How can we support a sense of belonging in the school community for children and young people with youth justice involvement?

Georgina Faye Seymour

Doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology
School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences
Newcastle University
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Declaration

This thesis is being submitted for the award of Doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology. I declare that it is my own work and does not include material that is the work of others without acknowledgement, that I have consulted all materials cited, and I have not submitted this assignment for any other academic award.

Overarching abstract

This thesis explores young people (YP) with Youth Justice (YJ) involvement's lived experiences of belonging within their school communities. It is comprised of four chapters: a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), a methodological and ethical critique, an empirical research project, and a reflective synthesis.

Chapter 1

The SLR reported in this chapter explores existing research about YP with YJ-involvement's experiences of education through a meta-ethnography. Five papers exploring the perspectives of YP attending court-ordered residential placements or from health perspectives (Forensic Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Speech and Language) were synthesised. Findings were discussed in light of narrative principles. The constraining impact of dominant societal narratives that inform systems, tools and processes intended to support YP was highlighted. Dominant narratives seemingly informed stories others hold about YP with YJ-involvement and impact upon YP's stories about themselves as agentic in their own lives, and YP's sense of belonging within their communities. This chapter identified the constraining impact of narratives that reinforce punitive approaches on YP's sense of belonging in their school communities.

Chapter 2

This chapter aims to bridge the meta-ethnography detailed in chapter one and the empirical project in chapter three. Philosophical assumptions and the rationale for the chosen narrative methodology employed in chapter three are explored. Key ethical considerations that underpinned my decision-making throughout this thesis are also discussed.

Chapter 3

Reviewing the current literature identified a gap in understanding the experiences of YP with YJ-involvement whilst still attending mainstream and alternative provisions. This chapter reports an empirical project involving three YP with YJ-involvement. A narrative inquiry of their experiences of belonging within the school community is detailed through semi-structured interviews, exploring positive experiences, hindering factors, and the YP's hopes for change. Findings are discussed in relation to relevant existing literature. These

findings have implications for educationalists, including Educational Psychologists.

Chapter 4

This chapter provides a reflective commentary detailing my professional and academic learning throughout this research project. The implications for future research and in my practice are also discussed.

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Chapter 1. What do we know about supporting youth-justice involved young people's experiences of belonging in their school communities?

Abstract

This chapter outlines a qualitative systematic literature review (SLR) in the form of a meta-ethnography, informed by narrative principles. The question: 'What do we know about supporting youth-justice involved young people's experiences of belonging in their school communities?' is explored. Five qualitative papers are reviewed and synthesised to create a model aiming to support understanding about the experiences of young people (YP) involved with the youth justice system (YJS). This meta-ethnography considers how narratives in wider societal systems inform and contribute to dominant systems around YP, such as education. Several potential constraining factors are identified. These constraints seemingly impact on YP's identity, agency, relationships with others, and engagement in education.

Whilst the number of YP in custody has reportedly reduced in England, hundreds of YP remain in the YJS (Department for Education, 2019; Harris & Goodfellow, 2021). Many YP in the YJS have experienced educational exclusions and report feeling stereotyped by labels like 'young offender' (Case et al., 2020; Children's Commissioner, 2020). Societal narratives about YJ-involved YP, reproduced through labels, are considered to marginalise and 'other' YP (Case et al., 2020; Paterson-Young et al., 2021). Case et al. (2020) determined these narratives can prevent alternative understandings of how to support YJ-involved YP.

The findings of this qualitative SLR offer a new perspective on existing research. This review concludes that dominant societal narratives about YJ, punitive approaches and punishment appear to impact on YP's feelings of belonging within their school communities. The findings exploring YJ-involved YP's sense of belonging aim to inform educational professional's approaches to working with YP who are at risk of or involved with the YJS. Further, this SLR identifies further areas for research.

1.1 Introduction and rationale

1.1.1 Youth justice in the current UK context

Despite a reported 20% decline of YP in custody in 2019 over the previous decade, hundreds of YP remain in the YJS in England, as numbers of YP on remand increased during the COVID-19 pandemic (Department for Education, 2019; Harris & Goodfellow, 2021). YJ-involvement is perceived to be influenced by psycho-social and emotional factors related to family, community, school and social inclusion (Haines & Case, 2015). This indicates that systems around YP, including the school community, contribute to YJ-involved YP's outcomes. Austerity and rising child poverty in England, amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, have reportedly compounded social vulnerabilities including lower socioeconomic status and family breakdown, coinciding with factors theorised to influence YP's YJ-involvement (Harris & Goodfellow, 2021; Shafi, 2019). Societal inequalities, like poverty, are considered to be reinforced through dominant societal narratives about social expectations, criminalising YP who do not fulfil these expectations through risk narratives, as opposed to recognising a need for welfare support (Muncie, 2005). Rising levels of austerity and vulnerability have been theorised to predict a future increase of YP with YJ-involvement (Harris & Goodfellow, 2021). This highlights the importance of developing a greater understanding about how to support YJ-involved YP in their communities, including in education.

1.1.2 Educational engagement and agency

Alongside socioeconomic status, educational engagement is considered influential for YP's later outcomes (Symonds et al., 2023). Educational engagement is considered to relate to YP's perception of their school climate, relationships with the school community, offending behaviour, and community and family socioeconomic status (Boxford, 2006). YJ-involved YP are believed to have experienced continuous educational disengagement, reportedly leading to YP leaving school and engaging in offending behaviours (Hayden, 2008; Little, 2015). Whilst prominent in the literature, the relationship between educational disengagement and YJ-involvement is not considered causal (Hirschfield & Gasper, 2011). This indicates gaining an understanding of educational engagement, alongside other factors, may provide an insight into supporting YJ-involved YP's outcomes.

Educational engagement is described as YP's involvement, motivation, and commitment to learning and working towards academic and later goals (Ryan, 2019). Engagement is deemed to comprise of behavioural, emotional, and cognitive elements (Fredricks et al., 2004), with agency proposed as a fourth element (Reeve & Tseng, 2011). Agency has been conceptualised as the process whereby YP endeavour to develop, enhance and personalise the environments and means they learn in (Reeve, 2012). Despite being present in educational literature, the concept of agency is considered elusive (Mameli et al., 2019). Narrative approaches position agency centrally in narrative therapy for empowering individuals and promoting positive outcomes (Denborough, 2019; White, 2007). However, critiques of the individualist nature of agency argue personal agency negates the influence of wider systems and power, perceived to constrain stories and experiences of agency (Guilfoyle, 2012). This suggests theories of personal agency place responsibility on individual YP without recognising the impact of wider systemic constraints, like education, on YP's experiences. This SLR endeavours to conceptualise engagement and agency and their relationship with wider systems through YP's stories.

1.1.3 YJ and education

Government reviews of the YJS in England and Wales position educational engagement centrally for preventing offending (Taylor, 2016). However, understanding how to support YP deemed at risk of offending in secondary schools is considered challenging due to limited evidence (Hayden, 2008). 'Inclusive' schools are deemed to protect against future offending behaviour (Hayden, 2008). Yet, approximately 85% of YP within Youth Offending Institutions (YOI) have experienced school exclusion (Children's Commissioner, 2020), suggesting YJ-involved YP experience high levels of exclusions in educational settings in England. Narrative approaches propose dominant narratives about school exclusion often blame individual attributes and parent-child relationships, invalidating the impact of wider systems (Holt, 2011). Dominant individualistic narratives may be exacerbated through school policies like Behaviour in Schools (Department for Education, 2022). This suggests YJ-involved YP can face systemic barriers, informed by dominant narratives, when accessing and engaging with education in their school communities. Berkowitz et al. (2016) theorise relationships with teachers, parents,

peers and the school climate contribute to educational engagement. This further indicates wider systems of education contribute to YJ-involved YP's educational engagement. This emphasises the importance of further understanding how systemic factors influence YP's experiences to inform ways of supporting YJ-involved YP in their school communities.

1.1.4 The impact of COVID-19

Recent school closures and public service changes during COVID-19 reportedly impacted YJ-involved YP's visibility, engagement with education, support, and safety (Harris & Goodfellow, 2021). Youth Offending Team staff were identified as critical workers by the government, however, YJ-involved YP were not considered vulnerable (Harris & Goodfellow, 2021). Subsequently, many YJ-involved YP's needs seemingly became increasingly acute as their school community engagement reportedly lessened (Harris & Goodfellow, 2021). Digital divides seemingly further excluded vulnerable or YJ-involved YP due to limited access to digital technologies, as digital pedagogies were introduced by settings (Harris & Goodfellow, 2021; OECD, 2020). School closures reportedly impacted on YP's feelings of belonging in schools and their feelings of self-worth (OECD, 2020). Education is determined to be a preventative and effective intervention for YJ-involved YP, or those considered at risk. However, barriers preventing YP from accessing, engaging with, and experiencing a sense of belonging within their school communities have seemingly been exacerbated by the pandemic. This further highlights the importance of understanding how best to support YJ-involved YP's educational engagement.

1.1.5 Feelings of belonging

Wider systems around YP, including a sense of school belonging, are deemed to promote YP's outcomes (Berkowitz et al., 2016). Terminology describing school belonging varies (for example, connectedness, relatedness and belonging), however consistencies amongst definitions have been recognised (Slaten et al., 2016). Belonging has been considered a fundamental evolutionary human need that can include forming and maintaining reciprocal interpersonal relationships for positive wellbeing, incorporating a need for regular personal contact with others and stable relationships (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Within education, Willms (2000)

considered belonging to include school attachment, founded by feelings of acceptance and being valued by others in the school community, including peers. This SLR will use Goodenow and Grady (1993) definition of school belonging due to its wide use in relevant literature, including with secondary settings (Slaten et al., 2016). Goodenow and Grady (1993) defined school belonging as feeling personally accepted, respected, included and supported. In addition to placing value on relationships with others in the school environment, Goodenow and Grady (1993)'s definition recognises the multifaceted nature of school belonging (Allen et al., 2018).

Belonging is perceived fundamental for development, engagement and participation in school (Osterman, 2000). For YP at risk of offending, feelings of safety, security and belonging are considered vital factors for positive outcomes (Paterson-Young et al., 2021). Many YJ-involved YP experience a sense of 'not belonging' or being 'othered' by their communities, despite differing journeys within the YJS (Paterson-Young et al., 2021). Labels that 'other' and 'outsider' YP can allow for the repetition of interventions informed by risk perspectives that reinforce offender identities (Goldson, 2010). The reported impact of school closures on YP's self-worth and sense of belonging in their school communities (OECD, 2020) further emphasise the importance of supporting YP's sense of belonging in the current context. Haines and Case (2015) argued societal changes are needed to promote feelings of belonging for YJ-involved YP. However, understanding the construction of belonging in research and real-life work applications in education is considered necessary (Allen & Bowles, 2013). Inconsistencies and differences amongst YP about what works and what hinders school belonging are perceived to present barriers for developing this understanding (Allen et al., 2018). This highlights the importance of understanding individual experience when endeavouring to support YP's belonging in the school community and promote educational engagement.

1.1.6 Stories about YP

Narrative approaches theorise dominant narratives in society develop as a form of meaning-making, shaped by power and socio-cultural history (Besley, 2002; Hammack, 2008). Dominant narratives can inform social structures in society; perceived to constrain individuals' power (Hammack, 2008). The internalisation of

social interactions and processes, anchored in socio-political and cultural beliefs, norms and ideology (Hammack, 2008) are deemed to shape individuals' personal narratives, influencing identity formation. Identity formation is considered an adaptation to specific developmental contexts (Baumeister & Muraven, 1996). Developing a personal narrative and identity can help individuals make sense of their socio-cultural positioning (Hammack, 2008).

Societal narratives about YJ-involved YP are considered to marginalise their voices and experiences (Case et al., 2020). Stigmatising labels and narratives about YJ-involved YP are theorised to warrant punitive responses to YJ-involved YP (Arthur, 2016). Such narratives can inform risk-focused, reductionist policies applied in education and public services, further marginalising YJ-involved YP and preventing alternative understandings of childhood and the need to support YJ-involved YP (Case et al., 2020; Case & Hazel, 2020). Narratives that 'other' YP seemingly inhibit YP's belonging, promoting a need for alternative approaches. Narrative principles and restorative approaches may provide alternative perspectives that provide opportunities for YP to participate in their communities and experience belonging. However, understanding YJ-involved YP's experiences is considered crucial for informing such developments (Haines & Case, 2015).

1.1.7 YP's voices

Foucauldian theories of power and knowledge theorise exploring individual stories can re-negotiate power in existing relationships, as society privileges certain types of knowledge as more meaningful than others (Bevir, 1999). Case et al. (2020) argued the adulterisation of YJ-involved YP and adult-centric processes of the YJS have marginalised YP's voices and their contribution to the YJS processes, including education, reinforcing partial understanding of YJ-involved YP's experiences. Case et al. (2020) presented a need for trust to be built between YJ-involved YP and the adults who work to support them.

When considering the adult-defined concept of engagement, Case and Hazel (2020) called for engagement to be understood and practised from YP's perspective as a valid actor, not a passive recipient. Case and Hazel (2020) argued previous attempts

at exploring YJ-involved YP's voices have been tokenistic, and more meaningful participation of YJ-involved YP is necessary to promote educational engagement. Further, despite debate about the individualistic nature of personal agency, Guilfoyle (2012) highlighted how agency can be reconstructed and reauthored through conversation. This suggests listening to YP's experiences may facilitate alternative understandings and challenge existing assumptions and dominant societal narratives that inform YP's existing educational support.

This review aims to explore existing literature about YJ-involved YP's experiences of education, and feelings of belonging in their school community, to further understanding about how YP can be supported as part of their school communities.

1.1.8 Definitions of key concepts

Definitions of key concepts used throughout this chapter are outlined in table 1 below.

Concept	Definition
Belonging	Please see above section for a discussion of belonging literature. This SLR uses the following definition of belonging. Belonging can be defined as feeling personally accepted, respected, included and supported (Goodenow & Grady, 1993). Belonging is perceived to be fundamental for development, engagement and participation in school (Osterman, 2000).
School community	This SLR uses the following definition of school community. McMillan and Chavis (1986) suggested community has two functions: 1) a territorial or geographical unit or 2) relational function that describes the quality of character of human relationships. Further, they suggested community consists of four elements: 1. Membership 2. Influence 3. Integration and fulfilment of needs 4. A shared emotional connection. Other definitions of school community explored in the literature include the following: Furman (1998) suggested community is not

	present until members within the perceived community feel belonging, trust in others and safety. Gibson and Blandford (2005) described school as a community within a community. Members of the school are members of their local community reflecting its beliefs and values. This is shown through the actions, behaviour and attitudes of pupils, teachers, parents and governors. A further definition is outlined by Redding (1998) who determined school community to be inclusive of families and students and some element of the community. School community operates on shared values, trust, expectations and obligations rather than tasks, rules and hierarchies. The definition described by McMillan and Chavis (1986) was deemed appropriate for this SLR due to the recognition of multiple elements of school community (geographical and relational). Although the other outlined definitions also touch on these elements, McMillan and Chavis (1986) highlighted inter-relational factors which aligned with definitions of belonging discussing belonging and community as a shared and reciprocal process.
Youth-justice involved children and young people	YP with YJ-involvement are reportedly often 'othered' and stereotyped by labels like 'young offender' (YO) and 'juvenile offender' (Case et al., 2020). This SLR refers to YJ-involved YP or YP with YJ-involvement. These terms refer to children and young people who are between the ages of 10-17 years old who have committed a crime (Crime Prosecution Service, 2023).

Table 1: Definitions of key concepts

1.2 Method

The research question 'What do we know about supporting YJ-involved YP's experiences of belonging in their school communities?' informed the method of this SLR. Due to the subjective nature of exploring how YJ-involved YP view their social world, a qualitative approach was taken (Atkins et al., 2008).

After reviewing different approaches, the qualitative method of meta-ethnography was selected (Noblit & Hare, 1988). Meta-ethnography enables the re-interpretation

of data from multiple studies, rather than solely summarising findings (Atkins et al., 2008). Meta-ethnography allows for a new insight or interpretation from the researcher that was not perhaps present in the studies themselves. This approach aims to translate different studies into one another, promoting a deeper understanding and combination of concepts and metaphors across the studies (Britten et al., 2002). Meta-ethnography is considered to be a well-established model of synthesis (Britten et al., 2002). Noblit and Hare (1988) propose seven steps (see table 2). This review draws on stages one to five to demonstrate the method and the remaining stages (six and seven) in the findings section.

1. Getting started
2. Deciding what is relevant to the initial interest
3. Reading the studies
4. Determining how the studies are related
5. Translating the studies into one another
6. Synthesising translations
7. Expressing the synthesis

Table 2: Meta-ethnography seven steps (Noblit & Hare, 1988)

1.2.1 Stages 1 and 2: Getting started and deciding what is relevant

To begin sourcing appropriate studies and to refine the review question, scoping searches were performed in December 2021. Key terminology from these searches aided the development of the search strategy.

To explore the range of studies available, five databases were searched using the search terms and related synonyms demonstrated in Appendix A. A number of search terms were initially trialled before being refined. The following databases were searched between November 2021 and January 2022: PsycInfo, British Education Index, Child Development and Adolescent Studies, Scopus and ERIC.

The initial searches retrieved 933 papers once duplicates and books were removed. To identify the most relevant papers for answering the research question, inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed (Table 3).

Inclusion criteria	**Exclusion criteria**
School/education	Re-integration into communities
Case studies	Quantitative
Children and young people's views	Mixed methods
Qualitative	Intervention studies
UK	Pre 2008
Experiences and perceptions of education/school	Meta-analyses
2008-2021 *(following key UK legislation aiming to reduce first-time entrants into the YJS and interventions introduced with emphasis on supporting YP's welfare)*	Theses/non peer reviewed articles
Peer reviewed	

Table 3: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Using this criteria, the 933 retrieved papers were screened to identify five final full text papers. The screening process is demonstrated in figure 1 below. Five papers met the above inclusion criteria and were selected to be analysed.

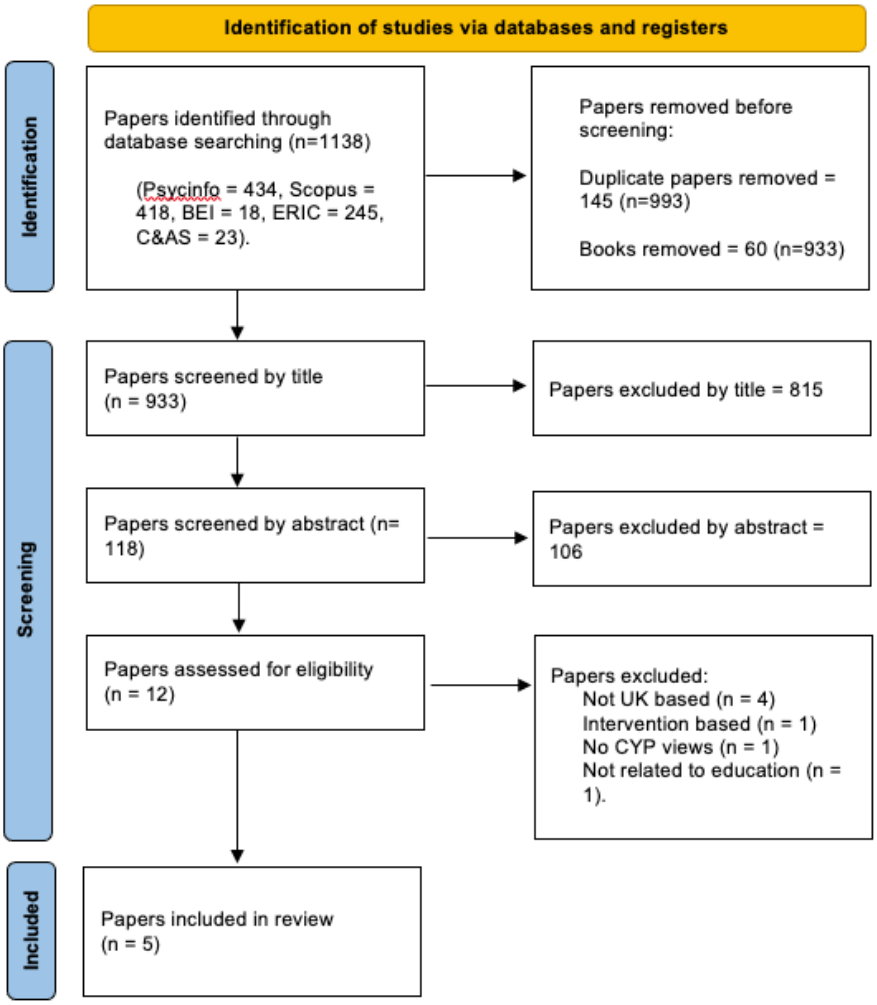

Figure 1: PRISMA table

1.2.3 Stages 3 and 4: Reading the studies and deciding how they are related

The five papers were read in depth and key information about design, participants, setting, and analysis were recorded (see table 4). Following data extraction, the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (2018) (CASP) quality appraisal tool was applied to the data. Please see Appendix B for the assessment. The appropriateness of quality appraisal for qualitative research has been debated. Concepts of measuring quality are widely associated with quantitative principles and opposing qualitative paradigms, suggesting shared realities are not present. However, Mays and Pope (2000) suggested it is possible for qualitative research to be quality assessed through systematic, self-conscious research design, data collection, interpretation and communication. For this purpose, CASP was selected after assessing the suitability of other available quality tools.

Following the quality appraisal, the papers were re-read, and key concepts recorded. This included original quotes from the participants from each study, defined as first order constructs. The researcher's interpretations were then recorded as second order constructs, as these are also considered to be relevant data (Schutz, 1962). First order constructs have been influenced by the original researcher's perspective as they are selected from the original data-set by the researcher, before being interpreted by the researcher, and interpreted again, alongside the second order constructs, during the meta-ethnography (Atkins et al., 2008). This led to the development of third order constructs. It is important to acknowledge this meta-ethnography considers the influence and subjectivity of the researcher and does not consider this process to perfectly represent the original data gathered. Instead, this meta-ethnography aims to offer a perspective of existing literature on YJ-involved YP's experiences.

Authors	Title	Design & Research question(s) (RQ)/Aim(s)	Participants/Setting	Analysis
Andow (2020)	The institutional shaping of children's educational experiences in secure custody: A case study of a secure children's home in England	Ethnographic case study RQ – How do staff and children experience life inside a secure children's home in England?	Secure children's home 11 children 24 staff	Repeated thematic coding & research diary
Heath and Priest (2016)	Examining experiences of transition, instability and coping for young offenders in the community: A qualitative analysis	Semi structured interviews RQ – How do young offenders in the community make sense of life experiences such as transition and instability, and how does this impact on coping behaviours?	FCAMHS 4 CYP on community order under supervision of YOTs	Inductive thematic analysis
Hopkins et al. (2016)	Young offenders' perspectives on their literacy and communication skills	Semi-structured interviews RQ1 - How satisfied are YOs with their own literacy and communication abilities, and how important do they perceive these skills to be for the YJS?	31 YOs on court orders 26 individual interviews 1 focus group (3 male YOs) 1 Paired interview (2 female YOs) Conducted at YJS centre	Framework analysis

		RQ 2 - How much do YOs believe they understand others in their communicative interactions? RQ 3 - How satisfied are YOs with their communicative interactions with others, and how is this seen to influence conflict at home, school and in the YJS?		
Little (2015)	Putting education at the heart of custody? The views of children on education in a young offender institution	3 stages: questionnaire. 5 discussion groups and 1:1 interviews Aim – to find out what children's experiences of education in a YOI were like from children themselves.	47 questionnaire responders 5 discussion groups – 24 participants 4 interviews Total – 75 children	Not stated
Shafi (2019)	The complexity of disengagement with education and learning: A case study of young offenders in a secure custodial setting in England	Qualitative ethnographic study Semi structured interviews – Authentic inquiry Aim – Exploring the nature of YP's disengagement in secure custodial settings to further theoretical understandings for re-engaging them during their custodial sentences.	16 YOs in one secure children's home in England 5 in depth case studies with teachers and care staff 24 participants in total including staff	Interviews - Thematic analysis

Table 4: Key details of the five final papers

1.3 Findings

1.3.1 Stages 5 and 6: Translating the studies into each other and synthesising the translations

Themes were identified across all five papers by drawing together recurring concepts (Noblit & Hare, 1988). In addition to reciprocal themes, some refutational themes were identified that provided contrasting perspectives or concepts. This process was iterative as the different themes were reviewed in relation to their context and ongoing interpretation. Several amendments were made throughout the previous stage and this stage to reflect my developing conceptualisation of the first and second order constructs. By aggregating the constructs and developing themes, several links were identified between them. Reciprocal and refutational themes are presented in Appendix C.

Identifying reciprocal and refutational translations led to my personal interpretation of the first and second order constructs. As I reviewed the themes, I began synthesising my understanding of the papers to create a line of argument towards answering the research question: ‘What do we know about YJ-involved YP’s experiences of belonging in their school communities?’. The interpretation and synthesis process is detailed in table 5.

Construct	Synthesis	Re-interpretation
Identity Confidence Emotional needs	Stories about self	Stories about self as agentic
Agency/choice Engagement/motivation Goals/hopes	Agency/choice	
Understanding communication Expressing communication Resolving conflict Relatedness/connectedness	Relating to others	
Managing others' perspectives/feeling judged Power imbalances Feeing heard/understood	Others' stories	Stories held by others
Teacher relationships Peer relationships Trust and loyalty Stability of relationships	Inter-relatedness	

Exclusion Systemic constraints of education Access to quality education Learning environment Support available	Accessing education and appropriate support	Systems, tools and processes
Basic needs Uncertainty of living situation Safety	Community	

Table 5. Interpretation and synthesis process

1.3.2 Stage 7: Expressing the synthesis

Following the synthesis process, I developed a model to demonstrate my interpretation and express the line of argument in a visual form (Figure 2). The three key constructs from the meta-ethnography: stories about self as agentic, stories others' hold, and systems, tools and processes are demonstrated in the figure below. These themes can be considered by drawing on Bronfenbrenner (1974) framework addressing the importance of YP's environments on their experiences. For example, the microsystem which incorporates YP's day to day interactions, and the mesosystem incorporating the interactions around the YP that do not directly involve them. These are within macrosystems that incorporate belief systems and cultural and institutional narratives and stories, for example public policies. Each of the constructs are interactional and demonstrate the constraining role of the outer two circles on YP's stories about themselves as being agentic in their own lives.

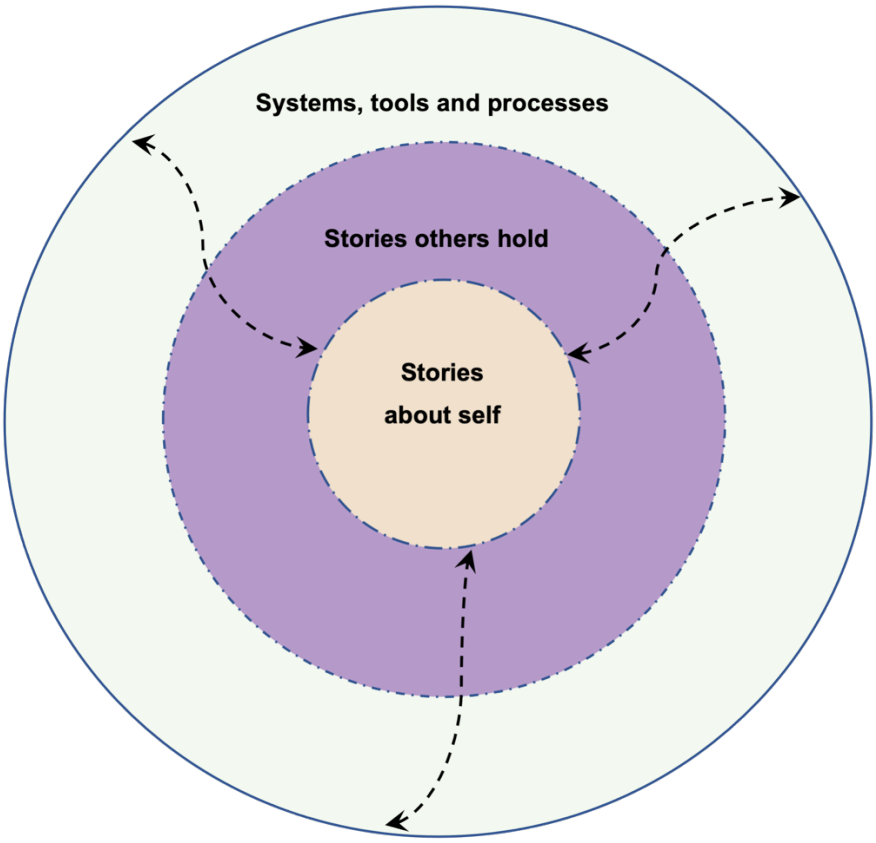

Figure 2: A model of YP's experiences of education

1.4 Discussion

The findings of this meta-ethnography suggest YP's stories about themselves as agentic are influenced by the stories others hold about them and systems, tools and processes in society. For example, relationships and support from teachers, communities, professional services and the YJS. The dynamic relationship indicates bidirectionality, underpinned by narratives about YJ-involved YP in wider society. Understanding how systems can constrain YJ-involved YP can inform changes in wider systems. With the aim of providing better support, promoting feelings of belonging and fostering engagement with learning; promoting positive outcomes and opportunities for YP. Each theme will now be discussed in relation to relevant existing literature.

1.4.1 Stories about self as agentic

The theme stories about self as agentic incorporated sub-themes stories about self, agency and choice, and relating to others. YP described limited confidence in their communication skills and relating to others. YP expressed difficulties knowing what to say to peers and challenges resolving conflict, despite some reporting understanding how to. Additionally, YP described low confidence in their learning abilities. For example, in Hopkins et al. (2016) study, a YP stated "*…all the people not clever… like all the people same as me*." These findings correspond with a body of literature reporting a high prevalence of language, communication and learning needs amongst YJ-involved YP (Anderson et al., 2016; Chitsabesan & Hughes, 2016).

Aligning with prior research identifying shared experiences of emotional and psychological needs in YJ-involved YP populations (Chitsabesan & Hughes, 2016), YP discussed their emotional needs. For example, "*I'm an angry person…but I have been since I was young*"; "*I suffer from attachment disorder…"* (Heath & Priest, 2016). Pathologising language positioned these needs as central to YP's identity. Identity tensions between being a 'young offender' and YP's personal values presented in YP's stories, were seemingly influenced by others' perspectives. Eisen and VanderPyl (2021) theorised personal development interventions for YJ-involved YP inform narratives YP internalise about needing to be 'fixed', rather than YP

whose agency is constrained by societal systems and recognising the role of building external social supports. These narratives are deemed to exacerbate existing barriers, alongside mistrust and fear (Crewe et al., 2013). Through a narrative lens, YPs' stories demonstrate how societal narratives may influence personal narratives and identity formation. Further impacting on YP's stories of agency over their identity, self-confidence, and throughout their previous life experiences.

Self Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2000) claims autonomy, competence and relatedness contribute to YP's agency and development. Seemingly, this corresponds with YPs' stories about themselves in this meta-ethnography. YP expressed low confidence in their learning and communication skills (competence) which seemingly impacted on their relationships with others (relatedness). Limited autonomy was described across different contexts, including educational choices related to future hopes and goals, and about their community experiences. Age and development seemed to influence YP's perspectives on previous experiences, as YP described limited choice in many former experiences.

Despite detailing limited autonomy in past experiences, YP maintained future hopes and dreams. Most aligned with typical societal expectations including getting a job or qualifications. "*I'm here to get help and move on with my life*" (Andow, 2020) and "*I start college after next week.. it's just so I can get my certificate and then get a job.*" (Heath & Priest, 2016). However, one YP identified entering adult prison as her goal (Andow, 2020). Mameli et al. (2019) claimed agency is a catalyst for envisioning a future and having self-efficacy to achieve identified goals. However, individualised perspectives of agency may negate to recognise the limitations of agency as a concept (Hammack, 2008).

The YP's stories of future hopes aligned with previous YJ-involved YP's stories that seemed influenced by dominant ideologies about gaining qualifications and securing a typical 'middle-class' job (Eisen & VanderPyl, 2021). YP positioned this as though they would now become a 'good person'. This emphasises the presence of responsibility within their own narratives impacted by the influence of dominant individualism narratives in wider society. However, the YP in this SLR identified needing appropriate support to progress towards these goals, indicating awareness

about the importance of wider support systems and appropriate resources. As YJ-involved YP have often experienced multiple social disadvantages (Shafi, 2019), a more prominent need for equitable support to develop feelings of agency and self-efficacy may be argued.

Beliefs centred in dominant narratives seemingly construct positive societal members as educated and employed YP who contribute to society, positioning YP with YJ-involvement as making active individual choices not to engage in expected behaviour (Eisen & VanderPyl, 2021). Such beliefs overlook the perceived influence and relationship between societal narratives, YP's narratives and the impact on sense of belonging and agency. These will be discussed in the next sub-section.

1.4.2 Stories held by others

Stories held by others included the sub-themes others' stories and inter-relatedness. Others' stories and YP's experiences of inter-relatedness impacted on stories of belonging in their school communities. Belonging, when conceptualised as active involvement in building relationships and organisations, is considered crucial for healthy development, exceeding common conceptualisations of 'inclusion' as simply accessing school (Jagers et al., 2019). Case and Hazel (2020) argued risk paradigms in education encourage deficit-led, stigmatising perceptions of YP that believe YP need adults to fix them, further rejecting YJ-involved YP's agency, strengths and capacity to have an equitable voice. This reinforces the impact of external stigmatising narratives on YP's stories, preventing their active involvement and sense of belonging in education.

YP reported feeling misunderstood and judged by others, particularly by teachers and professionals. These feelings and experiences seemingly impacted YP's stories of agency: "*I've proved most people wrong because they expected me to be in prison by now*" (Heath & Priest, 2016); "*They just automatically think you're up to no good*." (Hopkins et al., 2016). Mistrust between adults and YP was implied, aligning with theories about the adulterisation of YJ-involved YP and stigmatising perceptions on YP's identity and experiences (Case et al., 2020; Case & Hazel, 2020). Student perception of educational mistrust or injustice are considered to mediate student-

teacher relationships and influence educational engagement (Chory-Assad et al., 2014; Mameli et al., 2019). Molinari and Mameli (2017) deemed justice to be an additional self-determination factor for YP. Despite reported limited empirical evidence of this relationship, this corresponds with YP's stories of feeling judged by others' assumptions, impacting on feelings of relatedness and belonging in school, alongside reported experiences of limited agency.

YP considered clear explanations, feeling listened to and positive body language constituted positive teacher relationships: "*They explain if you know what I mean? They explain what's what.*"; "*And she were smiling at me all the time, like she really really listened to me.*" (Hopkins et al., 2016). Positive student perceptions of teacher support can promote educational engagement and self-determination (Skinner et al., 2008). Although conducted with a non-YJ population, the principles of supporting self-determination appear relevant based on the YP's stories. This emphasises how understanding YJ-involved YP's experiences and perspectives of relationships in school can promote an environment conducive to developing a sense of belonging through adult approaches.

Peer relationships encapsulated both positive and negative influence on behaviour in school and risk-taking behaviour. "*I made quite a lot of friends there. Some good, some not so good*." (Heath & Priest, 2016). Family relationships varied across YP but were largely characterised by trust, loyalty and stability. YP reported complex, fluctuating relationships with family members engaging in risk-taking behaviours that impacted the YP. Some YP detailed feeling understood within their family relationships. For example, "*Like your parents know what you're like, know what you can do, know what you're capable of, so they talk to you like how you are*." (Hopkins et al., 2016). Feeling received by others seemed to promote feelings of acceptance and a sense of belonging. Yet, many of the YP experienced complex relationships.

Eisen and VanderPyl (2021) suggested YP with YJ-involvement may experience double consciousness as they perceive themselves from their own marginalised perspective and from others' dominant narratives. Feagin (2013) regarded how dominant narratives can become central to how marginalised groups view themselves. Giving rise to the internalisation of stigmatising narratives, impacting on

sense of self and self-worth, and posing difficulties when challenging dominant narratives (Eisen & VanderPyl, 2021). Dominant narratives are deemed powerful, influencing YJ-involved YP's identity processes by reinforcing symbolic societal boundaries that marginalise these YP (Eisen & VanderPyl, 2021). When considering identity within a community, LaFramboise et al. (1993) theorised individuals need a developed personal identity, to effectively communicate in a shared language, maintain active relationships with others in that group and negotiate organisational community structures. Although dated and concerned with racial diversity, these findings may support the YP's stories about the impact of others' stories on their identities, confidence communicating and relating to others, and challenges navigating the systems around them, as discussed in the next section.

1.4.3 Systems, tools and processes

This theme included accessing education and appropriate support, and community. Educational exclusion and segregation were common amongst YP: "*I don't go to school on the out. Nowhere will take me...*" (Andow, 2020); and experiencing multiple educational changes and fluctuating attendance, including during primary education: "*Got excluded most months from primary school . . . I changed school about 10 times.*" (Heath & Priest, 2016). Paton et al. (2009) also identified many YJ-involved YP experienced multiple primary school transitions. Multiple transitions are associated with significant losses impacting on YP's relationships, including trust (Unrau et al., 2008). Secondary school transitions were deemed a precursor to many challenges YJ-involved YP experienced (Paton et al., 2009). Further, YP expressed feeling 'outsidered' and 'othered' by education, aligning with prior findings by Paterson-Young et al. (2021) and Case et al. (2020) who ascertained many YJ-involved YP experience a lack of belonging in their communities. Additionally, Taflan and Jalil (2020) identified almost one fifth of YP in UK custody reported receiving no education due to exclusions or disengagement. Rogers and Way (2021) considered how 'resistance' can be an appropriate response to experiencing stereotyping and oppression. Considering the high proportion of YJ-involved YP deemed disengaged with education, non-attendance may be a form of 'resistance' in response to feeling othered and outsidered in their school communities. Further reinforcing the need for systems, tools and processes to promote a sense of belonging for YP in their

communities. However, the YP in this meta-ethnography reported challenges feeling supported in education.

Individualised support in school and from professionals underpinned some of the YP's stories, aligning with previous research promoting the importance of personalised learning approaches (Knight, 2014). However, other YP argued for universal, transparent and consistent support, indicating mistrust between YP and adults. Inappropriate educational placements and learning environments impacted on YP's wellbeing, limiting access to goal-oriented opportunities. YP implied feeling constrained by the educational provision's ability to support their needs and develop their autonomy and competence. HMI Prisons and HMI Probation (2019) reported education in custody focuses on managing YP's immediate custodial needs and their previously assessed difficulties, rather than focusing on future needs and wellbeing. Additionally, not consulting YP when planning support is perceived to lead to inappropriate education when developing education plans and targets (Cripps & Summerfield, 2012; Stephenson, 2017). Tensions between appropriate support and feelings of agency underpinned YP's stories. Some YP expressed high responsibility and low support, contrasting with narratives of inflexible support and limited agency. Case and Hazel (2020) asserted risk-based YJS can disengage YP for ignoring their developmental capabilities as children with needs and agency over their lives. Haines and Case (2015) argued, therefore, the responsibility does not lie with YP to improve their needs, both educationally and otherwise, and an alternative view is needed. This reinforces adults' role in promoting autonomy and supporting YP to meet their goals.

In the community, YP experienced transient living situations and uncertainty about their basic needs being met, including food and safety. Some YP talked about living in communities where community norms were misaligned with their expectations. Paton et al. (2009) also identified cycles of instability, multiple transitions and uncertainty in home situations were common amongst YJ-involved YP. The pandemic is considered to have increased YP's experiences such challenges (Harris & Goodfellow, 2021), highlighting the importance of YJ-involved YP receiving support to meet their needs. Further, reinforcing tensions between YP's values and identity and community norms and expectations.

The role of systems, processes and tools presented by the YP demonstrated how YP felt constrained and with a range of unmet needs. Paton et al. (2009) reported high prevalence of trauma and emotional needs amongst YJ-involved YP, and argued for YP's voices to be heard when developing appropriate services to meet their needs. Jagers et al. (2019) explored the role of transformative social and emotional learning for YP with educational inequity, to address power imbalances, privilege and discrimination, promote social justice and self-determination. Jagers et al. (2019) identified how social identities can be informed by social advantage and disadvantage and in or out group. As high numbers of YJ-involved YP experienced social disadvantage, it could be suggested social and emotional learning, including promoting relationships and belonging, could be valuable in supporting YJ-involved YP to feel part of their school communities.

1.5 Conclusion and implications

This meta-ethnography presents the argument that YJ-involved YP are constrained by societal narratives that inform systems intended to support them. This impacts on YP's stories about themselves as agentic, the stories other people hold, and the systems, tools and processes that exist through educational settings, professional services and communities. Underlying this, are stories of relationships and experiences of being outsidered and othered. Understanding YJ-involved YP's experiences participating in their school community through this meta-ethnography has reinforced how societal narratives and the weight of others' stories can impact on YP's identities, experiences of belonging and subsequent educational engagement.

Implications for future research and professional practice are highlighted. EPs are considered well placed to promote social justice (Power, 2008) through their work with educational settings, advocating for equity, fairness and promoting non-discriminatory practice in schools (BPS, 2018; HCPC, 2015). EPs can work with YP, families, school staff and other services to promote alternative understandings of experience, challenging dominant societal narratives through restorative approaches promoting restoration of relationships and community responsibility (McCluskey,

2018). As current approaches to support YP are deemed to be created by adults for adults (Case et al., 2020), understanding individual conceptualisations of belonging, school community and YJ may inform appropriate support for YJ-involved YP. This indicates the importance of further initiatives that champion YJ-involved YP's voices to gain a further understanding of how to promote a sense of belonging for YJ-involved YP in their school communities in EP practice. The SLR identified gaps in the literature exploring YJ-involved YP's experiences attending educational settings within their school communities. EPs work mostly in this context, highlighting a need for further understanding of this populations' experiences to inform EP practice.

Chapter 2. An ethical and methodological critique

2.1 Introduction

This chapter intends to bridge the gap between the SLR (chapter 1) and empirical research project (chapter 3). Methodological and ethical considerations of the research design and methods employed in the empirical project will be explored. My ontological and epistemological positioning and role as a researcher, which have informed the ethical and methodological decisions made throughout this thesis, will also be discussed.

2.2 Summary of SLR

The meta-ethnography that synthesised the findings of 5 papers, detailed in chapter 1, endeavoured to provide an answer to the question "What do we know about supporting YJ-involved YP's experiences of belonging in the school community?". The meta-ethnography findings informed a line of argument describing the constraining role of systems, tools and processes that intend to support YP with YJ-involvement, and the impact of societal narratives on YP's stories about agency in their lives, and feelings of belonging in their school community.

2.2.1 From meta-ethnography to empirical research

The findings in chapter 1 identified an under-researched area: YJ-involved YP's experiences of belonging in their school communities. Previous research in England focused on YP with YJ-involvement's experiences of the YJ system itself, YP's perceptions of their communication skills, and experiences of education within court-ordered placements (Andow, 2020; Heath & Priest, 2016; Hopkins et al., 2016; Little, 2015; Shafi, 2019). Understanding YJ-involved YP's experiences of education whilst attending educational settings within their school communities can inform an understanding of how professionals can support YP's experiences of belonging within their school communities and promote educational engagement.

To address the gaps in current research and prioritise YP's experiences and perceptions within educational and YJ systems, I decided to take a narrative approach to the empirical research through narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry

presents opportunities for marginalised YP to share their stories and, by recognising the impact of wider systems of YP's lives, it is considered a social justice practice (Caine et al., 2018). By allowing researchers to understand the meaning that others place on their experiences (Clandinin, 2006), narrative inquiry can enable a deeper understanding of their lived experiences.

The empirical project aims to provide this understanding by exploring the following research questions:

- What do belonging and school community mean to YP with YJ-involvement?
- What can support YP with YJ-involvement to feel included in their school communities?

2.3 Underpinning philosophical principles

Research questions and methodological decisions are perceived to be informed by the researcher's ontological and epistemological assumptions (Willig, 2013). Further, the reader's understanding of the researcher's ontological and epistemological positioning arguably enables an informed assessment of given methodology and research findings (Grix, 2002). Therefore, presenting a discussion of the underpinning philosophical principles of this research may help maintain coherence and consistency in this research. My decision-making was guided by a research paradigm related to my ontological beliefs (the nature of reality), epistemology (the nature of knowledge), methodology (how knowledge can be gained) and axiology (the ethical nature of knowledge). The present research was informed by an interpretivist paradigm, adopting an ontological and epistemological positioning of critical realism.

Whilst positivist paradigms consider phenomena to be measurable, supported by evidence and generalisable to wider populations (Hammersley, 2013; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), interpretive paradigms endeavour to understand the world of individual human experience (Cohen et al., 2018). Interpretivist researchers believe phenomena have many interpretations, rather than a singular measurable truth (Pham, 2018). Interpretivist perspectives privilege deeper understanding of human experiences of phenomena and their intricacy within a specific context, rather than generalisability across a population (Cresswell, 2007).

Critical realism recognises shared systems in society, for example education and YJS, whilst acknowledging multiple subjective views of shared realities (Larkin et al., 2006). As critical realism also values the individuality of human experience, it arguably can align with an interpretivist paradigm. A qualitative methodological approach was taken to answer the research questions through narrative inquiry, drawing on visual methods to support dialogue within the interview process.

2.3.1 Critical realism

Critical realism is theorised to connect and combine realist intentions, developing an understanding of happenings in the world, whilst acknowledging research may not directly provide knowledge of reality; rejecting the notion of a singular 'truth' (Danermark et al., 2019; Willig, 2013). Science is perceived as human activity, mediated by social power and language (Gorski, 2013), insinuating events in the world may be observable, yet knowledge about events is constructed. Thinking and feeling humans constitute a shared society and human interpretations of the world can be explored to provide insight into knowledge (Danermark et al., 2019). However, intentionally developed social structures and organisations can have unplanned effects that may not be evident to individuals involved (Gorski, 2013). This suggests multiple, differing, wide ranging and context-dependent realities can be constructed from observing the effects of such structures (Forbes & Wainwright, 2001). Yet, social entities and powers themselves may not be visible (Haigh et al., 2019).

The findings from the empirical project in chapter 3 do not assume to directly reflect reality for all YJ-involved YP. Critical realism perspectives suggest reality is stratified in three domains: empirical, actual and real (Haigh et al., 2019). The empirical domain represents actual events-effects observed or experienced with reference to the 'real' level, influenced by unseen and often invisible causal powers associated with socio-cultural entities (Haigh et al., 2019). Therefore, the findings intend to be interpreted alongside societal social and psychological factors, including societal narratives and underlying societal structures, which are believed to impact and influence YP's experiences (Willig, 2013).

Critical realism was deemed an appropriate and coherent approach in this research as individual experience is privileged and assumptions that one YJ-involved YP's experiences will apply to all YJ-involved YP are foregone. Critical realism allows for differences amongst YJ-involved YP's realities and experiences. Further, societal and cultural influences are recognised when attempting to ascertain an understanding of the world. As critical realism recognises the role of multiple, subjective realities, given meaning through interpretation, whilst acknowledging the transiency of knowledge and the openness of interpretation (Maxwell, 2012), it can provide a coherent paradigm to explore the experiences of YJ-involved YP. Therefore, these ideas guided choices about data collection and analysis in this research. By listening to individual stories, this empirical project aims to develop and interpret links across YP's experiences. This can support understanding about contributing factors when developing a sense of belonging in the school community for YJ-involved YP, whilst recognising each YP's unique experience and context.

2.4 Methodology

The research explores the lived experiences of YJ-involved YP within their school communities. Key methodological approaches include qualitative, narrative inquiry and visual methodology.

Qualitative methodology is considered interpretive and assumes researchers' own experiences, beliefs and biases become part of the research (Cresswell, 2009). Prior to deciding on a narrative approach to this research, several other approaches were considered including grounded theory, discourse analysis, thematic analysis and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Please see Appendix D for considerations about the appropriateness of each approach for answering the research questions.

Action research was also considered, as the ethical and philosophical underpinnings align with my own. For example, engaging with participants as co-researchers where their views inform research processes in an attempt to address power and inequalities in the research relationship (Burck, 2005). However, critical realist perspectives are deemed pragmatic in their approaches to methodology (Haigh et al., 2019). Due to pragmatism and ethical considerations when engaging in

recruitment processes with the identified population of YP, narrative inquiry was deemed appropriate by meeting the research aims whilst aligning with ethical values and research processes.

2.4.1 Narrative inquiry

Narrative inquiry aims to investigate how people construct and experience the world, assuming alternative perceptions exist and are valid. Narrative inquiry aims to explore lived (untold) stories, alongside stories that are actively shared (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Narratives can be explored temporally: across the past, present, future, emotions, and place (Clandinin, 2013). However, whilst multiple components contribute, certain components may have more influence within people's stories (Haydon et al., 2018). In the research presented in chapter 3, participants were encouraged to think about past, present and future. Differences amongst the participants were noticed when observing components that were emphasised or occurred more frequently. Narrative approaches also consider lived experiences alongside social relationships and views of societal morality, suggesting a fundamental societal definition of "good" that informs our understanding of ourselves and the world around us (Crossley, 2002). This indicates narrative inquiry may allow for deeper exploration of underlying societal narratives during interviews and analysis, that may be overlooked with alternative methodologies. Narrative inquiry allows researchers to understand the meaning that others place on their experiences (Clandinin, 2006). Therefore, surpassing solely listening to stories people describe, by attempting to understand and interpret the life experiences of the person through their story (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Narrative inquiry can be understood and implemented using a range of frameworks (Butina, 2015). This empirical project took a combined approach, drawing on Narrative Oriented Inquiry (NOI) (Hiles et al., 2009) and analysis of narratives (AoN) (Polkinghorne, 1995). These are discussed below and within chapter 3. Visual methods were also drawn on in the empirical study.

2.4.2 Visuals as a support

Narrative inquiry and analysis enable the use of visuals, as narrative can take on many forms, including visual, diary and observations (Butina, 2015). Research identifies a high prevalence of language and communication needs in YJ-involved populations (Anderson et al., 2016). To ethically provide appropriate mediation for YP, visual supports were developed. After debating the role of visuals within this empirical project, it was deemed they would be used solely as dialogic support and a means of promoting discussion. This included small cards consisting of a small icon image and the related word. The intention of the selected narrative approach was to be inductive, rather than deductive, and so caution was taken about leading YP with the visual support. However, the visuals were informed by existing research from the literature discussed in chapter 1 defining school community (Gibson & Blandford, 2005; Redding, 1998). Furthermore, prior to the visual supports being introduced, YP discussed different definitions of the key concepts, including developing their own conceptualisation of school community which further informed the individual use of the visual prompts for each participant. Please see Appendix E for copies of the visual supports used.

2.5 Narrative analysis

Narrative analysis can take different forms (Polkinghorne, 1995). The approach taken in this empirical project is informed by paradigmatic cognition and is described as analysis of narratives (AoN), rather than narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995). AoN aims to exceed the collection and construction of narratives by analysing narratives to develop themes, categories and theories (Sharp et al., 2019; Smith & Sparkes, 2006). In this research, stories were situated around constructs (school community and YJS) and conceptualisations (belonging, school community, youth justice), in relation to the research questions. Polkinghorne (1995) described the process as either inductive or deductive. Inductive discovers themes from within the stories whereas deductive examines themes against pre-existing concepts and frameworks (Berg, 2007). This research attempted to take an inductive approach to the analysis. However, my own thoughts and questions informed by my experience throughout the SLR and this research to date, likely informed the analysis. Qualitative research acknowledges the researcher's personhood, experiences and beliefs are present in all elements of the research process, including data collection

and analysis (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). This raises questions about the extent to which this research was inductive in its approach.

Alternative approaches, like narrative analysis, are considered to maintain the unique and individual aspects of each individual story (Polkinghorne, 1995). Whereas AoN is critiqued to undermine this uniqueness by connecting multiple stories with shared constructs, rather than valuing individual stories in their own right (Polkinghorne, 1995). However, AoN can help organise and order experience about concepts, enabling shared knowledge to be gathered from multiple stories (Sharp et al., 2019). A motivating factor for using narrative approaches in this thesis was to explore "how" YP's stories are told, not just "what" is told. To try and encapsulate this and maintain the uniqueness of each individual story, I deepened my analysis of the YP's narratives using NOI alongside AoN. NOI enables consideration of the subtleties of storytelling, considered to influence deeper critical analysis of core themes and narratives that arise (Hiles et al., 2009). The process of NOI and AoN will be detailed in chapter 3.

2.5.1 Considerations of narrative approaches

Subjectivity in qualitative approaches, like narrative, have been queried for the complex and ambiguous concepts they attempt to examine. Contrasting approaches underpinned by positivist epistemologies conceptualise the researcher's interpretation as manipulative and caution the generalisability of such approaches (Robson, 2011).

To provide richer data and offer the participants opportunities to deepen their story or further co-construct understanding, some narrative approaches encourage multiple interviews with participants to deepen the researcher's understanding of the participants' lived experience (Burck, 2005). Narrative approaches can also include member checking (Birt et al., 2016), where the finalised dataset (or narratives) are presented to and discussed with the participant. Due to logistical factors related to time constraints during this research, the participants engaged with one interview. This may have consequences for the richness of the YP's stories, potentially resulting in increased researcher influence and interpretation over the YP's stories.

However, transparency and reflexivity have been prioritised throughout this research process (Hiles et al., 2009). Additionally, as narrative approaches provide space for the researcher's interpretation and by using NOI which explores "how" as well as "what" the participants have expressed, the analysis attempts to remain close to the original narratives, which are seen as valid in their own right. Reflections about my positioning as a researcher are explored further in chapter 4.

2.6 Ethical considerations

This empirical project gained full ethical approval from Newcastle University and was guided by BPS principles (BPS, 2018). When considering the interpretive paradigm and qualitative methodological approach of this research, reflecting on the research process is important.

2.6.1 Recruitment and consent

As mentioned previously, participant-led research (Aldridge, 2016), such as action research, was appraised as an approach due to its ethicality and alignment with my own values. However, due to logistical and pragmatic decisions, it was not possible to utilise action research in this project. To gain ethical approval through the University processes, decisions were made at an early stage after exploration of relevant literature, and single interviews were decided upon.

Fitzgerald (1995) presented a need for a trusting researcher-participant relationship prior to the research beginning. Pre-existing relationships may save time and resources during the interview process, facilitate acceptance and provide comfort for the participant (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Ross, 2017). However, the potential issue of coercion is important to consider during recruitment, should an existing researcher-participant relationship be present (McConnell-Henry et al., 2009/10; McDermid et al., 2014; O'Reilly & Parker, 2014). In this project, I recruited the participants through a gatekeeper, and I was aware of possible issues when planning my recruitment strategy. Coercion consists of feeling obliged to participate in research, due to concerns about potential consequences if a choice is made not to participate (Douglas et al., 2019). As the participants were recruited from a youth voice and participation group, this can be considered particularly important to consider for this project. Attempts to alleviate issues of perceived coercion included

provision of accessible information for the participants using a video introduction of myself discussing the project. Additionally, multiple virtual meetings with the facilitating adults were held over several months to promote a clear understanding about the project. This included clarifying that the YP understood participating was entirely their choice. Developing this communication aligns with O'Reilly and Parker (2014) view that trusting relationships with gatekeepers prior to engaging with YP are imperative. In this research, gatekeeping adults involved the Youth Workers who supported the YP during the weekly group sessions.

2.6.2 Emotional safety

Engaging in research with 'at risk' or 'vulnerable' YP can have multiple challenges (Douglas et al., 2019). One being, ensuring YP are emotionally safe as interviews provide space for the discussion of sensitive topics and lived experience (Clancy, 2011; Hewitt, 2007). When engaging in interviews, participants may begin sharing their stories unprompted (Thorne & McLean, 2003). Further, the agreement to an interview in itself, may imply a participant feels the importance to share their story (Corbin & Morse, 2003). Douglas et al. (2019) reinforced the need for researchers to be prepared with clear strategies in case participants initiate sharing stories of their past that may be distressing. This included the availability of support for participants.

Further, Asselin (2003) argued pre-existing relationships can influence role-confusion of the researcher. Although I had no pre-existing relationship with the participants, as a Trainee EP I was aware of the impact of a perceived dual role, should the YP have had previous involvement or contact with an EP. For example, the YP may have perceived my role to be 'therapeutic' within the interview process. I reflected on this possibility when introducing myself to the YP, attempting transparency and clarity about the aims of the project.

Additionally, for this empirical study, a strong focus of support was present throughout the planning process. Multiple planning meetings with the facilitating adults were held to discuss this and a plan was put in place for YP participating to access support at any time throughout the interview, and before and afterwards from

trusted adults. The participating YP also had regular contact with the trusted adults and were able to contact myself and my supervisor, should they wish.
Should I change anything if I were to engage in this research again, I would endeavour to involve the YP more directly in the recruitment stages, research design and construction through physical visits to the group. Additionally, I would re-visit the YP for multiple interviews and member-checking following the interviews.

2.7 Summary

Chapter 2 has provided an opportunity to consider underpinning philosophical beliefs and decisions that informed methodology and methods applied in the empirical project. Chapter 3 aims to detail more information about method. This chapter has also appraised some issues of ethicality that have been explored in this research.

Chapter 3. How can we support a sense of belonging in the school community for YJ-involved YP?

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this empirical research is to understand how YP with YJ-involvement conceptualise, construct and experience a sense of belonging as part of their school communities.

Rationale: This project builds on prior research, demonstrated in chapter 1, by providing an account of YP with YJ-involvement's lived experiences of their school communities.

Method: Three YP attending a participatory youth voice group facilitated by a Youth Justice Service (YJS) participated in a semi-structured interview which was analysed using Narrative Oriented Inquiry (NOI) and Analysis of Narratives (AoN).

Findings: Findings identified from the YP's stories are discussed in relation to experiences of belonging, school community and identity as a YP involved with the YJ system.

Limitations: The study's small sample size in addition to a lack of opportunity to engage with member checking have been considered as potential limitations.

Implications: This project hopes to inform professional practice in supporting and promoting positive outcomes for YP with YJ-involvement as part of their school communities through a deeper understanding of their stories of belonging.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to narratively explore YJ-involved YP's experiences of belonging in their school communities. Narrative approaches challenge structuralist perspectives that reinforce assumptions about human experience and widely unquestioned "truths" in society (Besley, 2002; Peters, 1999). Shaped by power and socio-cultural history, dominant narratives can inform meaning-making and personal construction of 'self' and relationships (Besley, 2002; White, 1995). These unconscious processes are theorised to underpin guiding and constraining socio-cultural and historical structures (Besley, 2002), like education and the YJS. Constraining societal structures and expectations can influence beliefs and stories about people's lives (White & Epston, 1990). This introduction considers how dominant narratives impact YJ-involved YP's experiences of belonging in their school communities and discusses how YP's stories can provide alternative understandings of their experiences.

3.1.1 Societal narratives about justice

Societal narratives about justice are theorised to be influenced by aims to 'eliminate' crime (Rabinow, 2020). Narratives of crime, deviance and social order are considered to be constructions of law, grounded in dominant stories of 'truth', and created by societal members who hold power (Austin, 1975; Tilly, 1985). Whilst obeying laws can reaffirm social order, resistance to social order is constructed as 'criminal' and 'irrational', disempowering alternative understanding of truth and further reproducing narratives of social order (Austin, 1975; Haugaard, 2022; Tilly, 1985). Through this lens, the justice system is perceived to abuse power and pathologise individuals caught between objectification and constraint (Rabinow, 2020). Gaining alternative understandings of experience may support shifts in dominant societal narratives. Foucauldian narrative approaches about power and knowledge consider justice structures to be 'made' and, therefore, can be 'unmade' (Rabinow, 2020). By giving voice to individual experience, different understandings within communities may be created, promoting community and societal healing (Peters, 2005; White & Epston, 1990).

3.1.2 Societal narratives about YJ-involved YP

YP with YJ-involvement often feel 'othered' and stereotyped by labels like 'young offender' and 'juvenile offender' (Case et al., 2020). This chapter uses the terms 'YP with YJ-involvement' and 'YJ-involved YP' to describe YP with previous or current involvement with community YJ services or formal YJ-involvement.

Narrative perspectives consider dominant narratives about YJ-involvement to produce and reproduce stereotypes, exacerbate disadvantage and promote multidimensional processes of stigma, through the social relationships that conceptualise and define them (Link & Phelan, 2001; Tyler, 2018). Narratives spotlighting differences between people can inform stigmatisation, as privileged narratives can hold power over stigmatised groups, demonstrated in social policies and systems (Deakin et al., 2022; Link & Phelan, 2001). Dominant stories about societal expectations can camouflage power structures, reproducing social inequalities through social policies and agendas informed by polarising narratives like "dysfunctional" and "stable" families, determining the development of "law-abiding" YP and reinforcing a need for behaviour regulation in communities (Besley, 2002; Martin et al., 2011; Tyler, 2018). Risk narratives in public policies are seen to criminalise YP in their communities, rather than highlighting welfare needs (Muncie, 2005). By positioning responsibility and blame on the family context for YP's YJ-involvement, the impact of wider socio-cultural constraints can be neglected.

YJ-involved YP who may not meet social expectations of behaviour are often labelled "troubled" YP from "disadvantaged" backgrounds, frequently receiving punitive consequences (Deakin et al., 2022; Goldson & Muncie, 2015). Many interventions and approaches targeting socially excluded individuals are informed by risk-focused narratives (Muncie, 2005). Alongside ill-defined, subjective categories of offending behaviour, interventions label YP at risk of YJ-involvement, exacerbating and reaffirming stereotyped identities prior to YP entering the YJ system; further adulterising and "othering" YP with YJ-involvement at an early stage (Case et al., 2020; Creaney, 2012). This cyclical process can perpetuate YP's social exclusion and stigma, reducing opportunities within their school communities (Deakin et al., 2022; Goldson, 2005). Narrative approaches intend to challenge individualist

perspectives reinforced through dominant narratives in education and YJS by introducing alternative understandings of YP's experiences and needs.

3.1.3 Educational engagement

YP with YJ-involvement frequently experience exclusions (Hayden, 2008) and are often considered disengaged from education. As education has been found to make a difference for YJ-involved YP (Eikeland, 2009; Holden et al., 2016), understanding educational engagement can support 'at risk' learners in alternative and mainstream settings (Shafi, 2019).

Dominant narratives underpinning school exclusion often position responsibility on individual attributes and parent-child dynamics, negating wider structural elements of exclusions (Holt, 2011). Common neuroscientific perspectives that approach YP through a common structuralist and developmentalism lens can perpetuate discourses that place blame with parents and psychologise YP's behaviour (Holt, 2011; Marsten et al., 2016). Further, recent government behaviour and exclusion policies like Behaviour in Schools (Department for Education, 2022) can exacerbate individualistic and totalising perspectives. Although mentioned briefly within this guidance, relational approaches are not positioned centrally. However, school community participation, school connectedness and YP's emotional and psychological needs have been found to be important for YJ-involved YP's educational engagement (Hayward et al., 2004; Holt, 2011; Shafi, 2019). Placing significance on wider systems around YP through constructs like belonging, emphasises the impact of social relationships and reciprocity. This presents an alternative approach to supporting YP, by widening the focus from individualised responsibility on and within the YP, to a focus on the social context in which YP live and learn.

Societal narratives in education seemingly impact YP with YJ-involvements' experiences in their communities, demonstrating feelings of being othered and not belonging. The SLR detailed in chapter 1 discussed research exploring YJ-involved YP's experiences of education in the community and in Secure Children's Homes and Youth Offending Institutions (Andow, 2020; Heath & Priest, 2016; Hopkins et al.,

2016; Little, 2015; Shafi, 2019). However, perspectives of YJ-involved YP still attending education in their school communities in England appears limited within YJ literature. When considering the drive for early intervention to support YP with YJ-involvement (Creaney, 2014), hearing YJ-involved YP's stories who access education in their school communities may support understanding about how to promote belonging for YP with YJ-involvement and improve their educational experiences and outcomes.

3.1.4 YP's stories and agency

Feeling unheard and unsupported in the school community is considered common amongst YP (Cook-Sather et al., 2015), including for YJ-involved YP who expressed limited agency in education (Heath & Priest, 2016; Hopkins et al., 2016). Within YJ, Case et al. (2020) championed the need for YP's voices to be heard when creating policies intended to support them, arguing YJ policies are created by adults for adults, characterised by a reciprocal lack of trust between adults and YJ-involved YP.

Opportunities to be heard and participate in decision making reportedly influence self-determination, engagement, agency and belonging (Mitra, 2004; Mitra, 2018); areas considered important by YJ-involved YP (Andow, 2020; Shafi, 2019). For those YP able to access youth voice initiatives, such opportunities can address and reconstruct the impact of stereotypes and labels on adults' perspectives of YP, as YP demonstrate resistance against dominant narratives of power within these relationships (Fielding, 2004; Mitra, 2018). However, increased agency in relationships may mean YP must consistently demonstrate resistance against dominant defining narratives informing traditional power relationships in education (Mitra, 2018). This highlights the embedded nature of dominant narratives in education and further indicates challenges associated with navigating relational power dynamics.

Although a key aspect of narrative therapy (White, 2007), narrative perspectives argue agency, deemed important for YP's outcomes, reinforces individualist perspectives and negate the relational nature of meaning-making (Denborough,

2019). This presents tensions between individualistic perspectives of personal agency and wider theories of power and knowledge, impacting stories of agency (Guilfoyle, 2012). However, narrative approaches position individuals within social relationships, highlighting a need for meaning-making to be situated contextually, socially and politically (Denborough, 2019). Implying stories of agency can be reconstructed and reauthored through conversation (Guilfoyle, 2012). Opportunities for YP with YJ-involvement to meaningfully share their experiences may promote renegotiations of power and promote stories of agency for socially excluded YP.

Foucauldian theories of power and knowledge demonstrate how societal structures privilege types of knowledge as more meaningful than others (Besley, 2002). Narrative approaches attempt to positively and productively re-position power dynamically through discourse (Besley, 2002). Specifically, narrative inquiry approaches are deemed a social justice practice, bringing voice to YP who experience marginalisation (Caine et al., 2018). Therefore, hearing YJ-involved YP's stories about their educational experiences may help develop alternative understandings about promoting a sense of belonging for YP in their school communities.

3.1.5 Belonging in the school community

Dominant narratives of exclusion and social marginalisation can be reinforced through hierarchical power structures and policies (Charbeneau, 2009). Understanding how to promote feelings of belonging within school community structures can enable consideration of the social relationships and context around the YP, challenging dominant stories of othering. Paterson-Young et al. (2021) described feelings of safety, security and belonging as crucial for YP 'at risk' of offending. Existing theories and terminology related to belonging vary in their conceptualisation. This empirical project initially uses Goodenow and Grady (1993) definition of school belonging that is used widely in relevant literature and recognises belonging as multi-dimensional (Allen et al., 2018). Goodenow and Grady (1993) define school belonging as feeling personally accepted, respected, included and supported. Similarly, definitions of school community vary within the literature. School community will be defined as encompassing both a geographical area and

the presence of relationships involving membership, influence, integration, fulfilment of needs, and a shared emotional connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986) in this project. Hayden (2008) identified a sense of belonging and feelings of connectedness to a school or other organisation are central in keeping YP safe and "out of trouble". Understanding what these concepts mean to YP with YJ-involvement can be considered important to aid understanding about how best to promote a sense of belonging in their school communities.

3.1.6 The current research

Reviews of the current literature demonstrate limited research exploring YJ-involved YP's experiences of belonging in their school communities in England. Caine et al. (2018) acknowledged a paradox when addressing issues of social justice where YP can be denied opportunities to share their stories of past and future, consequently silencing YP. This empirical project explores YP with YJ-involvement's experiences using narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry seeks to resolve issues by supporting people to separate and challenge their relationships and lives from dominant subjugating stories, enabling re-authoring of their lives in alignment with preferred stories of identity and experience (Besley, 2002). The project aims to develop an understanding of how to promote a sense of belonging for YJ-involved YP in their school communities, asking the following research questions:

1. What do belonging and school community mean to YP with YJ-involvement?
2. What can support YP with YJ-involvement to feel a part of their school communities?

3.2 Method

3.2.1 The context

This research took place in a Local Authority Youth Justice Service programme run Youth Participation Group in the South Yorkshire region. Four YP attended weekly sessions voluntarily. The group aimed to promote YP with YJ-involvement's voices in the local area.

3.2.2 Recruitment

Recruitment began in North East England through the EPS I worked on placement in Years 2 and 3 of the training course. The process is detailed in table 6 below.

	Recruitment process
Stage one	This consisted of contacting educational settings through their link EP and Youth Justice Services via their head of service in the North East. This included sharing a flyer (see Appendix F) detailing the project that could be shared with schools, parents and YP.
Stage two	Recruitment widened to nationally, using professional contacts within EPSs and YJSs and contacting senior members of services.
Stage three	I established contact and communication with a senior practitioner of the YJ team and Youth Support Worker who facilitated the participating Youth Voice and Participation group. Purposive sampling was used as the study focused on YP with YJ-involvement. The recruitment criteria included YP with any form of YJ-involvement, from a community level to a custodial level. The YP were secondary or college age to enable a retrospective view of education.
Stage four	Recruitment occurred virtually, due to geographical distance inhibiting in person meetings. Multiple planning meetings with staff members of the service were held via Microsoft Teams. Virtual methods may have impacted some research processes, like gaining consent, signposting and debriefing (Braun & Clarke, 2013). To support this, I provided a video to be shared with potential participants by staff members, detailing the aims, focus and content of the project. Information sheets were shared with YP who showed interest in participating. Parent/carer and YP consent forms were then shared with the interested YP by the Youth Support Worker facilitating the sessions. Please see Appendix F for copies of these documents.

Table 6: Recruitment process

3.2.3 Participants

Three YP participated in the interviews. A fourth YP was identified and had agreed to participate. This YP was absent on the date of the in-person interviews and it was agreed to hold the interview virtually. However, due to logistical issues with virtual methods, gaining consent was impacted and this YP was then unable to participate. To ensure anonymity, each YP was provided with a pseudonym. See table 7 for participant details.

Alice	16 years old and attending a sixth form college in the South Yorkshire region.
Brooke	15 years old and attended an alternative provision in the South Yorkshire region.
Cian	15 years old and attended a mainstream high school in the South Yorkshire region.

Table 7: Participant details

3.2.4 Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interviews occurred in-person in a small room adjoining the group's usual room that was used weekly. The interviews happened during the weekly group session to minimise disruption and promote a supportive atmosphere. Prior to the interviews, the participants had time to settle in, and they returned to this safe space to debrief directly afterwards. Two known and trusted staff members facilitated the session and were available during the interviews for support if needed.

To promote feelings of comfort and support, the participants had the opportunity for a trusted staff member to attend the interview. However, all three participants opted for an individual interview. To begin the interviews, the information sheets were revisited and the YP asked questions and were reminded they could withdraw their consent from the study at any point, up to completed data analysis. The YP were asked if they wanted to choose a pseudonym to be referred to throughout the study. The YP did not have a preference and so I selected the pseudonyms.

Narrative inquiry shaped the research process, specifically Narrative Oriented Inquiry (NOI). NOI does not conceptualise interviews as a question-and-answer process, rather a co-construction and reciprocal exchange of views (Kvale, 1996; Silverman, 2001). Semi-structured interviews are considered to encourage narrative discourse and can take the form of biographical or topic-focused interviews (Hiles et al., 2009). Please see table 8 for a description of the interview process. Please see Appendix E for an example of the interview schedule.

	Description of interview stage
Part one	To begin, the participants were asked about their current and previous educational experiences. As an ice breaker to develop some rapport and gain an insight the YP's identity construction (Erikson, 1968), they were asked to describe themselves in three words.
Part two	To investigate the first research question, participants were asked to explore key construct definitions gained from existing literature about belonging, school community and youth justice. These were printed on small cards and read aloud by the researcher. The YP were asked their thoughts, feelings and experiences related to each construct and how they might define each of them. To support dialogue, the participants selected definitions they felt most aligned with their conceptualisation of the construct and identified any specific words and vocabulary that contributed to their understanding.
Part three	To explore the second research question, the participants were asked about three elements of their school experiences: (a) what has helped promote a sense of belonging as part of their school community; (b) what has hindered a sense of belonging as part of their school community; (c) what would help to develop a sense of belonging as part of their school community. This included the use of A3 sheets of paper and the drawing of three circles to represent the three categories outlined above. The YP's answers were recorded in each of the circles and the visual supports were also used to support this dialogue. The visual output was not part of the analysis.

Table 8: Interview process

The interviews were audio recorded using Otter transcription software and the YP were able to see when the recordings started and ended. The interviews were transcribed verbatim building on Otter's initial transcription.

3.2.5 Ethical considerations

Enhanced ethical approval was gained by the Newcastle University Ethics Committee prior to recruitment.

Prior to interviewing, written consent was gained from YP who expressed interest in participating and from their parents/carers. One YP was under the care of a children's home and the person with designated and agreed parental responsibility for that YP provided written consent. Parental consent was gained separately to the YP consent. In the interviews we revisited the information sheets and the YP had the opportunity to withdraw from the project. I endeavoured to check ongoing consent and assent throughout the interview by checking in with the YP that they were happy to continue, closely monitoring non-verbal cues. This included their body language and facial expression. I reminded the YP they could choose not to answer questions and provided opportunity for this throughout the interview by verbally checking with the YP when they were quiet or appeared hesitant to answer. All YP and their parents/carers were provided with an information sheet, a copy of the signed and completed consent forms and a debrief form (see Appendix F). The facilitating staff members at the group were central to supporting this process and we remained in regular contact, both virtually and via email, throughout the process of gaining initial consent.

Interviewing the YP in their youth group context was considered optimal for ensuring they felt comfortable and had the support of trusted adults before, during, immediately afterwards and in the weeks following the interviews. As the group encouraged YP to share their views, it could be suggested the context could have supported the YP to feel more comfortable to express their views, particularly should they wish to withdraw from the project.

3.2.6 Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed and read several times alongside listening to the audio recording. Narrative analysis approaches were explored before selecting Hiles et al. (2009) guidance for NOI alongside Analysis of Narratives (AoN) (Polkinghorne, 1995). Please see chapter 2 for a discussion of the data analysis rationale. Prior to engaging with NOI and AoN, guidance from Carson et al. (2017) informed the transcription preparation for narrative thematic analysis. This included identifying key parts of the narrative to support deeper understanding of the story. For example, identifying thoughts/feelings and meanings the storyteller had ascribed to events. Whilst this approach helped familiarise myself with the data, I felt NOI provided clearer steps to follow. Subsequently, I followed Hiles et al. (2009) steps of NOI analysis. Narrative methodologies have been critiqued for favouring a "good" story over presenting the story as it was told (Spence, 1986). NOI does not re-story the YP's story, therefore maintaining the context and the YP's words. Yet, the stories presented by the researcher have been shaped on multiple levels as the researcher is present within all stages of the research process (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). For example, in the dialogue during the interview itself, in the interpretation of the researcher afterwards, and in the way the story is presented to the reader of the research. I followed the steps outlined in table 9 when completing the data analysis.

	Description of analysis
Step one	Step one involved dividing the text into segments, identified as a self-contained 'episode' within the broader overarching story. These episodes ranged from a sentence to a longer utterance and typically consisted of a story about a construct or key concept. Some of these concepts related to each other and therefore I recorded them in parts (e.g. 5a, 5b). I developed a working transcript for analysis where I recorded key themes, thoughts and comments in a column to the right-hand side of the episodic text.
Step two	Step two is described as a vital step in NOI (Hiles et al., 2009). This consisted of identifying the fabula and sjuzet within the transcripts to gain a deeper perspective of the episodes identified. Fabula described the main, raw material within the story. Sjuzet refers to the way the events and main story are presented and organised. In supporting me to complete this step, I

	considered how the fabula could be understood without the sjuzet, as the sjuzet brought a deeper meaning to the story. Hiles et al. (2009) recognised the complexities in identifying and separating the two, further emphasising the subjectivity of the process and impact of the researcher on the stories. However, this process brought the temporality of the YP's narratives to the surface, particularly through the sjuzet which demonstrated how the YP made sense of the events discussed (Hiles, 2007).
Step three	Step three furthers perspective taking of the stories. A number of options are available to the researcher based on Hiles et al. (2009) guidance and the purpose of the research questions. The present research questions focused on gaining an understanding of experience around specific constructs and so the following analytic techniques were identified as appropriate and applied to the transcripts: • Categorical content (Lieblich et al., 1998) – focuses on sections of content around a construct. The text was broken down into self-contained areas of content (e.g. the research question focus) and thematic analysis was employed; • Categorical form (Lieblich et al., 1998) – focuses on further sjuzet analysis. A construct (e.g. belonging) was selected and the linguistic features through the sjuzet like adverbs, mental verbs and verbs, intensifiers and repetitions were analysed to gain a story of "how" stories were told about different constructs. The episodes were analysed in turn using the two different techniques. This produced a story of "how" the YP told their stories alongside the episodic stories presenting the stories themselves (for example, "what" story was told). As these stories were developing, themes within each story related to each research question were identified. A common technique in narrative analysis approaches is the strategy of "smoothing" (Spence, 1986). This consists of the "erm"s and "hmm"s being extracted from a story. I decided not to engage in this process throughout the analysis, but this was present in the presentation of the final themes.

Table 9: NOI analysis

After NOI, AoN, which endeavours to develop shared themes across narratives, identified themes across the stories. Themes were refined further as the transcripts were returned to across each of the stories. Please see Appendix G for excerpts of analysed transcript. Excerpts of the YP's analysed stories are also demonstrated throughout the findings section.

3.3 Findings and discussion

Through the process of NOI and AoN, three common themes were identified throughout all three YP's stories about belonging, school community and youth justice. These were: feeling accepted and included, identity and agency, and support. Each of the three themes will be discussed in relation to each research question in the following sections.

3.3.1 Research Question 1: What do belonging and school community mean to YP with YJ-involvement?

To answer the first research question, each of the three main concepts (belonging, school community and youth justice) are discussed in relation to the YP's stories and relevant literature.

Defining belonging - Stories about belonging led to development of the three themes: feeling accepted and included, identity and agency, and support, which appeared to be interwoven and inter-related. Feeling accepted and included impacted on identity and feelings of agency, which in turn was mediated by the YP's perceptions of support. Adult relationships were central to defining belonging in all three stories, aligning with prior research positioning adult perceptions as influential on YP's sense of belonging within their school community (Heath & Priest, 2016; Hopkins et al., 2016). Further emphasising the role of adults' stories and perceptions about YJ on YP's stories about themselves and their experiences of belonging within their school communities. Please see table 10 for a discussion of belonging.

	Findings
Theme one:	Central to defining the concept of belonging was feeling accepted and included by adults in the school community. The impact of pre-existing

Feeling accepted and included	assumptions made by school staff was expressed. Brooke described staff as having "*their back up at you*" and emphasised the "*…need to take you, like see you, meet you and then have an opinion…".* Brooke's story presented elements of feeling judged and labelled by adults in school, for example when describing YP as "*naughty*", Brooke used gestures to demonstrate quotation marks with her hands. Brooke also highlighted mistrust and disingenuity in adult relationships when saying "*…so you don't really get accepted…*". Adults' judgements were also spoken about as impacting on YP's physical inclusion within the classroom environment. For example, *"…if you do something in school, and you might be shy to do it. They don't try and include you they just kind of sit you at the side and say okay, that's fine. Sit there, play with your phone, do whatever…"*.
Theme two: Identity and agency	Tensions were highlighted between others' perceptions of the YP's identities and how they perceived themselves. For example, Brooke described how pre-existing assumptions prevented adults from accepting YP for "*who you are*". This further impacted on the level of support YP accessed, impacting on feelings of agency and identity as a learner. For example, Brooke's story included talk about *"struggling*", being "*shy*" and experiencing challenges with learning. For example, "*schoolwork isn't always easy and…you need help*".
Theme three: Support	Alice and Cian's stories centred on feeling supported and cared for by adults. Alice's definition of belonging highlighted relational qualities with adults that impacted on how she felt, for example feeling "*safe*". Additionally, Alice placed importance of the role of adult support in YP's learning, for example "*To feel that adults…care about…the young person's learning*". Similarly, when explaining why feeling supported is important for experiencing a sense of belonging, Brooke expressed a desire for change in how adults respond to YP's learning needs and difficulties. Brooke described a situation where YP are separated from the class when they are struggling and emphasised the importance of adults talking to the YP and helping them. Brooke expressed a need for more understanding from adults and to not "*just*" take "*the easy option*".

	When describing how Cian felt accepted in his relationship with his mother, he described a consistency and availability of support. For example, being able to talk to her *"…whenever I feel like I need to…".*

Table 10: Defining belonging

Defining school community - McMillan and Chavis (1986) defined communities as a geographical area with relationships encompassing membership, influence, integration and fulfilment of needs, and a shared emotional connection as central to its presence. The three YP conceptualised their school communities as differing sizes, highlighting the importance of individual experience. For example, Alice described school community as solely "at school", Brooke as town-wide and Cian as including students from different geographical communities. The emphasis on difference and meeting new people promoted a sense of acceptance of diversity and inclusion amongst Cian's peer group which was deemed important for the school community. These differences further emphasise the importance of individual perspectives when considering a YP's perception of their school community and how to facilitate belonging. Please see table 11 for full discussion of defining school community.

	Findings
Theme one: Feeling accepted and included	The sjuzet in Alice's story suggested a togetherness and shared experience, for example "*…we're all in a community…*" where everyone "*feels belonging*". Brooke described being part of a school community as a "*need*" and a "*right*", shared by "*everyone*", further reflecting a togetherness and shared experience. However, Brooke used language such as feeling belonging "*somewhere"* reflecting an understanding of individual differences in experience as well as shared needs and rights. Shared factors underpinning these experiences were feelings of "*trust*" and "*safety*" and having key supportive relationships in the school community. Cian further emphasised the notion of inclusion and acceptance when describing the coming together of people from different backgrounds.

	This promoted a sense of acceptance of diversity and inclusion amongst Cian's peer group was important for the school community.
Theme two: Identity and agency	Cian described an element of choice and agency in YP's school community, for example "*there could be students…that wanted to come to… (name of school) school*". Cian's story about school community suggested an openness to broadening his peer community beyond the geographical boundaries of the town. When speaking about teacher-student relationships, Cian used language including "*build relationships*", suggesting recognition of mutuality and reciprocity in this process and agency on the YP's behalf within relationships with school staff.
Theme three: Support	When describing the school community, Cian explained "…*you're there to learn different stuff*…", suggesting the school community is a physical place which promotes a broad range of learning opportunities and experiences.

Table 11: Defining school community

Defining youth justice - The YP's stories about YJ varied. Alice and Brooke emphasised unhappiness with associated labels like 'young offender' and 'criminal', expressing tensions between their identity and these labels. This aligns with prior findings demonstrating identity tensions for YP with YJ-involvement (Heath & Priest, 2016). A desire for labels about youth offending to change was presented as alternative perspectives on the constructs were discussed. Cian's story differed to Alice's and Brooke's. Cian focused on support provided by the YJ team rather than perceived and embodied identity. These differences further emphasise the importance of individual experience and perspective when exploring identity within YJ. However, throughout all three stories the presence of dominant narratives of othering and societal expectations were notable. Please see table 12 for a discussion of defining YJ.

	Findings
Theme one:	Alice and Brooke expressed their views about feeling labelled clearly. For example, "(*I) don't like it*" and it "*makes me feel bad*". Brooke used

Feeling accepted and included	language like "*I don't agree*", "*I don't think it's right*" and used the term "*they*" regularly, further demarcating the difference between YP with YJ involvement and the police and policy makers. Brooke described YP with YJ involvement as having "*made maybe a couple of bad decisions*" and countered "*everyone makes mistakes at the end of the day, it's just whether you're going to get caught or not".* Brooke emphasised the need for YP with YJ involvement to be understood and emphasised the importance of understanding YP with YJ involvement's individual situations and previous experiences.
Theme two: Identity and agency	As in Brooke's story when defining belonging, Alice demonstrated tensions between her identity and others' perceptions when labelled as a 'young offender'. Alice explained the term implied they had done something "*properly*" wrong. Brooke further rejected the label "*young offender*" and emphasised the lack of agency YP with YJ involvement experience. For example "…*you don't know what they've been through. You don't know how they've been treated, you don't know, what's made them do that*". Brooke suggested YP should be described as "*a young person that's made a mistake*." Brooke emphasised that "*everyone makes mistakes at the end of the day, it's just whether you're going to get caught or not*".
Theme three: Support	Cian spoke about the support he received to help "…*get on the right track again*", but expressed the associated labels of 'young offender' and 'criminal' were "*fine*". Cian's use of polarising language, like *"right track*" indicates a right and wrong way to be, highlighting the impact of societal expectations on his experiences. The use of "*again*" suggests a temporariness about not being "*on the right track"* and a hopefulness for the future.

Table 12: Defining youth justice

3.3.2 Research Question 2: What can support YP with YJ-involvement to feel a part of their school communities?

To answer research question 2, the YP's stories of successful school experiences, elements of school that did not work so well and parts of school that could be better contributed to the overarching themes discussed below. Please see table 13 outlining the themes and subthemes to provide an overarching picture of the findings for research question 2.

Theme one: Feeling accepted and included	**Theme two: Identity and agency**	**Theme three: Support**
• Peer relationships • Physical inclusion/separation • Being judged and feeling heard • Teacher relationships	• Agency over learning • Agency in peer relationships • Agency over own stories • Agency in the community	• Support with peer relationships • Learning support • Support for functional skills • Relational approaches • Access and consistency

Table 13: Overarching themes and subthemes for Research Question 2

3.3.3 Theme one: Feeling accepted and included

When describing feeling accepted and included in their school community, the subthemes peer relationships, physical inclusion/separation, being judged and feeling heard and teacher relationships were presented. Each subtheme will be discussed in turn and related to relevant literature.

Peer relationships - Peer relationships featured centrally across the three stories and linked to the other two overarching themes: identity and agency, and support. Please see table 14 for examples of the YP's stories.

Feeling accepted and included in peer relationships
Alice described how her friends had "*just been there for me*" and "*listened*" and Cian described he could "*just talk*" with his friends. The emphasis of "just" promoted an ease and simplicity in these interactions.

Difficult reflections included stories of being othered and treated differently. For example, Alice described *"…people picking on me…like name calling and stuff."* For Cian, this also encompassed relationships in the classroom, particularly in group work dynamics which he expressed fluently, emphasising frustration and importance. For example, *"…when you have to work in a group…they're just always bossing you around"*. Brooke described a need for more opportunities to socialise with "*normaler*" peers to promote acceptance amongst the YP. Brooke's language presented a polarising view of YP, further emphasising experiences and stories of being judged and labelled as different to her peers.

Table 14: Feeling accepted and included in peer relationships

YP's stories reflected both positive and difficult peer experiences contributed to a sense of belonging. Positive experiences included feeling heard and feeling able to express themselves with their peers. Communication needs, including expression and reception of feelings and ideas (Riesch et al., 2006), are considered prevalent amongst YJ-involved YP (Anderson et al., 2016). YP with YJ-involvement have previously expressed low confidence in their communication and interactions with peers (Hopkins et al., 2016), aligning with these findings. Peer relationships are considered both positive and negative influences on YP and contribute to feelings of safety in school (Cowie & Oztug, 2008; Hopkins et al., 2016). Peer rejection has been considered an influential factor in YP's YJ-involvement (Ashkar & Kenny, 2009), suggesting peer relationships play a central but complex role in supporting belonging in the school community for YJ-involved YP.

Physical inclusion/separation - Educational exclusion and internal segregation are reported within existing stories shared by YJ-involved YP (Andow, 2020; Heath & Priest, 2016). Physical positioning within education featured strongly in Brooke's story and presented contrasting needs, see table 15 below.

Physical inclusion in the learning environment
Brooke's experiences of education included being in units attached to school, which Brooke described as for the "*naughty kids".* Brooke described an ideal classroom as "…*you kind of have the "special" bit of the class, but in like a normal*

class, so you don't get completely like, ignored". Brooke recognised the need for different support in the learning environment and demonstrated unhappiness in being separated completely. Brooke's use of quotation mark gestures with her hands when saying naughty and special indicate she rejects the labels assigned to YP and these are in tension with her own identity.

Table 15: Physical inclusion

Physical inclusion in primary education was the only positive reflection Brooke shared about her school community and her gestures indicated she rejected labels associated with her. These findings correspond with theories describing the impact of dominant narratives on YJ-involved YP's social exclusion in their school communities and reduced opportunities (Goldson, 2005). This highlights the importance of YP's views and physical positioning of YP within their school communities for promoting a sense of belonging.

Being judged and feeling heard - Being judged by adults was central to stories where belonging was not experienced, including mistrusting teachers and the police. Adults' pre-existing assumptions were dominant in Brooke's story based on information shared through professionals and from judgements about appearance in the community, see table 16 below.

Being judged and feeling heard
Brooke reinforced the importance of adults accepting YP "*…for who you are and don't judge you just because you've done something bad".* This also incorporated responsibility and fairness. Brooke expressed the importance of having evidence from CCTV to support YP to be believed when altercations happened at school so that "…*they can't then just blame "the naughty child"…"*. Positive experiences in the wider community included having opportunities to share views with the police and feelings of trust and safety. For example, Cian described how "*…on your streets like you look out for each other".*

Table 16: Being judged and feeling heard

Similarly to Hopkins et al. (2016) findings demonstrating stories of limited trust and respect and feeling judged by police, the present study highlighted the impact of pre-existing assumptions on professionals' approach to YP, and not feeling heard or believed. Theories of labelling and individualism (Link & Phelan, 2001; Muncie, 2006) suggest pre-existing risk-focused narratives in society can reinforce disadvantage and position assumptions about behaviour as a pre-cursor to criminality. The YP in Hopkins et al. (2016) study described avoidance of conflict resolution, whereas Brooke demonstrated an active desired to resolve conflict using visual evidence. This further emphasises mistrust between adults and YP with YJ-involvement and highlighting the importance of providing opportunities for YP with YJ-involvement to be heard to promote feelings of agency and belonging.

Teacher relationships - The YP described how changes in teacher approaches and relationships may improve their experiences of belonging. See table 17.

Teacher relationships and approaches
Teacher approaches were described particularly in relation to peers, including in the learning environment. For example, Alice determined "…*I think teachers need to be a bit less… firm. But at the same time, be a bit more firm with the students that are badly misbehaving. But not all the time.".* Brooke also described how teacher's approaches can impact on peer relationships. For example, "…*it could be better if teachers didn't talk about you when other kids are about because it makes them think badly about you".*

Table 17: Teacher relationships

Teacher relationships were centrally positioned for promoting positive peer interactions. However, complexities in classroom dynamics were presented through contradictory language, further highlighting the importance of individualised teacher approaches. Shafi (2019) highlighted the importance of a connection with a key staff member to be led by the YP's needs, to help facilitate a sense of belonging within the school community. These findings also related to stories about agency over information and privacy, this will be further explored in the next theme.

3.3.4 Theme two: Identity and agency

Linked closely to the overarching theme of feeling accepted and included, YP presented stories about their identity and feelings of agency related to experiencing belonging in their school communities. See table 18 for an example from Brooke's story.

Agency
As Brooke stated*: "The main thing for me is, you have to be heard…That's school, community, home, police anything. Young people's voices matter and they have to be taken into consideration."*

Table 18: Agency

The findings of this study align with previous research identifying the importance of feelings of agency for YJ-involved YP (Andow, 2020; Heath & Priest, 2016). For example, Heath and Priest (2016) identified how despite difficulties in past experiences, YP described the temporality of choice and identity, underpinned by frustrations over past lack of agency and experiences of othering, whilst describing hopefulness for the future. This suggests YP's experiences of agency are important to consider when supporting a sense of belonging in the school community. Agency was discussed in relation to learning, agency in peer relationships, agency over YP's own stories and agency in the community. Each subtheme will now be discussed.

Agency over learning - The YP highlighted feeling limited agency over their learning, despite attempts to take initiatives and communicate their needs. This included choices about seating position and initiating and accessing support. See table 19 for examples.

Agency over learning
Language like "*they try to make you feel*" and "*make you do it*" positioned school staff's approaches as a barrier to feeling agentic over learning in YP's stories. Alice presented a strong desire for more agency on her days off college and demonstrated aspirations to be more active in the community, through language

like *"I definitely think*…" and providing more fluent and greater descriptions about working with foodbanks in the community.

Table 19: Agency over learning

Stories of limited agency over learning were also present in Little (2015) study exploring experiences of education in YOI. This included exercising meaningful choice over learning and demonstrating a desire for opportunities to try different activities to increase agency over their future aspirations. Meaningful engagement with learning related to YP's aspirations and may be deemed important for promoting feelings of agency in school.

Agency in peer relationships - Agency in peer relationships was seen to further impact feelings of belonging, as demonstrated in table 20.

Agency in peer relationships
Cian spoke with emphasis about having agency in his peer relationships. Cian reflected on situations when working with peers that felt uncomfortable and impacted his sense of agency. Cian identified *"…not to get bossed around…"* as a key contributor to promoting a sense of belonging amongst his peers.

Table 20: Agency in peer relationships

As discussed previously, peer relationships are seen to play a complex role in YP's experiences. This seemingly aligns with theories of self-determination (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2000) that hypothesises relatedness indicates YP's agency and development, alongside feelings of competence and autonomy. This further reinforces the important role of peer relationships and power dynamics within the school community for YP's experiences of belonging.

Agency over own stories - Brooke expressed a desire for ownership over her life and past experiences, challenging dominant narratives and power dynamics in school. Further reinforcing the presence of dominant narratives in about YP with YJ-involvement (Holt, 2011) and the importance of experiencing autonomy for promoting feelings of agency in her life (Deci & Ryan, 2000). See table 21.

Agency over own stories
A dominant theme in Brooke's overarching story was YP having agency over her own stories and information. For example, "…*today it happened and someone talked about someone and I was there and I was like, it doesn't need to be spoken about…I just think schools need to make stuff a lot more…private*". Brooke argued for the need for choice about the information YP choose to share about themselves. "… *Cause at the end of the day why should anyone need to know about anyone unless they're friends and have chose to tell them about each other…"*.

Table 21: Agency over own stories

Agency in the community - YP also described aspirations for more agency and active involvement in the community and in interactions with the police. This was underpinned by feelings of mistrust and respect and contributed to feelings of not being heard or listened to, feeding into theme one of feeling accepted and included. See table 22.

Agency in the community
Alice's story described aspirations to be more actively involved in foodbanks in the community. Brooke described police approaches that seemingly removed all choice and agency from the YP. For example "*…just being like 'haha' you're spending the night in the cells"*. Brooke described a lack of opportunity to express her views and experience with police officers, impacting on feelings of agency in the wider community. Brooke highlighted a need for adults to ask YP. For example, "…*I think we need to have a look at, what's been said. What's happened? Instead of just jumping on that kid's case"*. This included feelings of agency within the process of restorative conversations and during police involvement in the community.

Table 22: Agency in the community

Hopkins et al. (2016) also highlighted stories of difficult interactions as YP described police as "aggressive" in their approach, despite YP's willing communication. YP

subsequently reported lower self-confidence and motivation to express their views, differing from the present study as Brooke maintained a strong desire to be heard. These findings reinforce the impact of dominant narratives that inform negative perceptions and discrimination of YP within communities (Deakin et al., 2022). As, once "othered", YP may lose others' understanding of their vulnerability and victimisation (Hudson, 2003). This further highlights the negative impact of risk-focused punitive approaches to supporting YP, both in education and in the wider school community, and the need for restorative and relational approaches that recognise the wider system and socio-cultural context around YP.

3.3.5 Theme three: Support

The theme support was also present in all three stories. The subthemes included support with peer relationships, learning support, support for functional skills, relational approaches and access and consistency. This suggests YP valued the presence of support across multiple contexts and the way support was accessed and received. Each subtheme will now be discussed.

Support with peer relationships - Challenges shared about managing peer relationships align with previous stories shared by YP with YJ involvement (Andow, 2020; Hopkins et al., 2016). See table 23.

Support with peer relationships
Alice's story focused on adult support with peer relationships. As described in theme one, Alice experienced challenges within her peer relationships. She also expressed frustration and unhappiness with adults' support during these situations. For example, *"…they didn't deal with bullying straight away. They let it get bad…they don't respond quickly enough…and there weren't many people could go to…about bullying…".* Some of Alice's language suggested experiencing disappointment and attributing responsibility of the situation to a lack of adult support.

Table 23: Support with peer relationships

Andow (2020) highlighted challenges with how differing needs were managed in a SCH setting. Despite the YP being on welfare and justice placements, not in mainstream settings, the findings suggest support for managing peer dynamics and relationships is important for a sense of belonging for YP at different stages of YJ-involvement. As Höjer and Johansson (2013) recognised, a safe, secure, predictable learning environment is considered vital for learning. The YP's stories indicate support to manage peer relationships may be part of developing a safe learning environment.

Learning support - Similarly to prior research identifying the importance of personalised approaches for learning (Knight, 2014), the YP identified individualised, subject specific teacher support was important for developing a sense of belonging in the school community. Environmental elements were also considered important alongside physical inclusion/separation (as discussed in theme one). See table 24.

Learning support
Brooke also identified environmental elements like "…*kind of quieter…Just a genuinely nicer place to work…*" as being important for promoting learning in school. Brooke positioned adults as facilitators to support YP's strengths and skills, for example *"…, if they're good at a certain subject, they should get to go into the proper bit…For that subject".*

Table 24: Learning support

Support drawing on the YP's perceived strengths and areas for development was discussed. YP with YJ-involvement have been highlighted as experiencing disrupted educational histories and having some difficulties with learning (Chitsabesan & Hughes, 2016; Little, 2015). The YP in the present study acknowledged their profile of abilities but their stories centred around the importance of appropriate support and developing their skills. Little (2015) identified how YP with YJ-involvement can be grouped together as 'young offenders' with the assumption they are unable to access learning, negating YP's aspirations, hopes, strengths and resources. These findings suggest appropriately individualised learning support and a supportive

learning environment are important for YP's sense of belonging in their school communities.

Support for functional skills - Chiesa et al. (2016) argued meeting basic psychological needs is vital for YP's progression towards future aspirations. Aligning with this, Cian described how functional and life skill support, including basic needs, are important for promoting a sense of belonging in the school community. Cian's story suggested adult support can promote agency by recognising specific areas of need, for example time and money management. This seemed to suggest a holistic view of the YP was important on behalf of the adults who can provide support in education. Similarly, Little (2015) found functional skills and basic needs like food, hunger and nutrition were central to discussions about education. This further reinforces the importance of support for general life skills and independence when supporting a sense of belonging for YP with YJ-involvement, particularly as YP within this population are considered more likely to experience multiple social disadvantages (Shafi, 2019).

Relational approaches - Teacher's relational approaches featured in stories of good support when developing a sense of belonging in the school community. See table 25.

Relational qualities
Alice described valued characteristics of adult support that were helpful. For example, "*Kind…explain things well. Going through it step by step."* Placing value not only on helping to break down academic learning but also the relational style and qualities within the adult's approach.

Table 25: Teacher's relational approaches

This is consistent with prior stories YJ-involved YP shared about the importance of support worker's characteristics, body language and approach (Heath & Priest, 2016; Hopkins et al., 2016). Additionally, developing a trusting relationship through warmth, genuineness and recognising the YP's reality of lived experience is described as crucial (Prior & Mason, 2010; Trevithick, 2012). This further

emphasises the importance of adult's relational approaches in supporting YP's sense of belonging rather than punitive and authoritarian approaches.

Access and consistency - Consistency of access to support aligns with prior findings (Hopkins et al., 2016). However, in Hopkins et al. (2016) study, YP reported feeling too embarrassed to ask for support. This differs to the current study where the YP spoke about actively seeking out support. See table 26 below.

Access and consistency of support
Alice described the importance of people "*always*" being inclusive and "*always there if you need support*". When examining the szujet, Alice's use of *"if*" suggests the support needed can be determined by the YP themselves, reinforcing the role of perceived autonomy and agency of the YP in the supportive relationship with adults. This also applied in the wider school community. Brooke also discussed a need for more support from community police officers to stay safe and work preventatively to support YP. "*But then again, there should be a lot more community police officers walking around to check that everyone's on their best behaviour."*

Table 26: Access and consistency of support

3.3.6 Visual representation of the findings

Figure 3 below demonstrates the key findings in visual form, drawing on narrative influences to make sense of the relationship between the key themes: feeling accepted and included, identity and agency, and support. Similarly to the SLR detailed in chapter 1, YP's stories about their identity and agency were influenced by feeling accepted and included in their school communities, particularly by adults (teachers and police) and their peer relationships. Again, aligning with the SLR, feeling accepted and included was seemingly impacted by wider dominant narratives that influenced others' stories about the YP. To promote feelings of belonging, YP highlighted the importance of adult support to navigate elements within their school community and to feel heard. However, access to support was also positioned as a barrier, seemingly influenced by the dominant narratives that impacted on feeling

accepted and included by those YP identified as support systems (teachers and police).

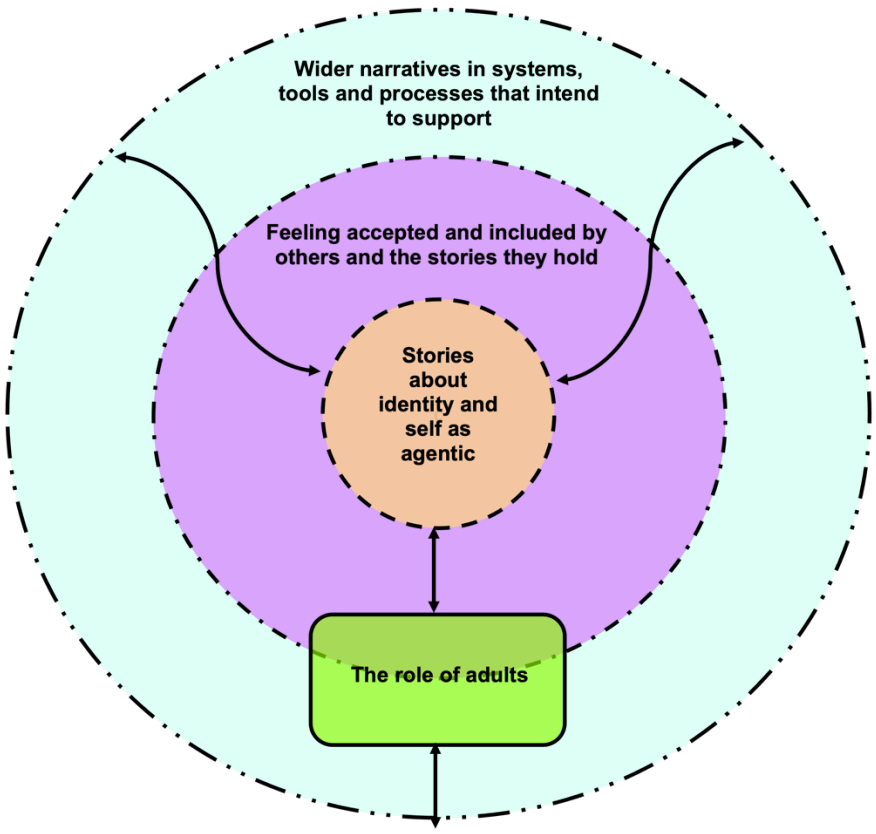

Figure 3: Visual model of findings

3.4 Discussion and concluding thoughts

This empirical project hoped to uncover alternative perspectives and understandings of three YP with YJ-involvement's experiences through their stories of belonging in their school communities (Caine et al., 2018). The themes feeling accepted and included, identity and agency, and support ran throughout all three stories of belonging in the school community.

3.4.1 A Narrative perspective

Narrative perspectives seek to challenge agendas that unhelpfully position YP, criminalise their identities in a totalising manner, reproducing social inequality in a

cyclical process and presenting structural and social barriers to participation and change in society (Barry, 2009; Deakin et al., 2022; Muncie, 2005). For YJ-involved YP, risk-focused narratives that adulterise YJ-involved YP can disengage YP by ignoring their position as a child with developmental capacities and agency over their lives (Case & Hazel, 2020). The present study highlighted how others' stories, influenced by dominant societal narratives about YJ, were central to YP's stories. In particular, their stories about identity and agency, aligning with chapter 1's SLR findings. This implies dominant narratives influence YJ-involved YP's stories about self at different educational and YJ stages. Constraining narratives presented in YP's stories about educational and policing systems, intended to support YP and safeguard them in the community, further aligned with the SLR findings. These systems also impacted YP's stories of agency and reinforced dominant stories in society about YP with YJ-involvement. The interactional nature of the findings demonstrate the embeddedness of dominant societal narratives. This highlights the importance of alternative understandings of YP's experience to promote change at multiple levels in the school community to meet the individual needs of YP and support feelings of belonging.

3.4.2 Listening to YP's stories

Opportunities for YJ-involved YP to share their educational experiences is considered important for informing appropriate educational provision (Little, 2015). The participating YP attended a weekly youth participation group indicating they may have more experience sharing their views and experiences than other YJ-involved YP, as voice initiatives are deemed to increase agency and belonging for YP in education (Mitra, 2018). The YP demonstrated agency and resistance against labels like 'young offender', indicating a desire for change. Resistance is considered an appropriate response to discrimination and social marginalisation (Rogers & Way, 2021) and YJ-involved YP have demonstrated resistance through educational disengagement in prior studies (Andow, 2020). However, resistance presented differently in the current study as YP resisted the labels presented to them but highlighted a desire to be accepted and heard, regardless of perceived challenges.

For example, although not formally analysed, YP's self-constructions in the initial icebreaker question were relationally centred, with one YP personally valuing a quality she recognised others perceived as negative ('blunt'). Identity tensions were also recognised in Heath and Priest (2016) study. However, Heath and Priest (2016) presented YP's stories about identity using pathologising language, aligning with developmentalist perspectives that are deemed to individualise YP's traits (Denborough, 2019; Holt, 2011). Whereas the stories about self in the current study aligned with a preferred or intentional identity (Besley, 2002) and emphasised the importance of opportunities to develop relationships, despite reported social marginalisation. This highlights differences amongst YJ-involved YP's responses to social marginalisation and dominant narratives, emphasising the importance of individual stories. Additionally, the findings may indicate youth voice initiatives facilitate safe spaces whereby YP can share their views more freely, as adults may support power shifts in traditional power dynamics. Externalising and sharing alternative understandings can influence identification and sharing of subjugated knowledge that is deemed to promote a sense of personal agency over one's life (White & Epston, 1990). In turn, challenging dominant narratives and promoting shifts in traditional societal and relational power dynamics.

3.4.3 The role of adults

The present study positioned adults both as a facilitator for support and as a barrier to experiencing a sense of belonging in their school communities, due to the reported experience of being judged by adults. This aligns with previous YJ arguments challenging the adulterisation of YP as responsible for their own needs, whilst reinforcing the adults' role in promoting autonomy and supporting YP's progression towards their aspirations (Haines & Case, 2015). The findings highlight a need for alternative understandings and narratives about YP with YJ-involvement within systems that support them, like education and the YJS. Whole school approaches that promote a relational ethos are considered important by YP (Mitra, 2004). Narrative perspectives argue for the re-negotiation of dominant power in social relationships, countering assumptions of who, when and what a person can speak or say, including who will listen and how their voice will be acted upon (Besley, 2002). In this case, arguably adults who support YJ-involved YP, and hold

the social power in the relationship, play a fundamental role in facilitating such change across multiple levels in the school community by supporting YJ-involved YP's voices to be heard and acted upon. Therefore, indicating shifts in adult approaches are needed within education for supporting YJ-involved YP.

3.4.4 Alternative approaches

Whilst championing individual experience, this empirical project's findings highlight the importance of developing alternative approaches for YJ-involved YP that support a sense of belonging and active participation in their school communities. Aligning with arguments against risk-focused, adulterising approaches that 'other' YP with YJ-involvement and further marginalise YP (Case et al., 2020; Haines & Case, 2015; Little, 2015). This study reinforces a need to challenge dominant societal narratives underpinning systems that support YP with YJ-involvement, like education. Approaches like youth voice initiatives and whole school relational approaches may support YP with YJ-involvement's sense of belonging in their school communities. Further, approaches which challenge dominant narratives associated with justice such as restorative approaches (RA) may support broader conversations within education.

3.5 Implications and limitations

EPs are often positioned alongside school development leaders and suggested to have a role in systemic working and can reinforce the importance of whole school approaches. RA is a whole school approach recognised in the YJ literature that aligns with this study's findings. RA can support restoration of communities, promote greater autonomy and agency for YP in the school community and support peer relationships (Cowie & Jennifer, 2008; Hopkins, 2011; Wachtel, 2013). Comprising of active involvement of YP and adults at different ecological levels (individual, group, systemic and community) (Greene, 2005; Hopkins, 2011). By promoting RA, EPs can continue to challenge dominant narratives in school by presenting alternative understandings of concepts like justice, individual responsibility, law and YP with YJ-involvement's experiences and needs.

Central to the EP role is advocacy and addressing issues of power (BPS, 2018). EPs can provide opportunities for YP to express their views and to be acted upon.

Through developing knowledge of YP's rights, particularly in relation to exclusions, by becoming confident with recent government guidance, e.g. Behaviour and Exclusions in Schools (Department for Education, 2022), EPs are well placed to act as advocates for YP with YJ-involvement and support the promotion of relational and restorative approaches in schools.

Additionally, narrative perspectives have demonstrated the presence of power and knowledge within societal structures and systems (White & Epston, 1990). Personally and professionally reflecting on existing ideas and their situated contexts to recognise potential impacts, concerns and limitations of existing psychological approaches and ideas within practice (White & Epston, 1990) can be beneficial for EPs to practice with respect and integrity (BPS, 2018).

3.5.1 Limitations

Caution is needed when interpreting and generalising findings that focus on individual experience. Further, the study has a small sample size. Whilst four YP expressed interest, three YP participated. Narrative inquiry commonly has four to six participants but sometimes one participant (Haydon et al., 2018). Whilst these may be considered research limitations, focusing on understanding individual experience provides opportunity for diversity and alternative knowledge (White & Epston, 1990). Approaches facing prior criticism for presenting individualist stances (like attachment theories) have returned in dominant narratives within psychology (Denborough, 2019) and are seemingly currently reflected in education and YJS. Additionally, professionals positioned as 'experts' are perceived to have more knowledge about people's lives than the people themselves (Besley, 2002). Narrative approaches intend to challenge this individualist and structuralist perspective as stories celebrate diversity in perspective and experience (Besley, 2002; Bruner, 2004).

A further potential limitation is the absence of multiple interviews (Burck, 2005) and member-checking (Birt et al., 2016) that are often drawn on in narrative approaches. Due to logistical issues when completing this thesis, I was unable to hold multiple interviews. Multiple interviews are considered to enable deeper, richer stories (Burck, 2005). The transcripts were not checked with the participating YP (member-

checking) and so criticisms could be made about whether the stories told accurately represent the YP's stories. To mediate this, I have endeavoured to be transparent throughout this empirical project (Hiles et al., 2009). Narrative inquiry and analysis are intended to be relational processes (Caine et al., 2018) recognising the subjectivity of the researcher and the temporal and contextual nature of YP's stories. Therefore, allowing for multiple truths and understandings (White & Epston, 1990) that change dependent on the questions that are asked, stories that are told and the research relationship.

3.4.3 Conclusion

This research explored YP with YJ-involvement's experiences of belonging within their school communities. The project aimed to present alternative understandings of YP with YJ-involvement's experiences by listening and thinking narratively with YP (Caine et al., 2018). The study's findings reinforce the presence of dominant societal narratives that constrain YP with YJ-involvement through the systems intended to support them, the stories' others hold about them, and their own stories of identity and agency. Adults are positioned as key facilitators of change who can promote YP's stories of agency. These findings further support whole school relational and restorative approaches that promote YP's feelings of belonging in the school community, by providing opportunities for YP to share their stories and experience agency over their own lives. These findings intend to inform the practice of educational settings and EPs, promote the value of hearing YP's stories and developing alternative understandings of YP with YJ-involvement and reinforce the need for systemic change in education and the wider school community.

Chapter 4. A Reflective Synthesis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a reflective synthesis detailing what this research means to me both as a researcher and within my professional practice. My positionality as a researcher is discussed before considering the empirical project findings in relation to the current justice context in England. Implications for practice, including the value and importance of youth participation groups and implications for narrative and restorative approaches in EP practice will be considered. Finally, I offer reflections for potential future research.

4.2 Reflexivity

Chapter 2 detailed my ontological and epistemological positioning, including the rationale of my decision making throughout the research process. Importance was placed on understanding lived experiences and personal interpretation, influenced by socio-cultural factors, to provide an insight into YJ-involved YP's experiences of belonging in their school communities. Conducting this research has prompted further reflection about my positioning in this process within which I attempted to promote issues of social justice for YJ-involved YP.

Caine et al. (2018) asked social justice researchers "what calls us to the research?". I chose to provide voice to YJ-involved YP in this project and, as highlighted by Limes-Taylor Henderson and Esposito (2019), YJ-involved YP did not ask me to do this research, in this way. These decisions were influenced by my own personhood, beliefs, values and experiences (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). The plethora of voices, expectations and history brought to social interactions (Bakhtin, 1981) imply researchers and participants make assumptions about one another's identity and experiences within research, influencing the content and telling of stories (Newton, 2014; Phoenix, 2013). Moreover, qualitative research acknowledges the presence of the researcher in all elements of the research process, including data collection and analysis (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Therefore, reflecting on my own positioning throughout the research process is important when considering any resulting implications.

4.2.1 My positioning

Narrative research emphasises the importance of understanding the researcher's own context, identity and personal history as narrative approaches vary across individual researchers, despite shared commitments to the process (Smith & Sparkes, 2006). Reflecting on my own positionality highlighted values and experiences that have informed my decision-making throughout this thesis. At times, understanding my positionality has been challenging and subsequently raised tensions that I have endeavoured to be mindful of and explore. This includes how professional experiences working in education, alongside family members' experiences of the YJS, have influenced my beliefs and values about the YJS and education. Whilst I have listened to other people's stories about YP with YJ-involvement and the stories of YP who have experienced the YJS, I am highly aware that I have not personally experienced the YJS. Maintaining this awareness, I have attempted to consciously and consistently privilege the YP stories within this research. This research has intended to maintain coherence and alignment with the underlying values of ethicality, fairness and social justice; understanding each YP as an individual within their own specific context; and relational values including acceptance, connectedness and community responsibility.

As I do not share identity or experiences with YJ-involved YP, I cannot be deemed an 'insider' (Asselin, 2003; Kanuha, 2000). 'Insider' status can promote trust and openness, deepening stories and narratives (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). However, the dual role of insider/researcher can confuse the research relationship, as assumptions of shared experience may limit information provided and the researcher's experiences may inform the interview process (Asselin, 2003; Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Whilst not an insider, I have reflected on my experiences of YJ through my relationships with family members and my experiences working in education. Resultantly, I have experienced tensions identifying my positioning. Insider/outsider perspectives are critiqued for reinforcing dominant narratives framing complex human experiences as dichotomous and binary (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Gould, 2003). Rather, the space between researchers and participants is deemed complex and rich, informed by prior experiences, knowledge and values, and considered important for qualitative research (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Gould, 2003). Acker (2000) also identified constraints when identifying one's

positioning and requested creativity in the space between insider/outsider. The use of narrative approaches, supervision and reflective time have promoted my reflections about my positioning in this project. I have reflected on how I perhaps privileged certain themes when analysing and interpreting the YP's stories based on prior reading or my experience in schools. Therefore, reinforcing how my personal perception of YJ-involved YP's experiences of belonging in their school community is undoubtedly present within this research.

4.2.2 Research context

This project also highlighted the influence of my positioning within the wider context of the training course expectations on the research process. Tensions arose when attempting to meet requirements of the EP training course and conduct the research narratively. At times, I felt constrained by university requirements which shaped parts of my decision making. For example, time limitations influenced methodological decisions guided by pragmatism.

Narrative approaches reinforce re-conceptualisations of 'self' and 'agency' as the researcher's positioning within localised systems is emphasised (Limes-Taylor Henderson & Esposito, 2019). University systems have been described as structures of historically oppressive institutions that reinforce power imbalances (Limes-Taylor Henderson & Esposito, 2019). This implies dominant narratives promoting societal power and marginalisation within university structures have influenced this research to a higher degree than initially anticipated. During interview construction I identified what I hoped to discover. This was informed by existing knowledge about social justice issues from research conducted by other institutions following traditional approaches to empirical study. Interview questions informed by existing narratives and impacted by dominant societal power may have shaped the participants' stories, minimising and reducing the reported complexities of life (Caine et al., 2018). Although I perceived the research to promote social justice issues, the presence of dominant narratives (alongside my own positionality) within all elements of this research has been stressed. Developing my awareness of the impact of university requirements and structures highlighted a need for working 'with' people in social justice research (Limes-Taylor Henderson & Esposito, 2019). Other ways of

conducting this research in the future could include participatory methods, attempting to further shift power when promoting alternative narratives in social justice research. Participatory methods were not utilised in this project. However, as I disseminate the research findings, I intend to engage in reflective discussion about the findings with the YP who participated in the research.

4.3 Relating the findings to the current justice context

This project's findings have prompted reflection about wider systemic justice issues that may inform YJ-involved YP's experiences. The justice system in England has undergone recent review reporting institutionalised racism, misogyny and homophobia within policing and identifying high levels of segregation, isolation and inequalities in communities (Baroness Casey Review, 2023). Situating this study's findings within the justice context in England, through a narrative lens, emphasises the reproduction of dominant power by systems intended to support socially excluded communities. The wide-reaching presence of these issues indicates challenges when promoting change within the justice system. Whilst identifying and sharing alternative narratives through narrative inquiry may support and promote change (Besley, 2002; Caine et al., 2018; Peters, 2005), Limes-Taylor Henderson and Esposito (2019) described resistance to accepting, acknowledging or understanding alternative narratives as 'unimagining'. The concept of unimagining suggests a resistance or lack of openness to research promoting and presenting alternative understandings and narratives in society. Limes-Taylor Henderson and Esposito (2019) acknowledged social justice researchers can only intend to fight dominant narratives as far as they no longer serve them, due to researcher positioning within constraining systems informed by the presence and influence of these ideas.

Considering this research in the wider justice context reinforces the seemingly deep-rooted social exclusion and marginalisation present in England (Baroness Casey Review, 2023). Supporting and promoting change on this scale can arguably surpass the scope of singular narratives and voices. Leading to reflections about fostering change within localised systems and communities through initiatives that promote multiple stories, involve YP in decision-making, and provide opportunities

for alternative approaches within systems to meet the needs of the community. Therefore, identifying implications for EPs and educational settings.

4.4. Child participation initiatives

Hearing the YP's stories in this project highlighted the valuable role community youth voice initiatives play in presenting opportunities for YP to feel heard within their communities. All three participants attended a weekly group promoting YJ-involved YP's voices within decision-making processes about issues in their community, facilitated by adults with some shared experiences with the YP. Narrative inquiry is driven by future possibilities and changes in social justice, and centrally positions relationships for discussion, exploration and supporting issues of social justice (Caine et al., 2018; Rosiek, 2013). The narrative exploration of YP's views in this study reinforced the importance of supportive adult relationships. YP's stories highlighted positive experiences of their YJ-involvement, reiterating the importance of localised systems that promote such processes, for example through participation and voice groups.

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states all YP's views should be explored in all issues affecting them. However, systemically marginalised YP experience limited equitable access to uphold these rights and participate in decision making (Byrne & Lundy, 2019; Scraton & Haydon, 2002; Smithson & Gray, 2021), emphasising the presence of systemic marginalising narratives. However, initiatives like 'Child First, Offender Second' (Haines & Case, 2015) describing YP as key to the solution, not part of the problem have emerged, presenting shifts in YJ. Similarly, the Youth Justice Board (2019-2022) strategic plan argued for child-centred ethos in YJ practice, prioritising YP's best interests through non-criminalising and collaborative approaches. Therefore, signifying the importance of child-participation in processes that impact them, facilitated by collaboration and relationships.

The YP's stories in this research positioned their involvement with the YJ service and participation group positively, whilst expressing a need for their voices to be heard in education. This strengthens the importance of youth participation groups for YP with YJ-involvement and implies education systems should take on similar models. EPs'

positioning working across and between different services, suggests EPs are well placed to support such initiatives within the school community by promoting collaboration with YJ services and prioritising YP voices.

4.5 Implications for Educational Psychology

Some implications for EPs have been touched upon in previous sections. This section aims to explore how this research informs potential next steps for EP practice through narrative and RA.

4.5.1 Supporting changes in narratives

This process has further developed my understanding of narrative approaches. Whilst maintaining interest in narrative approaches in professional practice, my understanding of the narrative community's diversity has advanced. Whilst narrative ideas offer possibilities and perspectives in assessment, therapeutic intervention and research (Wareham, 2012), narrative can be perceived as a spectrum with overlapping boundaries (Squire et al., 2013). Some narrative approaches are concerned with event-centred stories, some with experience-centred stories, whilst others are interested in the co-construction of narratives (Bakhtin, 1981; Labov & Waletzky, 1967; Squire et al., 2013). Further, arguments about the experience and construction of agency both within and through narrative have highlighted tensions within narrative approaches (Craib, 2004; Squire et al., 2013). This has prompted reflection about my own conceptualisation of narrative in my professional practice when discussing YP's and family's stories and concepts of agency in education. The EP role endeavours to acknowledge the complex nature of life and experience and provide space for alternative perspectives to be brought to light, to enable shifts in power and understanding when working in educational settings and with other services (Power, 2008; Shriberg & Clinton, 2016). Therefore, narrative may arguably be a useful tool for supporting social justice practice for EPs.

4.5.2 Restorative approaches

This research has reinforced the relationship between narrative and RA. RA aligns with this project's findings as YP emphasised the negative impact of punitive approaches in education on their feelings of belonging. As demonstrated in chapter 1 and chapter 3, many YJ-involved YP experience exclusions, isolations and

separation within their school communities (Hayden, 2008). Originally stemming from restorative justice in the justice system to repair harm (Bazemore & Umbreit, 2001), restorative narrative approaches promote externalisation by reinforcing that people are not problems and promote alternative perspectives through respectful interactions between people (White, 2007).

RA in education involves reframing school from a group of individuals to a community where all members are important (Hopkins, 2011). Broader systems of inequality and power are perceived to shape the community's experiences (McCluskey, 2018). This perspective reinforces the community's responsibility for addressing any harm or difficulties that occur in the community, as opposed to placing blame on individuals (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). This positions relational qualities like respect, feeling heard, safety and a sense of belonging as central to RA in the community (McCluskey, 2018). A whole school approach valuing relationships within RA can provide opportunities for promoting YJ-involved YP's sense of belonging within their school communities. Due to EP's positioning working at individual, group and whole school levels and with different members of the school community, EPs are arguably well-placed to promote RA in educational settings and systemically.

4.6 Final reflections

Amongst other considerations this research has prompted reflections about my researcher positioning, the wider justice context in England, and implications for EP practice in supporting a sense of belonging for YJ-involved YP in their school communities through voice initiatives, narrative approaches and RA.

This project has highlighted how dominant narratives can impact YJ-involved YP's experiences within their school communities and identified the importance of understanding and hearing alternative perspectives of YP's experiences. Future extensions of this research may include multiple interviews and broadening the range of narrative tools drawn upon with YP to thicken narratives of their experiences. For example, using journals, diaries and drawings (Butina, 2015). Moreover, this research has highlighted a need for further research working 'with' YJ-involved YP in social-justice research (Limes-Taylor Henderson & Esposito,

2019) through participatory methods to gain a further understanding of YP's experiences led by YP's own initiatives and agenda. As articulated by Brooke in this study:

"The main thing for me is, you have to be heard… Young people's voices matter and they have to be taken into consideration."

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Appendix A: Search terms and synonyms

The search terms and synonyms and databases used during the SLR to gain the five papers.

Scopus "young offend*" OR "youth justice" OR "juvenile delinquen*" OR "juvenile justice" *ERIC (EBSCO), British Education Index, Child development and adolescent studies* young offenders or youth offenders or juvenile delinquents or juvenile offenders *Psycinfo* Young offenders - Exploded to juvenile delinquency/or exploded juvenile justice / or young offenders.mp.	AND
Scopus school* OR education *ERIC (EBSCO), British Education Index, Child development and adolescent studies* school or education *Psycinfo* School - Exploded to school.mp or exploded to schools/	AND
Scopus experience* OR perspective* *ERIC (EBSCO), British Education Index, Child development and adolescent studies* experiences or perceptions or attitudes or views or feelings *Psycinfo* Experience$	AND

Appendix B: CASP quality assessment tool

CASP tool used to quality appraise the five papers in the SLR.

Andow (2020)	Heath and Priest (2016)	Hopkins et al. (2016)	Little (2015)	Shafi (2019)
Q: Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research? HINT: Consider • what was the goal of the research • why it was thought important • its relevance				
Yes – identified that the paper makes a unique contribution by exploring experiences of education inside a mixed placement SCH. Identified broad RQ - 'How do staff and children experience life inside a Secure Children's Home in England?'	Yes- to create qualitative research that helps to understand experiences of CYP. To support services to better target their interventions and facilitate better engagement. RQ – how do young offenders in the community make sense of life experiences such as transition and instability and how does	Yes – need for more qualitative research. RQs : How satisfied are YOs with their own literacy and communication abilities, and how important do they perceive these skills to be for the YJS? How much do YOs believe they understand others in their communicative interactions? How satisfied are YOs with their communicative	Yes – section on about the research. Aim: The aim of the research was to find out what children's experiences of education in a YOI were like from children themselves.	Yes – to further theoretical understandings of how to re-engage CYP whilst serving their custodial sentence. Need for more qualitative research.

	this impact on coping behaviours?	interactions with others, and how is this seen to influence conflict at home, school and in the YJS?		
Q: Is a qualitative methodology appropriate? HINT: Consider • If the research seeks to interpret or illuminate the actions and/or subjective experiences of research participants • Is qualitative research the right methodology for addressing the research goal				
Yes – The RQ aimed to explore experiences of children and staff.	Yes – wants to gain subjective experiences.	Yes – wanting to look at CYP's views in-depth.	Yes – wanting to explore the YP's views in depth.	Yes – sought to explore CYP's experiences.
Q: Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research? HINT: Consider • if the researcher has justified the research design (e.g. have they discussed how they decided which method to use)				
Yes – they did not state how they decided however they say how the design benefited their research.	Yes – because they wanted to build on previous research in a FCAMHS setting. It seems as though they used the same design.	Yes – explained previous research and aims and wants of the research. They explained why they used interviews.	Not sure if they actually used a mixed methods approach. There is a questionnaire but it does not specify whether it is quantitative	Yes – research design section.

	Also identified limits of quantitative and how qualitative can provide richer information and how that can be applied in practice.		or qualitative. Potentially to gain an overall view and demographics. However they also use discussion groups and 1:1 interviews which are qualitative.	
Q: Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research? HINT: Consider If the researcher has explained how the participants were selected If they explained why the participants they selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study • If there are any discussions around recruitment (e.g. why some people chose not to take part)				
Yes – They state why the SCH was selected: "The SCH was selected on the basis that it accommodated a mix of welfare and justice placements, and, pragmatically, my previous contact with the manager of the relevant local authority.	Yes- They are clear about recruitment processes and why participants were selected.	Yes – they state they recruited to represent the wider population.	To some extent – it is not clear how the YOI was selected. One YOI selected and questionnaires distributed by staff – they used a gatekeeper. There were different wings of the prison.	Yes – and they addressed issues around gatekeepers etc.

Gaining access to this closed institution was a protracted process, involving 11 months of negotiations with the management team.“			Interviews – Whether or not they were asked to participate would have been the decision of the senior member of prison staff facilitating the research. The research may have therefore excluded the involvement of children experiencing the most difficulties in the prison at the time.	
Q: Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue? HINT: Consider If the setting for the data collection was justified. If it is clear how data were collected (e.g. focus group, semi-structured interview etc.). If the researcher has justified the methods chosen. If the researcher has made the methods explicit (e.g. for interview method, is there an indication of how interviews are conducted, or did they use a topic guide). If methods were modified during the study. If so, has the researcher explained how and why • If the form of data is clear (e.g. tape recordings, video material, notes etc.). If the researcher has discussed saturation of data				
To some extent – they justified the setting and identified the different	Yes – there is a clear section on data collection.	Yes – they are very clear on procedure.	Yes – in YOI where children live.	Yes – they explained how the data was collected.

ways data was collected and the benefits of this. They did not mention or state how interviews were conducted, how methods were modified and saturation.			Clear how data was collected (3 different ways).	
Q: Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered? HINT: Consider If the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location How the researcher responded to events during the study and whether they considered the implications of any changes in the research design				
To some extent. The researcher has discussed their role and acknowledged the participant/observer continuum and how they recorded their observations.	Not clearly. Location of interview was considered.	Not clear.	Talked about relationship between Researcher and gatekeeper. This has implications for how the opportunity was communicated to the child prisoners. In this respect, the researchers were dependent on the	Not clearly.

The research questions are from doctoral research and this is acknowledged. Very clear about 'my own interpretation at one point in time at one SCH'.			prison staff involved in communicating with the children. Mutual trust and respect between the researcher and the prison staff is useful here.	
Q: Have ethical issues been taken into consideration? HINT: Consider If there are sufficient details of how the research was explained to participants for the reader to assess whether ethical standards were maintained If the researcher has discussed issues raised by the study (e.g. issues around informed consent or confidentiality or how they have handled the effects of the study on the participants during and after the study) • If approval has been sought from the ethics committee				
Yes – They discuss informed consent as an ongoing process.	Yes – small section about 'ethical considerations'.	Yes – ethical approval gained from University and local city council.	Yes – section on ethical considerations. Part of larger project	Signposted to a different paper but not included in this write up.

They discuss confidentiality of the SCH and using pseudonyms. Approval sought from two ethics committees.	Approval from NHS ethics. Written informed consent.	Informed consent gained. Prize draw.		
Q: Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous? HINT: Consider If there is an in-depth description of the analysis process If thematic analysis is used. If so, is it clear how the categories/themes were derived from the data Whether the researcher explains how the data presented were selected from the original sample to demonstrate the analysis process If sufficient data are presented to support the findings • To what extent contradictory data are taken into account Whether the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation				
Largely. Data analysis – repeated thematic coding of 38 interviews and 80000 word research diary. Demonstrate where the themes come from when discussing the	To some extent – in-depth description of data analysis.	Yes – in-depth description. Some acknowledgement of researcher impact – looking at second and third inter-rater.	Not overly clear on specific analysis. Throughout findings section it says where the themes have been taken from e.g. focus group and quotes are used.	Yes – indepth description.

results e.g. anecdotal comments or interview with whom. Quotes used to support the points/themes made. Acknowledged the role of researcher/participant in observation and impact of interpretation.			Not evident of there being any consideration about the role of the researcher/potential bias.	
Q: Is there a clear statement of findings? HINT: Consider whether • If the findings are explicit If there is adequate discussion of the evidence both for and against the researcher's arguments • If the researcher has discussed the credibility of their findings (e.g. triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst) If the findings are discussed in relation to the original research question				
Yes - Findings presented aim to illuminate the influence of the institution on educational experiences inside a SCH.	Yes – mostly.	Yes	Yes	Yes

Q: How valuable is the research? HINT: Consider • If the researcher discusses the contribution the study makes to existing knowledge or understanding (e.g. do they consider the findings in relation to current practice or policy, or relevant research- based literature If they identify new areas where research is necessary If the researchers have discussed whether or how the findings can be transferred to other populations or considered other ways the research may be used				
Yes – the findings are discussed in relation to existing research and how a unique contribution has been made.	Yes – findings are discussed in relation to clinical implications and existing and future research.	Yes – findings discussed in relation to previous research and discussion about implications for practice.	They don't talk about the contribution of the research to or alongside existing research but they do talk about what the research brings and the implications.	Yes – links findings to previous research and implications for future.

Appendix C: Reciprocal and refutational themes

This table details the reciprocal and refutational themes identified during the meta-ethnography in chapter 1.

Reciprocal themes	
Identity	Four of the five papers presented YP's narratives describing their identity and values. For example, some YP's narratives pathologized their behaviours and character, or demonstrated tensions between their identity as a 'young offender' and as themselves. It seemed these narratives could have been informed by other influences, for example others' narratives, but these were presented as YP's self-descriptions.
Confidence	Three of the five papers presented narratives about the YP having low or limited confidence with their communication skills and learning ability. This seemingly acted as a barrier to their learning engagement and communication with others.
Agency and choice	Four papers demonstrated YP experienced little to no control or choice in situations that occurred in their lives. This included living situations, their education (including what they learned and how they learned) and involvement in decisions about their futures made by professionals. Narratives were presented about tensions between support and agency. For example, having too much inflexible support and not enough agency, or having limited support and too much responsibility.
Engagement and motivation	All five papers identified narratives about engagement and motivation with education and systems. This seemed to be related to the YP's values, feelings of agency, empowerment, the impact of the learning environment and their relationships with others.
Emotional needs	Emotional needs of the YP were identified by two of the papers. They explored themes of emotional vulnerability and the wellbeing of the YP. One example was in relation to being

	exposed to other YP self-harming in their learning environment. Another was using disruptive behaviour as a strategy to mask how they feel in the classroom.
Understanding communication	Two of the papers identified YP's understanding of others' communication and vocabulary as a barrier to engaging in education and relating to others. This included language used by teachers and professionals within the YJS.
Expressing communication	One paper specifically explored the communication skills of the YP they interviewed. They identified narratives about the YP experiencing difficulties expressing their thoughts and feelings, both verbally and in a written capacity. This included how the YP expressed and presented themselves across different contexts and relate to others. This seemingly related to their confidence interacting and relating to their peers, teachers and professionals within the YJS.
Resolving conflict	One paper identified resolving conflict as a theme linked to the YP's communication skills. This paper explored YP's understanding of different ways to resolve conflict. Some of the YP demonstrated they had an understanding of how to but expressed they did not feel able to in the moment. This was seemingly related to feeling unable to express themselves emotionally and relate to the other person because they did not feel it worthwhile.
Relatedness and connectedness	Relatedness and connectedness were identified by four of the five papers. Relatedness and connectedness refer to the general feeling of the YP being connected to others and involved in systems that include them.
Awareness of others' perspectives and feeling judged	Four of the papers demonstrated narratives about feeling judged and a strong awareness and impact of other people's perspectives on their experiences. This included peers, family, teachers and professionals. The YP did not hold these narratives themselves, but demonstrated an awareness of others' perspectives and how they affected them.

Power imbalances	Two of the papers identified themes about power imbalances in the relationships with parents, teachers and professionals. This related to how YP felt they were positioned as less worthy than other people due to their experiences and identity as 'young offenders'.
Feeling heard and understood	Feeling heard and understood were themes presented by four of the five papers. This related to feeling valued, having their individual needs acknowledged and met by professionals and support, and having agency and choice over their experiences. Some of the YP identified situations with professionals whereby they felt the professional understood them and this was linked to feelings of being believed in and successful support. Other YP felt they were misunderstood and the professionals supporting them did not understand them.
Teacher relationships	Relationships with teachers were discussed in three of the four papers. These relationships were linked to power imbalances, feeling judged and feeling misunderstood. Positive reports of teacher relationships were discussed as facilitating engagement with education. Elements of positive teacher relationships included feeling understood, believed in and valued.
Trust and loyalty	The theme trust and loyalty was identified by one of the papers in relation to family relationships. One YP described a situation where they had dropped charges against a sibling after they had physically assaulted them. This related to the strength of family relationships and also identified the complexity of some of the YP's family relationships. Trust also appeared throughout a number of the themes, for example in the YP's identity, confidence and agency, and a lack of trust in the systems and processes that intended to provide support and access to education.
Exclusion	Exclusion from school was identified by four of the papers as a theme. YP reported experiencing multiple education changes, missing schooling or having inconsistent education, being segregated within their setting and feeling rejected. Many of the YP expressed feeling outsidered and othered by their educational setting.

Systemic constraints of education	Three of the five papers raised issues with systemic issues in education preventing YP's engagement. These included the appropriateness of their placement and the impact of risk assessments on what they were able to engage in. There were narratives about YP not being able to access the education they would like to access due to these issues. Additionally, risks were posed to the YP's wellbeing as a result of this.
Access to quality education	Three of the papers identified limited and inconsistent education opportunities, negative experiences of education and limited access to appropriate teaching and programmes. When YP did access appropriate courses and teaching, they reported feeling more positively and engaged with their education. When there were barriers to accessing quality education, there were themes of disengagement.
Learning environment	Two papers reported themes about the impact of the learning environment on YP accessing quality education. One YP reported risks in the learning environment and not being able to access resources (such as pens) due to the risk of self-harm of other YP in the setting.
Basic needs	Two studies identified themes about the uncertainty of basic needs being met. This included hunger. This was positioned as a barrier for YP engaging in education and goal setting, as there was uncertainty about whether these needs would be met in the future.
Uncertainty of living situation	Three papers demonstrated narratives about uncertainty of living situation. This was reported historically by YP who experienced frequent house moves, living with different relatives and adapting to different communities. This also included future-focused uncertainty, once YP left their residential settings.
Safety	Two studies identified themes about safety in the community and in the home. YP expressed physical violence was present in their relationships and reported experiencing threats of violence in the community. This was expressed as typical by some of the YP and part of life.

Refutational themes	
Support	Four of the five papers demonstrated themes about available support for the YP in their educational settings. This was conflicting as some YP emphasised the importance of individualised support, whereas others perceived individualised support being unjust and unfair if they believed others were getting more support than they were. However, consistency and transparency about support was deemed important by the YP. Some YP talked about the type of support that they found helpful in education. These included digital technology to support spelling, Teaching Assistants being available, positive reinforcement and different teaching strategies. However, barriers accessing this support were identified and YP reported a lack of support in their educational experience.
Peer relationships and influence	Peer relationships were discussed by four of the papers. Peer relationships were described by some YP as being supportive. Some YP talked about only being able to talk to their peers about difficult things. Other peer relationships were discussed as being more of a negative influence on behaviour and educational experiences. Some YP demonstrated that spending time with peers led to risk taking behaviour that could get them into trouble within the community. Additionally, some YP in a residential setting reported difficulties about the impact of the complex needs of other YP acting as a barrier to engaging with education and in feeling safe and settled in their setting.
Goals and hopes	Three papers discussed the role of goal setting and aspirations, related to self-belief. Goal setting was identified as a helpful tool that supported feelings of engagement and motivation to meet aspirations of going to college, by some YP. However, one YP talked about aspirations of going to adult prison.

Stability of relationships	Two of the papers identified themes about the stability of relationships within the family. This included managing the complexities of relationships as young people expressed parental relationships that fluctuated and changed, as well as family members engaging in risk taking behaviour. Narratives around feeling unsettled and responding to changes within family relationships demonstrated YP might not be experiencing secure relationships.

Appendix D: Comparison of analysis approaches

This table details a comparison of different qualitative analysis considered for this study that informed decision-making.

Methodology or analysis	**Epistemology**	**Key elements**	**Coherence with thesis RQ and aims**
Grounded theory	Can be used in social constructionist paradigms and in positivist paradigms.	Opposition to hypothesis testing, designed to elicit and analysis qualitative data to identify important categories in the data to generate ideas and theory grounded in the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Notion that data analysis of the first interviews modify the interview format for subsequent interviews.	Does not allow for researcher's interpretation. Analysis begins in the first interview – pragmatic and logistical issues for the current project.
Discourse analysis	Social constructionist.	Scrutinises ways of talking in which people account for and make sense of themselves and their social worlds (Shotter, 1993) Close focus on language to see how themes are discussed.	Focus is on language rather than content. The current project is interested in content.

IPA	Based on phenomenology.	Participant oriented approach allows participants to express themselves. Committed to a degree of open-mindedness on the behalf of the researcher. (Alase, 2017).	Does not allow for the researcher's interpretation (this is separate). Looks for uniformity across participants. The current project is interested in individual experience.
Narrative inquiry and analysis	Can be used in social constructionist or critical realist approaches.	Narrative looks at the way participants present their stories. Their stories are seen as constructions and claims of identity (Linde, 1993). Considered an extension of discourse analysis (Hiles & Cermak, 2008). The research process is perceived to inescapably include and be impacted by researcher intervention.	Aligns with findings from SLR (exploring identity, hopes and fears). Allows for the use of visual methods and different types of data. Allows for the interpretation of the researcher.

Appendix E: Supporting documents within the interviews

Interview structure

Introduction

- Re-cap information sheet and consent form (including aims – YP check consent again)
- Demographic info
- Ice breaker activity – how would you describe yourself in 3 words?

Definitions

- Definition cards for the three main concepts:
    - Belonging
    - School community
    - Youth justice
- Ask YP – I've got some definitions here. I was hoping to explore them with you to find out your thoughts about them. First of all, here are some definitions of 'belonging'. *Read aloud.* I was wondering what you thought about them. How might you define 'belonging'?

Task

- Need large piece of paper and felt tips. Draw three circles.
- I was hoping we could explore your experiences of school. We have 3 areas to look at. This one looks at what was good about school e.g. what worked well for you. The next one is what makes a not so good school e.g. what hasn't worked well for you. The final one is what would a dream school be like e.g. what would you like it to be like. Is there one you would like to start with?
- Have additional prompts – questions, visuals? E.g. peer group, learning, staff relationships, specific lessons....

Reflection on task

- Re-cap what we covered and reflect back to them the key points they shared.
- Ask if there is anything further they feel is important to share about their school experiences?

Definitions gained from the literature about belonging, school community and youth justice

These definitions were gained from the literature discussed in chapter 1. These were cut up into individual slips, mounted and used to support discussion with the young people in the interviews.

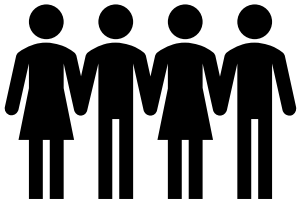
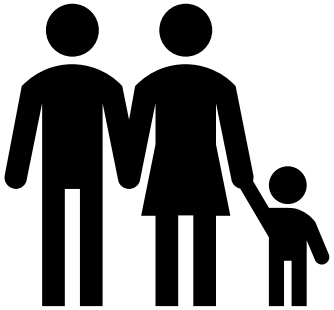
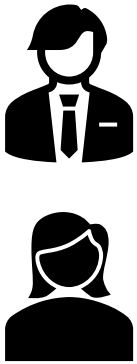
Belonging	Feeling personally accepted, respected, included and supported.
	To feel that adults in the school community care about their learning, have an interest in them as individuals and have high academic expectations. To have positive teacher-student relationships and to feel safe in school.
	To feel close to, a part of, and happy at school. To feel that teachers care about students and treat them fairly. To get along with teachers and other students and to feel safe at school.

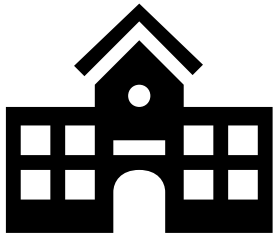
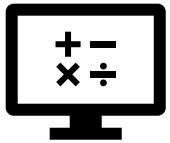
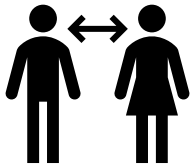
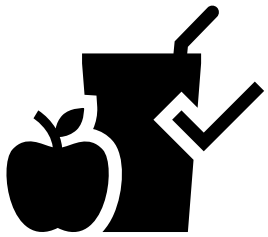
School community	Community is present when members within the community feel belonging, trust in others and safety.
	School is a community within a community. Members of the school are members of their local community reflecting its beliefs and values. This is shown through the actions, behaviour and attitudes of pupils, teachers, parents and governors.
	School community is inclusive of families and students and some element of the community. School community operates on the basis of shared values, trust, expectations and obligations rather than tasks, rules and hierarchies.

Youth justice	A young offender is someone aged between the age of 10 and 17 who has committed a criminal offence. Individuals in England and Wales aged 18 and over are classed as adults, while children under 10 are not considered 'criminally responsible' and therefore cannot be arrested or charged with a crime.
	A criminal who, according to the law, is not yet an adult but no longer a child.

Visual supports

These cards were gained from the literature and definitions about school community detailed in chapter 1. They were cut up, mounted and used to support discussion with the young people during the interviews.

 Teachers	 Peers	 Family	 Professionals	 Home

 Community	  Classroom	 School	  Learning	  Socialising
 Basic needs				

Appendix F: Documents shared with YP and their families

Flyer

This flyer was shared with educational settings, local authorities, Educational Psychology Services and Youth Justice Services as part of recruitment processes.

Newcastle University
School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences

Have you been, or do you know someone who has been, involved with the youth justice system?

My name is Gina Seymour and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist at Newcastle University. As part of my doctoral research, I am hoping to meet with young people with youth justice involvement.

I'm really interested in supporting people with youth justice involvement to tell their story. I'm keen to find out about young people's experiences of school. In particular, to understand how they can feel better supported as part of their school community.

If you are a young person with youth justice involvement, or know somebody with youth justice involvement who might be interested in taking part, please get in touch for an initial conversation.
You can email me at **g.f.seymour1@newcastle.ac.uk** or you can contact Emma Miller, my supervisor, at **emma.miller@newcastle.ac.uk**

I look forward to hearing from you.

Participant information sheet

Newcastle University
School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences

Participant Information Sheet

This information will be shared through discussion with the participants in light of any reasonable adjustments that may be required to support their understanding. This information sheet will be made available to all participants.

You are invited to take part in the doctoral research study exploring: '*How can we support a sense of belonging in the school community for children and young people who have involvement with the youth justice system?'*

Thank you for your interest in taking part. This information sheet aims to give you a summary of the purpose of the study and details about taking part.
Please read this document carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

Who am I?
My name is Gina Seymour and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist undertaking a professional practice doctorate from the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences at Newcastle University. This study is part of a professional practice doctorate, funded by the Department for Education. I am supervised by Dr Emma Miller, Academic & Professional Tutor at the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences at Newcastle University.

What is this study?
This study aims to explore the views of children and young people who are involved with the youth justice system and their experiences of school and feelings of belonging.
Learning about these experiences may help others to understand what is important to young people and how schools can better support them. Hearing your views and experiences is really important.
Having a better understanding of what helps children and young people to feel a part of their school communities will hopefully improve children and young people's experiences of school.

Taking part

You have been invited to take part in this study because you have either previously or currently have involvement with the youth justice system.
You may have been asked by a youth worker or youth justice practitioner if you are interested in taking part. You are free to decide if you want to take part or not and can contact the researcher, Gina Seymour, with any questions. If you agree to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time for any reason.
If you would like to take part, you will be asked to attend an interview with the researcher, Gina Seymour. We will talk about your experiences of school and feeling part of your school community. This interview may last about 45 minutes, though you can talk as little or as much as you would like to.
Sharing your views and experiences about school in this study can help provide a better understanding of how schools can support young people who have had similar experiences.
It is important that you feel comfortable in the interview. Talking about some of your experiences may remind you of difficult feelings or situations. You can choose not to answer any questions asked in the interview.
You can take a break or speak with a member of staff at any time. After the interview, a staff member will be available if you have any concerns.
You can withdraw from the research at any time with no questions or consequences.
The interview will be audio-recorded. To protect your identity, this recording will be kept in a secure, password-protected folder and tagged with an anonymous ID number. These recordings will be deleted after the research is complete. Your contact details will only be kept so that you can withdraw your data from the study at any time up until the data collection is complete, and for sending out the research summary at the end. You will not be identified in any report or publication resulting from this research.
Your data will be managed under UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Only the minimum personally identifiable information will be used.
You can find out more about how Newcastle University uses your information at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/data.protection/PrivacyNotice and/or by contacting Newcastle University's Data Protection Officer (Maureen Wilkinson, rec-man@ncl.ac.uk).

<u>After the interview</u>
After your interview, I will write up the main themes that have come from your interview and interviews with other children and young people. Once I have written this up, you will have the option to receive a summary of the findings via email or post. If you would like me to talk the findings through with you, I am happy to arrange this.

<u>Getting in touch</u>
This study has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Committee at Newcastle University (Date of approval: 01/07/2022)
If you have any questions about this research, please contact me on g.f.seymour1@newcastle.ac.uk.

My supervisor can be contacted at emma.miller@newcastle.ac.uk

If you would like to take part in this research, please sign and return the Declaration of Informed Consent and email me at g.f.seymour1@newcastle.ac.uk stating that you are interested. I will then get in touch with you to arrange dates and times to meet for the interview.

Many thanks again for your interest in taking part in this research. I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Gina Seymour
Trainee Educational Psychologist and Doctoral Student

Parent/carer information sheet

Newcastle University
School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences

Parent/carer Information Sheet

Your child _____ has been invited to take part in a doctoral research study exploring: *'How can we support a sense of belonging in the school community for children and young people who have involvement with the youth justice system?'*

This information sheet aims to give you a summary of the purpose of the study and details about taking part.
Please read this document carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing for your child to take part in the study.

- The study is being conducted by Gina Seymour, Trainee Educational Psychologist at the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences at Newcastle University.
- This doctoral project is supervised by Dr Emma Miller, Academic & Professional Tutor at the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences at Newcastle University. The project forms part of a professional practice doctorate, funded by the Department for Education.
- Your child has been invited to take part in this study because they have either previous or current involvement with the youth justice system. This study aims to explore your child's experiences of education and feelings of belonging during an interview with the researcher, Gina Seymour.
- Your child will have an opportunity to share their views and experiences, including parts of school that worked well, parts that did not work so well, their relationships with staff and students, and experience as part of the school community. Exploring the experiences of children and young people with youth justice involvement can hopefully help inform how to better support them in the school community. This can also give children and young people an opportunity for their voice to be heard. Gaining an understanding of what helps children and young people to feel a part of their school communities may hopefully improve their experiences of school.

- Once the research is completed, your child will have the option to receive a summary of its findings via email or post. The researcher will also arrange to feedback the findings to them directly, if they are interested in doing so.
- Your child is free to decide if they want to take part or not. If they agree to participate, it is important they feel comfortable. Talking about school experiences may remind your child of some difficult feelings or experiences. Your child can choose not to answer any questions asked. They can take breaks at any time and staff will be available for support during and after the interview. If they agree to take part, they are free to withdraw at any time for any reason.
- To ensure accurate recording of your child's answers, the interview will be audio-recorded. This recording will be kept in a secure, password-protected folder and tagged with an anonymous ID number. Identifying information, e.g. their name and contact details, will be kept separately, meaning that anyone with access to the recordings will not be able to identify them. These recordings will be deleted after the research is complete. Their contact details will only be kept so they can withdraw their data from the study at any time, up until the data collection is complete, and for sending out the research summary at the end. They will not be identified in any report or publication resulting from this research.
- Their data will be managed under UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Only the minimum personally identifiable information will be used.
- You can find out more about how Newcastle University uses information at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/data.protection/PrivacyNotice and/or by contacting Newcastle University's Data Protection Officer (Maureen Wilkinson, rec-man@ncl.ac.uk).
- This study has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Committee at Newcastle University (Date of approval: 01/07/2022)
- If you have any questions about this research, please contact me on g.f.seymour1@newcastle.ac.uk.
- My supervisor can be contacted at emma.miller@newcastle.ac.uk

If you are happy for your child to take part in this research, please sign and return the Declaration of Informed Consent and email me at g.f.seymour1@newcastle.ac.uk stating that you are both interested. I will then get in touch to arrange dates and times to meet for the interview.

Many thanks again for your interest in taking part in this research. I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Gina Seymour (Trainee Educational Psychologist and Doctoral Student)

Participant consent form

Newcastle University
School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences

Declaration of Informed Consent

Please tick the box next to each statement to show your agreement

- ☐ I agree to participate in this study, the purpose of which is to explore the views of children and young people who have had involvement with the youth justice system.
- ☐ I have understood the nature and purpose of the research.
- ☐ I have read the participant information sheet and understand the information provided.
- ☐ I agree to the interview being audio-recorded by the researcher and understand this will be deleted when the data analysis is completed.
- ☐ I have been informed that I may decline to answer any questions or withdraw from the study without any questions.
- ☐ I have been informed that all my responses will be kept confidential and secure, and I will not be identified in any report or other publication resulting from this research.
- ☐ I have been informed that the researcher will answer any questions regarding the study and its procedures. The researcher's email is g.f.seymour1@newcastle.ac.uk and they can be contacted at any time. The research supervisor can be contacted at emma.miller@newcastle.ac.uk.
- ☐ I will be provided with a copy of this form for my records.

Any concerns about this study should be addressed to the School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences Ethics Committee, Newcastle University via email to ecls.researchteam@newcastle.ac.uk

_____

Date Child/young person's Name (please print) Child/young person's Signature

I certify that I have presented the above information to the participant and secured his or her consent.

_____

Date Signature of researcher

I confirm that verbal consent has been gained from (NAME) at the time of the interview.

_____

___

Date Signature of Researcher

Parent/carer consent form

Newcastle University
School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences

Declaration of Informed Consent – Parent/carer form

Please tick the box next to each statement to show your agreement

- ☐ I agree for my child _____ to participate in this study, the purpose of which is to explore the views of children and young people who have had involvement with the youth justice system.
- ☐ I declare that myself and my child have understood the nature and purpose of the research.
- ☐ I have read the participant information sheet and understand the information provided.
- ☐ I agree for my child's interview to be audio-recorded and understand the recording will be securely stored and deleted when data analysis is completed.
- ☐ I have been informed that my child may decline to answer any questions or withdraw from the study without any questions or consequences.
- ☐ I have been informed that all my child's responses will be kept confidential and secure, and they will not be identified in any report or other publication resulting from this research.
- ☐ I have been informed that the researcher will answer any questions regarding the study and its procedures. The researcher's email is g.f.seymour1@newcastle.ac.uk and they can be contacted at any time. The research supervisor can be contacted at emma.miller@newcastle.ac.uk.
- ☐ I will be provided with a copy of this form for my records.

Any concerns about this study should be addressed to the School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences Ethics Committee, Newcastle University via email to ecls.researchteam@newcastle.ac.uk or to the research supervisor, Emma Miller, contactable at emma.miller@newcastle.ac.uk.

_____

Date Parent/carer name (please print) Parent/carer Signature

I certify that I have presented the above information to the participant and secured his or her consent.

_____

Date Signature of Researcher

Debrief form

Newcastle University
School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences

Participant Debrief Sheet

How can we support a sense of belonging in the school community for children and young people who have involvement with the youth justice system?

Thank you for taking part in this study. Your time and involvement is highly valued.

This project aimed to explore the views of children and young people who have had involvement with the youth justice system. It aimed to find out about your experiences of school and your relationships in school.

I hope the findings of this research help schools to better understand and support children and young people who have involvement with the youth justice system.

Having a better understanding of what helps children and young people to feel a part of their school communities will hopefully help to improve children and young people's experiences of school.

I hope you found the interviews interesting and have felt supported during the research.

If you feel you need support or would like to talk to somebody following the interview, please speak to:

_____

Following completion of this research, you will be invited to talk through the outcomes of this research if you would like to. You will also receive a copy via email.

As a reminder, your data will be kept secure and confidential. You may withdraw your data from this study at any time before the research is complete. If you would like to do this, please email the researcher. If you would like to speak with the researcher again, you can contact them at g.f.seymour1@newcastle.ac.uk or the research supervisor at emma.miller@newcastle.ac.uk.

Thanks again for your time and taking part.

Yours sincerely

Gina Seymour
Trainee Educational Psychologist and Doctoral Student

Appendix G: Analysis

Step one of NOI analysis example

This is a brief extract to demonstrate how the original story transcript was split into episodes and the analysis began in the right hand column by separating out the fabula and sjuzet and identifying initial themes, alongside any initial observations from listening to the transcript and reading it back multiple times.

Story transcript	Episodes	Annotations
1. Current education **Researcher:** …Okay. Right. So first of all, I just want to know a little bit of information about you. Okay, so things like how old are you? What school do you go to at the moment?		Fabula = Raw material of the story *Szujet = Representation of events/overarching plot* **Observations of tone/emotion reaction or response** Potential themes
YPA: er I'm 16 and go to *** college **Researcher:** Yep. What are you doing at *** college?	Episode 1 – Current education **YPA:** er I'm 16 and go to *** college **YPA:** That's something called *name of course*, at the moment.	Episode 1 – Current education I'm 16 and go to *** college *That's something* called *name of course* *at the moment.*

YPA: That's something called *name of course*, at the moment. **Researcher:** Oh, what do you do in *name of course*? **YPA:** Er, We do taster session because I'm not 100% sure what to do next year. So we like… doing taster sessions into different… areas in mainstream. **Researcher:** Have you got a favourite thing? **YPA:** Health and social care. I think I'm gonna do that next year.	**YPA:** Er, We do taster session because I'm not 100% sure what to do next year. So we like… doing taster sessions into different… areas in mainstream. **YPA:** Health and social care. I think I'm gonna do that next year.	<u>We do taster sessions</u> *because I'm not 100% sure what to do next year.* **"At the moment" "not 100% sure" – uncertainty, sense of anticipating change and making a choice** <u>We like… doing taster sessions into different areas in mainstream.</u> <u>Health and social care.</u> *I think I'm gonna do that next year.* **Themes** Separate/difference to mainstream currently; Aspirations and working towards them; Uncertainty.

Step two/three of NOI analysis process

This demonstrates 'how' the YP's story was told and gives an example of how the episodes were analysed, themes were refined within episodes and across the wider story linked to the key constructs.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Analysis step 2 - YPA
Re-read episodes and associated annotations about how the story was told to identify key threads/themes running through the story as a whole.
Key
Fabula
Szujet
Themes – first glance/initial themes
Themes – Refining themes</td></tr>
<tr><td>How YPA told their story
YPA demonstrated some uncertainty about the future and a sense of temporariness and anticipation of change when talking about their present education. For example, through language like "at the moment" and "not 100% sure". YPA seemed hesitant at times throughout the interview and expressed uncertainty through pausing and saying "I don't know". At these times, YPA's speech seemed more disjointed and less fluent.
When describing themselves in the warm up activity, YPA paused prior to answering. YPA described themselves using relational focused adjectives like "loving" and "caring". However, their intonation lifted at the end of the description, suggesting a question and uncertainty.</td><td>Confidence
Hopes/aspirations
Change</td></tr>
</table>

YPA demonstrated certainty in their story through emphasis and exclamation which was demonstrated in their tone and volume of their voice. For example, when discussing the term 'young offender', YPA clearly stated "don't like it" and placed emphasis that it "makes me feel bad". YPA also used language that demonstrated some tensions between their identity and others' perceptions about the term 'young offender'. YPA explained the term implied they had done something "properly" wrong. YPA's vocal expression demonstrated some unhappiness when reflecting on some experiences that were not successful in promoting a sense of belonging. This included difficulties with peer relationships and YPA implied feeling let down by teacher support to manage difficult situations, like bullying. Contrastingly, YPA used language that implied simplicity and contentedness when talking about previous positive experiences with peers, for example "just" and using "we" to suggest togetherness. When talking about their present social experiences at college, YPA used adulterised language such as "safe space" and described these experiences in the first person, rather than using "we". YPA explained there were "lots" of staff in the safe space, and a "few" peers, suggesting YPA was experiencing more time with adults in their present educational setting. YPA also expressed emphasis and certainty when responding to clarifying questions from the researcher about key support being helpful and sharing what supports belonging in the school community. YPA spoke about "always" having access to adult support and "always" feeling included. When discussing adult support in school, some of YPA's language suggested	Identity - Relational qualities Confidence Unfairness/injustice Peer relationships Support – to navigate peer relationships Othering

experiencing disappointment and positioned responsibility on adults for their experiences. For example, “they let it get bad”. YPA demonstrated a need for different teacher approaches for different students. When describing this, YPA presented complexities and contradictions in their hopes by stating “but at the same time” and “but not all the time”. YPA also demonstrated certainty and emphasis by speaking confidently about their thoughts in relation to what could be improved when engaging in the wider community. For example, “I definitely think…” and providing greater detail more fluently about working with foodbanks in the community,	Support – consistency and access Inclusion Injustice/difference Desire for change
Episode 1 – Current education I’m 16 and go to *** college *That’s something* called *name of course* *at the moment.* We do taster session *because* I’m not *100%* sure what to do next year. *We like…* doing taster sessions into different areas in mainstream. Health and social care. I think I’m gonna do that next year.	Separate/difference to mainstream currently; Aspirations and working towards them; Uncertainty. Uncertainty Separation Aspiration/hopes
Episode 2 – Story about self	**Themes**

*I don't know…*Kind, Loving and caring(?)	Relational qualities in story about self Identity Confidence
Episode 3 – Defining belonging 1 (academic) To feel that adults *urm…*care about… The young person's learning.	**Themes** Belonging linked to learning? Adult responsibility Feeling cared about Support Relationships with adults
Episode 4 – Defining belonging 2 (social and emotional) To have a positive teacher-student relationship and to feel safe. *Certain!*	**Themes** Relationship with teacher Feeling safe Relationships with adults Safety/trust
Episode 5 – Defining school community	**Themes**

That we're all in a community That feels belonging *and stuff* Just at school	Sense of belonging in the community Belonging Togetherness