement
P4	M	16	Black Other	Lives with mother and step father, social care involvement	Year 11 in college. Permanently excluded from mainstream	No Statement
P5	M	17	Black Caribbean	Lives with mother, social care involvement	NEET. Managed move to PRU in Year 10 as poor attendance	No Statement
P6	M	17	Black Caribbean	Lives with mother, no social care	NEET. Managed move to PRU in	No Statement

				involvement	Year 10 as non-attendance at mainstream	
P7	M	15	Black Caribbean	Lives with mother, social care involvement	Tutoring 2 hours every day per week. Permanently excluded from mainstream in Year 9.	No Statement

As the research aim is to provide a description of youth offender's engagement with education, which will potentially have relevance to different contexts, recruitment from a sufficiently broad range of people in the sample aimed to capture the different perspectives that are likely to be encountered (Yardley, 2000).

5.8 Data Collection

A semi-structured interview (SSI) approach was selected for the current project as it provides an opportunity to generate rich data and the language used by the participants is considered essential in gaining an insight into their perceptions. Face to face interview is appropriate for gaining insight and understanding and recognises the potential significance of context (Newton, 2010).

Semi-structured interviews are also consistent with an exploratory and flexible style of study. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that getting to the categories gradually as an inductive path is as legitimate as starting with them, and as Preissle (1991)

states the design is not a copyable 'off the shelf' pattern but has to be revised and custom built. Therefore, a flexible inductive design approach has been adopted, as it is a complex area where the intent is descriptive and exploratory (Miles & Hauberman, 1994). However, it is important to be clear about how I am constructing theory as the analysis proceeds that there are different levels of interpretation (Van Maanen, 1988). As my research is both descriptive and exploratory I am drawing on two constructions including Rein & Schon's (1977) "map" aiming to generalize the story and Carley's (1991) network of nonhierarchical relationships, expressed through statements defining linkages among concepts.

SSI with both professionals and young people has been chosen in order to potentially gather richer data on individual's views and perspectives, especially when the professionals may offer differing perspectives due to their professional diversity. SSI has been chosen, however, focus groups could be an alternative to use when gathering the data. Focus groups are another method to elicit views and perspectives of people and have been described as less threatening and more informal than other types of interviewing (Lunt, 1998). A further advantage of using focus groups instead of SSI with the participants is that it is an efficient method of gathering qualitative data from several people at one time. Furthermore, Krueger (1994) states that the quality of the data may be enhanced as the comments and ideas are influenced from other participants responses. However, this can also be seen as a disadvantage as Robson (2002) suggests that an experienced facilitator is needed as there can be difficulties in managing group dynamics and the number of questions that can be asked is limited; he suggests less than ten in an hour. However, the YOS doesn't offer group drop in sessions for the young people,

therefore focus groups may have been more difficult to recruit and arrange for this sample.

Livesey & Lawson (2010) report that the objective of SSI is to understand the participants view point rather than making generalisations. However, this method does have its strengths and weaknesses, as shown in the table adapted from Livesey (2010, p69) below and these were considered at the start of the project design.

Table 5.4 Strengths and weaknesses of semi structured interviews

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Develops relationship with client • Can be flexible with client • Can get full depth and wide range of information • The interviewer can clarify and check understanding with participant from complex questions	• Can be difficult to analyse and compare, the personal nature of an interview can result in difficulties generalizing the findings • Participant can be influenced by interviewers bias • Can be time consuming • Validity issues as the participant may not give authentic responses, or may feel the need to justify their actions so the explanation is different from what they thought at

	the time.

The questions in the SSI schedule are linked to my research aims and guided from the literature review to provide prompts of the barriers and facilitators reported from existing research.

Two interview schedules were developed (one for professionals and one for young people) due to their different positions within the research area and to allow individual perspectives to emerge. (See Appendix 3 and 4). The interview schedules was designed as a guide to the topics intended to be covered, for example, within the professionals interview the researcher wanted to explore their role in relation to working with youth offenders and the level of educational information they may have on the young person, or how they gain such information. The interview schedule was therefore used as a broad guide to answer RQ2, however, the order and phrasing of questions could be changed to suit the flow of conversation, and often-unplanned questions could be asked following the participant's statements. A flexible method of questioning was deemed necessary in this study due to interviewing a range of professionals from differing backgrounds, and young people with different experiences who are also considered a hard to reach population. See Appendix 5 for a full transcript of an interview with a professional.

The professional interview questions are more directed at a structural level of working with other professionals, communication and information gathering and sharing. The young person's interview schedule is more focused on their experience of school and transitions between key stages in education, their skills and aspirations

for their educational or vocational career. The flexibility of SSI allows further lines of questioning to emerge and the ordering of questions can change in response to the participant. Therefore, the interview with the young person began generally by giving them an opportunity to talk about their current education situation to allow time to build trust and rapport. The order of questions are arranged in line with suggestions by Robson (2002) to ease the participants into the interview to include a warm up, main section and closure. Furthermore, to demonstrate sensitivity to the participant's perspective I used open ended questions to encourage all participants to talk freely about their experiences and practice rather than be constrained by my agenda (Wilkinson, 2004).

5.9 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a term used for the researcher having an explicit acknowledgement of the ways in which the study can be influenced by themselves (Nightingale and Cromby, 1999). Throughout this process I considered how my identity as a white, middle aged female from an education background may be seen by participants. It was important for me to consider how participants in my study, particularly the young people, where 88% are black ethnicity, perceive their own racial identity because some individuals from different racial and ethnic groups may adhere to the beliefs of the dominant white culture, or alternatively value their own culture to the exclusion of the dominant culture (Mertens, 2010).

Denscombe (2007) discusses how people respond differently depending on how they perceive the interviewer, termed 'the interviewer effect'. In particular, sex, age and ethnic origins have a bearing on how much information participants divulge and

honesty. Gomm (2004) describes demand characteristics when the participant's responses are influenced by what they think the situation requires. Therefore, an understanding is required that all participants speak from their perspective and may say some items that they think I want to hear rather than their truth or actual experience. To try to overcome this, at the beginning of the interview the purpose was made clear in an attempt to put the participant at ease and to allow the participant to be frank about their situation. My ontological position is that the participant's knowledge, experiences and interpretations are meaningful properties that I want to explore and understand.

The interviews took place in the professionals' place of work and in the YOS office or place of education for the young people.

5.10 Qualitative Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the interviews and is a widely used qualitative analytic method in Psychology.

The data was analysed based on the six-step guide for thematic analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke below (2006).

Table 5.5 Phases of Thematic Analysis

Phase	Process
1. Data familiarization	Reading and re-reading data, noting any patterns occurring in transcribed interviews.

2. Initial codes being generated	Coding where patterns occur, collapsing data into labels to create examples under each code.
3. Searching for themes	Developing overarching themes by combining codes. Researchers describe what the themes mean, develop a thematic map from the analysis.
4. Reviewing themes	Explore how the themes support the data and the overarching theoretical position.
5. Defining and naming themes	Defining each theme, looking at what aspects of data are captured.
6. Producing the report	Descriptions of the results ensuring the themes make meaningful contribution to the data.

An example of initial coding of an interview extract can be seen in Appendix 6 and 7 with a professional's transcript. I typed up all of the young people's interviews and four of the professional's interviews to begin to familiarize with the data. Due to time constraints a transcriber was used for the remaining professional's interviews. Themes are identified across the interviews, looking at patterns found in the data, which describe and interpret aspects of the research questions posed (Boyatzis, 1998). Braun and Clark's (2006) notion of Semantic and Latent is helpful in identifying the semantic themes which identify the explicit surface meaning, and

Latent themes which identify the underlying, unspoken patterns, ideas and feelings. The themes are identified using an inductive approach (Patton, 1990). An inductive analysis is data driven, the coding of the data does not fit into a pre- existing coding frame, theoretical model or researcher's perspective, they emerge purely from the data: reflecting a "bottom up" approach to generating new theoretical understandings (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Whilst reading and re-reading the transcripts, I made handwritten notes of any initial ideas and potential patterns emerging from the data. Initial codes were then developed and generated and taken to supervision to discuss. Potential themes started to emerge after coding three transcripts and I used A3 paper to initially draw out rough 'mind maps' to make the links between codes and put into overarching themes. The overarching themes, or superordinate themes where developed by having Bronfenbrenner's ecological model in mind, for example the first three professionals all spoke about the difficulties of multi agency working and working with different databases, which was placed under a systemic overarching theme, whilst issues with exclusions and school attendance could all be grouped under a school related overarching theme. At this stage I had a large amount of codes and realised that several codes could be grouped together to create a sub theme for example, challenging behaviour in schools and issues with schools could all be grouped under a subtheme of Exclusions. This stage then involved grouping codes together to create numerous sub themes under the overarching themes. Supervision was used to group the codes and place the sub themes in the appropriate place on the mind maps. Appendix 7 shows an example of the themes and quotes arrived at during stage five after several attempts at refining the themes. Tables 6.1 and 6.2 show the overarching themes with the sub themes.

Thematic analysis was used as it is considered the most appropriate for any study that aims to use interpretations to discover meanings. Furthermore, using a qualitative approach following the collected quantitative data, thematic analysis gives the opportunity to understand potential issues more widely. Therefore this approach allows the scope of linking various concepts and then to compare these with the data that has been gathered at a different time during the study. Finally, thematic analysis was considered to be the most appropriate approach to use as this case study aimed to understand the current practice within one local authority and a flexible approach was deemed necessary. However, the reliability and validity of this approach has been questioned and is discussed further in 5.11.

Grounded Theory is another well-known articulation of this 'bottom up' approach (Gibson & Brown, 2009). The authors (Glaser & Strauss, 1999) argue that in grounded theory it is best to avoid using literature to generate theoretical ideas, as they will obstruct discovery. However, in this research the literature review was used to assist generating the selection of questions for the SSI to use in subsequent analytic phases.

Reliability of this data analysis approach has been criticised due to the numerous interpretations that can be provided from multiple researchers (Guest, 2012). A detailed description of how the data was initially coded and modified is provided in the next chapter to allow a transparency in the analysis of the data.

5.11 Reliability, Validity and Generalisation

The notion that different people have varied, yet equally valid perspectives on 'reality' is widely believed and accepted by qualitative researchers. This 'reality' is

shaped by their culture, context and activities. This is problematic to evaluate the

validity of a study; if there is no one 'true' perspective on reality, how do you decide

which perspective is to be used? (Yardley, 2000). Therefore a number of guidelines

have been developed for validity criteria in qualitative psychology (Henwood &

Pidegon, 1992; Yardley, 2000) and I found it helpful to use the framework suggested

by Yardley (2003) to help support the validity of my study. The following steps have

been chosen to select 'tools' from the 'toolbox' to enhance validity suited to my

particular study (Barbour, 2001).

Context and generalization

Qualitative research is interested in context and variation and individual differences

and that the findings will be generalisable in another context of samples. Therefore

the aim is what Johnson (1997) terms "theoretical" "vertical" or "logical"

generalisations rather than statistical. Alternatively, the findings will not be replicated

exactly in another context but hopefully the findings will prove useful in another

context which has similarities. This can potentially be wide ranging and flexible if

some contexts share some similarities, for example other inner city London

boroughs.

Triangulation

People's perspectives may be different but equally valid; therefore triangulation is a

method of understanding a phenomenon by viewing it from different perspectives

rather than from one single view (Flick, 1998). Data was gathered from different

groups of people such as the YOS case officer, education/training setting and the young person. Another perspective that would be useful is that of the parent, but due to time constraints and practicalities this was not felt achievable in this study, but would be a consideration for future work.

Comparing researcher's codes

Another researcher compared my coding to duplicate the perspective of a different researcher so the findings are not confined to just one perspective. Two transcripts were separately rated by two coders to compare codes and determine inter-rater reliability (Boyatzis, 1998). Coders 1 and 2 had 79% agreement which is considered to be an acceptable percentage agreement (Gwet, 2014). The most stringent form would be to use two researchers to triangulate the perspectives, however, to further determine the validity and reliability of this approach I used a clear analytic framework and used regular supervision throughout this process so that the materials were shared and themes could be discussed, reviewed and refined to ensure inter-rater reliability. The theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner was used to help develop an understanding of the existing body of research to my research findings.

Disconfirming Case Analysis

An inductive process of identifying themes and patterns within the data was used and, as previously discussed this can be influenced by the researcher's interests and aims. Therefore, seeking out data that does not fit the themes should be reported to

ensure that all of the data has been taken into account, and not just the selection that fits the research aims (Creswell, 1994). Disconfirming cases can furthermore highlight the limitations of generalizing the analysis of the data.

5.12 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations include the importance of discussing anonymity and confidentiality with the participant. Semi-structured interviews allow individuals to disclose thoughts and feelings through trust and rapport. Therefore, confidentiality was discussed at the start of each interview and permission sought prior to the interview that it would be recorded and that recordings would be destroyed after transcription.

Interviews with the young people took place either in the YOS building or in their place of education to provide them with a safe and familiar environment to participate. All participants were informed that they could stop the process at any time or didn't have to answer any questions they didn't want to, and that I was only going to ask them about their education.

All participants was sent an information sheet of my research aims, a consent form (one for professionals and one for young people, see Appendix 1 and 2) and the interview questions in advance of their agreement to participate in order to gain their informed consent.

For the young people who took part in the research, the professional working with them from the YOS or their place of education acted directly as a gatekeeper for consent and worked in loco-parentis with the young person to approach and gain initial interest in participating. All 16 year olds and under who are known to the YOS

had signed parental consent forms. I approached the young people as an opportunity for them to understand the purpose of the research and what it meant for them. I explained that I was a TEP on a doctorate course who wanted to listen and learn from young people about their experiences and views on education, and that I wanted to share this with other professionals working with youth offenders so they could learn and improve practice for young people in the future.

I worked in line with the Gillick competency (1985) in relation to under 16 year old and parental consent. This ruling is used widely in children legal rights to help assess whether a child has the maturity to make their own decisions and to understand the implications of those decisions. Professionals working with children need to consider how to balance children's rights and wishes with their responsibility to keep children safe from harm.

"Parental rights yields to the child's right to make his own decisions when he reaches a sufficient understanding and intelligence to be capable of making up his own mind on the matters requiring decisions" (Lord Scarman, 1985, Gillick v West Norfolk, 1985).

It was emphasized to all participants that the research is anonymous and anonymised records and public domain records were used. Personal and locality details and names have been removed in the writing up of the data.

All research subjects have the right to know what is written about them, and this was clearly stated at the outset of how the research summary and publication could be accessed.

This chapter has detailed the research design and how data was collected using a mixed methods design. The process of analysing the qualitative data using thematic analysis was discussed and the ethical considerations given to the study. The results from both the quantitative and qualitative data are shown in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Results

6.1 Introduction

This study aims to explore young people's perceptions and experiences of educational inclusion and engagement, and to gain the views of professionals working with youth offenders. My intention is also to reveal findings from one inner London Local Authority of the educational needs, uptake and educational provisional for youth offenders within that area.

My study is designed to focus on these areas by using a mixed methods approach to gather the data and experiences from two research questions which are:

1. What are the educational needs, uptake and provision for youth offenders within one local authority? (Quantitative results)

2. What are the barriers and facilitators of educational inclusion and engagement from different stakeholder's perspectives? (Qualitative results)

This chapter will begin with the quantitative results to address RQ1, followed by the qualitative results to address RQ2.

6.2 Quantitative results

In this section the findings will be presented from the data collected from the quarterly collection within the YOS from the Asset form. It is important to interpret this data because it can help identify vulnerable groups and patterns in those involved with youth offending in this borough. It will also highlight the number of young people with SEN and unidentified SEN involved with crime. Finally, this provides an educational context in which to interpret the barriers and facilitators which will be presented in the next section.

6.3 Demographics

Analysis of the data identified significantly more males than females (figure 6.1) known to YOS.   14 to 16 year olds made up the largest group of youth offenders with 10 to 13 year olds being the smallest group (Figure 6.2). Young people who identified themselves as Black UK are represented more than five times more frequently than any other ethnic group. Other ethnic groups that made up a noticeable proportion of young offenders were Afro Caribbean, African, Mixed (White and Caribbean), White UK and Unknown (Figure 6.3). This borough has a higher proportion of BME people within the YOS, in my sample 88% (n=259) were from a BME background as opposed to 85% average in the borough, which although slightly more, is broadly similar to the local demographics and not a statistically significant difference.

Figure 6.1: Numbers of male and female young people known to youth offending service
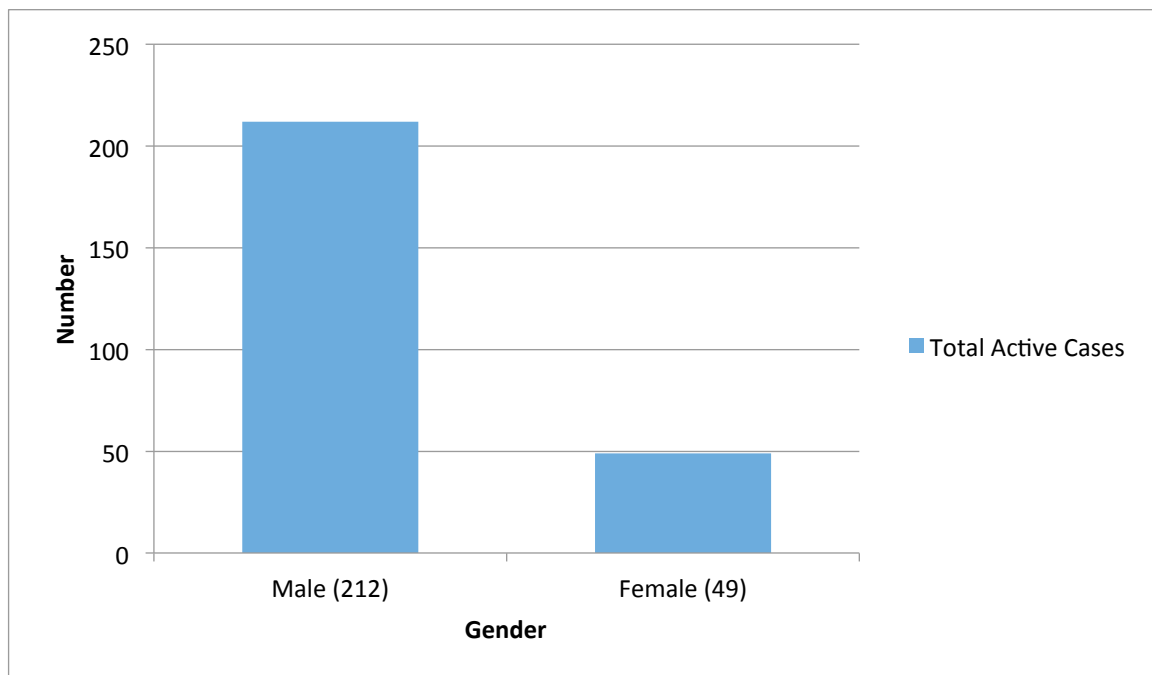
Figure 6.2: Age bands of youth offenders
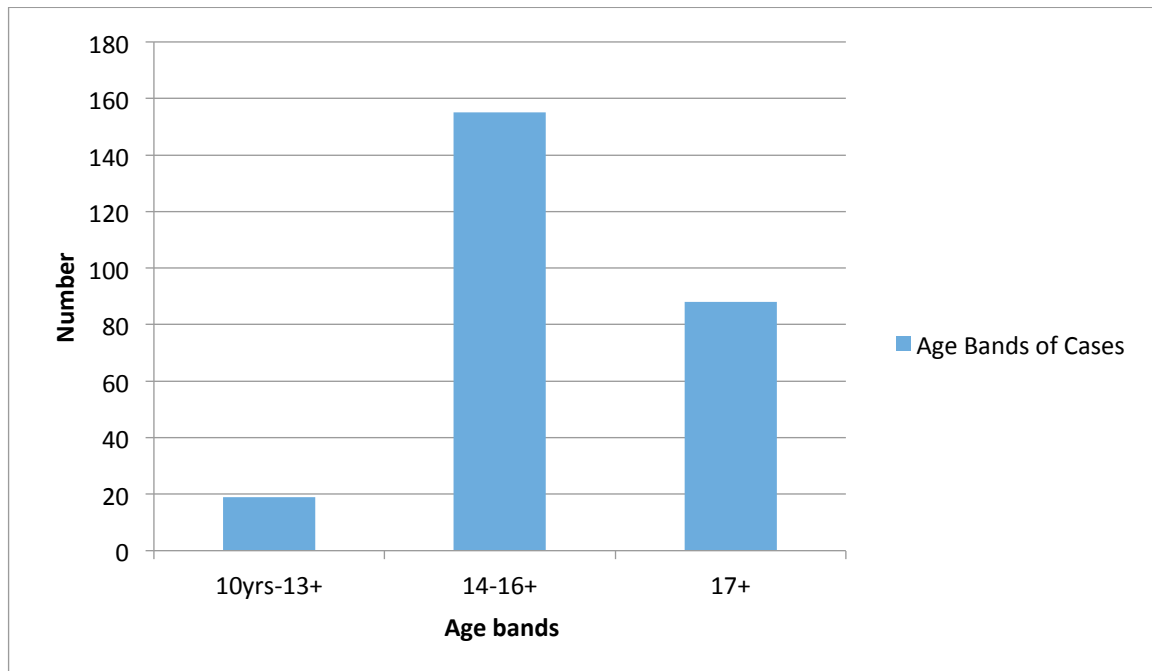
Figure 6.3 Ethnicity of cases
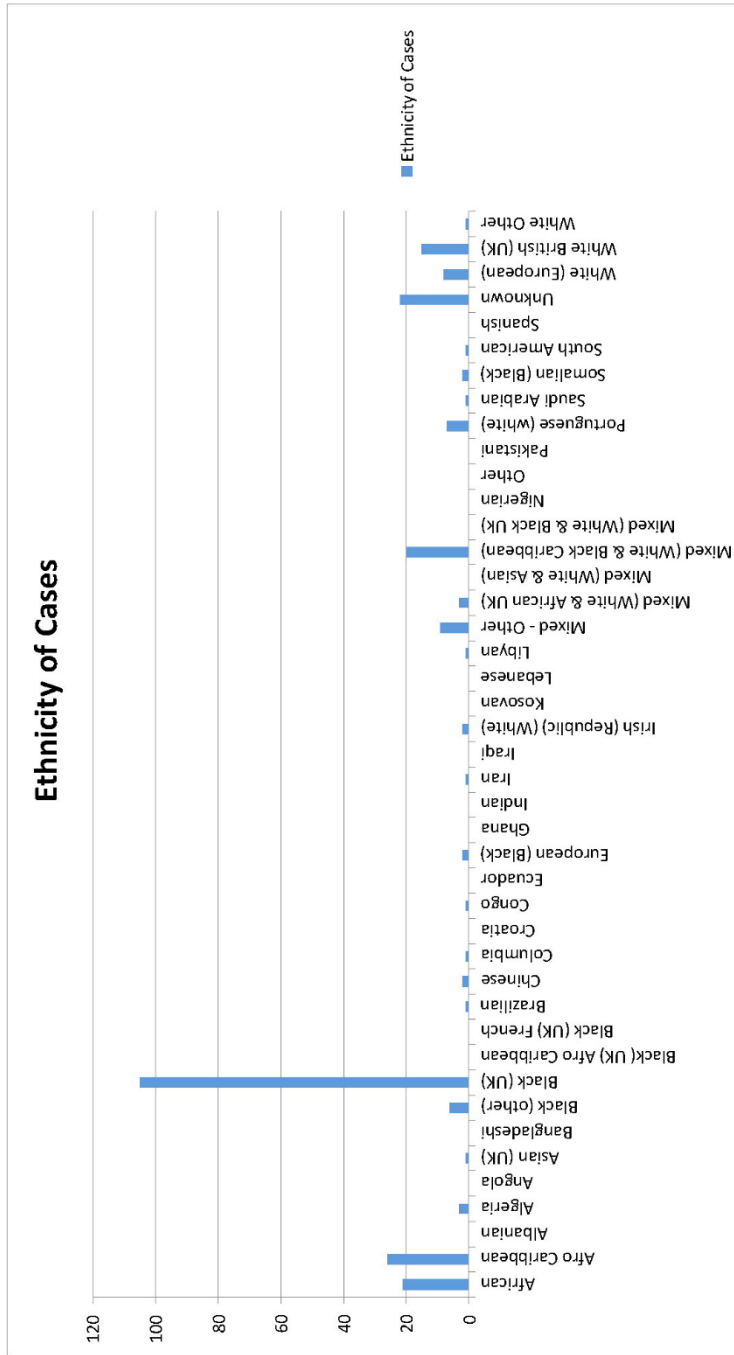
6.4 Above school age provision

Of the youth offenders who were above school age a significant majority had no provision recorded. This category represents youths who may not have been asked about their provision at the time of data collection. Reasons for this will be explored later. The majority of those in recorded provisions were in a training course, other, college or unemployed, in order of frequency (figure 6.4).

Figure 6.4: Numbers of youth offenders in above school age provision
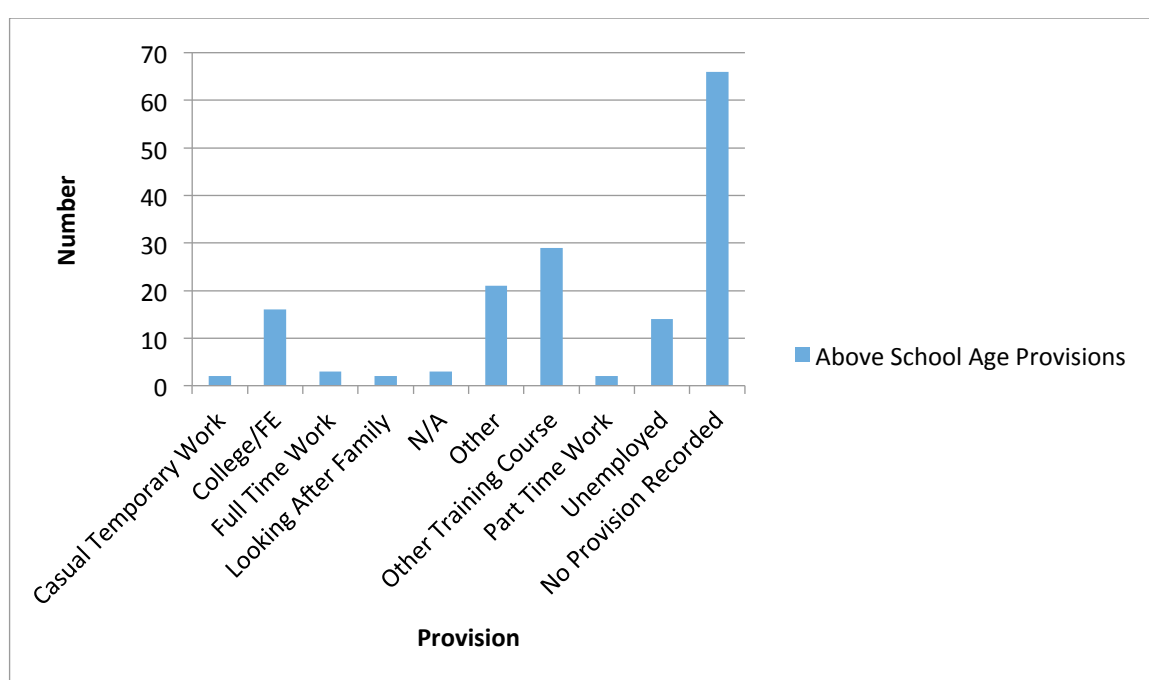
6.5 School age provision

The PRU provided for the highest number of students known to YOS however, this was not replicated with high number of Statements of Special Educational Need. Youth offenders in special schools had the highest number of Statements. The second highest number of youth offenders were attending mainstream schools followed by those that are not engaged in any education. The latter group had a proportionally low number of Statements. Over all settings the percentage of YOS students with a Statement of Special Educational Need was 19%. (Figure 6.5).

However, 'not known', 'missing' and 'N/A' (as separate categories) account for a large number of youth offenders whose SEN status is unknown to YOS (Figure 6.6). Equal numbers of youth offenders had been permanently excluded and had not been permanently excluded. A small number were not recorded (Figure 6.7). Data shows that a large majority of those attending school were not regularly truanting (Figure 6.8). Of the 65 students for whom there was a record of any literacy and numeracy difficulties, 35% had difficulties and 65% had not, however, again, 'not known', 'missing' and 'N/A' represented the majority of answers given on the Asset form (Figure 6.9). The terms including 'N/A' will be discussed in the next chapter. The vast majority of youth offenders did not report being bullied (Figure 6.10). Similarly, high levels of youth offenders did not report having a poor relationship with teachers (Figure 6.11). Data of the number of hours spent in school showed that almost all youth offenders fitted into one of two groups: over 25 hours (full time education) or zero hours. Of these two groups more youth offenders were in full time education than zero hours. Once again data regarding the number of hours in education was missing for a large number of youth offenders (Figure 6.12).

Figure 6.5: Numbers of youth offenders and Statements in school age provision
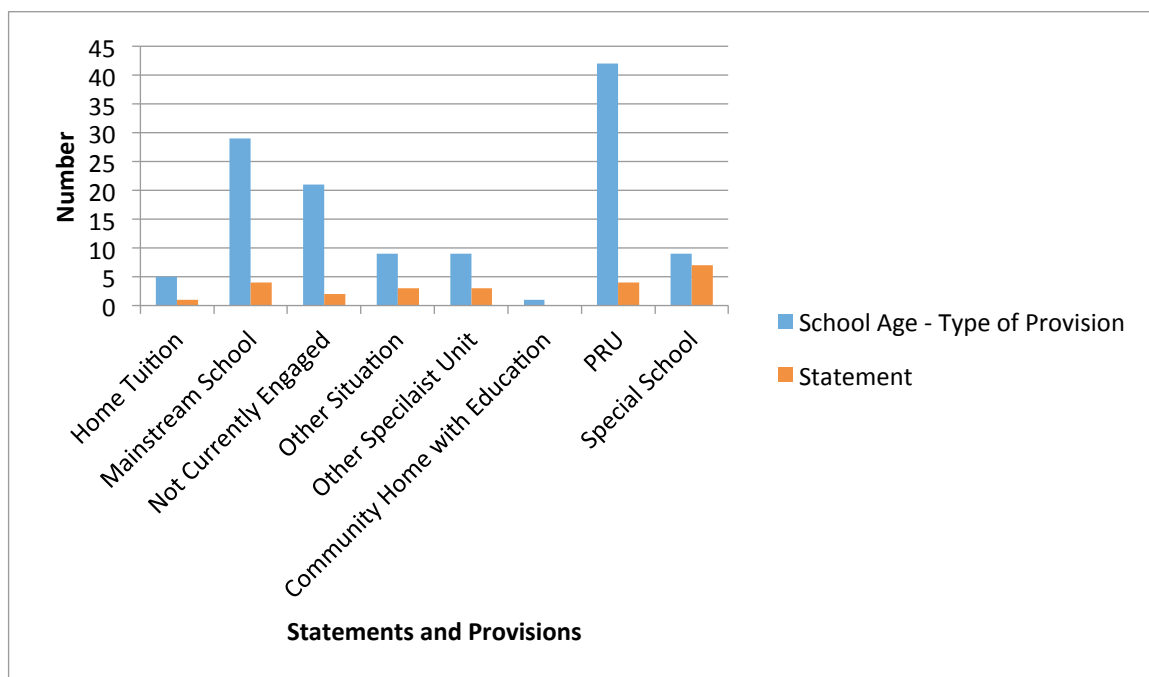
Figure 6.6: Numbers of school age youth offenders with Statements
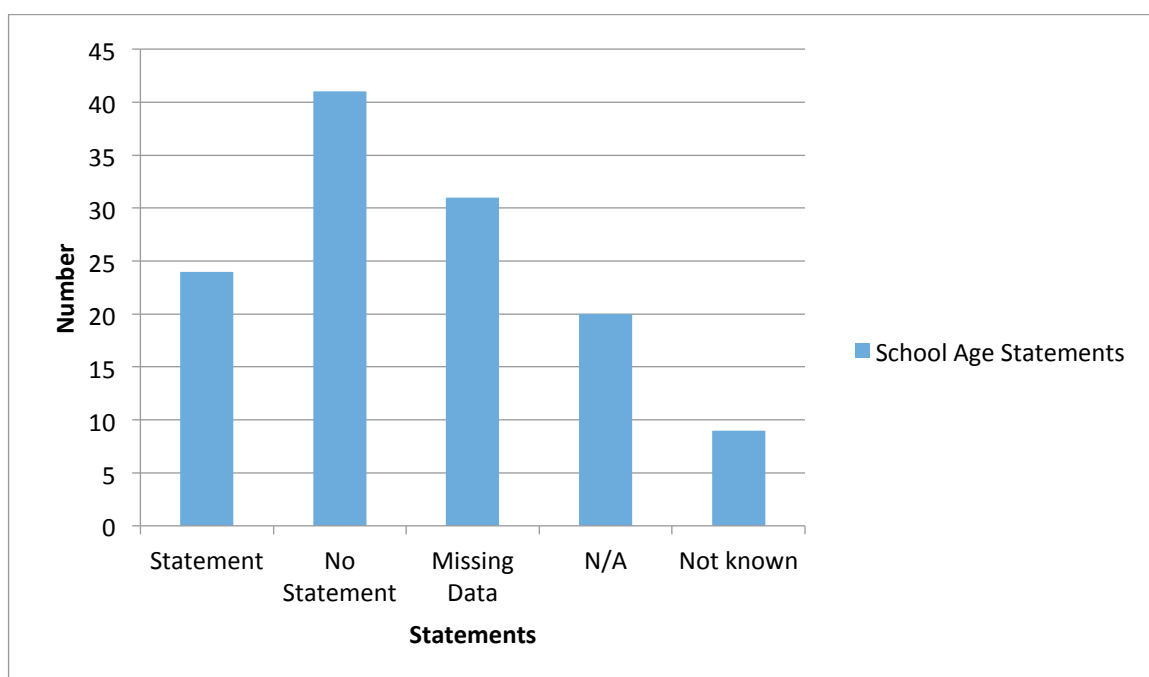
Figure 6.7: Number of school age youth offenders with permanent exclusions
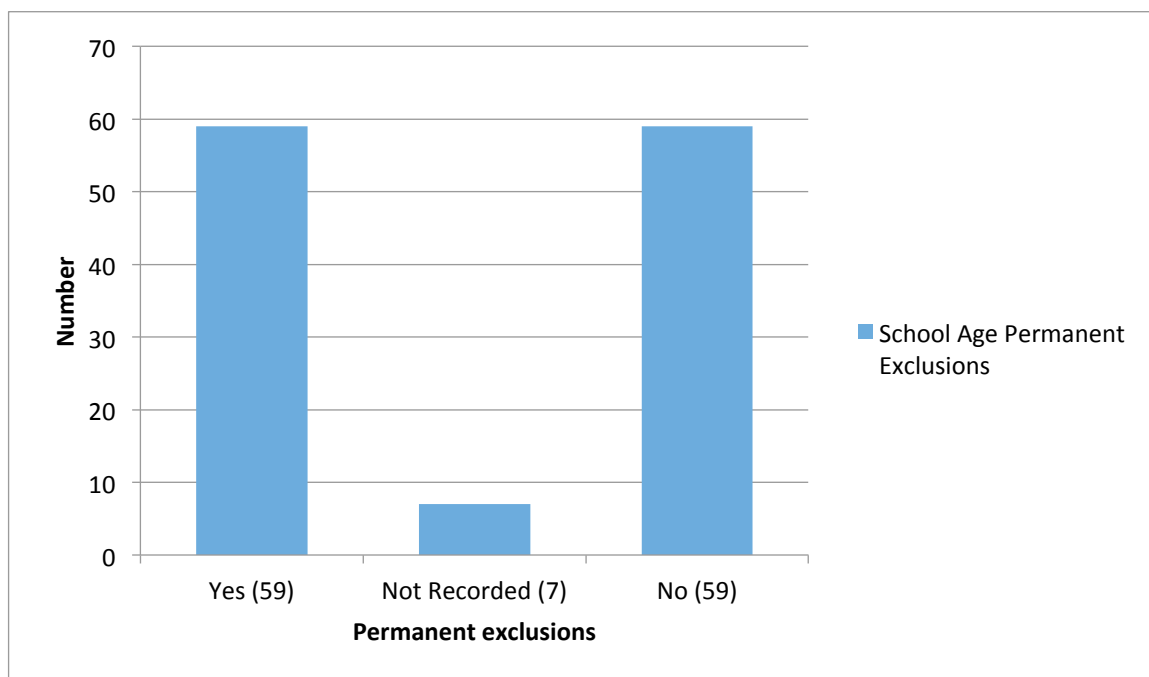
Figure 6.8: Numbers of school age youth offenders with regular truanting
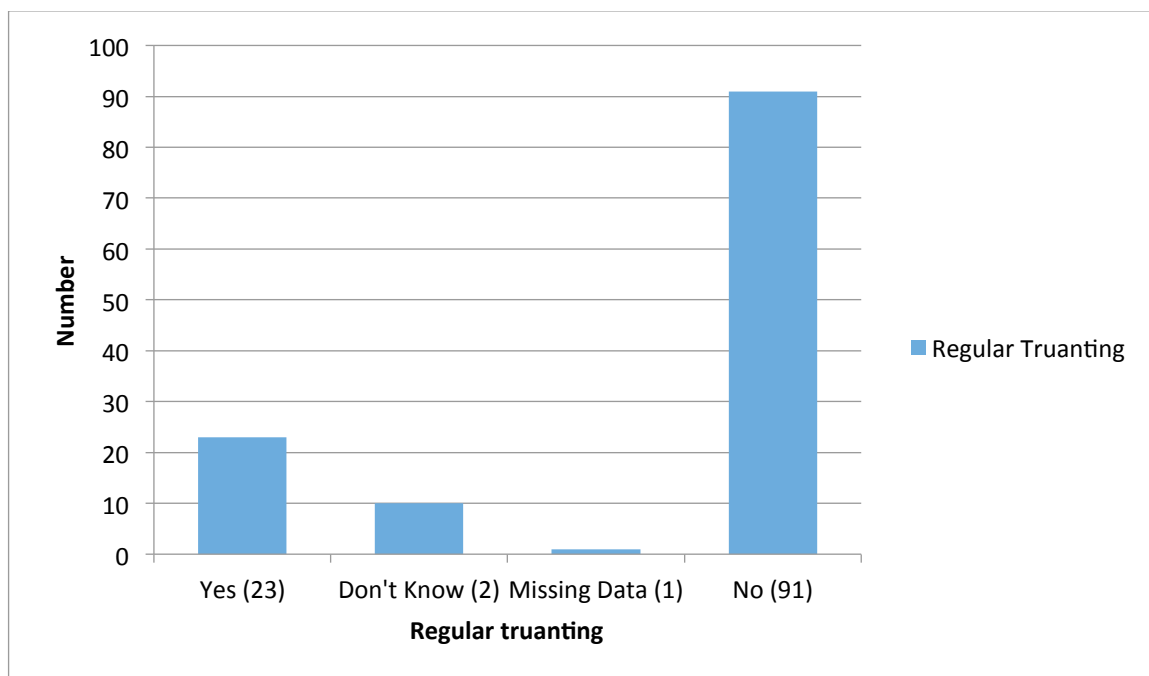
Figure 6.9: Numbers of school age youth offenders with difficulties with basic literacy and numeracy
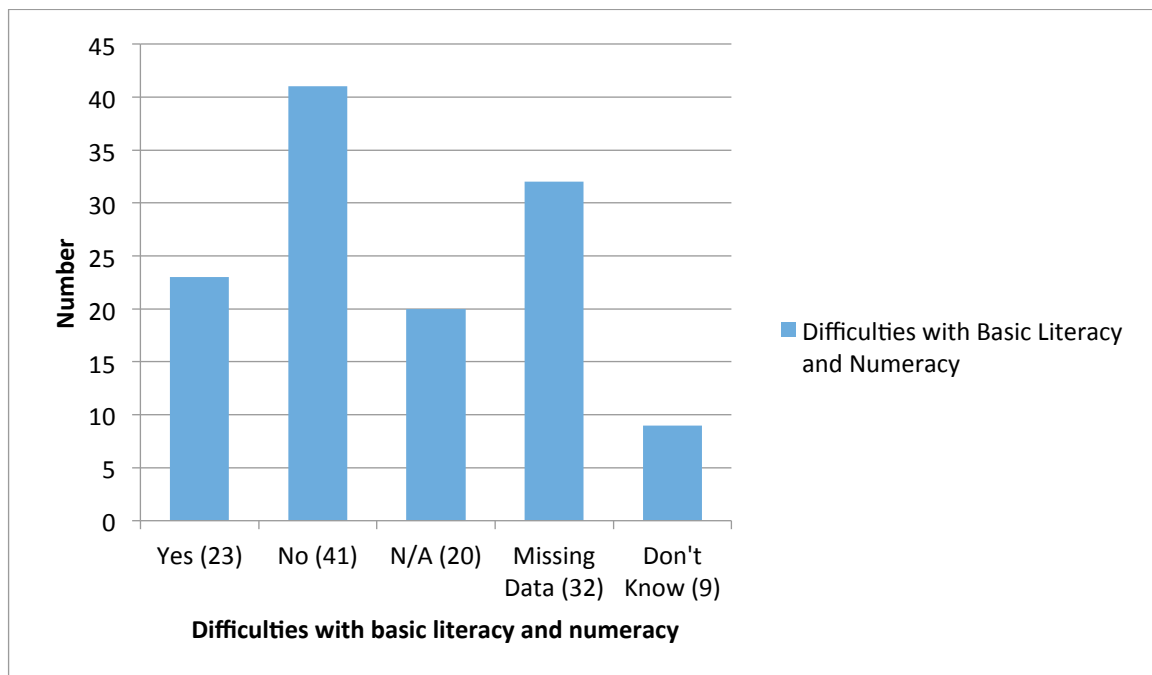
Figure 6.10: Number of school age youth offenders who reported being bullied
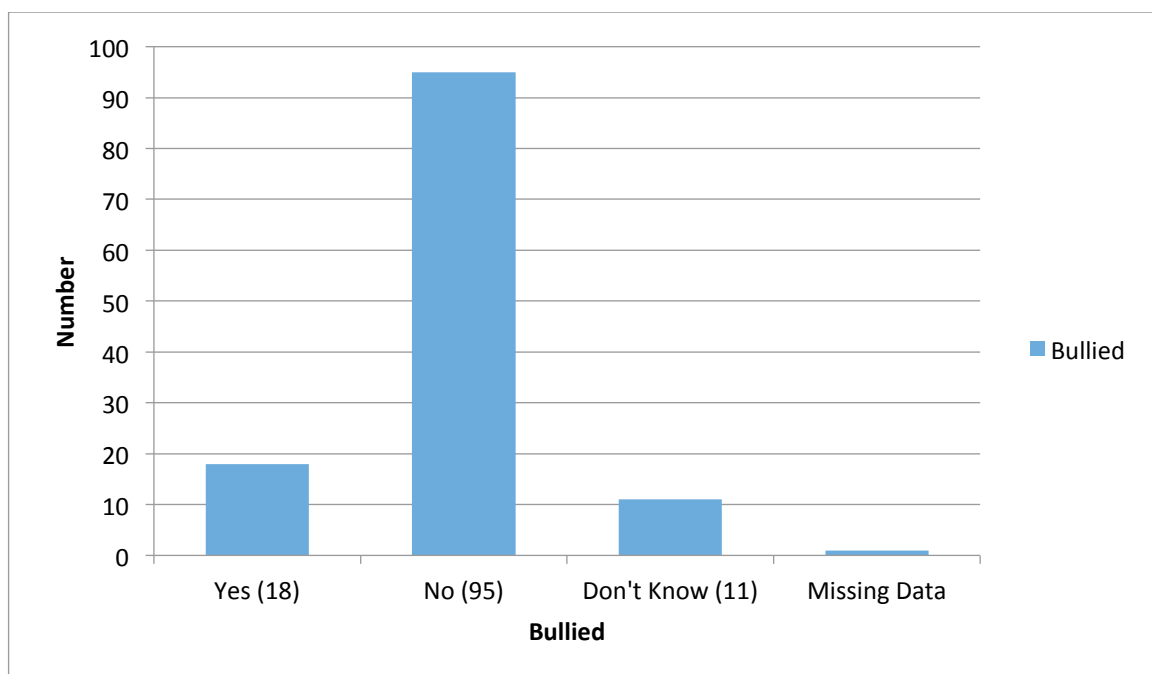
Figure 6.11: Numbers of school age youth offenders who report a poor relationship with teachers
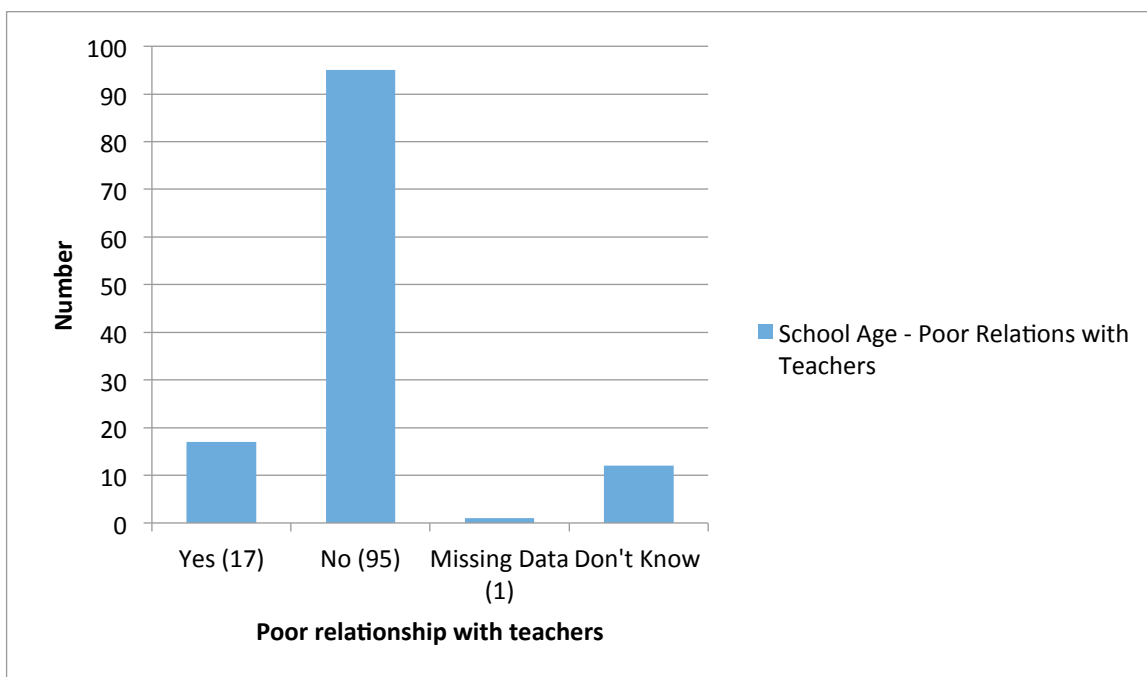
Figure 6.12: Number of hours school age youth offenders spend in education
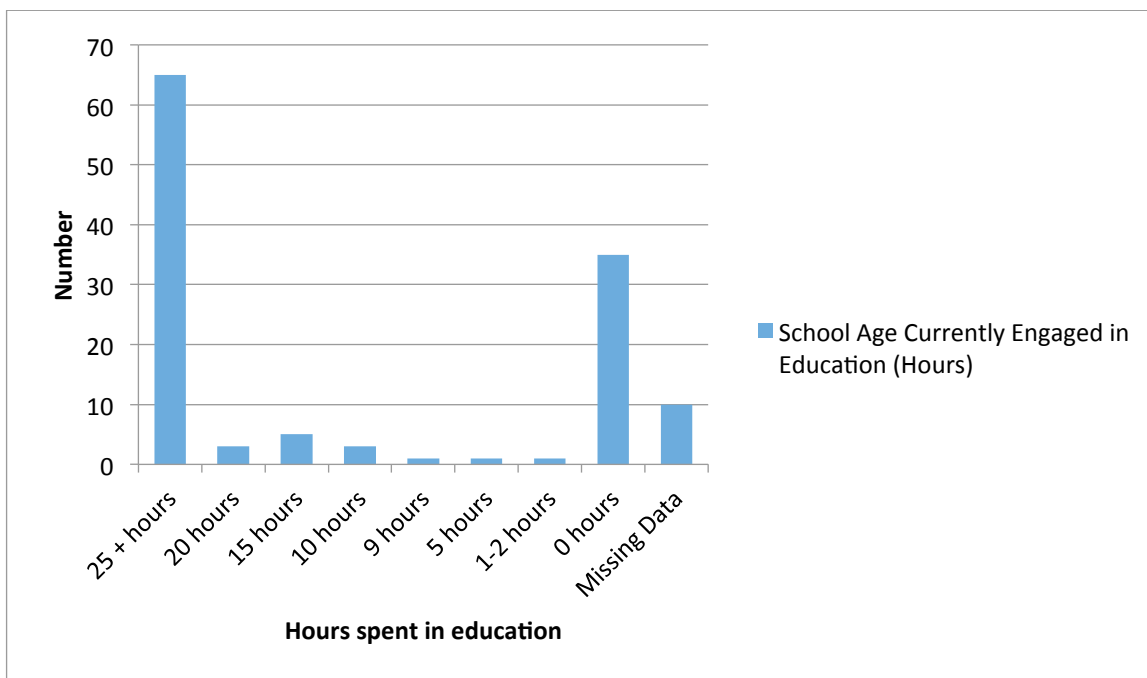
6.6 Summary of quantitative results

Analysis of data from the Asset form shows that many categories have missing data, more prevalent in questions which relied on official figures from schools or the Local Authority e.g. Statements. Boys aged between 14 and 16 years who reported their

ethnicity as Black UK represented the majority of young people known to youth offending. In terms of ethnicity this was broadly representative of the demographics for the borough. The majority of youth offenders who were in a school provision did not have a Statement and did not record difficulties with literacy and numeracy, however, relative to their peers the proportion of those with a Statement, with literacy and numeracy difficulties or out of school was raised.

6.7 Introduction of Qualitative Results

This section will discuss findings from the qualitative data. This can help in understanding the quantitative data in the context of the professional and personal experiences of those involved within YOS. Thematic analysis with an inductive approach produced the themes to address RQ2. I analysed the interviews from professionals and young people separately. Analysis of the interviews drew out themes from individual interviews which were then clustered into four factors. These factors represented different levels of involvement: systemic factors, care/parenting related factors, school related factors and individual factors. These factors have been interpreted through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic model, which represents level of influence on an individual.   The model helps to consider the different processes that are involved around the individual in relation to the context and the time of the study e.g. undertaken in times of economic austerity and budget cuts. Although they are presented separately within the diagram and my discussion, it should be noted that many of the themes contribute to multiple levels and therefore factors often interrelate as shown in the diagram of Bronfenbrenner on page 26 where the arrows indicate interrelations.

Results from the qualitative data are presented using two thematic maps (one for professionals and one for young people) produced during the thematic analysis. Each overarching factor has a number of sub themes, each of which will be presented and supported by data extracts from the interviews. The thematic maps are therefore linked to Bronfennbrenner's ecological map in accordance to the sub themes that could be linked to the macrosystem, exosystem, mesosystem and microsystem.

First, results will be presented from the professionals, then from the young people, and the chapter will conclude by identifying themes that are common across the two data sets and any differences. Table 6.1 illustrates the superordinate themes or overarching factors next to the sub-themes and their barriers and facilatators.

Table 6.1 Overarching factors (superordinate themes) and sub themes from professionals

SYSTEMIC FACTORS	JOINED UP WORKING B: Multi agency challenges F: Multi agency working; making links COMMUNICATION B: Fractured Information Sharing B: Fractured Information Sharing with schools B: Variation in information gathering B: Different Databases F: Good information sharing F: Access to databases F: Communication B: WORKING TO TARGETS AND TIMEFRAMES DEVOLVED BUDGETS AND FRAGMENTED SERVICES B: Restructure difficulties/loss of roles B: Role Identity B: Financial constraints F: Supporting young people's finance B: OUT OF BOROUGH CHALLENGES

CARE/PARENTING RELATED FACTORS	PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT B: Parental behaviour B: Limited parental engagement B; No support for parents B: Lack of role models F: Parental engagement/supportive families F: Role models PARENTS AND EDUCATION B: Low parent support re: education B: Parents misunderstanding education system F: Involving parents FAMILY ISSUES B: Family patterns B: Family relationships PARENTING/CARE ISSUES B: Frustrations with social care B: High social care/involvement with CP issues GANGS B: Financial gains B: Terrority/safe travel B: Belongings/Peers
SCHOOL RELATED FACTORS	PROVISIONS B: No school provisions B: Inadequate provisions B: Attendance/punctuality issues B: Variation in support F: Provision tailored to young person needs F: Support from school EXCLUSIONS B: Broken schooling B: Challenging behaviour in schools B: Schools quick to exclude F: Keep in school STIGMA OF YOUTH OFFENDING LABEL B: stigma of label B: No training F: Remove stigma EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING B: Difficult to engage young people

	B: Different expectations F: Explore expectations/other routes RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS B: Poor relationships F: Good relationships TRANSITIONS B: Transitions F: Support and plan transitions
INDIVIDUAL FACTORS	UNIDENTIFIED SEN B: Unidentified SEN F: Identified SEN LABELS B: Stigma B: Emotional Well-Being B: Substance Misuse B: Neurodevelopmental labels F: Support for emotional needs MOTIVATION/ENGAGEMENT B: Disengagement F: Motivation VOICE OF YOUNG PERSON B: No voice of young person B: Consequences F: Listening to voice of young person PEER INFLUENCES B: Peer influences F: Resilience B: MULTIPLE ISSUES B: SOCIAL SKILLS

6.8 Barrier and Facilitators: Professionals Results

BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS OF PROFESSIONALS

SYSTEMIC FACTORS

B: WORKING TO TARGETS AND TIMEFRAMES

COMMUNICATION
B: Fractured Information Sharing
B: Fractured Information Sharing with schools
B: Variation in information gathering
B: Different Databases
F: Good information sharing
F: Access to databases
F: Communication

DEVOLVED BUDGETS AND FRAGMENTED SERVICES
B: Restructure difficulties/loss of roles
B: Role Identity
B: Financial constraints
F: Supporting young people's finance

B: OUT OF BOROUGH CHALLENGES

CARE/PARENTING RELATED FACTORS

PARENTS AND EDUCATION
B: Low parent support re: education
B: Parents misunderstanding education system
F: Involving parents

FAMILY ISSUES
B: Family patterns
B: Family relationships

PARENTING/CARE ISSUES
B: Frustrations with social care
B: High social care/involvement with CP issues

SCHOOL RELATED FACTORS

EXCLUSIONS
B: Broken schooling
B: Challenging behaviour in schools
B: Schools quick to exclude
F: Keep in school

STIGMA OF YOUTH OFFENDING LABEL
B: stigma of label
B: No training
F: Remove stigma

GANGS
B: Financial gains
B: Terrority/safe travel
B: Belongings/Peers

INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

LABELS
B: Stigma
B: Emotional Well-Being
B: Substance Misuse
B: Neurodevelopmental labels
F: Support for emotional needs

MOTIVATION/ENGAGEMENT
B: Disengagement
F: Motivation

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING
B: Difficult to engage young people
B: Different expectations
F: Explore expectations/other routes

RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS
B: Poor relationships
F: Good relationships

UNIDENTIFIED SEN
B: Unidentified SEN
F: Identified SEN

VOICE OF YOUNG PERSON
B: No voice of young person

TRANSITIONS
B: Transitions
F: Support and plan transitions

PROVISIONS
B: No school provisions
B: Inadequate provisions
B: Attendance/punctuality issues
B: Variation in support
F: Provision tailored to young person needs
F: ...pport from school

...ENTAL ...GEMENT
...tal behaviour
...ited parental ...gagement
...ort for parents
...role models
...ntal
...pportive

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6.9 Systemic factors

Systemic factors represented themes that are related to organisational, cultural, legislative and universal issues. These are ideas that would be represented in the macro system in Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic model. An overview of the themes within this factor is presented in this part of the map.

Within the interviews from professionals, many identified the reality of multiple different professionals working within a climate of austerity and target driven working which creates a frustration of organisational issues. The professionals identified a number of issues relating to the challenges of working and communicating with multiple agencies such as different professional agendas and multiple locations of staff.

> *"Working in the YOT you find out there are five of us working with the young person, so you go hang on, do you mind if we sit down and have a talk about them and find out who is doing what?" (1,YOS worker)*
> *"It's challenging because every specialist within that multi agency team will have their own agenda, their own remit to work with and their own outcomes*

that they need to achieve. And sometimes it can be difficult to pull all of them together." (3,YOS worker)

A disconfirming quote from one professional identified that multi agency working was effective.

"For me, in terms of how it works, it works really well."(7,Worker in Education, Training and Employment, ETE)

This different perspective may be due to this professional working in a large mainstream school with multi agency professionals on site. It is difficult to determine whether multi agency working with the YOS is being described as working well or multi agency working within the setting works well for that professional. When relationships had been built and statutory systems are in place, for example for LAC and CP, this enabled enforced joined up working and most professionals spoke about how this can be a facilitator for good practice.

"I think being on the risk management panel is quite useful as you get to hear who does what."(2,YOS worker)
"CAMHs and education sit with us and I always make referrals to them, like 99% of the time."(6,YOS worker)
"If you've already made links with people it's perfect."(6,YOS worker)

The risk management panel is a weekly meeting which consists of representatives from Social Care, Police, Education, CAMHS, Substance Misuse, Speech and Language, Gangs worker and is chaired by the Practice Manager. The YOS case officer presents young people where they have scored medium or high scores on the Asset form to indicate high risk or high vulnerability concerns to provide a holistic approach to risk management. Information sharing caused difficulties for some professionals for a variety of different reasons. These included difficulties in

communication with schools where a named contact has not been established and the commitment of different professionals to make contact across agencies.

> *"Communication is definitely a problem; it's always been a problem."(4,YOS worker)*
> *"I think it depends on the case worker, sometimes they provide everything."(12,ETE worker)*
> *"We don't have a SPOC, single point of contact (with schools) we tried to do that and have a protocol before with the school where we had one person that we go to for information but that never worked out for whatever reason, I don't know why." (5, YOS worker)*

Professionals also reported the duplication of professionals gathering information.

> *Where a YOS professional is asking the young person questions and the young person replies: "Do you not have this information already? Why are you asking me already, I've already said this. And I'm (the YOS professional) guilty because I think I just need this information for me."(5, YOS worker)*

Information sharing was also inhibited by different methods of data gathering and different databases being accessible to different professions.

> *"They can't see ours (database) I don't think."(6, YOS worker)*
> *"I got a copy of his statement from the school so that wasn't available within the YOS."(11, YOS worker)*

Some professions cited 'Framework' the Local Authority electronic record system as a facilitator for information sharing as YOS and other professionals within YOS could access this, however, this was still inaccessible to schools and therefore schools didn't always know if social care were involved.

> *"We've got access to the SEN team and the database to see if they had a statement or EHC."(4, YOS worker)*
> *"The first thing I do is check Framework, see if they're known to social care."(6, YOS worker)*

Again, once relationships have been established professionals were positive about communication.

> *"When we all communicate then that is great."(5, YOS worker)*
> *"Where the young person is actually referred by YOS the information is good."(14, ETE worker)*

The pressure from budget cuts led to multiple restructuring difficulties such as changes in management, relocation and loss of roles which put an increase on workload pressures.

> *"They (parents) were good to engage when we had our parenting worker...And until we get another parenting worker that's an area that's a bit lacking."(3, YOS worker)*
> *"Sadly we don't have an EP; it would be good to have one though in the actual YOT."(1, YOS worker)*
> *"So the YOS in X does not sit under children's services and that is a big barrier."(3, YOS worker)*

In borough X the council services are divided into 4 clusters; Children, Adults and Health, Neighbourhoods and Growth, Corporate Resources and Public Health. The YOS sits within Neighbourhoods and Growth cluster, where education, social care, adult services and children services sit within Children, Adults and Health. Therefore, different strategic directors oversee each cluster and the YOS is in a

different cluster from the majority of services that they link with in terms of youth offenders, education and social care.

The restructuring difficulties and budget cuts related to confusion for professionals regarding their own responsibilities and the responsibilities of others, resulting in unnecessary tasks being completed, for example, multiple professionals contacting schools for the same information.

> *"But generally in terms of other meetings to just meet and discuss or professional meetings it is often kind of us engineering that. Often because you can see that you're having to have lots of different conversations and that maybe the YOS officer is struggling to put it all together a little bit"(11, YOS worker)*

Budget restrictions led many professionals to feel they didn't have the adequate provision to meet the needs of youth offenders.

> *"Over the last few years services have been ripped out of X, a lot of our young people want practical courses and the vocational local courses and access has been taken away….all these things, business skills just all gone."(4, YOS worker)*

But some professionals reported that when they could financially support youth offenders then that was a positive outcome.

> *"Young people are not going to come in, travel is going to be a big barrier to getting here. Lunch that could be their only meal of the day, so we need to cover that. So for young people getting something back."(12, ETE worker)*

Professionals spoke only about the barriers of working to targets and timeframes and working with services outside of the borough. Individuals reported that timeframes

given are often arbitrary and restricted the quality and effectiveness of the work they could do with youth offenders.

"There is no universal intervention or timeline, that is just a fantasy thing where we are going to do this and everything will be fine and also importantly sometimes we only work with a young person for 6 months and they have all the needs, and we ideally all meant to get on board and fix it like it's a MOT or something and they will come out clean."(5, YOS worker)

When youth offenders have been involved with services out of borough this exacerbated previously discussed difficulties with information gathering and sharing.

"The only place it becomes an issue is when the young person has travelled several times and haven't engaged in each setting so you get bits of information."(5, YOS worker)

6.10 Care/Parenting Related Factors

Care/Parenting related factors represented themes that are connected to professionals working with parents, families, social care and gang related issues. These are ideas that would be represented in the exo and meso system in Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic model. An overview of the themes within this factor is presented in this part of the map:

CARE/PARENTING RELATED FACTORS

PARENTS AND EDUCATION
B: Low parent support re: education
B: Parents misunderstanding education system
F: Involving parents

FAMILY ISSUES
B: Family patterns
B: Family relationships

PARENTING/CARE ISSUES
B: Frustrations with social care
B: High social care/involvement with CP issues

PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT
B: Parental behaviour
B: Limited parental engagement
B; No support for parents
B: Lack of role models
F: Parental engagement/supportive families
F: Role models

GANGS
B: Financial gains
B: Terrority/safe travel
B: Belongings/Peers
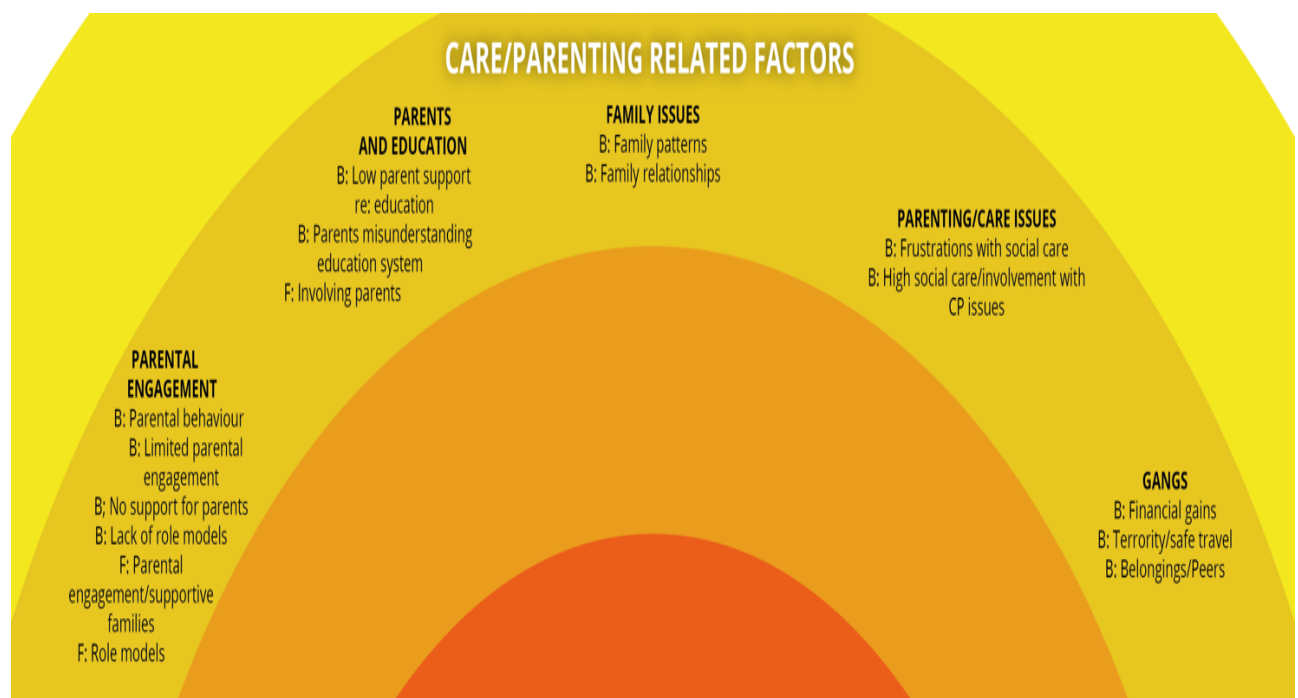
Within the interviews with professionals the importance of working with and involving parents was considered vital, however, many barriers were cited as to why this was difficult to achieve in practice. Professionals reported limited parental engagement with agencies around the young person; challenging behaviour from parents; lack of role models and no support for parents.

> *"Because when you think about, certainly the youth offenders I know, how actively involved are their parents? I wouldn't say that involved and that supportive."(8, ETE worker)*

"The ones where it's the difficult and most challenging parents that we're not able to work with, or are actually refusing to work professionals."(3, YOS worker)

"But how many of these young people do know someone who has gone to university, I suspect it is very low and it's just that role model thing."(1, YOS worker)

"I think as well for young people who are refusing to attend, there is not a huge amount of support given to parents to help with that."(11, YOS worker)

The restructuring of services has left the parenting support officer within the YOS vacant and many professionals acknowledged that parents did not appear to have support in a number of areas including understanding the education system, a negative experience of education by parents or not placing education as a priority.

"They're not engaging with education because it's something that the family themselves don't necessarily value."(3, YOS worker)

"But we also have parents that are not inclusive or don't know how the system works to access support services in the borough…and also parents misunderstanding of how the education system works and their expectations."(5, YOS worker)

One professional reported ethnicity differences in parents' perceptions of the education system.

"Even looking at parents and getting them to feel more involved, because especially African and African Caribbean parents, we've got a long history in that school is a school, yeah you go to school they'll take care of you, they'll do it all, lots of them don't get involved with parents associations in school or PTA's, they just expect you go to school, they deal with you, when you get home I deal with you. A lot of parents just don't know what's going on with their kids at school."(13, ETE worker)

It is important to note that the above quote is a perspective of a professional which may differ to that of a parent. This is discussed further in the next chapter. However, when relationships had been built with parents, professionals identified that involving parents with their work was effective. Furthermore, supportive families and role models around the young person were considered to be positive.

> *"But what I think works best with young people whose parents are quite engaged…so yeah it's good to make that relationship with parents."(6, YOS worker)*

> *"And we get a mentor they'll take them out and go to home and go help them with whatever is going on in their area, that's been very positive."(10, ETE worker)*
> *"Where the focus is on what they do in and outside of school and really involving their parents."(9, ETE worker)*

Family patterns and family relationships led many professionals to feel that the young people had entrenched home difficulties which resulted in many feeling that this created further complexities when supporting youth offenders to break a cycle.

> *"His older brother is gang affiliated. It might appear that this older brother introduced him to the gang, crime and gang world stuff."(6, YOS worker)*
> *"The fact they have been sofa surfing for months because the arguments at home just got too much and they've decided it's time for me to leave."(13, ETE worker)*

Many professionals reported a frustration with communicating and working with social care. Furthermore, many reported that they felt they were often having to do a

social care role; with concerns that social care was not working with youth offenders where they felt they should be.

> *"It's not great (link with social care) and the reason why it's not great is because of the way that it's been structured….and we have identified that we do need to work more closely and the YOS needs to stop picking up on the work that social care needs to be doing."(3, YOS worker)*

This is alongside the majority of professionals reporting that they felt the majority of youth offenders had CP issues or high social care involvement.

> *"I'm just thinking of a number of cases, we've got a number of cases where they are a child in need or they're on child protection plans."(8, ETE worker)*
> *"I think a lot of them should (have social care involvement), but they don't."(14, ETE worker)*

Gang involvement was mentioned by all of the professionals as the potential financial gain from such involvement was difficult for young people to resist and it was hard to prioritize education over such gains.

> *"It's not rare for young people to say well why am I going into school or doing that job when I can earn this now? That is a fairly common thing. What we offer them is not enticing enough." (4, YOS worker)*

Furthermore, the issues of safe travel and crossing boundaries created a pressure on professionals to identify education placements for youth offenders involved in gangs.

> *"Is it an area that our young people have an issue travelling to. I may think it is in X and that's really close, it's a walk away, but for some young people if they go there it will be world war 3."(4, YOS worker)*

The gang lifestyle was reported by many professionals to provide a sense of belonging with peers which was difficult for them to offer alternatives to young people.

> *"If you're looking for companionship and belonging and you're not getting it at home, being lured into a gang with offers of money or clothes or just a feeling of belonging, that's quite a pull for a young person. Some of our young people get pulled in that direction."(7, ETE worker)*

6.11 School related factors

School related factors represented themes that are related to practicalities and practice within the education system. These are ideas that would be represented in the meso and micro systems in Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic model. An overview of the themes within this factor is presented from the map shown below.

SCHOOL RELATED FACTORS

STIGMA OF YOUTH OFFENDING LABEL
B: stigma of label
B: No training
F: Remove stigma

EXCLUSIONS
B: Broken schooling
B: Challenging behaviour in schools
B: Schools quick to exclude
F: Keep in school

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING
B: Difficult to engage young people
B: Different expectations
F: Explore expectations/other routes

TRANSITIONS
B: Transitions
F: Support and plan transitions

RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS
B: Poor relationships
F: Good relationships
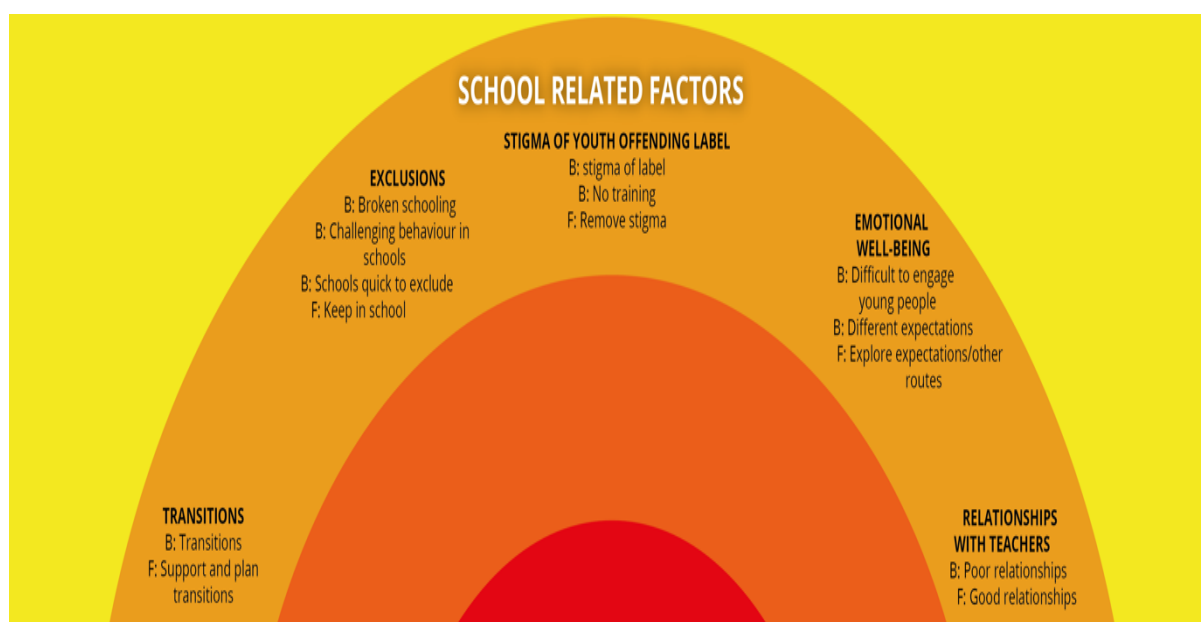
Within the interviews from professionals many identified the frustration of inadequate or no provision suitable to meet the needs of many youth offenders at an organisational level.

> *"The lack of local accessible training programmes and educational settings in X...so what we are finding that the need is still there but we have to find it (education or training provision)."(4, YOS worker)*
>
> *"With this particular provision it's just there as a way of putting that group of young people somewhere to say that something is being done, but it doesn't necessarily mean that what's being done is meaningful."(3, YOS worker)*

Frustrations were also reported at the time youth offenders spent without education whilst a placement was identified for them either due to their SEN or behaviour. Many professionals did report that some young people can be difficult to engage or do display challenging behaviour which further complicates the search for suitable provision. This links with the quotes in the Individual Factor section below but it is important to note here as there can be several issues involved for linking these young people into ETE. The majority of professionals identified a number of issues relating to attendance and punctuality concerns and the variation in support that schools and provisions offered.

> *"Mine are typically not in education or their attendance is sketchy or non-existent."(4, YOS worker)*
>
> *"He went in yesterday at 12 o clock and walked out at 1."(6, YOS worker)*
>
> *"I've touched on the potential of SEN and I think also schools are not always willing to support young people."(11, YOS worker)*

A disconfirming quote could be seen from one professional who reported that youth offenders in that provision had good attendance.

> *"'cause even the 2 young people that you've seen today, I think they've got almost 100% attendance."(14, ETE worker)*

It is difficult to ascertain why this is the case for these two young people, but possible explanations could be the high level of pastoral support they receive in their college provision or the family are supportive of this placement. At both the young people's previous provision they were excluded. This is interesting as some youth offenders in mainstream school may not have any difficulties and some in the PRU or specialist provision may have more problematic and challenging needs. However, this may not be the case for all youth offenders, as may be the case with the two young people in the quote above, where a move to a more specialist provision may be better suited to meet their needs and therefore encourage participation and attendance. When provision was tailored to meet the young persons' needs and good pastoral support was offered from the provision this enabled good practice.

> *"I think that some of the specific programmes that are available, that are tailored for these sort of young people are quite good because instantly then you have staff and provision who are much more aware of the needs of these young people. They are much more willing to work flexibly and more creatively to get them engaged."(11, YOS worker)*
> *"We talk to the schools, schools put resources in and put in extra support, we get regular feedback, those things tend to work well…some schools are even willing to go to prisons to young people work while they are remanded to make sure that when they come out that they haven't got big gaps, so there is good practice."(5, YOS worker)*

Youth offenders excluded from education was reported by most professionals for a variety of different reasons. These included young people having a pattern of disrupted schooling; young people presenting with challenging behaviour within schools and school being quick to exclude.

"I can't think of a single young person who has come to us having had a very consistent and normal education. They often come with having had periods of exclusion, of changing schools or being out of school for a long time."(11, YOS worker)

"He wasn't managing and I think his behaviour, he was quite a challenge…there's another boy he assaulted a member of staff."(8, ETE worker)

"And another issue that we have with the schools as well is that they're very quick to actually exclude young people."(3, YOS worker)

It is interesting to consider the positioning of the professionals with the quotes, as the YOS worker has the view that schools are quick to exclude, however the ETE worker talks about the challenging behaviour seen in her provision which resulted in physical violence against a member of staff. This highlights the problems and tensions that could be evidence of professionals trying to keep young people in provisions alongside very challenging behaviours being displayed. However, one professional reported that not all youth offenders have issues with education and that the majority of youth offenders are in mainstream school.

"We have young people who are in school who don't actually have any education issues, it does happen, I know it's a rare thing but I don't want you to think that every young person coming to the YOT has education issues."(5, YOS worker).

The majority of young people, from the many years I have been here tend to come from school, as there is this train of thought that if young people are not in school then they will offend more, but from my experience the majority of young people we see come from a mainstream school but are offending."(5, YOS worker).

Many professionals reported good practice of provisions trying to keep young people within their setting and this was considered a facilitator in supporting their educational journey:

> "I think my main focus when it comes to meeting people of school age, in Year 9, Year 10 is to keep them in school, for me that is the most important output for me, if I can keep them in school well then the chances of them getting involved in antisocial violent criminal behaviour reduces by its got be at least 60/70%."(13, ETE worker)

Many professional reported that the stigma of the youth offending label creates a barrier to young people accessing education or provision:

> "Schools being aware of a young person's offending behaviour and saying well you want us to have him after he did x, y and z? But young people are entitled to an education even with an offending background."(5, YOS worker)

Good practice was reported from provisions that felt skilled in working with this cohort of young people. However, little training was reported by professionals to be provided to them about youth offending practice:

> "With us there are no barriers here at X. Our team are pretty skilled with learners so they're not offended by these learners and I think that part of the problem in a lot of establishments is that they are offended by the behaviour of these young people and they can't see past it."(14, ETE worker)

> "There hasn't been specific training at this job about working with youth offending teams."(7, ETE worker)

The emotional needs presented by the youth offenders created a difficulty with professionals trying to engage young people with education:

> *"You can think of some of our young offenders who are in a chronic state of stress so when they're in class, information just sounds like noise why would they engage, there's no reason for them to engage."(9, ETE worker)*

Furthermore, professionals reported a discrepancy in what the young person expected from a provision as to the reality of the course:

> *"Particularly with the 16 year olds who want apprenticeships straight away and I don't know if they fully understand what an apprenticeship is, and it's quite competitive and you don't suddenly get paid loads of money straight away and you will have to do things like making the tea."(2, YOS worker)*

This was reported to be overcome when professionals spent the time to explore and discuss expectations and alternative routes to the young person:

> *"Education isn't for everybody and there are alternative routes, so for young people who come here, a lot of organisations are drumming "you need to go to college, you need to do this" but actually there are alternative things, you can be an entrepreneur."(12, ETE worker)*

Once again, relationships were considered vital for the success, or lack of success, of a young person engaging with education, as many professionals reported that if a member of staff understood the young people's needs and provided support then this often made the difference.

> *"They will go to school if they get on with their teachers. I'm not going to Maths cause I hate Mr Blah Blah, I'm gonna go to English because Miss Blah Blah is all right."(6, YOS worker)*
> *"A supportive school network, people who are in school who really understand what they need, and is able to provide the support they need."(2, YOS worker)*

Transitions were reported to be difficult times for youth offenders for a number of reasons including transferring from primary to secondary school, transferring from custody out of term time timeframes and general transitions in changes of provisions:

> *"For young people that are returning to the community following custody…it's the time when they are actually being released, does that tally up with them being able to make timely applications to courses to aid their resettlement; and the answer is no."(3, YOS worker)*
> *"We try and get them used to that transition as a lot of them find it really really really hard when they leave."(10, ETE worker)*
> *"A lot of our work was directed at Year 6's because that transition from year 6 to year 7 for some of them was hell on earth."(13, ETE worker)*

When transitions could be highly planned and supported then this was considered good practice:

> *"We make sure in terms of a managed move it's going to be appropriate and meet the needs of the young person in terms of provision…because we have a good relationship with other providers we won't send them to somewhere which is not gonna meet their needs."(7, ETE worker)*

6.12 Individual factors

Individual factors represented themes that are related to the young person. These are ideas that would be represented in the micro system in Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic model. It is important to acknowledge that although not all youth offenders have problems engaging and achieving with education, there are some youth offenders who do have problems and will be challenging to work with due to behaviour, disengagement or several issues involved. The quotes below may demonstrate that professionals view the difficulty with the system being able to engage youth offenders with education, although it is important to acknowledge that some young people may be very difficult to engage and work with. However, as a service it is important that professionals can find the provision that meets the child's needs once the needs have been identified. An overview of the themes within this factor is presented in this part of the map shown below.

INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

MOTIVATION/ENGAGEMENT
B: Disengagement
F: Motivation

LABELS
B: Stigma
B: Emotional
Well-Being
B: Substance Misuse
B: Neurodevelopmental labels
F: Support for emotional needs

UNIDENTIFIED SEN
B: Unidentified SEN
F: Identified SEN

VOICE OF YOUNG PERSON
B: No voice of young person
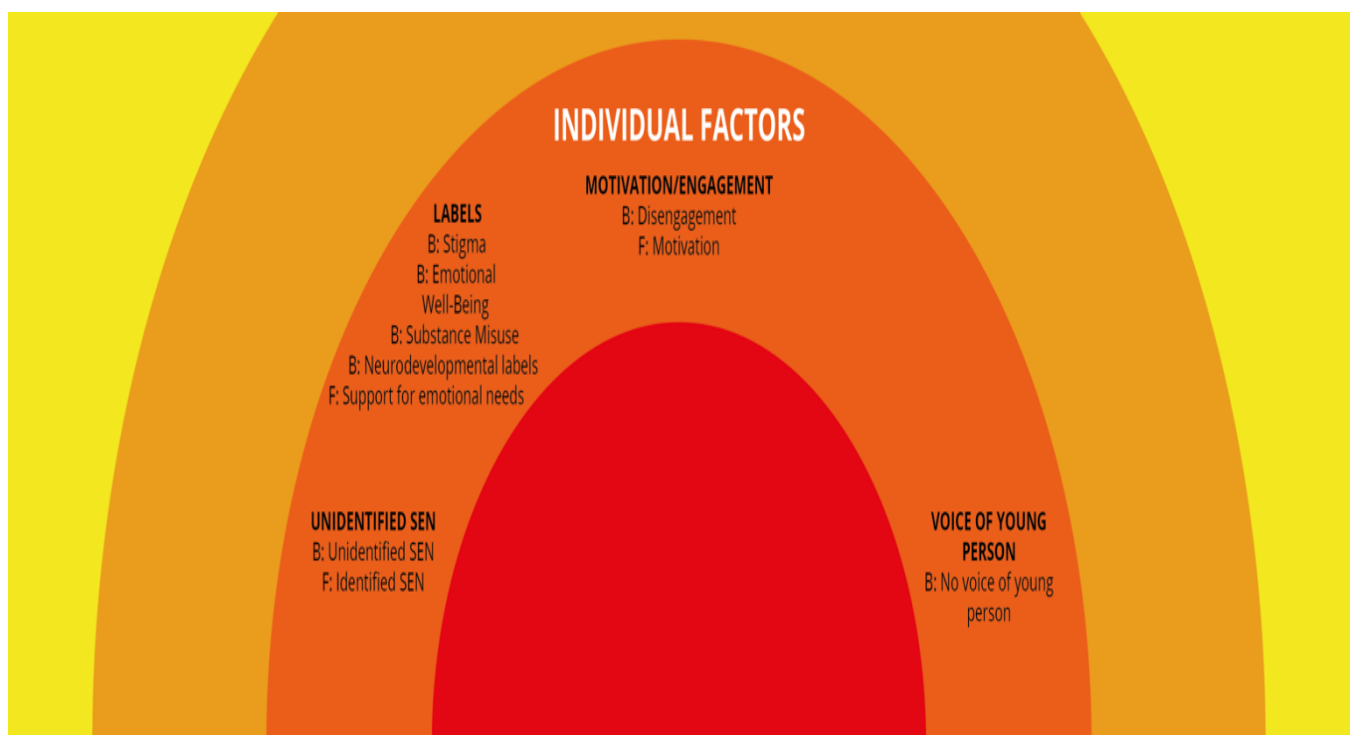
Within the interviews from professionals, all identified the reality and consequences of youth offenders having unidentified SEN:

> *"One of the young people's come in today he's 17, he can't read or write, he's had no GCSE's. That stems from him having severe learning difficulties that were never picked up on."(6, YOS worker)*
> *"Whether it's because they were causing agro at school, so it's the behaviour that's seen and not maybe the learning needs."(8, ETE worker)*

Professionals reported then when SEN was identified then positive outcomes could be achieved:

> *"When we identify the young people early, we know what the issues are."(5, YOS worker)*

Labels caused difficulties for some professionals for a variety of different reasons. These included the stigma of how society views youth offenders and the stigma of having a label such as mental health difficulties and accessing support, substance misuse difficulties and the accuracy of labels used such as ASD and ADHD with youth offenders:

> *"That's probably our biggest value, its engagement and the stigma around mental health or any additional needs in young people generally but I think it's much more of an issue with this particular group of young people."(11, YOS worker)*
> *"I think the biggest barrier is about their confidence and their self-esteem. And because nobody's picking up on that work specifically."(3, YOS worker)*

"Substance misuse, we will work with them as well because if there's issues in relation to their substance misuse, or even their mental health, that is going to impact on the way workers need to work with them."(3, YOS worker)

"Things like ADHD/ADD they get banded about and a lot of the young people I've worked with have had those labels on them and that does present issues because they are treated differently and their expectations of them are very low."(13, ETE worker)

A facilitator was reported to be when professionals supported the emotional well-being needs of youth offenders:

"It's something that we've linked in instead of focusing on behaviour we focus on emotional wellbeing, because we all know behaviour is an end product of their emotional wellbeing."(9, ETE worker)

The importance of being able to understand and motivate the young person was reported to be linked to success in their engagement with education or training:

"Having something they are interested in and is not academic…It's having that interest, I think you need the hook, what is the thing that is going to grab them, you need that passion and it makes our work so much easier if they are engaged."(12, ETE worker)

However, many professionals reported the difficulty of working with disengaged young people:

"Motivation, definitely, not being able to see the long term…like what is the point…actually a lot of them don't actually have a long term life goal, and not even knowing if they want to go to college." (1, YOS worker)

Some professionals reported that the multiple professionals around a young person made it difficult for the young person's voice to be heard:

> "Because young people at times don't have a voice or aren't heard."(6, YOS worker)
>
> "I hate being in a meeting with four adults, one child and everyone's talking over the child."(9, ETE worker)

But good practice was when the network placed an emphasis on hearing the young person and working with them:

> "We don't move with the times and we have to take the lead from the young people."(3, YOS worker)
>
> "What's the point of us providing a service that we think they need without asking them what they need?"(3, YOS worker)

Professionals also reported the difficulties with peer influences and social skills that many youth offenders have, and the apparent tendency to not consider the consequences of their actions:

> "I think a lot of our young people become involved in peer groups where the vast majority of that peer group are not in school and that becomes a motivation to not go to school rather than go to school."(11, YOS worker)
>
> That comes back around to what I said about the social skills; if we helped young people to know and understand what assertiveness is, that would get them out of a lot of those sort of situations."(3, YOS worker)
>
> "You can always talk to them about the fact that the consequences of their actions which many of them don't really consider until the consequence has happened."(13, ETE worker)

One professional reported that resilience is a facilitator for many youth offenders:

"A lot of young people within this service are incredibly resilient and have had some incredibly difficult experiences but don't have an adverse response which is fantastic and testament to their resilience."(11, YOS worker)

Many professionals reported the multiple complexities involved within many youth offenders lives, and often other factors such as their welfare and safety needed to be addressed before education concerns can be discussed:

"So most of the time the case officer is going to work from what the young person needs as a priority in their life, as they will make it clear that I've got nowhere to sleep tonight."(4, YOS worker)

Youth offenders who tended to stay within education or provisions were often reported to have multiple protective factors around them:

"He has a lot of protective factors, mum, dad, friends who are not in the Youth Offending Service, good school, educational qualifications, that sort of stuff."(6, YOS worker)

6.13 Barrier and Facilitators: Young People's Results

Results will now be presented from the young people, and the chapter will conclude by identifying themes that are common across the two data sets and any differences. This table illustrates the superordinate themes or overarching factors next to the sub-themes and their barriers and facilitators.

Table of overarching themes (superordinate themes) and sub themes of young people

SYSTEMIC FACTORS	SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION B: Societal expectations B: Issues B: Ethnicity target to police F: Social mobility
CARE/PARENTING RELATED FACTORS	CARE SYSTEM B: In and out of care B: Family Issues RELATIONSHIP WITH PARENT B: Poor relationships F: Supportive parents GANG ISSUES
SCHOOL RELATED FACTORS	PROVISIONS B: Multiple provisions B: Rigid provisions B: Wrong ability set/provision F: Flexibility in schools EXCLUSIONS B: Challenging behaviour in schools B: Issues in schools B: Exclusions B: Attendance/punctuality issues B: Boredom F: IMPORTANCE OF GCSE'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS

	B: Poor relationships B: Feeling targeted/stigma F: Good relationship/advocate in school TRANSITIONS B: Transition to secondary school B: Changes in courses F: Primary school experiences
INDIVIDUAL FACTORS	IDENTIFIED SEN? B: Concentration Issues PEER RELATIONSHIPS B: Negative F: Positive MOTIVATION/DISENGAGEMENT B: Self fulfilling prophecy B: Consequences HOPES/ASPIRATIONS B: Within child F: Strengths

Barrier and Facilitators: Young People's Results

Concentric circle diagram titled "BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS OF YOUNG PEOPLE"

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION
B: Societal expectations
B: Issues
B: Ethnicity target to police
F: Social mobility

CARE/PARENTING RELATED FACTORS

CARE SYSTEM
B: In and out of care
B: Family Issues

GANG ISSUES

RELATIONSHIP WITH PARENT
B: Poor relationships
F: Supportive parents

SCHOOL RELATED FACTORS

PROVISIONS
B: Multiple provisions
B: Rigid provisions
B: Wrong ability set/provision
F: Flexibility in schools

EXCLUSIONS
B: Challenging behaviour in schools
B: Issues in schools
B: Exclusions
B: Attendance/punctuality issues
B: Boredom

RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS
B: Poor relationships
B: Feeling targeted/stigma
F: Good relationship/advocate in school

TRANSITIONS
B: Transition to secondary school
B: Changes in courses
F: Primary school experiences

INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

IDENTIFIED SEN?
B: Concentration Issues

MOTIVATION/ DISENGAGEMENT
B: Self fulfilling prophecy
B: Consequences

PEER RELATIONSHIPS
B: Negative
F: Positive

HOPES/ASPIRATIONS
B: Within child
F: Strengths

F: IMPORTANCE OF GCSE'S

BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

6.14 Systemic factors

Systemic factors represented themes that are related to social inclusion and exclusion issues. These are ideas that would be represented in the macro system in Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic model. An overview of the themes within this factor is presented from the map shown below.

SYSTEMIC FACTORS

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION
B: Societal expectations
B: Issues
B: Ethnicity target to police
F: Social mobility

As the interviews with the young people were about their education, and the interviewer made clear at the start that the aim was to understand their thoughts and experiences about education, fewer quotations related to this factor.

However, the young people did report the negative view they perceive society has of them and the challenges they face within society either due to their ethnicity making them a target, worrying about other issues or having to rely on themselves to make a change.

> *"Like you hear it all the time like young people are so different, they're so rude, they don't want to do anything you tell them to."(1, Yr 11, alternative provision)*
>
> *"Just be about yourself 'cause nobody else cares."(6, Yr 12, NEET)*
>
> *"I was worried about other stuff."(4, Yr 11, College)*

"'cause when you try to get a job it's kind of hard."(6, Yr 12, NEET)

"Especially like us black boys as well, we're a target to police so I don't want him to be a target, if you get what I mean. Even though we're targets anyways, I don't want him to have a name…I don't want the police to know his name. The police know our names and it's not right, it's not nice to know like…"(3, Yr11, College)

A facilitator was expressed by one young person who recognised that he wanted to change issues within society:

"I don't want any little kid in this day and age to grow up and fear anybody, I *don't want anybody to fear anybody. That's why I'm trying to change; I'm trying to change this circle, I'm trying to change."(3, Yr 11, College)*

6.15 Care/Parenting Related Factors

Care/Parenting related factors represented themes that are related to young people's relationships with parents, families, social care and gang related issues. These are ideas that would be represented in the exo and meso system in Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic model. An overview of the themes within this factor is presented from the map shown below.

CARE/PARENTING RELATED FACTORS

CARE SYSTEM
B: In and out of care
B: Family Issues

GANG ISSUES

RELATIONSHIP
WITH PARENT
B: Poor relationships
F: Supportive parents

PARENTAL
ENGAGEMENT
B: Parental behaviour
B: Limited parental
engagement
B; No support for parents
B: Lack of role models
F: Parental engagement/
supportive families
F: Role models
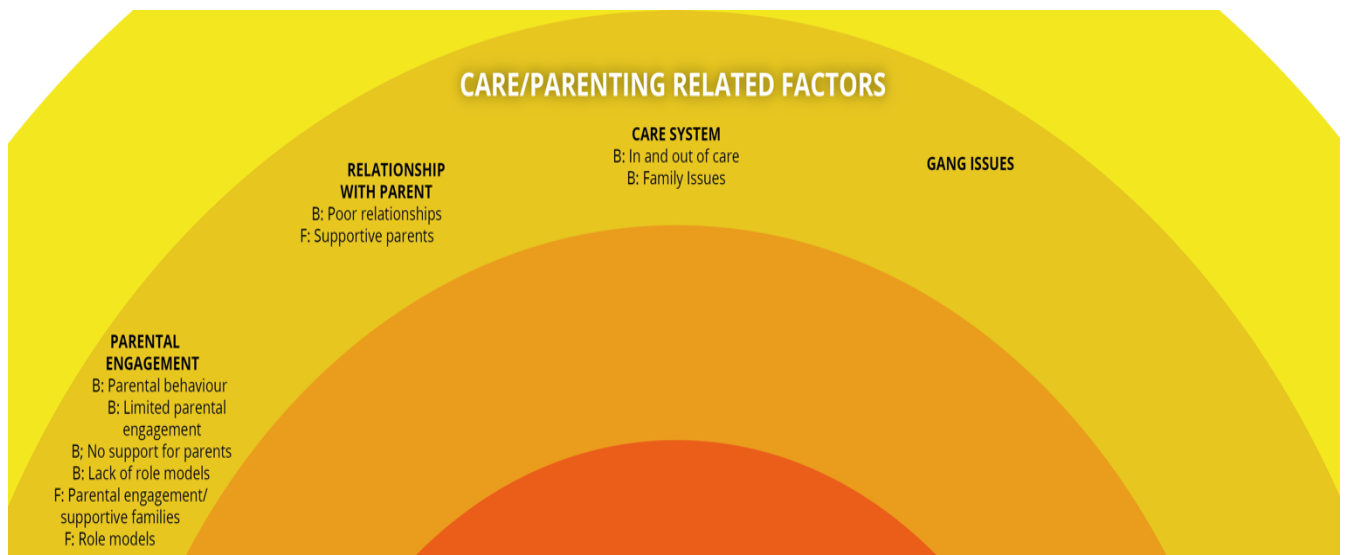
Although none of the young people interviewed were currently in the care system, two had been in care multiple times during adolescence, and only one of the young people interviewed lived with both parents with no social care involvement. Although the young people didn't directly talk about their experience of the care system, their explanations of multiple schools or missing school was due to moving locations or issues with family:

"*Because I moved for a bit like temporarily for a little while.*"(1, Yr 11, alternative provision)

"*When I moved back to where my mum lives I was out of school for at least 3 months but I was pretty much out of school from May until November and then from November to January.*"(1, Yr 11, alternative provision)
"*I went to another school but because of what's been going on in my life, troubles and stuff, I had to leave that school.*"(3, Yr 11, College)

"*Some I don't even know about (siblings) I've got a lot…what I can think now, I have four sisters, three brothers that I know of at the moment.*"(3, Yr 11, College)

Three of the young people spoke about fractured relationships with parents:

"I didn't have a dad when I was younger so obviously craving for my dad. Me and mums relationship wasn't very good, still isn't good now, but it was resentment, yeah, I wanted them but I couldn't have them so I used to just do some crazy stuff."(3, Yr 11, College)

"But there's no communication, she (mum) doesn't tell me everything, I don't tell her everything, which I'm barely at home 'cause I prefer being out than at home."(4, Yr 11, College)

"I never really had a relationship with my mum, so my mum wasn't really, she put on the upset act but then really she just didn't care because she don't care now."(3, Yr 11, College)

But the majority of young people (n=4) spoke about family that was supportive of them:

"She thinks it's good and supports me….they say stay in school."(2, Yr 11, Mainstream)

"Then my step dad started looking for college and things and then X college popped up."(4, Yr 11, College)

"My Nan, yeah, she's helped me a lot...she's calm with me like, she gives me the time of day, if she's doing something she gives me the time of day….Something's going on right now and I told my nan yesterday. My nan said 'we can deal with it, that's something we can deal with."(3, Yr 11, College)

"There are people that help me, like my mum, she helps me."(4, Yr 11, College)

"Eventually she knew I stopped going (to school)…She told me to go back to school."(5, Year 12, NEET)

The majority of the boys interviewed spoke about gang related issues and how this is a difficult issue for them to engage in some education settings or to get out situations they are currently involved in:

"Places that you can't go, even going outside to have a smoke or something, I don't know, or going to the shop, like simple things, going to the shop you have to look after your back, who's that, who's this, looking on buses 'cause you never know who's on that bus. I don't my brother to have that fear."(3, Yr 11, College)

"Yeah, if when I was younger, growing up I was going around with the older boys. I used to be fascinated seeing them with watches, cars, bags, money, I used to want to live that life but now it's not good, it's not good."(4, Yr 11, College)

"yeah, I got influences in other young people that didn't agree with where I came from and stuff in college 'cause I went to Y college (in another borough)….yeah things got in the way."(6, Yr 12, NEET)

6.16 School related factors

School related factors represented themes that are related to practicalities and practice within the education system. These are ideas that would be represented in the meso and micro systems in Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic model. An overview of the themes within this factor is presented from the map below.

SCHOOL RELATED FACTORS

EXCLUSIONS
B: Challenging
behaviour in schools
B: Issues in schools
B: Exclusions
B: Attendance/punctuality issues
B: Boredom

PROVISIONS
B: Multiple provisions
B: Rigid provisions
B: Wrong ability set/provision
F: Flexibility in schools

**RELATIONSHIPS
WITH TEACHERS**
B: Poor relationships
B: Feeling targeted/stigma
F: Good relationship/advocate in
school

**F:IMPORTANCE
OF GCSE'S**

TRANSITIONS
B: Transition to
secondary school
B: Changes in courses
F: Primary school
experiences
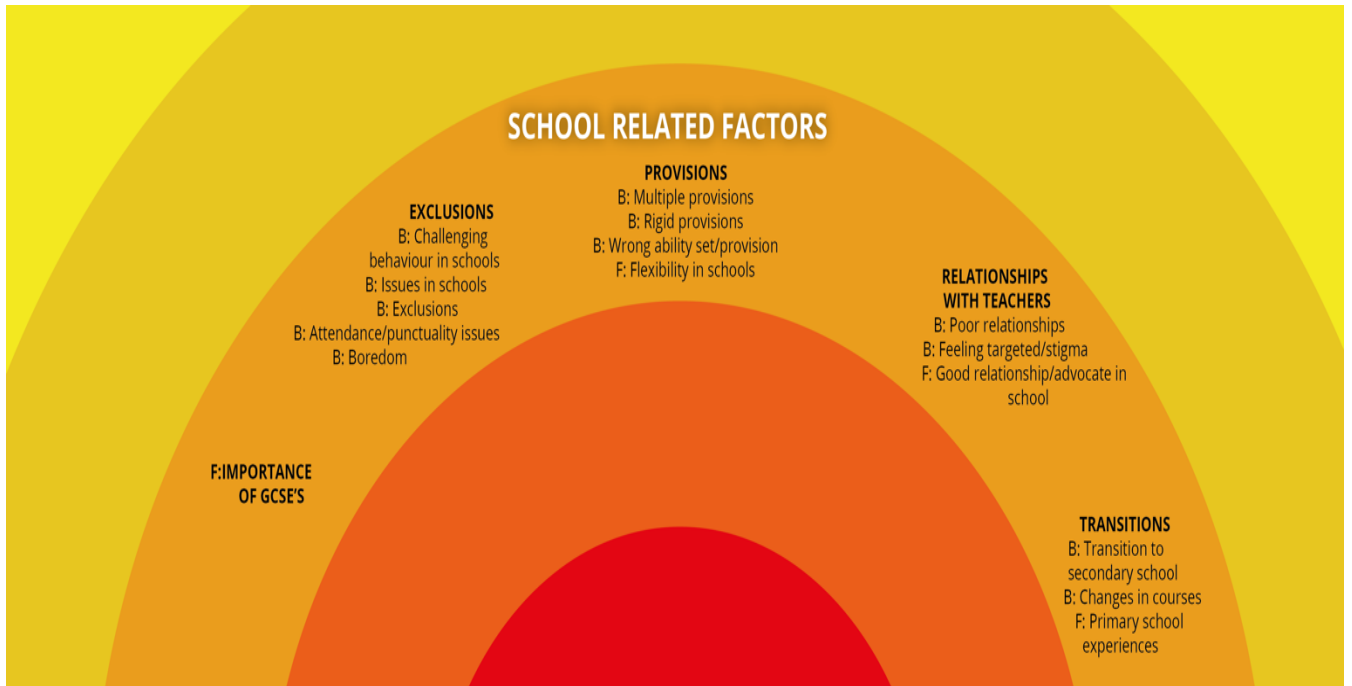
All but one of the young people reported multiple changes of school for a variety of reasons. These included moving locations, being excluded or managed moved, or the parent choosing to move their child to a different school.

> *"I've been to four different ones (PRUs). Two of them out of London. One was in north London and one was in (south coast) and then there are two other ones."(1, Yr 11, Alternative provision)*
> *"I got kicked out of primary school, went into a PRU until secondary school, then by luck I got into a secondary school…because of my behaviour I went into a course at another secondary school…then I went to another school 'til the beginning of this year."(3, Yr 11, College)*

The majority spoke about the frustrations of being placed in the wrong ability set or provision which they felt didn't stimulate or challenge them. Furthermore, the frustration of a rigid school or provision was expressed and how when schools were flexible with them then they felt this supported and engaged them:

"Because I realised that when I started off in the classroom that I was in I was really like unsettled but now that I've moved up there's much better focus and things. When I took my tests I got moved up ability group and can focus more."(2, Yr 11, mainstream)

"yeah, anytime, even the mornings when you're just walking in, if your uniform wasn't correct, you're getting sent back home no matter how far you live…Like they don't really care about your education 'cause uniform wouldn't' mean that much…yeah that's maybe why we failed."(6, Yr 12, NEET)

"I think it would work better if students had way more choice and the rules are relaxed, I see why and the purpose of rules...if you did something more constructive…but just something more constructive than just go and sit in this room and do this for 3 hours."(1, Yr 11, Alternative provision)

The last quote is an example of a young person's perception of the tension between a school system and an individual's desire for autonomy. Five of the young people had experienced multiple exclusions from schools. Two of these started at primary age. One may have had a managed move to an alternative setting and one young person experienced no exclusions or changes of schools. The young people did acknowledge their challenging behaviour in school and often reported how secondary school was boring. The majority of young people also reported missing education or non-attendance either whilst waiting for a placement to be found or because they disengaged.

"I smashed a bin at the Head teacher."(1, Yr 11, Alternative provision)
 "Punch teachers, wreck the classroom, bad things, stupid things, things I regret now."(3, Year 11, College)
"Fights and things like that."(4, Yr 11, College)
"Basically I was going secondary school but I was going to the course as well at another school but 'cause what happened in that school, my school didn't plan on kicking me out, they just said I'm not allowed back into school so that

school permanently excluded me and then my school obviously wouldn't take me back. So I had to go to the other…yeah, so you know and then I got kicked out of there."(3, Yr 11, College)

"Well I didn't go to school for a long time, and then I started again in year 9."(5, Yr 12, NEET)

 "Yeah, did nothing for a whole year."(6, Yr 12, NEET)

"I don't know, I was getting bored...I can't even remember doing work."(5, Yr 12, NEET)

"Secondary school was a bit boring."(6, Yr 12, NEET)

"No it's not difficult, yeah its boring (secondary school)."(7Yr 11, tutored)

All of the young people reported the importance they placed on gaining some GCSE's:

"No, I would like to take it (GCSE's) 'cause I know I'll need them for future. 'Cause I've got a cousin, she failed and then she's doing, she's 22 now and she's doing her GCSE's 'cause she needs them…as long as that sits equal to a GCSE then I'm alright."(4, Yr 11, College)

"I need GCSE's, yeah, 'cause if what I'm doing fails and I need GCSE's but I'm not really out trying to…"(3, Yr 11, College)

However, the changes in settings or courses that some young people experienced resulted in them having limited options in the qualifications they could achieve:

"I'm going to sit all my GCSE's. It's kind of limited, I wanted to do more than I can….I think I'm only allowed to do English, maths and Science, but it will probably be triple Science, English Lit and Language, and I'm going to do both functional skills up to level 2."(1, Yr 11, Alternative provision)

"We're doing some entries and levels, Level 2 and that."(4, Yr 11, College)

Many of the young people reported positive experiences at primary school:

"Personally I think it was just fun. It was lovely at, like, primary school…Primary school, it was fun, loads of fun."(6, Yr 12, NEET)

"I went to one primary school and it was fun….mostly like the teachers, the way they interact with you and the activities and stuff."(2, Yr 11, mainstream)

However, they all reported the anxiety felt at transitioning to secondary school or how the secondary school experience was different from primary school.

"When I first started it was a bit scary but then I got used to it…Just thinking that you're just gonna be the youngest and everyone's gonna be older than you and stuff but you get used to it…it was way more stricter and stuff but I guess it was alright for secondary school."(6, Yr 12, NEET)
"I was good until I got to secondary school...and then I got to secondary school and things changed."(4, Yr 11, College)

Although many reported the difficult relationship they had experienced with teachers, they could name and remember a member of staff who would encourage and support them:

"My primary school head teacher hated me, she refused to sign my shirt at the end of year 6 out of all the class, and when I asked her if she would do it she said no I'm too busy, she hated me."(1, Yr 11, Alternative provision)
"But obviously if I don't like the teacher then I won't enjoy the lesson."(4, Yr 11, College)
"I never liked teachers, I never ever liked teachers."(3, Yr 11, College)
"There was one teacher in primary school who helped me out a lot, like I respect him, can't remember, Mr X, I remember him so much. He always had time for me, always, even when he was teaching he used to come and help me out, he's a nice teacher."(3, Yr 11, College)
"My tutor, I had a tutor, she used to help me when I was in trouble, she used to get me out of trouble."(4, Yr 11, College)

The majority did report the stigma they felt from staff and being targeted:

"And the man (teacher) is pulling the girl aside and all like don't hang around with her (the girl I interviewed) she's gonna distract you...making false accusations (the youth offender feeling that the teacher is making false accusations about her to another pupil)."(1, Yr 11, Alternative provision)

"I dunno, like always on to me, I was like the first person they gave a warning to or something."(4, Yr 11, College)

"I felt like I was always a target. That because of my behaviour from primary growing up, I always felt I was a target, 'cause I had a short like, anger…my fuse was very short, the teachers knew that so they would take me the…they would make up things and try to wind me up and stuff."(3, Yr 11, College)

With the last quote, it is important to note that it is difficult to know the 'truth' in all circumstances, however, stigmatisation was clearly an issue from the perception of the majority of the young people.

6.17 Individual factors

Individual factors represented themes that are related to the beliefs the young people have about themselves. These are ideas that would be represented in the micro system in Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic model. An overview of the themes within this factor is presented from the map below.

INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

IDENTIFIED SEN?
B: Concentration Issues

PEER RELATIONSHIPS
B: Negative
F: Positive

MOTIVATION/
DISENGAGEMENT
B: Self fulfilling prophecy
B: Consequences

HOPES/ASPIRATIONS
B: Within child
F: Strengths
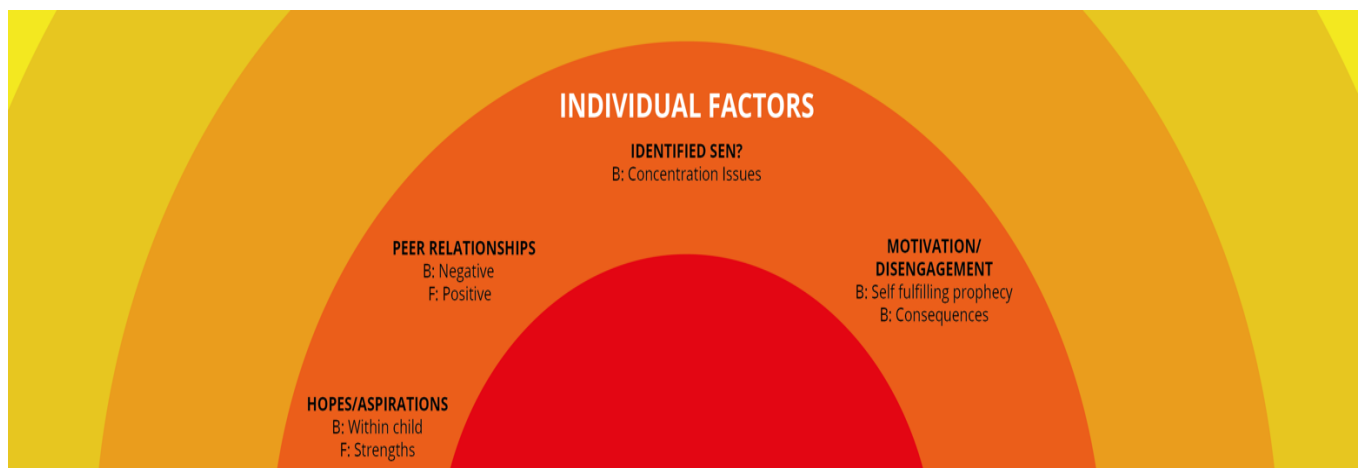
An example of this would be the young people talking about their difficulties with learning in school and how they made sense of their SEN:

> "I had a statement but…yeah I did have one from primary, just something happened to it, I don't know."(3, Yr 11, College)
> "I didn't really like writing and all that…He (tutor) tried to work with me and that and talk with me about my behaviour and tell me what I need to try to do and that."(7, Yr 11, tutoring)

These quotes are interesting as the young people appear to have little understanding of their educational needs and their behaviour could perhaps have been prioritised over supporting any learning needs. Some young people also spoke about having trouble with concentrating, which again could be considered in relation to unidentified SEN or providing a label where other factors may be concerning the young person outside of the classroom.

> "I think it was ADHD, something like that, I think, I dunno, I can't remember. I never really paid attention to that stuff 'cause it wasn't really, it never really concerned me, I never really cared about it 'cause I never knew what status like, I never knew but now I know, don't really wanna, I have status in other things, I don't want a status in that. (Do you have ADHD, did anyone say that you do?) "People say that I do but I think I don't….no I haven't been diagnosed."(3, Yr 11, College)

Young people spoke about the influences of peers in their lives that were entirely negative:

> "But she was trying to cut me out of the lesson…but I wasn't the one that came up with the idea."(1, Yr 11, Alternative provision)
> "Started hanging with the wrong people and they just influenced me to do other stuff."(4, Yr 11, College)

Young people also spoke about their relationships with their peers which could be positive or negative. Young people who were negative about their relationships felt isolated from their peers:

> *"I didn't really get along with no-one but obviously apart from friends but by the time I stopped going to school in year 9 I had pretty much stopped talking to everyone that I was close with anyway so when I left I was like I don't even care."(1, Yr 11, Alternative provision)*

Some young people spoke about positive relationships as a protective factor in school enhancing their sense of belonging:

> *"Yeah, loads. Everyone that went to my primary school, they're still my friends now."(6, Yr 12, NEET)*
> *"So most of my friends from the first primary school was there."(7, Yr 11, tutoring)*

Another theme identified from young people was a lack of engagement with education resulting in a lack of motivation to attend:

> *"I don't like school, I don't read, I don't study…I don't really like going to school and being told to do this and that."(1, Yr 11, Alternative provision)*
> *"I didn't want to but obviously I had to."(Attend college in year 11.)(4, Yr 11, College)*
> *"But it's just this college, I don't really wanna go."(4, Yr 11, College)*
> *"I knew what I did so I didn't really care."(5, Yr 12, NEET)*

One young person identified how expectations of school engagement can be a self-fulfilling prophecy:

"'cause I knew we were gonna get kicked out anyway."(3, Yr 11, College)

Young people were aware of the consequences of their behaviour in school or choices they have made, both of which resulted in exclusion from school:

> *"Well I look at the small things like I'm never going to go to a prom, or have a graduation, but it obviously happened because it wasn't for me and whatever career I have will be a result of my education so if I end up that I don't have a job then that's because of that and if I end up being a journalist then we know why."(1, Yr 11, Alternative provision)*
> *"Well, I knew I had done a mistake and…but obviously what happened, happened and there's no going back."(4, Yr 11, College)*

Beliefs that young people held about themselves were also evident in some interviews. This theme exemplifies how perspectives from within the young person influence their behaviour in a wider context:

> *"I'm just a difficult child."(3, Yr 11, College)*
> *"My school used to think I was bad."(6, Yr 12, NEET)*

All of the young people shared their hopes and aspirations during the interview, these varied with some focusing on future careers, others on immediate materialistic gains, others on future training. This may demonstrate the importance of involving the young people in discussing their aspirations to help motivate and plan with them the next steps and stages to achieve this. Some of the quotes demonstrate that some of the young people may need more support with identifying what they would like to do, or discussion about what they think is involved with the course they talk about:

"I'm starting my own clothing brand….I'm trying to be a successful business man….I'm trying to do accessories as well, just a lot of things, just trying to make money."(3, Yr 11, College)

"I like the army, infantry, I like everything that has to do with weapons, guns, things like that….I'm enrolled and I'm just waiting for my interview."(4, Yr 11, College)

"Not right now but it (education) is important for the future, I want to work now so I can buy a car..(And what would you like to do?) "Anything."(5, Yr 12 NEET)

"I wanna get into college and do some construction."(6, Yr 12, NEET)

"I wanna try and get into another school and if I don't I'll try college or something…I don't know, engineering or something."(7, Yr 11, tutoring)

Amongst many negative themes some young people were able to identify their own strengths:

"I was good at football…I still play football, I'm good at it and I like playing it but I didn't choose to go into a Sunday team so I just play on Saturday for fun."(2, Yr 11, mainstream)

"I've been good at learning, I've always been god at that…I enjoy maths."(4, Yr 11, College)

"I'm good at everything. I'm just smart."(1, Yr 11, Alternative provision)

6.18 Venn diagram of where professionals and young people had differences and similarities in views.

YOUNG PEOPLE

SYSTEMIC FACTORS
- Social inclusion & exclusion

SCHOOL RELATED FACTORS
- Boredom
- Importance of GCSE's
- Good primary school experience

INDIVIDUAL FACTORS
- Within child
- Self-fulfilling prophecy
- Hopes/aspirations

CARE/PARENTING RELATED FACTORS
B: In and out of care/high social care
B: Family issues
B: Poor relationship with parent
F: Supportive parent
B: Gang Issues

SCHOOL RELATED FACTORS
B: Multiple provisions/broken schooling
B; Rigid provisions/schools quick to exclude
B: wrong set/provision/inadequate provisions
B: Challenging behaviour in school
B: Exclusions
B: Attendance/punctuality issues
F: Flexibility in school/provision tailored to yp needs
B: Poor relationship with teacher
B: Feeling targeted/stigma/stigma of label
B: Transitions

INDIVIDUAL FACTORS
B: Unidentified SEN/concentration
F: Identified SEN
B: Peer influences
B: Motivation/engagement
F: Listening to yp/strengths

PROFESSIONALS

STEMIC FACTORS
Joined up working
Communication
Working to targets & timeframes
Out of borough challenges

ARE/PARENTING RELATED FACTORS
Parental engagement
Parents and education

HOOL RELATED FACTORS
Emotional well-being
Explore expectations
Devolved budgets & fragmented services

DIVIDUAL FACTORS
Labels
Multiple issues
Social skills

As the Venn diagram shows, professionals and young people had some interesting areas of the same views mainly in the care/parenting related factors, school related factors and individual factors. Relationships with parents, family issues, gang related issues and the care system were reported by both sets of interviews as barriers. Supportive parents were seen as a facilitator by both professionals and young people.

School related factors similarities included multiple provisions, exclusions, transitions, stigma and negative relationship with teachers as barriers. Positive relationships with teachers were seen as a facilitator.

Individual related factors similarities included concentration issues, unidentified SEN, peer relationships and motivation and engagement as barriers.

The young people spoke about the importance of gaining GCSE's, their strengths and hopes and aspirations as facilitators which differed from professionals who mainly spoke about systemic barriers for young people to engage in education.

The main area of difference between the professional and young people's views was in the systemic factor. Professionals spoke mainly about systemic challenges, however, it is important to note that the young people were only asked to talk about their educational experience which may explain some of the difference. It is interesting however, that the young people spoke about within child concerns where professionals spoke more about the system not being able to support the young person. The professionals spoke about the young people needing support with social skills however the young people did not mention this.

This chapter has presented the findings from the data collected from the quarterly

collection within the YOS from the Asset form to answer RQ1, followed by the

findings from the interviews with professionals and young people involved within the

YOS to answer RQ2. Further exploration and discussion about the findings and their

implications are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusions

7.1 Research Questions, main findings of the study and links to previous research

The aim of this study was to explore the barriers and facilitators of educational inclusion and engagement of youth offenders in one inner London Local Authority. It was a mixed methods design divided into two phases.

Research Question 1 looked at phase one using quantitative descriptive methods to find out: What are the educational needs, uptake and provision of youth offenders within the LA?

The quantitative descriptive data shows that the vast majority of the sample of young people open to the YOS during the three month period were black, male, aged between 14-16 years and educated in a PRU.

This borough has a high proportion of BME young people within the YOS. In my sample 88% (n=259) but this is broadly similar to the local demographics (85% BME). However, this percentage is a much higher proportion than the national UK figures, where 82% are from a white UK background in the YOS with the national figure of 86% of the UK population described as White UK (UK Census, 2011). This needs to be borne in mind when interpreting and generalising from the findings. The 14-16 year old age group and males make up the largest proportion within the YOS and this is in line with national figures for youth offenders. At this age young people are going through developmental changes in adolescence, creating their identity and

making future plans within their education settings to prepare for the ending of statutory education. This period of autonomy and gaining independence during adolescence is a time of increased vulnerability for disengagement from education, particularly when some teenagers have a number of issues to be dealt with at this time as described by the Focal Model (Coleman, 1974). The Self System Model (Reeve, 2002) and Motivational Model (Skinner and Pitzer, 2012) emphasize the individual's level of motivation but this study has shown that multiple systemic factors also affect a young person's motivation and capacity to engage with school. The data illustrates the particular vulnerabilities with this age group of young offenders in terms of education within alternative provision such as the PRU. This fits with previous literature on the associations between exclusions from school and offending behaviour and the concerns of detachment with education for this group (Daniel et al., 2003; YJB, 2006).

The data shows that the majority of above school age young people (n=66, 60%) have no provision recorded which is consistent with national figures (House of Commons, 2011). It is impossible to know if this number means they are NEET or the provision is not accurately recorded in the time of data set being collected. Missing data was a problem across the quantitative data and was also an issue when recording whether youth offenders had a Statement of SEN. The categories of 'N/A', 'missing data' and 'Not Known' were all used and it is not clear how these items were defined by the various professionals using the system. The issue however of a lack of educational focus could be revealed by the quantitative data. The low number of Statements but the higher reported levels of literacy and numeracy need could suggest a raised level of need with the youth offending population that is not identified, which is also consistent with previous findings

(Berelowitz, 2011; Department of Work and Pensions, 2012; Harrington & Bailey, 2005; Hughes, Williams, Chitsabean, Davies and Mounce, 2012; YJB, 2006). These findings from the quantitative data are at odds with the qualitative data where the majority of professionals spoke about youth offenders having learning needs. Furthermore, the levels of recorded exclusions would seem to suggest that there are problems and needs for the majority of youth offenders.

The quantitative data also shows that the majority of young people did not report having poor relationships with teachers or experiences of being bullied. These results are in contrast with the qualitative data which will be discussed later. Although the sample of young people interviewed was small and may not be representative, the discrepancy does raise issues regarding the validity of the Asset data. It is possible that this discrepancy could be due to how the data is collected but also who was asking the questions, for example, a young person may respond differently to a YOS case officer asking them a question as part of the Asset collection from an EP researcher asking them about their school experiences. It is also relevant to consider how bullying and a poor relationship were defined; bullying is a vague term, and it is important to consider the social and psychological factors which might affect how willing a young person is to talk about such issues; young people could see this as a weakness or vulnerability to admit such things, or have fears of the negative repercussions of telling a professional such an answer. Or furthermore, the young person may not fully understand why such questions are being asked and therefore what happens to their answers.

Overall, the quantitative data shows that there is a problem with missing data in this sample and it could be concluded that we can't be confident of the quality of the data. It is difficult to know how the YOS got their data, whether it was based on self-

report or information from teachers or the LA, or whether data was corroborated from other sources. The quality of the data will be discussed further in section 7.2 limitations of the study. This concern about data quality is echoed by some of the research reviewed in Chapter 4. Many of these studies report that the educational demographics of young people in the youth justice system is largely unknown (YJB, 2006) and that there is inadequate and missing information from the Asset collection, where the high level of discrepancy between youth offenders reported to have SEN from the number that actually had SEN was found to be due to YOS practitioners having limited experience in SEN and needs of the young person were subjective to workers perception (YJB, 2006, Welsh Assembly Board, 2009). The practice implications of this will be discussed later in the chapter. However, the implications of not having accurate and effective identification of need is problematic for young people and the professionals working with them in the YJS. Furthermore, alongside the concerns of the quality of data collected, there is no such system for the monitoring and evaluating of educational progress made whilst young people are in the YJS. Some young people do have orders for a considerable time within the YJS and monitoring attainment could be an indicator of what is, or is not, effective for their education. Having an agreed system of terms used and how to record data could help to gather accurate data.

Research Question 2 used qualitative methods to explore the barriers and facilitators of educational inclusion and engagement for youth offenders.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework was used in this study to assist with exploring the multiple factors that exist in systems around a young person, and that

the interactions between these systems can become complex. The ecological model was useful to attempt to explain the differences in individuals through the structures of the society in which they live. Furthermore, the interactions between the numerous overlapping systems can affect a person, which can increase the likelihood of negative outcomes for youth offenders. Therefore, this study used this model to try to understand the interactions of these systems and what leads to barriers and facilitators for young people involved in crime to achieve success in education. The interviews with professionals suggested that there are many barriers at all levels of the system with no defined system in place unless young people are within a statutory framework.

Systemic level

At the systemic level all professionals mentioned multi-agency challenges and poor, fragmented information sharing.   Successive reviews have repeatedly suggested problems with multi-agency working and system sharing (e.g. The Laming Reports 2003; 2009) with different data systems, different terms and poor quality of data collection and reporting. In the LA under study there is also a high turnover of staff with professionals having a high caseload, this further adds to information getting lost and a difficulty sustaining and maintaining a structure in a context of restructuring and reorganisation. It has previously been observed that within the YJS the focus of organisational energy is on the young person and not on the system (Stephenson, 2006) with multiple professionals involved in working with those young people. This organisation is evident in the present study. Whilst it is important to tailor services to young peoples' needs, organisation structures do need

to operate at a systemic level if the complex network of services necessary to address those needs is to be managed effectively. There is a different social policy response to LAC than is evident in the YJS, following a growing body of literature which revealed a systemic failure, leading to policy reforms for LAC (DfES 2000; DfES 2003; DfES 2006; DfES 2007; DoH & DfE 2009; DfE 2010; DoE 2011; DoH & DfE 2014). This results in pressures on the professional network to have a robust system in place to work with vulnerable, complex and challenging young people. Therefore this study could be argued to highlight that policy reform and robust systemic practice should also be in place for youth offenders. Indications for possible solutions are provided in section 7.5.

Care/Parenting level

At the care/parenting level for both professionals and young people, parental involvement was considered a protective factor. The theme of repeating patterns of family issues or disengagement was apparent across both the education and social care systems; parental trust of the professional system may play a role here. Furthermore, if a parent has problems of their own with education and/or offending then this could perpetuate the concerns for the young person. This is borne out by many studies such as Smith and Farrington (2004) and Thornberry (2011) where the engagement of parents is considered to be a facilitator in supporting young people. Indeed, the YJB (Ghate & Ramella, 2002) commissioned a study of the effectiveness of a Positive Parenting Programme for parents of young people who are at risk or known to be engaged with offending, with the results showing effective and positive outcomes. Therefore, it could be argued that the YJB should be supporting its own

research findings. However, the majority of professionals reported the high level of social care involvement with the families they work with and the difficulty with engaging parents. The idea of connectedness with parents (Grotevant and Cooper, 1986) as a positive factor against behavioural difficulties could be problematic for many young people involved in the YJS, where young people have a higher incidence of living with a relative/parental partner who has been arrested and 70% having social care involvement (Farringdon, 1994; 1996; Sampson and Laub, 1993).

The gang culture and issues was also a major concern for professionals when working with youth offenders, and some of the young participants also mentioned the implications of such culture in their lives. This echoes research into gangs where young people are seen to join a gang for protection and where it is estate based and therefore can result in postcode issues and violence (Hagedom, 2008; Hallsworth and Young, 2008; Palmer 2009 and Pitts 2007). The implications of gang involvement is problematic for professionals and young people; professionals have a pressure to provide ETE for youth offenders and this can be problematic to find within their local area due to austerity cuts but the young people may have issues with travelling safely to alternative provisions either within their borough or further afield. Some young people also spoke about not being to attend an alternative provision due to their own or parents concern of other gang members attending there. This results in a pressure on the local authority to try to secure additional provision to what they would normally offer young people, and can then result in a delay for the young person in accessing ETE which could result in further disengagement and motivation to engage.

School related factors

Both professionals and young people reported many issues at the school related level; mainly around exclusions and disrupted education and stigma from professionals when working with youth offenders. Professionals within the YOS reported a frustration with having appropriate provisions available and this is borne out in studies with YOTs struggling with issues of access to full time education, training or employment for youth offenders (Stephenson, 2006). The majority of professionals reported a weak link between schools or education settings and YOT which echoes Daniel et al's. (2003) research indicating a cultural and structural mismatch between youth justice and education systems and YJB (2006) concerns that there is virtually no cross-pollination between education and youth justice.

Furthermore, professionals within education settings reported the difficulties of working with challenging behaviour and although the peak age for offending in borough X is 14-16, many professionals reported the complex and long standing issues for the young people prior to this age. This could be seen as pointing to a need for more preventative work with families happening earlier although austerity measures make this difficult currently.   However, Sure Start was a government initiative that started from 2004 and so this suggests that early intervention was available when this cohort were young children, but may not have been accessed by this group or may not have been effective or sufficient. Action for Children, Children's Society and National Children's Bureau recently published report *Losing in the long run* (2016) which calls on the Government to renew its commitment to vital early intervention services that support children, young people and families. The report shows that Local Authority spending on services for children, young people and families has fallen by 31% between 2010-11 and 2015-16. Family support services have seen the biggest drop in spending including the Troubled

Families programme. 87% of councillors reported that early intervention services are a high priority in their area, but 59% said there is a reduction in early intervention services. However, it is important to discuss that even if the families and young people attended early intervention programmes, problems can arise during adolescence and therefore may be needed at this particular age group too. The findings from the Children Society's (2016) study showing that less than a third of teenagers reported that they were supported with education or emotional support further highlights that this age group needs more professional response. This could be provided via an EP training school staff around the physical and psychological stages that occur during adolescence, the prevalence of negativity accounts for teenagers and an awareness of the YJS and the role of the YOS, trying to bring the two services together.

Individual Factors

At the individual level a theme of unidentified SEN was evident from the professionals, and although the young people didn't report any SEN concerns, the challenge of them achieving GCSE's when they had been placed in alternative provision was a concern for them. The literature details that there are a significant number of young people in the youth justice system who have identified or unidentified SEN (Berelowitz, 2011; ECOTEC 2001; Farrington 1996; Harrington & Bailey 2005). This is borne out by the quantitative and qualitative data and confirms the Ofsted (2004) Report where record keeping and detailed tracking of the educational needs of youth offenders is challenging. Furthermore, LAC have a systematic monitoring of the attainment level and academic or vocational

progression of young people but there is no such system in the YJS. Studies exploring the role of the ASSET form as the data gathering have been criticised as being used a tick box exercise with a lack of a screening process, inadequate information and a lack of confidence from some YOS staff with educational issues (Welsh Assembly Board 2009). The YJB (2006) report that the educational demographics of young people in the YJS were largely unknown could still be considered an issue ten years on from this study. An educational psychologist is well placed to help gather a holistic assessment of educational needs which is integrated with an assessment of behavioural, psychological and emotional needs if embedded within the YOS. This would support educational progress if the young person has their needs identified and support given to help any emotional needs, and furthermore is well placed to support an EHC application if required.

The young people in the study talked about their strengths and the Positive Youth Development Programme (Lerner, 2002) perspective is important to consider regarding positive development in adolescents. However, the findings from this study also highlight the need to align individual strengths and contextual resources.

Summary

Examples of barriers and facilitators for educational engagement and inclusion for youth offenders were seen at all levels of the system. As previously discussed, there could be a lack of focus on the education of youth offenders due to a number of issues; the professional background of those involved with youth offenders within the YOS may not focus on education; professionals with an education background working within the education sector may not be trained to work with marginalised groups or may have external pressures that result in a difficulty working with young

people with challenging needs, or even the organisational structure of where the YOS sits within the LA could all be relevant. The poor outcomes of educational attainment for young people in the YJS seem to reflect a range of known risk factors which results in a high level of vulnerability for these young people.

Pressures could be seen at each level of the system, and the context of austerity and a target driven culture are likely to have added to this. Throughout both data sets of interviews a common thread was relationships and this was identified as a barrier and a potential facilitator at each level of the system. Relationships could be seen between limited research and practice, LA and Government drives, stigma, the multitude of professional involved, relationships with professionals and parents, young people and parents, teachers and professionals, teachers and young people. When good relationships are established then this is considered to be facilitator. However, the majority of professionals and young people cited fractured and difficult relationships. EPs are well placed to work with the professional network involved to apply psychology at all levels to support the system.

In terms of RQ2, which explored the barriers and facilitators of educational inclusion for youth offenders, the findings echo previous findings which point to systemic failure and social policy reform for LAC but no such coherent system for YJS. A strong supportive network was a protective factor and this reinforces the idea that a good coherent system, with good working relationships, is crucial in supporting this vulnerable young group of people.   When relationships are fractured, which can be an issue at each level of the system, this can be a massive barrier for youth offenders to engage and succeed with education. Therefore building and strengthening relationships at all levels of the system with a close supportive network which is supported by a structure of a system, could be viewed as a key facilitator.

7.2 Limitations of the study

As noted above, one of the key limitations of the study was the data system used by the YOS, which was the only available source for the quantitative data. There is a huge amount of missing data which undermines the reliability of the overall data set. There are different definitions of terms being used and therefore we can't be sure of the validity of the quantitative data, or how a true representation of the sample it is. There may also be an issue with the collection of data and how much on the Asset is self-report without being corroborated with other sources. It also depends on the young person's own knowledge and willingness to share data themselves. The research is limited to the data systems available to me, and although one can cautiously interpret the quantitative data, this highlights a main finding of the study as the limited and unknown data is a concern.

This study is also specific to an inner London borough and caution should be applied in generalising findings to other areas of the UK because of particular demographics of this area. However, it does help to identify the risk factors such as social deprivation, work with parents, stigma and social exclusion.

There was also a relatively small number of young people in the study and one should be mindful of the fact of a small sample size, possibly not representative, and the dangers of generalising to all youth offenders. However, it should also be recognised that gaining access to these young people is extremely difficult and some representation of their views is essential.

For ethical reasons my interviews with young people focused on educational issues rather than asking specific questions on barriers and facilitators on other levels as

they may have found this upsetting or distressing to discuss with a researcher. However, some young people mentioned other issues spontaneously and so although the data is limited in this area form the young people, it still offers some insight alongside the professional's interviews.

The voice of the parents was also absent from this study and future studies may look at the parents' views of the barriers and facilitators of their child engaging with the education system. Parental views is considered to be vital for any future research involving youth offenders and their educational issues and needs, especially when other systems surrounding the young person, such as education, training and employment workers and YOT's officers are included.

In any qualitative study it is important to be mindful of pre conceived ideas and expectations of existing narratives that may be held within a system. Professionals may hold particular ideas about factors affecting the life chances of youth offenders even before having direct contact with them; for instance it is reasonable to assume with this population that educational needs are unidentified and unsupported. I had to be aware of this at interview to avoid the risk of confirmation bias; that a researcher may start a piece of work expecting to find something or that professionals being interviewed may have a set of ideas about the young people which reflect their own pre-existing views, rather than solely their direct experiences. However, on reflection of my own processes and impressions at interviews, I feel confident that the influence of this was minimised as the professionals gave clear explanations and examples of their experiences of working with young people to support their views.

7.3 Problems arising during the study

Data Collection Problems

Several frustrations arose during data collection. The most serious of these was the difficulty in accessing youth offenders. It was hoped that the research presentation delivered to the YOS at the early stages of the study would encourage case officers to identify and recruit potential young people to take part. However, only one case officer engaged with this, and recruited three young people to take part. When the professionals were interviewed, all were asked if they could liaise with youth offenders at their provision to investigate interest from the young people. Unfortunately no professional then responded to me including the Youth Club, the PRU or the three schools that took part. Attempts were also made to access young people via groups at the YOS but again there was no response.

A second problem was gaining data from education provisions about the number of youth offenders they have on roll at their provision. This is interesting as this may mean that the provisions are not confident as to whom the youth offenders are on their roll which would result in communication and information sharing issues, and potentially unidentified needs of this group. This is particularly concerning when the largest number of youth offenders were on roll at the PRU according to the quantitative data. As mentioned previously, if we cannot be confident with the quantitative data, then the qualitative data can help to unpick this as there was no structure of communication in place between the PRU and the YOS.

A third problem was having a consistent link with the YOS to support the process of data collection over several months. Three different Education YOS managers have

been in post and linked with since the start of the study and a relocation of office buildings created a drift in building relationships.

Research Design Problems

A shortcoming of the research design was the limited information on the young people. The opportunistic element of being available to interview young people meant trying to go back to case officers to gain relevant information.

7.4 Implications of the findings

This study appears to support the argument for better understanding and identification of the educational demographics and needs of young people in the YJS. Systemic reforms are needed to enhance the importance of systemic thinking in policy making, assessment and intervention for youth offenders. Furthermore, working relationships are a key factor in the barriers and facilitators for this group of young people as services need to be working together to improve outcomes for these young people. Improving staff stability, removing the stigma to focus on the positives of young people and creating a network that is reflective and supportive to work together is important. Working with youth offenders is a complex and challenging area, it may be easy for the network to feel despairing at the level of deprivation and limited life changes for this group of young people and therefore a supportive professional group should be able to communicate and think through these complexities together and to try to avoid staff burn out. The qualitative data also highlighted that multi-agency working was improved when situated together within the YOS, therefore an EP within this team would be beneficial to encourage

people to build relationships in this complex area and to help identify and support educational and emotional well-being needs.   Furthermore, an EP focus is on education and there is a possibility that those working with youth offenders tend to come from different backgrounds and may not prioritise or understand educational issues with the same level of expertise.   The young people in the study all put a priority on achieving GCSE's and gaining qualifications and therefore education is a focus for them but this focus may not be a priority for the workers within the YOS who may have little understanding of the young person's educational issues and needs or how to support them.

The qualitative part of this study gave an opportunity to really explore the experiences of the people involved with such work, and a high level of dedication, creativity and compassion required to support every young person. Working with parents and involving parents was another key finding from the qualitative part. It appears to be a loss to the YJS that the parenting support officer has not been replaced and future research to explore how parents feel within the network could highlight how this work or role could be set up for the future.

The research findings have been disseminated to all of the professionals that were interviewed via a research briefing. The YOS and the EPS teams received the findings via two presentations and copies of the research briefing. Following on from the positive responses received by both teams, this has resulted in senior managers from the YOS and EPS arranging to discuss the implications of the findings and how the following recommendations can be implemented within the borough alongside how an EP can be linked with the YOS.

7.5 Professional recommendations

Possible areas for further research suggested by these findings include how EPs work with YOT's and looking at the EP role within the YOS to see what works. Furthermore, as mentioned previously, parents could be interviewed to gain their views within this network and to determine how we can encourage and support families of the young people.

Potential areas for future action/policy include EPs working in YOT's which could also help for YOS to have a systemic monitoring of the attainment level and academic or vocational progression of YP. In response to the issues with the quantitative data an agreed system of recording data and social care, schools, YJS and Health having access to a shared and updated database would help information sharing and communication.

The qualitative data suggested that multi-agency working was supported when professionals from different backgrounds were located together and this created an ease of referrals to other professionals, for example Speech and Language and CAMHS sitting within the YOS was seen as a facilitator for identifying and supporting young people with potential issues in these areas. Therefore an EP being embedded with the youth offending service would enable them to be seen as an integral part of this network. A similar framework as is used for LAC will be discussed here as a potential framework that could be piloted within the YOS to achieve such aims. Furthermore, EPs can deliver training, and potentially joint training with a member of the YOT staff to schools on risk factors of YOT and how YOT works. This would hopefully highlight this vulnerable group of young people to mainstream settings to try to encourage a supportive working network to keep young

people within mainstream with needs identified and supported. Furthermore, the young people themselves in this study echo the professional views that their behaviour can be very challenging and schools should not have to work alone to deal with this. This would encourage closer working links and potentially help to set up a professionals meeting with particular provisions that have a high number of youth offenders for example the PRU to share and support each other in a young person centred approach to improve outcomes. This could create the potential for an Education Plan for youth offenders to ease communication and clarity of information, similar to the statutory process that LAC have in place, where the network including young person and parents come together at the provision to discuss positives and next steps to support the young person's education and training. Furthermore, this can ensure that any unidentified needs can be explored. This would highlight work with parents and the young person in a person centred approach which is in line with new SEN reforms and an area that the EP has a lot of experience in. It is interesting that the quantitative data showed that the highest number of youth offenders attended the PRU but a small number of these had a Statement of SEN. It could perhaps be argued that when young people are excluded from schools they may have one or multiple issues that need identifying or supporting which may not have happened for a variety of reasons whilst in mainstream school; these could include poor attendance, challenging behaviour masking learning needs, social and emotional needs being difficult to get support for or parents not engaging with education systems etc. Therefore, an EP bringing together parent, young person, YOS and education setting can help to address such complexities and collect educational information that informs a plan rather than for a tick box Asset form for data collection purposes only.

Also in line with the LAC framework is that each education setting has a designated teacher for LAC which was made statutory to focus on improving the educational outcomes for this group which could be argued is needed for the youth offending population. Each designated teacher is in a managerial position and ensures that communication is shared with other professionals, and acts as an advocate for the young person within the setting. Although a SPOC (single point of contact) was considered to have been tried within the YOS, it may be required that a statutory footing for such a role is needed within education for the YJS to ensure that an ease of communication, information sharing and an advocate for the young person is in place. It is hoped that such procedures being in place would secure educational and wider social and emotional needs to be discussed and identified with the setting and that action can move forward to support any needs, and plan appropriate alternative or next steps education on transition from leaving school or the PRU.

This widespread concern and issue of gang involvement with young people in this study results in pressures on each level of the system, but more support and training given to schools, training and employment places in this area would again result in provisions not having to work alone with such serious concerns.

This research contributes to the current knowledge base in the important area of exploring the educational needs and issues with youth offenders, which is an important area given that research promises education to be key in reducing offending behaviours. This case study highlights that there are still many barriers for educational inclusion for youth offenders, and that policy is way behind reforms given to the Looked After Children population. The original contribution of this work is therefore considered to be in the proposal for a similar framework used for LAC to be used for youth offenders, to ensure that accurate educational data is recorded and

all agencies work together to secure educational inclusion. An EP is well placed to support this proposal and work at all levels of the system to encourage and promote improved educational outcomes for youth offenders.

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7.6 Autobiographical reflections

Undertaking this research study has been an invaluable learning experience. I have gained some understanding of the nature of research and of at times complex research process. The process has at times been very frustrating, yet at other times immensely rewarding.

My biggest concern/finding was the vulnerabilities of the young people. I was very aware of the cultural and gender differences of being a young white woman interviewing predominately young black men, and therefore how they might respond to me, in light of their previous experiences and the power dynamics inherent in the interview situation; although the young people were aware of the aims of the study and I gained informed consent from them before participating. It is possible that they may have felt wary about my role or the implications of any comments they might make. However, I hope that the information I provided to them would have minimised their fears in this area and their presentation in the interviews suggested to me that they seemed relaxed and happy to participate. All of the young people were very inspiring and very open about the challenges they face in life but also the aspirations and ideas they have to overcome them.

This research has also provided some key ideas which have helped me examine my own professional values and guidelines for possible changes to my own future practice. I intend to continue to explore how EPs are working with youth offenders

in local authorities that I may be employed with in future, and will continue to champion this vulnerable group to help improve outcomes for them. I believe the role of the EP could really help to remove the stigma youth offenders face when engaging with education and help to build links with education settings to ensure the young people can continue with education and have their educational needs looked at and supported, and not just focus on challenging behaviour without acknowledging emotional needs for this vulnerable group of young people. This research process has encouraged me to view the wider educational, social and political context of the authority EPs may be working in and as research has identified that raising the education attainment of young people who offend promises to be one of the most effective means of reducing the risk of offending, I agree with Lin Hinnigan, Chief Executive of the Youth Justice Board, when she stated how she would love to see EPs embedded in YOT. The EP role should be involved in helping this vulnerable group of young people to be engaged with ETE and to have the best chance of social inclusion as adults.

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Appendix 1: **Information Sheet on the Research Project**

This project is being conducted as part of a Doctoral Course in Educational Psychology at the IoE. It has been discussed and approved by the Ethics Board and an Academic supervisor.

The overall aim of the research study is to identify the reasons for educational under performance and explore how to increase young offenders successful participation back into education. This will be achieved by the answering the following research questions:

1) Find out what is already known about the educational history and current educational needs of youth offenders in the UK.

2) Identify the factors found to be associated with the educational under performance with the youth offending population.

3) Explore the barriers and facilitators for educational inclusion and engagement for youth offenders.

It is hoped that the outcome of the study will be able to:

1) Increase awareness of EPs working with youth offenders and effective ways to work with them to continue within education.

2) Increase professional links with EPs and YOTs, EPs are well placed to work with YOTs as they work in an eco-systemic way and can help identify educational and therapeutic needs, and how to support the young person with such needs.

3. Potential for providing a rationale as to why changes in social policy reform are needed so that a similar framework to LAC is achieved for YOT to improve outcomes.

The research method aims to take a qualitative approach over 2 phases. The first phase will report descriptive statistics from available data from Asset and other data sources available within the YOS, which covers Research Question 1.

The second phase will cover Research Question 2 and 3 and will involve semi-structured interviews with professionals who work in the X YOS and a sample of young people known to the service.

Once the project is complete, a final project report will be provided to X YOS and X Educational Psychology Service in September 2016 and a summary of the key outcomes will be made available to you.

If you have any queries regarding the research please contact Jenny O'Carroll: Email: jocarroll@ioe.ac.uk   Mobile: 07947 295478

Thank you for taking the time to read through this information sheet

Participant Consent Form Individual Interview

Thank you for taking the time to read the project information sheet. I would like to invite you to take part in the interview stage of the research. The interview will be arranged at a time that is convenient for you and will take about 50 minutes.

The interview will be audio recorded in order to support the analysis of the data. All information gathered will be anonymised and each participant will be given an individual participant number. The information collected is strictly confidential to myself and my IOE research supervisor, It will not be possible to identify individual members. You have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time and for any reason. All data/information gained from you will then be destroyed.

I give my permission to be interviewed about my experiences or my role of working with children and young people known to the Youth Offending Service.

YES ☐

NO ☐

Name of Service/School ....

Name ....

Role ....

Signature ....Date ....

Contact Details:

Phone ....

Email ....

Please give a preferred time for the interview

....THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART

If you have any queries regarding the research please contact Jenny O'Carroll:
Email: jocarroll@ioe.ac.uk Mobile: 07947 295478

Fancy getting this?

I would like to hear how you got on with school or college.

I would like to interview you to find out about your school days, and what has been helpful or not during your education.

- The interviews are a 1:1 talk that take about 45 minutes.
- The interviews will be held at the YOS office or your place of education/training.
- You do not have to answer all of the questions if there are some things you would rather not talk about.
- It will be helpful if I am able to see background information about you which has already been collected by the YOS.
- Your information and interview will be anonymous.

Please inform your YOS worker or teacher if you would like to take part.

Thank You!

If you agree to take part in the research, you will be doing so voluntarily and therefore may choose to withdraw from the study at any time.

Any data collected will only be accessible to those working on the project and will be treated as confidential at all times. I will be asking you questions, taking notes and recording the process using a digital voice recorder. Data will be destroyed at the end of the project.

Please put a circle around your answers and sign your name on this form to let me know if you would like to take part in this research.

- **I would like to take part** **YES / NO**

If you would like to take part, please circle Yes or No to confirm that you understand and agree to the following conditions:

- I am free to stop taking part in the study at
  any time
  YES / NO

- I do not have to tell the researcher
  anything I would rather not
  YES / NO

- My background information from school
  and the Youth Offending Service will be
  shared with the researcher
  YES / NO

- All information about me will be treated as
  confidential
  YES / NO

- The researcher will destroy all data about
  me once the project is finished
  YES / NO

I confirm that I have read and explained the information above and consent form to the young person named above, and that he / she understands what is involved.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Young Person: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3: SSI Interview schedule with professionals

Research Questions/ Themes	Interview Question - Professionals SSI	Prompts
RQ2. Explore the barriers and facilitators for educational inclusion and engagement for youth offenders.	Can you please describe the profile of young people that you typically work with?	Age range of YP Professional background Excluded children SEN Type of Order
	Can you tell me about your role in relation to youth offenders	
	Can you tell me about other professionals that you work with in relation to youth offenders?	How often? In what forum?
	.Can you tell me about the level of information you have about the youth offender?	Prior to working with yp? During work? From whom? Parents?
	.Can you tell me of any barriers that you have known youth offenders to face with their education?	Background factors? SEN? Education history? Social Care? Health? Training?
	Can you tell me of any facilitators or things that have helped with youth offenders engaging in education?	Examples of what worked well? and Why? Training?

Appendix 4: SSI Interview schedule with young people

Research Questions/ Themes	Interview Question - Young person SSI	Prompts
RQ2. Explore the barriers and facilitators for educational inclusion and engagement for youth offenders.	. Will cover bread areas: . • Current education/training • Phases of education • Specific relationships with school/college e.g peer relationships, teacher relationships • Family attitudes to school/level of other background factors • Views of school • School giving meaning to their goals • Aspirational goals for the future	What was primary school like? What was it like when you first started secondary school? How was it when you went through the year groups at school? Any parts of learning you like/dislike? Why?
	Anything that has helped you with education?	Teachers? TA's? Parent?
	Anything that has not helped you with learning/training/employment?	
	Guided from literature review and factors researched into youth offenders relationship with education	

Appendix 5: Interview Transcript with a professional
Participant 3
Worker in YOS team.

This is interview with participant number three. Could you please describe the profile of young people that you typically work with?

OK. Typically we're actually working with young people predominantly from the Afro-Caribbean and African background, ethnic background. They tend to be past school leaving age, so we've actually got a lot of sixteen-pluses that we're actually currently working with. And obviously the reason why we're working with them is because they've actually got no form of education, training or employment in place. They also tend to be high risk offenders as well.

With high risk, is it that they're re-offenders, or...?

It could be high risk in terms of re-offending, or high risk in terms of the fact that their behaviour might cause serious harm related consequences for their victims, of they could be high risk in terms of their own vulnerability.

OK. And what sort of numbers are we looking at that you typically...?

That we typically work with? We've got quite a large number of needs in the service. I couldn't give you a specific number but it's a lot larger than the ones that are in mainstream school.

Oh OK. And the kind of percentage that would be needs...is it like over fifty percent, or...?

At a guess I would say it would be round about that.

OK. And then can you tell me about your role in relation to these offenders?

My role is to manage the team, to support young people that have got educational issues - so it could be somebody that's at risk of exclusion, it could be a young person who is being home tutored, but they want to get back into mainstream school; or it could be that the young person's just been referred because they haven't got anything at all in place. And obvious research shows us that with young offenders, the more constructive activity is actually engaged in minimises their risks in all three of those areas in terms of re-offending, serious harm to others and vulnerability. So our main focus is to actually try and get them into something. The issue that we have is, because they are high risk offenders, a lot of those offenders might be out there earning a substantial amount of money through their illegitimate gains. And then if us as workers come in and say we have a trainee-ship or we have an apprenticeship, or we have some sort of training course for them to go on, but not paying them, to get their...they might in some circumstances get assistance with their travel...but the biggest issue that we actually have is the fact that if there is financial remuneration attached to the role or the course that they want to do, it's never enough in comparison to what they're actually doing...illegally. And this is what the barrier is for us to

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actually get them engaged into something. Where we might have a young person who is of school age, but they're actually either at risk of being excluded, or they have been excluded, they have a youth engagement programme which is run in conjunction with X College. And that particular programme has been in existence for a number of years. The issue that I have with it, which I believe is the issue why there's not a good take-up from the young people that are actually referred, is because it's something that now has become stereotyped to offenders specifically.

Can you tell me a bit more about the engagement programme?

Well it's a programme for young people that have either got behavioural issues...well mostly they've got behavioural issues within the school environment, and for that reason...

And they're in mainstream.

They're in mainstream. But for that reason the mainstream school are not willing to have the young people attend their provision. So they then refer them on to the youth engagement programme and the youth engagement programme is about literacy, numeracy...skills really.

So they're not excluding them.

So they're not excluding them, so they're still on roll.

They're still on roll at the school, but they ask the youth offending team...

That's not the youth offending team, this is through the youth engagement programme which is offered through X College. So it's trying to give them...those young people that might not be suited to the school environment...

Due to behaviour.
Absolutely.

OK.

Yeah.

So X College then offer this programme to look at literacy, numeracy...

Yeah.

And to help them with the behaviour?

Not necessarily with behaviour because that's not the role of the college really. The role of the college is...and this is why I have a big (inaudible) with this particular provision because it's...it's just there as a way of putting that group of young people somewhere to say that something is being done. But it doesn't necessarily mean that what's being done is

meaningful. So what I have planned to do is work in conjunction with the person who runs the youth engagement programme and we're going to look to see if we can actually revise it to make it more meaningful for the young people, more attractive and something that's sort of similar to what mirrors what's going on in the school. Because that's the thing with our young people - you take them out of the school environment which is where they don't just learn the educational stuff, they learn social skills, they learn team building, using their own initiative; they learn a lot of social skills from being in school. And once they're excluded, that has an impact on their self-esteem; it has an impact on their confidence. And for some of those young people who do want to go on into some form of education, training or employment, because of those issues and experiences that they've had at the school, it puts them off of actually going forward.

Do you think there's any scope in working with the mainstream school before they refer on to the youth engagement programme to kind of...?

See if there's a way...

Are there other professionals we can...?

I think so. I think even to bring in outside trainers to come in and put on workshops that help young people understand about motivation, assertiveness, confident communication, goal setting - so setting short-term, long-term and mid-term goals, because all of that will aid their confidence and their self-esteem. But give them an understanding and level of self-awareness of where they're at now and where they need to actually push themselves.

And I'm wondering also with supporting the professionals in the mainstream school so that they feel supported and they can work with these young people.

Yeah.

OK. Just going back to so you manage a team; can you just tell me a bit about what that team looks like? How many people there are, what their backgrounds are...?

Yeah. OK. Well we have two, I have two workers in the team that provide support to our young people that have got educational issues. One works as the exclusion officer and reintegration officer. So he works predominantly with those that are of mainstream school age. He will liaise with the schools in terms of getting information about progress, attainment, and pass that on to the case managers to inform any reports or assessments. If a young person is at risk of being excluded then he will carry out an assessment with the young person and their parent or carer, find out what the issues are, find out what their needs are and work as a conduit really between the family and the local authority to see what provisions are available for the young people. And also one of his other roles would be to undertake assessments for those young people that are without a mainstream school place for some reason or another. So it might be that a young person that's known to us has just recently moved into the area and without a school provision. So he will actually work with that young person and work with the local authority to get that young person into something suitable.

OK. And the other worker?

The other worker works with our young people that are post school leaving age. And his role is to work with them around cv writing, interview skills. He does a lot of work with helping them to complete applications for apprenticeships, trainee-ships and applications for college. What else does X do? And some of the project work that we've got going on at the moment...X is taking the lead in some of those areas. We've got Y, the exclusion and reintegration officer, will also be part of it as well. And as I mentioned earlier, we've got the new changes in law in relation to raising the participation age, so a lot of work will need to be done with the two of them together to see how they'll merge their work together.

So you manage the two workers...

Yeah.

And the two workers gather the educational information...

Yeah.

And then what...that informs their work of what needs to be done...

To be done...yeah.

And worked through... They report back to you...

Absolutely. So they'll have an assessment put there on the table with the young person round the education. And then that assessment will inform their intervention plan. So their intervention might be to work with that person to address issues around building their confidence in relation to interview skills. Or it might be to work with that young person to get them on to an apprenticeship. But that...there will be a clear intervention plan.

So their assessment, their information gathering...is that the asset part of the form...?

No.

Or is it separate?

It's separate. So the case managers complete the asset. When they refer the case to me or E3 support, I then look at the education section on that asset, so it should give me the background information as to where that young person currently is at educationally. And that's the basis that I've got that I use to determine whether we're accepting it or not. Yeah.

I see. So the case managers initially meet the young people, get the educational information; then they pass it on to you...

Yeah.

All of them, regardless, or only the ones they feel...

Only the ones that need to be. So if anybody scores two or more in the E3 section on asset, they will automatically be referred. There's some that don't necessarily score two, but because they're in that transition stage of leaving school and going on to further education, those young people are also getting referred for information and advice about colleges and courses to do after school. Or because they want part-time work before they start further education.

OK. So the level of information is dependent on the case manager doing the asset form.

Absolutely.

OK.

But what you need to make clear...be clear on is that the asset is an assessment that looks at...I think it's about sixteen or seventeen different domains. But what they're actually assessing is each domain, how does that correlate with that young person's risk of re-offending. So that's what they use that section to determine whether we accept that young person or not. The assessments that the workers actually complete in E3 is more specific, so that it will have a lot more information in that than what you'll get in the section on the actual asset.

So the asset really provides the general, numerical scores...

Yes.

As to whether they come to you?

Yeah.

And then your team decide if they ask that more thorough information's gathered.

Yeah.

And they gather information from...?

From the young person, parent or carer, any other professionals that might be working with that young person in an educational capacity. So with the re-integration and exclusion officer, he will liaise with the school. He'll also liaise with the local authority as well to find out if referrals have been made and what they're actually doing, if at all. If it isn't he will also undertake a specific assessment, which is (incomprehensible word) and that will be used to pass on to the local authority to support getting the young person's case heard at a panel so they be formed into some sort of provision.

I think that's about the level of information that we have, and how it's gathered. But can you tell me about other professionals that you work with in relation to youth offenders?

Yeah. We work quite closely with the SALT team, the speech and language team. And we've just started to think about how we can work a bit more closely together. We recognise that a lot of our cohort have either got an unidentified speech and language issue, communication issue, or they've got an unidentified learning need. It's testing times in the off at the moment because all of the changes in legislation that have been brought in around SEN, there's a big piece of work in relation to identifying those young people and actually getting them assessed where we feel that there is an issue. And also there's a big piece of work where we're trying identify those that have come with a statement that needs to be converted into the EHCP, and also identifying those high risk young people that have got SEN needs and have a statement that are also at risk of going into custody, so that we can actually work in partnership with the SEN department to actually get their statements converted whilst they're still in the community.

So do you have a link in the SEN team?

Yeah. I link up with (inaudible).

So you link up with an EP, and you link up with a SEN officer...and the case manager. Yeah.

OK. And any other professionals that you work with?

Substance misuse, we will work with them as well because if there's issues in relation to their substance misuse, or even their mental health, that's going to impact on the way that the workers need to work with them, then we would include them in our meetings with (inaudible). And obviously the schools (inaudible) schools and the college.

And when you said some young people may have unidentified speech and language needs and unidentified learning needs...

Yeah.

How would you go about trying to get those identified? Who would you go to?

Speech and language first and foremost to them, and that provides us with some information that helps us understand that there is an issue that needs further probing. Following that, then that will be followed up with if we do need to recommend that young person needs an EHCP assessment, that will inform. And we'll also get information from school in terms of where that young person's educational attainment is and what behaviour that they're seeing that's causing them reasons for concern. Because the more information that we actually gather, the more likely the young person will get the assessment. And that will lead on to a plan.

OK. And how effective do you think multi-agency working is?

For youth offenders it's challenging. And it's challenging because every specialist within that multi-agency team will have their own agenda, their own remit to work with and their own outcomes that they need to achieve. And sometimes it can be difficult to pull of them together. There's issues also around information sharing; so people are not quite converse on what the legislation says about information sharing and data protection, and sometimes by them actually retaining that information it actually holds up the process of getting a service for some of the young people. So we have a lot of contributing factors that we have to look at, but that also hampers the work that we can do and it then hampers the outcomes for the young people. So a bit more expeditious working in terms of sharing information would be fantastic.

And are there any particular forums where the multi-agencies do work together? Are there particular multi-agency panels or meetings where they're...? Or are you...for instance, as well, are you in the same building together or not? How does it look...?

Some (inaudible) use CAMHS and...and SLT are all in house, which is helpful. We haven't got an educational psychologist attached to (inaudible), but as I said, we've got good links with that department and they always respond to queries. So working with them is not an issue. What we find being an issue in terms of partnership working is with the schools.

Can you tell me a bit more?

Yeah.

And some of the issues with the schools?

So the issues with the schools are around, as I highlighted, again - information sharing, that being done in a timely manner. Sometimes it's the reluctance of the school to be willing to work with us when they've made the decision to actually exclude the young person. So they're not necessarily interested at the point that we come into play to actually think about alternatives and find strategies of how we can actually keep the young person in the school. And another issue that we have with the schools as well is that they're very quick to actually exclude young people. And when I say schools, I wouldn't necessarily say so much in terms of PRU because I do understand that PRU has got...because they also commission young people I suppose that are on alternative educational provisions as well, people know that in the community and other schools also know that as well. So if they exclude them they know that automatically they go to PRU. If they get to PRU and PRU are not able to meet their needs in terms of education or in terms of their behaviour, then they go on to these other provisions. And these other provisions, as good as they might well be, they should be something that complements what's actually happening in the school as opposed to being the replacement for what they should actually be getting. And that is the biggest issue that we actually have with schools.

And the thoughts around them being very quick to exclude...is that around, do you think, because they now...they know the person has committed an offence; they know they're a youth offender?

Yeah.

Or is it around the offence that's been caused and they feel the risk management...?

Sometimes it's both. Sometimes the young person could commit...say a robbery; not against some school people, not during school time, but in the community. And it could be even at that weekend. On some occasions I've known for the school to actually exclude that young person as a result of that.

OK.

And some other issues might be where young people have been found to be in possession of cannabis, but not necessarily on school grounds; or it might be just outside the school, not in the school specifically. On some of those occasions they've excluded the young people.

So you think the label of the young person being a youth offender gives the school a...

Yeah.

Reason...

A reason...

...to exclude.

An excuse I would say, because it's not a valid reason to exclude them, but yeah, it gives them...

Do you know when this... When this happens, do you know if the parents of the young people appeal the decision for the exclusion? Do you think the parents feel they accept the decision or...?

See, this is another issue that we have. Where the parents might withdraw their kids from the school...that is another issue for us because they are not really aware at that time that if they withdraw their child from the school they are not...you know, they don't have any rights or entitlement to get them into another school. And so what we're now doing is working with an agency who is commissioned through X to work independently with parents and carers to actually provide them with that bit of information. It's mostly linked to the EHCP stuff, however they will provide information generally to the parents.

Around this kind of...? I guess we're talking about informal exclusions, really, aren't we.

Yes. Yeah. So giving...arming the parents with the right information, so that they can actually make an informed decision about how they want to proceed. And letting them know what rights they have in terms of when their children are actually being excluded...and signposting.

And I guess like you were saying earlier then, some of this work...when you get involved it's already happened. The school have already made this decision, so it's hard for the education workers to build those bridges, because it's happened already.

Already...yeah.

So I think some of these are barriers that younger offenders face with engaging with education. I mean, are there any others...any other barriers that you can think of that youth offenders face with engaging in education?

I think the biggest barrier is about their confidence and their self-esteem. And because nobody's picking up on that work specifically, and it's a bit of work that if that's addressed it will have a big impact in terms of their...them taking (inaudible) seriously and also them addressing the problematic aspects of their behaviour. You know, because it's about value; they don't value themselves enough because of...for some of the young people it's because of the experiences that they've had where they're made to feel small. Other barriers would be, as I've mentioned, the fact that some of them are actually engaging in offences that are acquisitive in terms of large amounts of cash and money. So it's hard for us to come in with an apprenticeship or a trainee-ship for them when they know that by doing that it's going to take away from them in terms of the money that they're actually gaining illegally. And again, unidentified learning difficulties as well; so if they've got unidentified learning difficulties and they've not been picked up, that then links back to their confidence and self-esteem because they just think to themselves that they're stupid. And then they're less likely to engage in anything. And a lot of it is fear; it's not because they can't do it, it's because it's fear. Or they might not necessarily understand the level of support that they might receive if they went to a different institution. So another bit of work that we're actually doing is...this week, Wednesday, we had X College come in and present to a group of young people about the local offer. Part of it was about what courses are actually available, but a lot of it was about what support they can actually get. And so those young people that are interested and have signed up, will go to X College for a day and have the X College experience, where they go round, see the building, meet with the tutors, meet with some of the students there and meet with the support team so that they can actually address any individual concerns that they might have about support when they get there.

I wonder if the young people as well...is there anything that their peer group...so difficulties for them...?

Yes, that can sometimes be a barrier, because you might have a young person that is quite intelligent and has the ability to actually succeed, and they themselves might have something within them that they want to go and do something; but if the majority of the peer group that they're hanging around with isn't at the same level of attainment that they are at, they have got that influence over them to actually dissuade them from pursuing that. And again, that comes back round to what I said about the social skills; if we helped young people to know and understand what assertiveness is, that would get them out of a lot of those sort of situations.

Do you find working with the families of youth offenders quite positive...are they good to engage with, or what's the...?

They were good to engage with when we had our parenting worker who also sat in my team and worked alongside us in terms of education as well as other areas of YOT work. And she...was experienced, she was very good in terms of her approach to the families, and was yielding the results that we wanted. We haven't got her in place, because she retired in March. And until we get another parenting worker that's an area that's a bit lacking. But also X's a bit of a tough borough; and because some of the issues that we've got with our young people, we also understand that a lot of them is learnt behaviours that they've actually learned from their parents. So for then us to come in and show them something different to what their family's been telling them is putting that...placing that young person in conflict in a sense. We don't always give a lot of credence or consideration to that when we're actually working with the young people.

I think that's quite interesting. Can you just elaborate a bit why you think this borough is quite difficult in areas, just so we've got a context about the area we're in?

A lot of the young...because of the position that I'm in I know from chairing the risk management panel for high risk offenders that we've got a lot of young people that are known to us, but...known to us also...and the reasons why they're known to us is because they've got welfare concerns that have not been addressed appropriately by social services. Those cases that I've noticed from chairing the RMP are the ones where it's the difficult and most challenging parents that we're not able to work with, or are refusing to actually work with any professionals. So we've got a lot of young people that are high risk that may be subject to a child protection plan...those welfare concerns are what is actually a big risk factor to their risk of re-offending. They're not engaging in education because it's something that the family themselves don't necessarily value. So you've got all of these competing factors and barriers and challenges for the young person that they've got to think about and consider before they can actually open a book.

And with the welfare concerns, that there's a high level of welfare need, how is the link with social care...?

It's not great, and the reason why it's not great is because of the way that it's been structured. So the youth offending service in X does not sit under children's services and that is a big barrier.

Do they attend the risk management panel? Do they...?

No. We've got one or two social workers that might do, but again they're all coming for their own purposes, and that is where the difficulty is in terms of multi-agency working. So...but it's going to get better; and the reason why I say it's going to get better is because we have identified that we do need to work more closely and the YOT needs to stop picking up on the work that social care needs to be doing, and we need to focus on the offending behaviour work.

Yeah. Some of your workers perhaps think they're social workers?

Yes. They take on that actual role. But it's about us saying no, this is something... Because if we continue to do it social care are not...they'll never pick up.

So we've got some barriers around confidence, self-esteem for the young person, they don't value themselves. We've got the I guess maybe link to the social/economic status then where they're engaging in offences which gives them a higher actual incentive than we can offer them by looking into an apprenticeship or training.

Yeah.

Unidentified learning needs and them having a fear of actually engaging because they feel that they don't have the right support. Peer influences. We've got the parents...learned behaviours, parenting and welfare...

(Inaudible) yeah.

OK. So...I'll move on then to facilitators really. You know, in terms of outcomes, what do you think works well for youth offenders to engage in education...can you think of things that have happened that - yeah, that works well, or we can try and do that?

I think short-term workshops...like getting (inaudible) because if you ask the young person to participate, the first thing they as for is how long is it for. They don't want to hear six weeks, they don't want to hear eight weeks. So small, bite-sized bits of workshops that's going to help them understand what the subject matter is and help to inform where they need to position themselves.

What kind of workshops would happen?

Well I think all workshops...

Like practical...?

Practical subjects; stuff that's got a wide range of activities that's going to lend support to all of the learning staff. Because if we don't know if a young person's got a learning difficulty or a speech and language communication, how will we know that what we're delivering, that they've actually understood it? So it needs to have all of the learning styles incorporated so that anybody can benefit from it. And I think a lot of thought's not necessarily given to how workshops are set up and...you know, specifically for this cohort of young people.
Yeah. It's not just saying we provide it...
Absolutely.
It's how we...
How we're providing it. And if it's in a way that's meaningful for the young person to engage. Because sometimes it's our approach that can also be a barrier to that young person actually getting access to the services that they need in terms of education.

Do you feel you have the range of workshops to offer?

No, we haven't. And the reason why I say we haven't, it is something that I would like to bring in...not just into the YOT but also to bring into the colleges. Because that is also a big stumbling block for our young people. Our young people might want to go to college, but there might be work that needs to be done beforehand to get them ready for it. Otherwise we're setting them up to fail. And I have had conversations with X College and that's something that's got to be in the pipeline to actually start looking at doing. Also another issue, another thing - going back to the barriers - would be for the young people that are returning to the community following custody...it's the time when they're actually being released, does that tally up with them being able to make timely applications to courses to aid their resettlement; and the answer is no. The answer is no. So we do need more provision, particularly within the summer holidays, that might be able to give them those short workshops that will prepare them so that when September comes they can make an application to go into the college and (inaudible).

The timelines don't sync up, do they.

No. Not at all. Yeah. And obvious we've got a big problem with the College is not actually supporting us by going to the secure unit to actually undertake some of those interviews for those young people that are coming out in a timely manner to actually go in and do a course. And that's because of resources, which we understand, we fully understand, but it's not necessarily fair or right for the offender and to the community.

Yeah. Any other facilitators you think help young people, any ways of working or...?

I think speech and language therapy, I can't big them up enough. The bit of work that they do is so insightful in so many different areas. Not just in terms of their education, because what they've actually started to do for us is they put up indicators of the month, which helps the case managers to understand a bit more. So they're more alert in terms of picking up issues with their young people as well, and making a referral in a timely manner. What they're also doing is they attend our youth management panel every Tuesday and provide feedback on assessments they've undertaken and work that they're actually doing with the young people. They work quite closely with the case managers to help them develop strategies for them to use in their individual sessions, so communication is effective for the young people. Also where we've got young people that might be having one-to-one tuition, SALT are also willing to work with those tutors and provide them with strategies to work with their young people. So SLT are our strongest allies really. And obviously the information that we get from them also helps us to get access to services for our young people that have got learning difficulties.

So it's partly the information gathering and sharing, but also how they're collaborating with the professionals around them.

Absolutely. Yeah. And how that all ties in and coordinates so there's a single plan for that young person. Because if you think about it, the young person's got three or four different professionals or different agencies looking after them, you can understand why they get fatigued by having to come in (inaudible).

So it's about having a coordinated...

Absolutely.

Yeah. And is there anything else you would like to tell me about in relation to education factors for young people?

I think that what you might find once you start doing the focus groups, is...the provision that we're offering them now - yes, it's good to offer the trainee-ships, it's good to offer the apprenticeships and that's going to suit a lot of people. But go back to the fact that what they're doing illegitimately needs to be looked at, because even though they're...it's illegitimate what they're actually doing, the skills that they're actually employing to undertake those criminal activities are transferable into something that's meaningful. And a lot of the young people are independent, self-employed in their illegitimate work, so we should be offering some sort of enterprise that's going to allow them to be their own boss. They can then determine how much they're going to make or not...you know, no different from what they're... So we need to find them legitimate ways to mirror what they're doing illegitimately that's going to be conducive to them and that's going to give them take-home. But without having that financial incentive to get them set up initially, it's not going to take them away from what they're currently doing. That's my perception of what's going on and what needs... Because I think what the biggest problem is for the youth offending team is that we don't move with the times and we have to take the lead from the young people.

Do you think that's around listening to them more...?

I think I do in respect...yeah, because we're providing a service to them. And what's the point of us providing a service that we think they need without asking them what they need?
Is there anything else?
No.
Thank you.

Appendix 6: Section of Professionals Transcript partitioned into Coded Extracts

Extract	Coded for
So the kind of work that I am doing with him at the moment is so hard because of mum blocking everything.	Family/Mum "blocking"
But it's difficult 'cause it gets blocked and because of his age mum does have to agree to stuff.	Family beliefs/absent consequences
If you can work on that relationship and make mum see the good that she's in	Building relationship with mum as protective factor
But it's always important to have parents on board, because whatever we're trying to instill in their children they need to be seeing it as well, like we're reading off the same book	Importance of parents being on board/importance of working with parent
Since the two workers have left...I think the gender specific service is gone now	Staff turnover/change/loss of roles
Because I don't know what goes on here	Not knowing about the broader agency/context/restructure
Both, because obviously CAMHs and education that sit with us and I always make referrals to them, like 99% of the time	Close links with other agencies/easier with co-location referrals
I know it sounds bad, but I think it depends on the worker you get to speak to, to be honest. If you've already made links with people it's perfect, if you haven't maybe not so good. It just depends on whoever	Importance of relationships with other professionals/worker variable

picks up the phone on that day actually.	
Everybody works differently, but the first thing I do is check Framework, see if they're known to social care	Different people doing different things
The only time you come together is if it's a LAC review, that's the only time. Because other external agencies are invited to things, for instance the risk management panel I had this morning, there was no social worker there. So it's usually a lack of people turn up to anything else	LAC reviews a place for professionals to link up/statutory process in place easier to link up/multi agency challenges for non statutory processes
But what I think works best with young people whose parents are engaged, is asking the parents	Importance of parental engagement
I think it's very important to find something they want to engage with	Importance of engagement with education
This young person I've been talking about, that's been at school for an hour, he loves gardening. But he won't tell anybody that because it's not cool.	Social influence 'coolness'
One of the young people come in today he's 17 like I said, he can't read or write, he's had no GCSE's. That stems from him having severe learning difficulties that were never picked up on.	Learning difficulties not picked up on/identified SEN

Appendix 7: Section of codes with quotations

Systemic factors: *Disjointed systems and working*	
Sub category	**Quotations**
Multi agency challenges – Barrier	"Working in the YOT you find out there are five of us working with the young person, so you go hang on, do you mind if we sit down and have a talk about them and find out who is doing what?." (1) "It's challenging because every specialist within that multi agency team will have their own agenda, their own remit to work with and their own outcomes that they need to achieve. And sometimes it can be difficult to pull all of them together." (3) "As what I find is there is so much duplication, the young people are working with so many professionals in a community, whether it be social services, the YOT, the police, so by the time they get to me it's like they've got professional exhaustion."(4) "You can't bombard the young person with so much at one time, so they make priorities as to what the referral should be, they may need to see ten people but they can't see them all at once." … "When it comes to involving more outside agencies so social care etc. that can be a bit more difficult I think sometimes it is about their willingness to join in or perhaps see the importance of it. Also a large part of it is logistical, trying to get six or seven different professionals from very different backgrounds and working hours and things together at the same time. The disciplines are quite separate."(11) "Everybody works differently."(6) "We are just trying to think about how we work a bit more closely together."(3)
Multi agency working – making links - facilitator	*"I think being on the risk management panel is quite useful as you get to hear who does what."(2)* *"We work quite closely with the SALT team, and we've just started to think about how we can work together a bit more closely together."(3)* *"CAMHS and SLT are all in house, which is helpful."(3)*

	"We have the police in here now, the police do a police check, there is a check from CAMHs."(5)
	"CAMHs and education sit with us and I always make referrals to them, like 99% of the time."(6)
	"If you've already made links with people it's perfect."(6)
	"So you can make the links, in terms of the agencies working together, so they don't have to scramble around for information. You're the conduit by which all that information is disseminated, so for me it's been really useful having that part of the role."(7)
	"Within the YOS it's quite good, we really bring to the YOS more of a tradition of multi-agency working. Between ourselves and speech and language and substance misuse, I think we are all quite big advocates of working together, so meeting to discuss."(11)
	"Without multi agency working the job couldn't be done."(13)
Fractured Information sharing - barrier	"Some people will call you back and some people just won't call you back as they don't think it's important." (2)
	"There's issues also around information sharing; so people are not quite converse on what the legislation says about information sharing and data protection, and sometimes by them actually retaining their information it actually holds up the process of getting a service for some of the young people."(3)
	"So we pass information on, if there is someone to pass it on to, but if they are NEET then that kind of goes into the ether." (1)
	"Even when the young person is in school and is with CAMHs we can't tap into that as that is confidential, even when the young person is referred to CAMHs in house and they sit across the table, we can't ask them for information, they can only say what the young person wants them to say and that is a real frustration…
	I'm here doing my thing, and there's no communication of where these people come from, and they turn up, and it's like, who are you, and the YOS officer doesn't even know that they're working with these people, so duplication can be a real problem for all concerned, not just the young person."(5)

	"Some of our young people slip through the net."(7)
	"Sometimes you're just talking to the parents, you only hear a bit of a story because they may choose not to tell you that the YOS is involved, and then it's just a matter of sharing, so hopefully the CAF will say that the YOS is involved, or the young person, but there are times I suspect that we don't know straight away. That's the one thing we struggle with, because we have to ask the YOS this all the time; can we double check."(8)
	"Communication is definitely a problem; it's always been a problem."(4)
	"So the information level can vary."(11)
	"I think it depends on the case worker, sometimes they provide everything."(12)
	"It is spikey, there are some officers what will give you everything and they will give it to you quickly so you can do what you need to do, there are some whom know that their young person self-referred and you probably wouldn't even see them unless you called them and begged them to come to you, you wouldn't see them."(14)
	"There are a lot of arguments and conversations within the local authority about who is going to pay for it of where the place is going to come from."(11)