An Exploration of Educational Psychologists' and Youth Justice Practitioners' Perspectives of Interagency Collaboration: Illuminating Facilitators and Barriers

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Declaration: This thesis is being submitted for the award of Doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology. I declare that this work is my own and has not been submitted for any other purpose.

Hayley Marsden (June 2024)

Overarching Abstract

This thesis begins by exploring interventions aimed at reducing youth crime, then, based on the findings, shifts its focus to consider interprofessional collaboration between Educational Psychologists (EPs) and Youth Justice Practitioners (YJPs) in England and Wales. Chapter One presents a systematic literature review considering interventions aimed at reducing youth criminal behaviour, highlighting themes of collaboration with other professionals, relationships, adopting person-centred and collaborative approaches, and barriers to maintaining the intervention's impact.

Chapter Two provides a bridging chapter, outlining the shift in the project's trajectory to focus on EP-YJP collaboration. The chapter offers a methodological and ethical critique of the methods in Chapter Three. It provides the rationale for the chosen methodology based on ethical and logistical considerations, outlines the method's strengths and limitations, and briefly discusses considered alternative methods for data collection.

Chapter three outlines a two-phase empirical project using questionnaires and then semi-structured interviews with a smaller sample of participants to explore the perspectives of EPs and YJPs on facilitators and barriers to interagency collaboration. Using cultural-historical activity theory to structure the semi-structured interview schedule, phase two aimed to explore participants' perspectives on how these barriers and facilitators arise within the context of professional practice. A third-generation activity theory model is presented, accommodated by the themes emerging from the thematic analysis of EP and YJP interview data. The findings draw attention to the complex interplay of differing worldviews, the application of a range of psychological theories and approaches in facilitating a holistic understanding of the complex needs of CYP, and how models of service delivery can create systemic tensions that both enable and constrain interprofessional collaboration between EPs and YJPs.

Chapter four reflects on my positioning, the impact conducting this research has had on my professional identity and practice and the study's possible contributions. Despite the limited literature on EPs working with the YJS, this project fosters an understanding of EP-YJP collaboration and prompts consideration of how services can best support vulnerable CYP through collaborative interagency responses.

Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1. An exploration of interventions in the Youth Justice System of England and Wales: a systematic literature review

This chapter has been prepared for publication in the *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, which focuses on adult and youth justice in the United Kingdom and Europe. This journal accepts papers with a word count of up to 8,000 words (excluding references, appendices, and tables). This chapter has a word count of 6,596 (excluding references, appendices, and tables).

Abstract

This chapter presents a systematic literature review exploring youth justice interventions in England and Wales. This review aims to illuminate what is known about youth justice interventions that aim to reduce youth criminal behaviour since the revised sentencing guidelines in 2012, which initiated a paradigm shift in Youth Justice across England and Wales. Using Petticrew and Roberts' method, I identified four heterogeneous studies exploring music, sport, multisystemic therapy, and emotion recognition interventions, reflecting the broad landscape of interventions delivered within Youth Justice. Thematic synthesis of these studies led to the identification of four themes: collaboration with other professionals, adopting a person-centred and collaborative approach, relationships, and barriers to maintaining the intervention's impact. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the potential impact for future research and professionals working with Youth Justice in England and Wales, recognising the small number of included studies.

1.1 A Brief Introduction to Youth Justice

To position this systematic literature review (SLR) focusing on what is known about youth justice (YJ) interventions in England and Wales, this brief introduction will outline the differences in legal frameworks, systems, and ages of criminal responsibility across international jurisdictions, with a specific focus on the unique context of the English and Welsh Youth Justice System (YJS). It will highlight the paradigm shift towards community-based interventions and rehabilitation over incarceration initiated by policy changes in 2012, as well as the role of the AssetPlus assessment framework in informing individualised intervention plans. The introduction also defines key terminology related to compliance, rehabilitation, and recidivism, which are central concepts in the discourse surrounding YJ in England and Wales.

The YJS in England and Wales differs from its international counterparts in several ways. The legal frameworks, systems, and ages of criminal responsibility in YJ vary internationally, directly influenced by the evolving legal and political landscapes surrounding YJ across different jurisdictions. These procedural variations directly influence the types of interventions available to children and young people (CYP), their implementation, and the rights of CYP involved with the YJS (Brown & Charles, 2021; Goldson et al., 2020). Outlining these differences will provide warrant for this systematic literature review's (SLR) focus on literature considering the English and Welsh YJS. This section will outline the differences in the approaches to youth crimes internationally, specifically considering America, Europe, and countries of the United Kingdom, as literature from these jurisdictions was returned by scoping searches.

1.1.1 United States of America

In the United States of America (USA), the age of criminal responsibility varies across states, but most set the minimum age between 6 and 12 years old (Lynch & Liefaard, 2020; Wolff et al., 2017). The legal framework governing juvenile justice is primarily shaped by state laws, with some federal guidelines and regulations. The juvenile justice system in the USA operates separately from the adult criminal justice system. In certain cases, juveniles can be tried in court as adults, depending on factors such as the severity of the offence and the individual's age (Wolff et al.,

2017). In the USA, compliance is often emphasised through court-mandated programmes, probation conditions, and the threat of incarceration or transfer to the adult criminal justice system for non-compliance.

1.1.2 Europe

Across Europe, the legal frameworks and systems governing YJ vary significantly across countries. The age of criminal responsibility ranges from 8 years old in countries including Switzerland and Portugal to 18 years old in countries such as Belgium and Spain (Aebi et al., 2021). Many European countries have separate YJSs that prioritise rehabilitation and reintegration, with a focus on educational and therapeutic interventions rather than punitive measures (Dünkel, 2022). Across European countries, compliance with interventions is typically promoted through restorative justice practices, victim-offender mediation, and community-based programmes that aim to foster accountability and responsibility in CYP involved with the YJS (Kilkelly, 2008).

1.1.3 Across the United Kingdom

1.1.3.1 Scotland

In Scotland, the age of criminal responsibility has been a subject of ongoing debate and reform efforts. Prior to 2019, the age of criminal responsibility in Scotland was 8 years old, one of the lowest in Europe (Sutherland, 2016). In 2019, the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act raised the age to 12 years old (Scottish Parliament, 2019). This change brought Scotland in line with international standards and addressed concerns about the criminalisation of young children.

The Scottish YJS operates independently from the adult justice system, emphasising early intervention, prevention, and diversion programs. Scotland's approach to youth justice prioritises voluntary compliance and engagement with such programs, recognising the importance of building trust and fostering positive relationships with CYP to encourage their active participation in rehabilitation efforts (Sutherland, 2016).

1.1.3.2 England and Wales

This SLR will focus specifically on literature published in the context of the English and Welsh YJS. As approaches to youth crime vary internationally, confining the

scope of this review to England and Wales allows for a more coherent and contextually relevant synthesis.

YJ in England and Wales has a unique legal and political landscape which will be set out in the following section. It is also unique in its interventions, assessment frameworks (e.g., AssetPlus), and policy priorities, necessitating a targeted consideration. By including literature situated within the English and Welsh YJSs, this review hopes to provide a nuanced and applicable understanding of the interventions, outcomes, and ongoing debates relevant to this geographic and jurisdictional scope.

Attempting to synthesise literature across different international contexts would pose challenges in drawing meaningful conclusions and accounting for the nuanced contextual factors that shape YJ approaches in different regions. Therefore, to ensure a focused and contextually grounded synthesis, this SLR will search for and include literature that directly pertains to the English and Welsh YJS, their distinct policies, practices, and ongoing discussions surrounding youth crime.

1.1.3.3 Terminology

Compliance, rehabilitation, and recidivism are central concepts in the discourse surrounding YJ in England and Wales. Compliance refers to the adherence of CYP involved with the YJS to the conditions and requirements imposed by the YJS, such as attending court-mandated programmes or abiding by curfews (Dubberley et al., 2015). Seymour (2023, p. 4) suggested that "there is increasing recognition within the criminal justice system that strategies that engage individuals and encourage cooperation in the first instance may be more effective in promoting compliance with legal requirements than rigid, front-end enforcement approaches." Interventions that encourage engagement and cooperation may help CYP comply with court orders, leading to subsequent desistance from offending.

Rehabilitation encompasses interventions and programmes that address the underlying factors contributing to offending behaviour. The goal is to facilitate successful reintegration into society and reduce the likelihood of future criminal involvement (Goldson & Muncie, 2015). The concept of recidivism is closely tied to rehabilitation, as it measures the rate at which CYP reoffend after undergoing interventions or serving their sentences (Jacobson et al., 2010). Recidivism rates are

often used as a metric to evaluate the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes and the overall YJS in achieving its goals of reducing youth crime and promoting positive behavioural changes (Seigle et al., 2014).

1.1.4 Positionality Statement

In undertaking this research, I am guided by a commitment to placing young people at the heart of all educational and psychological interventions and wider practice. My professional and personal values have been shaped by my belief in the potential of young people to overcome challenges when they are listened to and provided with the right support. This thesis reflects these values, as it seeks to explore and amplify the voices of those who support the often marginalised or overlooked young people involved with youth justice across England and Wales.

My values of inclusivity, respect for diverse perspectives, and a commitment to social justice have guided my approach to this research. These values influenced the selection and analysis of literature in my Systematic Literature Review by ensuring that I included a broad range of studies that reflect diverse perspectives on interventions within the YJS. I sought research that centred the needs and voices of CYP, ensuring that their experiences and challenges were at the forefront of the review. In the synthesis of findings, I prioritised themes that emphasised collaborative, person-centred approaches, as these align with my belief in placing young people at the heart of educational and psychological practice. My commitment to social justice drove me to critically evaluate how well the reviewed interventions supported equitable and meaningful outcomes for all young people, ensuring that the review underscored the importance of inclusive and ethical practices in the YJS.

Finally, my personal experiences of working in multidisciplinary teams have highlighted both the challenges and rewards of collaboration. These experiences have allowed me to approach this research with empathy and a nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in professional collaboration, ultimately shaping the questions I asked, the methods I employed, and the interpretations I made throughout.

1.2 The Youth Justice System in England and Wales

CYP under eighteen years of age who break the law in the United Kingdom have been treated differently from adults since 1909, with the YJS developing independently from the adult criminal system (Bradley, 2009). Youth offending teams (YOTs) were introduced to each local authority in England and Wales following the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to reduce crime and promote positive behaviour change (Home Office, 1998) and are overseen by the Youth Justice Board (YJB).

1.2.1 A paradigm shift from incarceration to intervention initiated by the 2012 shift in policy and guidance

The revised sentencing policy and guidelines introduced in England and Wales in 2012 arguably marked a paradigm shift in the approach to YJ, emphasising intervention and rehabilitation over incarceration (Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act, 2012; Sentencing Council, 2012). These guidelines, supported by the subsequent implementation of the AssetPlus assessment framework (Youth Justice Board, 2014), aimed to steer CYP involved with the YJS from custodial sentences and towards community-based interventions tailored to their specific needs and risk factors they pose.

The implementation of the AssetPlus assessment framework complemented the shift in the approach to reducing youth crime in England and Wales (Baker, 2014). Hampson (2018) considered AssetPlus, which replaced the previous ASSET framework, to provide a more comprehensive and structured tool for assessing the risks, vulnerabilities, and underlying factors contributing to offending. By identifying factors such as mental health, substance abuse, or family dynamics, AssetPlus is considered to facilitate the development of individualised intervention plans (Picken et al., 2019). AssetPlus's emphasis on holistic and evidence-based interventions aligned with the broader paradigm shift towards community-based interventions and away from incarceration (Case & Haines, 2021). By emphasising interventions targeting the specific factors associated with crime, these policy shifts and the AssetPlus framework aimed to promote rehabilitation, reduce reoffending rates, and minimise the detrimental effects of incarceration on CYP's development and prospects (Baker, 2014). However, researchers have raised concerns about the reliance of AssetPlus on actuarial risk assessment judgements, which may

perpetuate systemic bias and disproportionately target ethnic minority groups or those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Case & Haines, 2021). Additionally, the framework's emphasis on risk management and deficit-based assessments has been criticised for neglecting the strengths and positive attributes of CYP involved with the YJS, which could hinder effective engagement and rehabilitation (Hampson, 2018).

Despite these concerns, this shift has led to a diverse array of interventions employed by YOTs across England and Wales in their efforts to reduce youth criminal behaviour (Crawford & Cunningham, 2015). While the overarching goal of rehabilitation and diversion from custodial sentences remains consistent, the localised nature of each YOT's objectives has led to a heterogeneous landscape of intervention strategies, reflected in my scoping searches of the literature. This heterogeneity reflects the varying needs, resources, and contextual factors unique to each region, resulting in a multifaceted approach to tackling youth offending within the broader national framework (Case et al., 2022). Consequently, the implementation of community-based interventions has manifested in a range of localised programmes, initiatives, and services tailored to address the specific risk factors and vulnerabilities of CYP involved with the YJS within their respective communities (Brooks-Wilson, 2020). These interventions encompass a range of aims, including promoting compliance with court orders, reducing recidivism rates, facilitating successful rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

Therefore, this SLR will explore the question:

What is known about interventions for children and young people interacting with the youth justice system in England and Wales that aim to reduce youth criminal behaviour?

1.3 Systematic Literature Review

This section will outline the SLR, which followed the Petticrew and Roberts (2006) method. I will begin by outlining my philosophical positioning before providing the method of the SLR process.

1.3.1 Philosophical positioning

This review is positioned within the critical realist worldview. Ontologically, critical realism (CR) acknowledges the presence of a reality external to our perceptions and interpretations and recognises that our social, cultural and historical contexts shape our understanding of reality (Fleetwood, 2014). Epistemologically, CR recognises that human knowledge of reality is inherently partial or fallible (Archer et al., 2013). Therefore, CR positions our understanding as shaped by our perspectives, experiences, and methods of investigation. CR embraces epistemic relativism, acknowledging that different individuals and communities have different perspectives and interpretations of reality (Bhaskar, 2013b).

CR rejects the assumption that the impact of an intervention is based on its inherent qualities (Blackwood et al., 2010) but are the result of the complex interaction of factors within the cultural, social and organisational context in which the intervention is delivered (Clegg, 2005). CR is therefore considered an appropriate philosophical position for this SLR due to its compatibility with the complex nature of social phenomena and the research purpose of understanding underlying mechanisms of change within interventions (Mingers & Standing, 2017).

In adopting this philosophical stance, I acknowledge my own interpretive position within the synthesis and recognise the provisionality of the findings reached. In outlining my philosophical influences, I hope to be transparent about my positioning within the interpretations made within this review (Lawani, 2021).

1.3.2 Method overview and SLR process

Petticrew and Roberts' (2006) systematic review method was followed as it provides a rigorous approach to searching and selecting papers (see Table 1).

Table 1. Petticrew and Roberts' (2006) systematic literature review method: an outline of the process with dates for each set of actions.

Stage	Actions	Dates
Searching	Scoping searches of databases Clearly defining the review question.	October 2022- December 2022

	Determining the nature of studies needed to answer the review question.	
	Carrying out a comprehensive literature search. Screening yielded studies for adherence to the inclusion criteria.	January 2023
Mapping	Quality appraisal of included studies.	February 2023
	Extracting relevant data from included studies.	March 2023
Synthesising	Synthesis of the studies, considering heterogeneity.	May-June 2023
	Communication of review findings.	June 2023- May 2024

1.3.3 Searching the literature

Scoping searches demonstrated that there are heterogenous interventions in literature conducted in the area of YJ, requiring a broad exploratory question considering interventions aiming to reduce youth crime (Haines, 2014). Due to the broad nature of my review question and the range of research methods in studies returned from scoping searches, I included qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods papers in my search criteria. Different methods provide different perspectives and insights into the review topic and are considered to reduce bias in the review process (Pluye et al., 2009). This presented challenges during synthesis and interpretation as I had to consider the heterogeneity of studies and the compatibility of the different methodologies (Petticrew et al., 2013).

Petticrew and Roberts (2006) encourage the use of a PICOC table (Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome and Context) to facilitate the comprehensive identification of studies relevant to the research question. Scoping searches were used to determine the search terms and appropriate synonyms relevant to each area of the PICOC table (see Table 2). Broad search terms were used to generate relevant literature that could be reduced using the inclusion and exclusion criteria. I

employed search terms associated with international YJ to include literature considering the context of England and Wales that may use terminology reflecting international YJS or published in international journals. My scoping searches identified a range of research utilising terms associated with international justice but conducted within the UK YJS, thus warranting their inclusion within the search terms used.

Table 2 outlines the search terms used in this SLR of published literature in the Web of Science, EBSCO, Ovid, and Scopus databases. Newcastle University Library suggests these databases as relevant to educational psychology and youth justice. Others (education abstracts and British Education Index) were ruled out following scoping searches, as they yielded few relevant papers.

Table 2. Search terms to be input into the online databases during the comprehensive literature search phase

PICOC Search Area	Search Terms
Population	Youth* OR Young* OR Adolesc* OR Teen* OR Juvenile* AND Offend* OR Crim* OR Justice*
Intervention	Inteven* OR Strateg* OR Program*
Comparison	Effect* OR Impact* OR Outcome* OR Consequence*
Outcome	Recidiv* OR Reoffen* OR Recommit* OR "Repeat crime"
Context	England OR Wales

I undertook a systematic search of published literature in January 2023. In addition to searching online databases, I hand-searched journals considered relevant to the review available through Newcastle University Library: Youth Justice and Juvenile Justice, Justice Evaluation Journal, Educational Psychology in Practice, and the special issue of Educational and Child Psychology: Responding to the needs of children who offend (39(2)).

I included the criteria conducted in England or Wales to aid the synthesis process. Research returned by searches was predominantly conducted in America and considered the American juvenile justice system. This was unsurprising given the inclusion of international terminology in my search terms, but it enabled studies considering the English and Welsh systems that utilised internationally associated

terminology and published in internationally aimed crime journals to be returned in the searches.

The online database searches generated 673 results, with 10 studies located through hand searches. After deleting duplicates using EndNote and hand screening, 341 papers remained. I read the title and abstract of these studies to remove studies not considered relevant according to the criteria outlined in Table 3.

Table 3. PICOC Table outlining the definitions and rationale for each inclusion criterion.

Category	Definition	Rationale
Population	Participants aged between 10 and 17 years	The age at which CYP are supported by the YJS in England and Wales. Some papers considered CYP aged 18 and over when they would have transitioned into wider adult services and thus were excluded.
Intervention	Non-pharmacological treatment	Studies that were specifically a pharmacological treatment targeted at reducing criminal behaviour. Studies which focussed on pharmacological interventions to reduce criminal behaviour were therefore excluded. In the studies I have included, it may be that CYP are accessing medication for ADHD, anxiety or other medical needs, but this was not the focus of the reported interventions, none of which included a pharmacological treatment.
Outcome	Aims to reduce youth criminal behaviour	The YJS aims to reduce youth criminal behaviour, and intervention is considered a key method of achieving this aim (Youth Justice Board, 2021).

Context	The study takes place within England or Wales	England and Wales follow parallel systems for YJ, determined by legislation published by the UK Government.
Time	Studies published since 2012	The sentencing guidelines and policy shift in YJ in England and Wales were revised in 2012 to promote a shift away from incarceration towards an interventionist approach (Sentencing Council, 2012).

Title and abstract screening reduced the number of studies to 47 (see Figure 1). If it was unclear from the title or abstract if a study met the inclusion criteria, the study was included for full paper screen. The full texts of the remaining papers were accessed to assess for correspondence with the inclusion criteria. This resulted in 4 studies: 2 qualitative (Parker et al., 2014; Tighe et al., 2012), 1 mixed method (Caulfield et al., 2022), 1 quantitative (Hubble et al., 2015), that met each of the inclusion criteria. These studies were subject to forward and backward searches to identify any relevant papers that were not identified in the database or hand searches, but this yielded no additional papers.

Figure 1. A diagram outlining the search and screening process in this systematic review process.
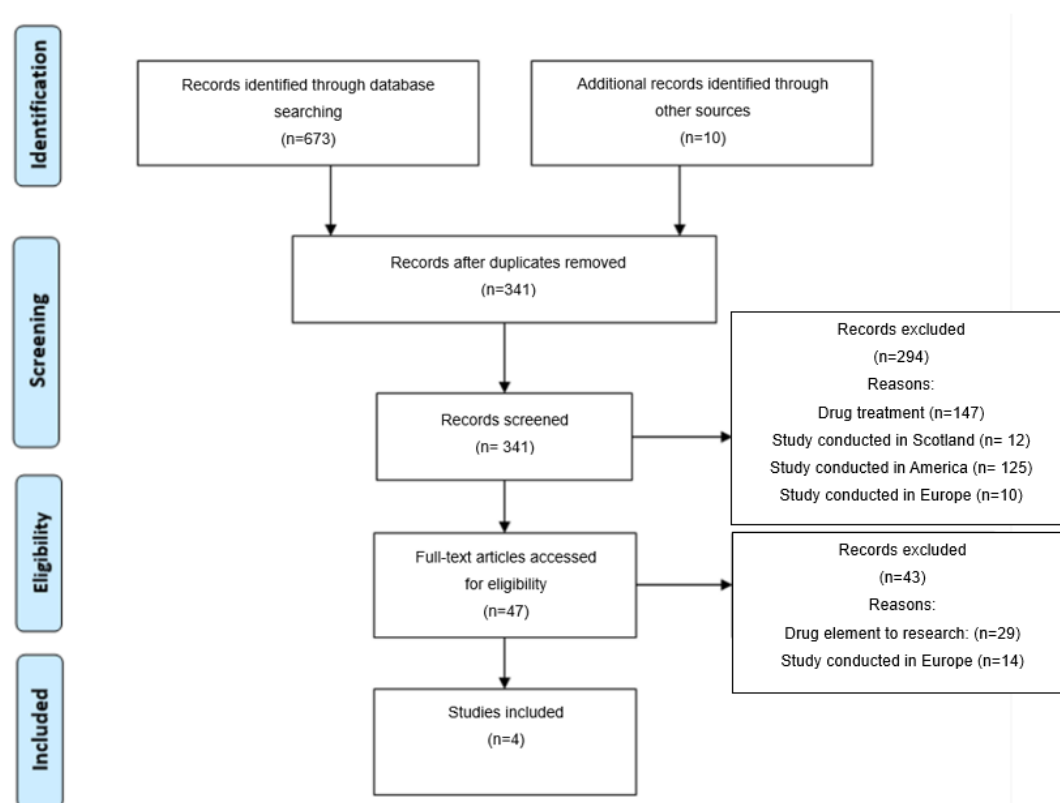
1.3.4 Quality Appraisal

The assessment of quality in SLRs is complex, particularly when synthesising studies employing diverse methods. Initially, the inclusion of only peer-reviewed literature was presumed to ensure a baseline quality (Toye et al., 2013). However, this assumption fails to acknowledge the inherent philosophical tensions and divergent conceptualisations of quality that permeate different research paradigms. Recognising these complexities, the decision to use a tool capable of accommodating diverse methodologies was guided by Petticrew and Roberts' (2006) assertion that quality assessment should determine if "the study is adequate to answer the research question" (p.125).

The Mixed Methods Assessment Tool (MMAT) (Hong et al., 2018) was selected for its ability to appraise the methodological quality of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies. The MMAT acknowledges the distinct underlying assumptions of each methodological approach yet enables a systematic evaluation of transparency and reporting across designs. Each included study was interrogated

using the corresponding MMAT criteria, allowing for an assessment of key methodological elements.

I recognise the subjectivity in this quality appraisal process, particularly as this was conducted by a single researcher. The MMAT's format ensured that the judgements I made were grounded in the tool's prescribed questions, fostering rigour and transparency in my decision-making process. No studies were excluded based on quality, as the quality of all papers was judged adequate. The outcomes are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool Outcomes.

Included Paper	Category of Study Designs	Methodological Quality Criteria	Response			
			Yes	No	Can't tell	Comments
Parker, Meek and Lewis (2014)	Qualitative	Are there clear research questions?	X			Research questions are written as prose within the article rather than explicitly stated.
		Does the data collected address the research question?	X			
		Is the qualitative approach appropriate to answer the research question?	X			
		Are the qualitative data collection methods adequate to address the research question?	X			
		Are the findings adequately derived from the data?	X			Sample all male.
			X			
		Is the interpretation of results sufficiently substantiated by data?				Interview questions and quotes were used to support themes.
			X			
		Is there coherence between qualitative data sources, collection, analysis and interpretation?				
Tighe, Pistrang, Casdagli,	Qualitative	Are there clear research questions?	X			Research questions written in prose rather
		Does the data collected address the research question?	X			

			X		than explicitly
Baruch		Is the qualitative approach appropriate to answer the research question?	X		than explicitly stated.
and					
Butler		Are the qualitative data collection methods adequate to address the research question?	X		Quotes used to
(2012)					support themes.
		Are the findings adequately derived from the data?	X		The absence of
			X		questions may be
		Is the interpretation of results sufficiently substantiated by data?			a result of the
			X		semi-structured
		Is there coherence between qualitative data sources, collection, analysis and interpretation?			nature of interviews where additional questions that generated quotes were absent from the paper.
Hubble,	Quantitative	Are there clear research questions?	X		Research
Bowen,	non-	Does the data collected address the research question?	X		questions written
Moore &	randomised				as prose within
Van		Are participants representative of the target population?	X		the article rather

Goozen (2015)		Are the measurements appropriate regarding both the outcome and intervention?	X	than explicitly stated.
		Are there complete outcome data?	X	
		Are the confounders accounted for in the design and analysis?	X (see comment)	Possible confounding variables, including substance use, self-reported aggression, opportunity, and maltreatment, were mentioned but not considered in analysis or interpretation.
		During the study period, is the intervention administered as intended?	X	
Caulfield, Jolly, Simpson, & Devi-	Mixed methods	Are there clear research questions?	X	Quotes from interviews were used to support themes.
		Does the data collected address the research question?	X	
			X	

McGleish (2020)	Is there adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question?	X	
	Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question?	X	
	Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted?	X	
	Are divergences and inconsistencies between qualitative and quantitative results adequately addressed?	X	
	Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?		

1.3.5 Overview of the included studies

This systematic process yielded 4 studies: 2 qualitative (Parker et al., 2014; Tighe et al., 2012), 1 mixed method (Caulfield et al., 2022), 1 quantitative (Hubble et al., 2015), that met the inclusion criteria. Each study considered a different intervention; Caulfield et al. (2022) a music programme, Tighe et al. (2012) multi-systemic family therapy (MST), Parker et al. (2014) a sports programme and Hubble et al. (2015) a facial expression recognition intervention to support CYP in recognising negative emotional responses in others.

1.3.5.1 Heterogeneity in the aims of the included studies

The studies reported on interventions which differed in how they aimed to reduce youth crime. Hubble et al. (2015) aimed to improve negative emotion recognition abilities by enhancing their ability to recognise and understand negative emotions in others. The intervention sought to equip CYP involved with the YJS with skills that could potentially mitigate antisocial or aggressive responses, thereby decreasing the likelihood of future offending. Caulfield et al. (2022) explored the impact of music-based interventions for CYP involved in the YJS, aiming to understand how these might positively influence rehabilitation and desistance from crime. Parker et al. (2014) investigated the experiences of male CYP involved with the YJS participating in a sporting intervention within a youth prison, examining the potential benefits of physical activity and sport in promoting positive outcomes and reducing recidivism. Tighe et al. (2012) focused on the experiences of families undergoing MST, an intensive, family-based intervention for CYP involved with the YJS, aiming to understand the therapeutic processes and outcomes.

A summary of the characteristics of each included studies can be found in Table 5.

Table 5. Summary of the characteristics of the included studies.

Included study	Research Question	Aim	Definition of impact on youth crime	Design and measures	Outline of Intervention	Analysis method	Reported findings
Caulfield et al. (2022)	How does music participation impact young people in contact with the criminal justice system?	To understand the impact of music participation on young people in contact with the criminal justice system.	"improving the level of compliance and successful completion of court orders among project participants" (p.80)	Mixed methods; interviews and measures of wellbeing, engagement, and behaviours.	Music-making programme delivered in youth justice settings. Participants: 42 Mean age: 15.93 years Duration: 12 weeks	Thematic analysis of interviews, statistical analysis of quantitative data.	Music participation improved wellbeing, engagement, behaviours and compliance among participants.
Hubble et al. (2015)	Can improving emotion recognition abilities reduce subsequent offending behaviours in young offenders?	To investigate if improving negative emotion recognition abilities in young offenders can reduce subsequent criminal behaviour.	"crimes committed in the 6 months following the second emotion recognition test" (p.4)	Quantitative (Randomised controlled trial); Crime data (number and severity of offences), socio-economic status and IQ (WASI), personality measure	Computer-based facial affect recognition training program. Participants: 4 Mean age: 16.21 years Duration: 23 days	ANOVA, regression analyses.	Young offenders who received facial affect recognition training showed significantly improved negative emotion recognition abilities (p < 0.001) and reduced subsequent criminal convictions (35% reduced rate) compared to controls over 6-month follow-up.

					(Youth Psychopathy Inventory), Facial emotional recognition measure (150 slides on a laptop displaying facial expressions)		
Parker et al. (2014)	What are male young offenders' experiences of a sporting intervention in a youth prison?	To explore male young offenders' motivations and experiences of participating in a sporting intervention in a youth prison, with a specific focus on the perceived psychosocial and rehabilitative impact.	"perceived psychosocial and rehabilitative impact" (p.384)	Qualitative Semi-structured interviews.	Sporting intervention program delivered in a youth prison. Participants: 12 Mean age: not reported Duration: 12 weeks	Thematic analysis.	Participants reported positive experiences, including improved self-confidence, teamwork skills, and motivation for future participation in sports and education.

| Tighe et al. (2012) | What are families' experiences of multisystemic therapy for young offenders? | To explore families' experiences of the therapeutic processes and outcomes of multisystemic therapy for young offenders. | "improve the young person's behaviour and to prevent reoffending" (p.1) | Qualitative Semi-structured interviews. | Multisystemic therapy for young offenders and their families.

Participants: 16
Mean age 15.3 years
Duration: 23 weeks | Interpretative phenomenological analysis. | Families reported positive experiences, including improved family relationships, communication, and problem-solving skills. Challenges included the intensity of the therapy and difficulties maintaining changes. |

1.4 Approach to Synthesis

Thematic synthesis was chosen to synthesise the findings of the included studies due to its ability to integrate diverse forms of evidence, including qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods research (Thomas & Harden, 2008). This is relevant to this review, which includes studies employing a range of methodological approaches.

This systematic approach to synthesising evidence is particularly valuable when addressing complex interventions and phenomena (Heyvaert et al., 2016), as is the case in this review of interventions within the YJS. Its alignment with CR further reinforced the decision to employ thematic synthesis (Fryer, 2022). CR acknowledges the presence of an objective reality whilst recognising that our understanding of reality is shaped by our perspectives, experiences, and methods of investigation (Bhaskar, 2013b). Thematic synthesis embraces this philosophical position by enabling the identification of themes and patterns across studies while also allowing for inductive interpretation and generation of collective meaning (Thomas & Harden, 2008).

I chose thematic synthesis to analyse my secondary data due to its unique advantages in addressing the challenges presented by the limited and diverse literature available (Thomas & Harden, 2008). This approach aligns well with the aims of my systematic literature review, offering a less interpretive method that still provides a systematic and transparent process for generating a comprehensive understanding of the research topic (Atkins et al., 2008). Thematic synthesis excels in integrating diverse data types, allowing me to qualitatively interpret quantitative data and draw meaningful themes across all methodologies - a task less straightforward with other methods like narrative synthesis (Madden et al., 2018). While meta-ethnography can be applied through a critical realist lens, it typically requires more detailed data than was available in some of the included studies. In contrast, thematic synthesis is better suited for synthesizing the "thinner" data often found in quantitative and mixed-methods research (Atkins et al., 2008). I did consider a convergent-integrated approach but ultimately decided against it, concerned that its complexity and time demands might lead to overlooking important interconnections in the data (Dixon-Woods et al., 2005). Ultimately, thematic

synthesis provided the most effective way to systematically analyse and synthesise the heterogeneous studies included in this review, allowing for a nuanced understanding of interventions in youth justice.

Thematic synthesis offers a systematic and transparent process for integrating diverse forms of evidence, facilitating an understanding of the research topic. I considered conducting a convergent integrated approach involving separately synthesising the qualitative and quantitative data using appropriate methods (e.g. thematic synthesis for qualitative and meta-analysis for quantitative) and then integrating the synthesised findings into a final combined interpretation (Pluye & Hong, 2014). This method was excluded due to its complexity and time demands, particularly given the heterogeneity of the included studies. Furthermore, I was unsure if the convergent integrated approach would capture the interconnectedness and interplay between the qualitative and quantitative findings, which can be better addressed through thematic synthesis (Dixon-Woods et al., 2005).

The thematic synthesis was informed by the Braun and Clarke (2006) approach (see Table 6), which is widely recognised as a rigorous method for identifying, analysing and reporting themes within primary data. When applying this method to a SLR, it is important to consider that the data being analysed is secondary. Unlike primary research, where researchers collect and analyse raw data from participants, an SLR involves synthesising and interpreting findings reported across multiple existing studies. This difference in data sources necessitates some adaptations to the thematic synthesis process, such as qualitising quantitative data from included studies by converting statistical results into narrative form to allow integration with the qualitative findings (Nzabonimpa, 2018).

Table 6. A table outlining the stages of the thematic synthesis (drawing on Braun and Clarke (2006)).

Stage of thematic synthesis	Method	Evidence from process
Familiarisation	Papers were read and reread, and personal notes were taken to familiarise myself with each included paper. I have used note-taking throughout my doctoral studies when engaging with	See Appendix A

	literature. I have found that taking my own notes enables me to become more familiar with the literature I am reading as I read each paper more closely.	
Line by Line coding	I used Nvivo14 to generate line-by-line codes for each included paper. I coded all text describing the intervention and the outcomes. This enabled me to identify common themes within each study and highlight anomalies. As my research question did not assume any prior knowledge about the factors associated with interventions in YJ, I inductively coded each line by semantic meaning. When coding each new paper, if a previous code was considered appropriate, these were applied. I then re-read each paper to see if any codes generated before or after it had been coded were more appropriate to ensure rigour and consistency. This led to the generation of 58 codes.	See Appendix B
Development of descriptive themes	I hand-grouped codes according to semantic meaning. To do this, I transferred themes onto paper and Post-it notes, which enabled me to move themes around more easily than using Nvivo14.	See Appendix **C**
Reviewing descriptive themes	I reviewed each descriptive theme for meaning. This stage required me to move some codes into different descriptive themes, where I felt they	

	shared a mutual semantic meaning. I particularly focused on descriptive themes with few codes to see if they better fit into wider descriptive categories. This led to the development of new descriptive codes that I perceive better fit the semantic meaning of each code. This led to the generation of 12 descriptive codes (see Table 7).	
	1.5 Findings and Discussion, where each analytic theme is discussed independently, includes maps of how each of these descriptive themes contributes to the analytic theme.	
Development of analytic themes	Descriptive themes were then organised by hand into five analytic themes. The generated analytic themes were formed of themes that were considered similar, enabling them to be grouped for overarching meaning.	See Appendix D

The initial coding and theme development stages involved extracting and organising relevant data from the results, findings, and discussion sections of the included studies. I considered the level of interpretation present in the reported data, as authors may have already applied their own analytical lenses. The synthesis process then involved iteratively comparing and contrasting the extracted data across studies, identifying patterns, similarities, and differences to generate descriptive and analytical themes that capture the overarching insights. The development of themes from the included papers can be found in Table 7.

Table 7. A map of theme development

Meta Theme (analytic)	Sub-Themes (descriptive)	Caulfield et al., (2022)	Tighe et al., (2012)	Parker et al., (2014)	Hubble et al., (2015)
Collaboration with other professionals	Involvement of professionals from diverse fields	X	X	X	X
	Skill development	X	X	X	X
	Holistic understanding and tailored interventions	X	X		
	Safe expression and learning environment	X		X	
Adopting a person-centred and collaborative approach	Involving CYP in shaping interventions	X	X	X	
	Tailoring interventions to individual needs	X	X	X	X

	and contexts				
	Building therapeutic relationships	X	X		
	Practical considerations	X	X		X
Relationships	Family Relationships	X	X		
	Peer Relationships	X	X	X	
Barriers to maintenance	Abrupt ending of interventions		X	X	
	Lack of holistic change		X	X	

1.5 Findings and Discussion

This section describes the themes arising from the thematic synthesis in response to the research question:

What is known about interventions for children and young people interacting with the youth justice system in England and Wales that aim to reduce youth criminal behaviour?

Four themes emerged from the thematic synthesis from the included studies that I interpret as contributing to the intervention's intended reduction in youth crime (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. A model to demonstrate the factors that influence interventions that aim to reduce recidivism in the youth offending population.
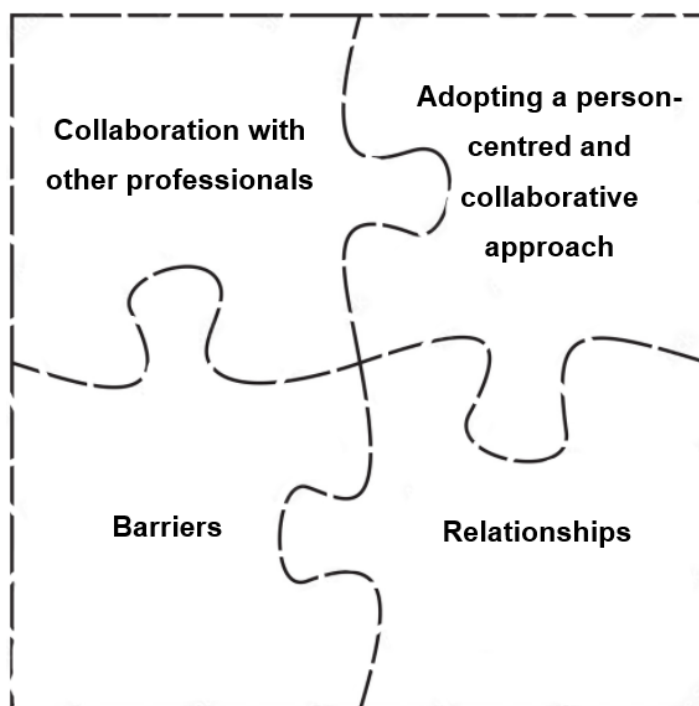
I propose that these themes are interconnected and may overlap in their application, but also appear to represent distinct aspects of interventions within the YJS. Collaboration with other professionals highlights the importance of multiagency teamwork, while relationships emphasise the significance of social support networks. Person-centred and collaborative approaches speak to the overarching philosophies and practices which might promote youth engagement, ownership, and tailored interventions. Each theme will now be discussed and situated within the wider literature.

1.5.1 Collaboration with other professionals

In each of the included studies, the YOT collaborated with other professionals to deliver interventions (see Figure 3). The collaboration between YOTs and external professionals appeared to facilitate the development of interventions that targeted both hard skills (e.g. music production, sport) and soft skills (e.g. emotion recognition, family relationships) (Caulfield et al., 2022; Hubble et al., 2015; Parker et al., 2014). This multifaceted approach may align with the Good Lives Model (Ward & Brown, 2004), which emphasises the importance of addressing both risk factors and promoting positive development through the acquisition of skills and resources (Mallion et al., 2020; Ward & Fortune, 2013).

Figure 3. Thematic Network of Subgroups and Descriptive Themes as organised into Analytical Theme 'Collaboration with other professionals.''

Whilst the acquisition of hard skills appears to have improved domain-specific skills, the studies also reported subsequent impacts on soft skills, such as improved emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and communication (Caulfield et al., 2022; Parker et al., 2014). This is congruent with literature considering the transferability of skills, suggesting that interventions targeting specific skills can have subsequent implications for personal and social development (Heckman & Kautz, 2012).

The included studies involved various professionals/practitioners (e.g. from sports, music, and education). In each intervention, professionals worked alongside CYP to listen to their stories and help CYP express themselves through a positive outlet rather than through their behaviour (Caulfield et al., 2022; Parker et al., 2014). In the sports intervention, coaches played a crucial role in facilitating this positive expression. It appears that they fostered an environment where CYP could "let off steam" and discuss issues, providing pastoral support and guidance (Parker et al., 2014, p. 389). The physical nature of sports is suggested to allow participants to express themselves through movement and physical activity as the coaches listened to their stories and offered advice, creating a safe space for both physical and emotional expression. Similarly, music professionals may have facilitated self-expression through lyric writing and music production. Participants reported being able to "open up" in ways they had not experienced in other settings (Caulfield et al., 2022, p. 76). The professionals reported actively listening to the CYP's thoughts and feelings, creating an environment where they could share their stories and express themselves through music. Providing opportunities for CYP to explore and develop positive outlets is considered beneficial in promoting future desistance from crime, an idea promoted since the work of Maruna (2001).

Working alongside professionals who shared a similar approach and philosophy of providing supportive, non-judgemental guidance was perceived positively by CYP participating in the music intervention (Caulfield et al., 2022). The CYP reported that these professionals demonstrate genuine care, support, and encouragement whilst also providing constructive feedback. One participant shared, "They care. They support and encourage. They challenge you if you mess up. They're not only music producers, they constantly support you" (Caulfield et al., 2022, p. 77). This positive perception captured in qualitative data suggests the importance of establishing a nurturing environment, balanced with appropriate guidance and accountability, to

foster meaningful engagement and positive outcomes for CYP involved with interventions in the YJS. This emerging sense of feeling supported, understood, and guided is subjective and may be challenging to assess through standardised scales or metrics, thus preventing this from emerging from the quantitative measures; quantitative measures may struggle to encapsulate the experiences and perceptions of CYP regarding the quality of their relationships with intervention providers.

The involvement of external professionals who bring fresh perspectives and diverse experiences is considered to complement the efforts of YJPs in engaging CYP (Underwood & Washington, 2016). While YJPs possess valuable expertise and skills in working with CYP, external professionals may bring different backgrounds and approaches that are suggested to enhance an intervention. Caulfield et al. (2022) identified that CYP perceived the music professionals as less constrained by the inherent power dynamics and stigma associated with the YJS, allowing for more trusting and open relationships. This may align with the principles of desistance-focused approaches, which emphasise the importance of fostering respectful, non-judgemental relationships that empower individuals and promote agency (Caulfield et al., 2022; Maruna, 2001).

The involvement of professionals external to the YJS in delivering interventions in the included studies may help to create an environment conducive to building trusting and motivational relationships with participants (Caulfield et al., 2022; Parker et al., 2014). Participants expressed a greater willingness to receive feedback and guidance from these professionals, sharing that they "don't even care if it was criticism because I know he's saying it for a reason; I know he's not saying it to put me down; he's saying it to make me up." (Caulfield et al., 2022, p. 78).

The integration of diverse professional perspectives in YJ interventions has been suggested in wider literature to be a facilitator of positive change within intervention studies (Case & Haines, 2021; Haight et al., 2014). This collaborative approach, which is considered to unite the expertise and viewpoints of various professionals, may enrich the understanding and approach to the complex issues that CYP involved with the YJS face, thereby helping to develop comprehensive, tailored interventions (Davis & Clark, 2023). Professionals in the papers reviewed collaborated with YJPs, which is considered to create a multifaceted understanding

of CYP's circumstances (Caulfield et al., 2022), and may support the delivery of interventions that enable CYP to make changes in their lives (Tighe et al., 2012). CYP shared that this professional team "was the support mechanism for me ... having [the therapist] there was someone to talk to as well, not just sort ways forward, it was having the support element which I think helped me sort of deal with things." (Tighe et al., 2012, p. 6).

Collaboration, according to the included studies, was about creating an environment where the combined expertise and efforts of the professionals produced an environment where CYP could express themselves freely, learn from others and develop new practical and social skills to take forward in their lives. For example, the involvement of psychologists and criminologists may have contributed to a deeper understanding of the interplay between emotion recognition difficulties, psychological factors and offending behaviour, leading to a more comprehensive intervention (Hubble et al., 2015). In the MST intervention (Tighe et al., 2012), the collaboration between therapists, family counsellors and YJPs may have contributed to a holistic approach that addressed the CYP's needs, broader family dynamics and environmental influences considered to contribute to offending. In the sports intervention (Parker et al., 2014), the collaboration of sports coaches, educators, and YJPs may have fostered an environment where participants could develop physical skills and essential social skills such as teamwork, conflict resolution, and emotional regulation. The involvement of professionals from other fields may help to develop a holistic understanding of a CYP's behaviours and support them to make positive changes in their lives.

This collaborative perspective within each of the included studies led to the development of interventions that may be more attuned to the needs of the participants, who reflected that "We talk about a lot of things, you know, like life, what's going on, what you can do in the future, things like that" (Caulfield et al., 2022, p. 77).

1.5.2 Adopting a person-centred and collaborative approach

Each included study contributed to the theme adoption of person-centred and collaborative approaches within YJ interventions. This theme highlights the role of actively involving CYP in decision-making, tailoring interventions to their unique

needs, interests, and aspirations, and fostering therapeutic relationships built on empathy, respect, and non-judgmental attitudes (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Thematic Network of Subgroups and Descriptive Themes as organised into Analytical Theme 'Adopting a person-centred and collaborative approach'

The active engagement of CYP in shaping and co-creating interventions may have been a factor contributing to the outcomes of the intervention. Caulfield et al. (2022) involved participants in the design and delivery of the music intervention, which may have enabled CYP to take ownership and shape the direction of the sessions. This participatory approach appears to resonate with the principles of positive YJ, which aims to empower CYP as active agents in their change process (Duke et al., 2020). Parker et al. (2014) suggests that involving CYP in decision-making processes related to a sporting intervention fostered a sense of ownership and sustained engagement, underscoring the importance of actively involving CYP in shaping interventions to enhance their investment and participation. As one participant shared, "I'd been here a couple of weeks and the Gym lads [PE Department staff] said 'Do you wanna play football?' and I said I'd give it a go […] And then every other sport they said 'Do you wanna have a go at this, do you wanna have a go at that?' and so I had a go" (Parker et al., 2014, p. 388).

Each study highlighted the role of tailoring interventions to the specific needs, characteristics, and contexts of CYP. Hubble et al. (2015) suggests that interventions tailored to the unique needs and characteristics of CYP involved with the YJS are more likely to be effective in reducing reoffending. This emphasis on individualisation aligns with person-centred approaches, which promote the consideration of individual circumstances and the collaborative planning of interventions to best support each CYP (Day, 2023).

The development of therapeutic relationships characterised by empathy, care, understanding, and nonjudgmental attitudes emerged in the synthesis as approaches to consider within interventions. Tighe et al. (2012) reported that MST therapists adopted a collaborative approach, which they suggest elicited a sense of partnership with families by treating them as experts on their situations. Caulfield et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of practitioners developing connections with CYP by sharing their own experiences and views, fostering an environment of mutual understanding and trust.

The person-centred and collaborative approaches employed by practitioners delivering interventions appears to extend to practical considerations, such as ensuring work took place at times convenient to families and drawing on CYP's

interests (Caulfield et al., 2022; Tighe et al., 2012), thus demonstrating a commitment to a client-centred approach.

This theme appears to support the adoption of person-centred and collaborative practices within YJ interventions. By actively involving CYP in decision-making processes, tailoring interventions to their specific needs and aspirations, and fostering therapeutic relationships built on empathy, respect, and non-judgment, these interventions appear to align with principles of positive YJ and promote engagement, ownership, and ultimately, positive outcomes for some CYP in contact with the YJS.

1.5.3 Relationships

This theme highlights the role of relationships within interventions aimed at reducing criminal behaviour among CYP interacting with the YJS in England and Wales. The synthesis suggests that fostering positive relationships with family and peers may facilitate positive change for CYP (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Thematic Network of Subgroups and Descriptive Themes as organised into Analytical Theme 'Relationships'
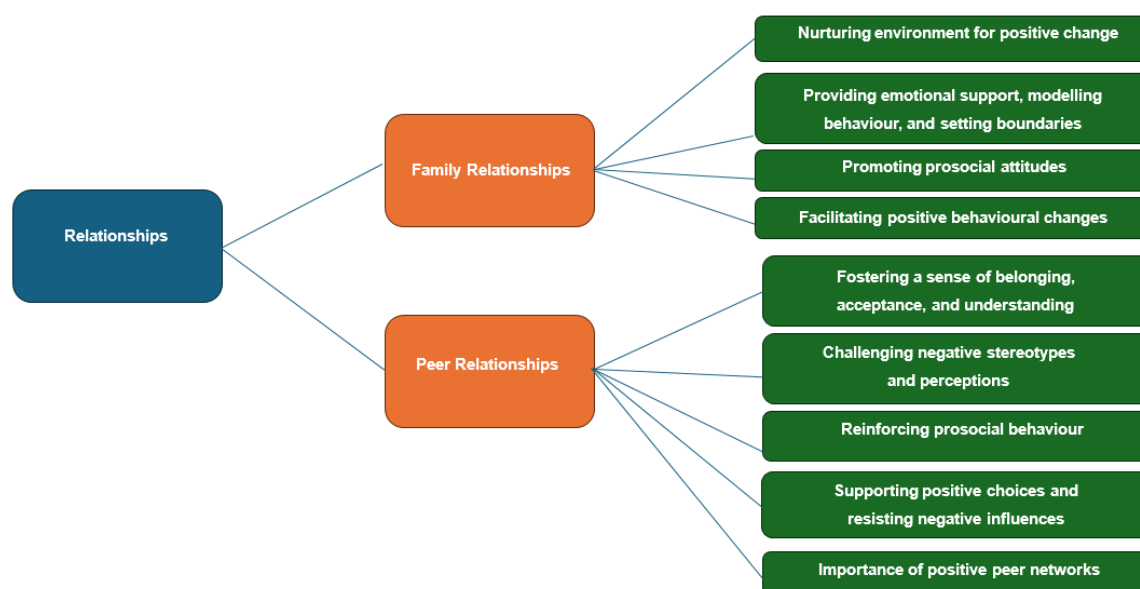
1.5.3.1 Family Relationships

Family relationships may contribute to facilitating positive behavioural changes and promoting prosocial attitudes (Caulfield et al., 2022; Tighe et al., 2012). Tighe et al. (2012) suggested that MST focuses on supporting parents in setting boundaries and

improving emotional regulation, which may lead to "closer and warmer relationships" (p. 6). One participant shared, "She [daughter] talks to us more, she listens to us more. She concentrates more on what we do, what we say, how we react" (p. 6). This indicates that strengthening family dynamics seemed to be important to increase compliance, reduce aggression, and a calm demeanour among CYP. The importance of positive family relationships is further suggested by Caulfield et al. (2022), where participants reported improved communication skills and a reduction in conflicts. As one participant described, "I don't argue with my family anymore" (p. 74). These ideas appear to align with research highlighting the protective and nurturing role of families in deterring criminal involvement and supporting positive integration into society (Pettus-Davis, 2021).

Families, in their various forms and complexities, may provide a stable environment that promotes positive behavioural change, facilitates the development of prosocial attitudes and encourages adherence to social norms (Tighe et al., 2012). Therefore, the family role is considered active and dynamic in shaping the trajectories of CYP involved with the YJS. Interventions that consider and support the development of positive family relationships are suggested to be important in diverting CYP from further offending behaviour (Roberts et al., 2017). It is important to consider that for CYP in the care system interacting with the YJS, the role of family relationships may be more complex and nuanced (Staines, 2017). In such cases, fostering positive relationships with caregivers, social workers, and other supportive adults may help to provide a stable and nurturing environment that facilitates positive behavioural change (Goldson & Muncie, 2015).

Family relationships may influence the CYP's capacity to internalise and enact the principles of behaviour conducive to following a law-abiding life. Tighe et al. (2012) suggests this may be achieved through providing emotional support, modelling appropriate behaviours and providing clear boundaries and expectations. These elements only appeared central to the MST intervention. CYP reported that they became "calmer, more helpful around the house, less violent and aggressive, and more compliant with rules such as curfews and bedtimes" (Tighe et al., 2012, p. 8).

1.5.3.2 Peer relationships

In three interventions, participants reflected on the development of their relationships with peers (Caulfield et al., 2022; Parker et al., 2014; Tighe et al., 2012).

Parker et al. (2014) suggests that group sports facilitated the development of new peer relationships, challenging participants' preconceptions. One participant shared, "You think that everyone's from London and are just gangsters an' everything, but it's not like that… When you get to know them, they're not actually people that are like that; they're totally different" (p. 390). This illustrates how positive peer interactions may promote a sense of belonging, acceptance, and understanding, refuting negative stereotypes and influences. Peer relationships are suggested to help CYP feel understood, accepted and valued, which may be important during challenging times, including involvement with the YJS. Furthermore, interacting with a range of new peers may challenge CYP's perceptions of others (Parker et al., 2014), helping them to see other CYP as like-minded. This may have been particularly important for CYP who have been involved with gang-related crimes, where CYP from other areas are often positioned as enemies (Miller, 2020).

Caulfield et al. (2022) highlighted how improved communication skills developed through the music intervention extended to peer relationships and may have contributed to increased respect for others' perspectives. Positive peer relationships may reinforce prosocial behaviour, support CYP in making positive choices, and help them resist negative influences associated with criminal activities or organised crime groups (Goldson & Muncie, 2015). This is particularly pertinent within the current organised crime landscape in England and Wales as CYP with involvement from the YJS appear to be increasingly targeted by organised crime groups (Goldson & Muncie, 2015; Robinson et al., 2019). These groups capitalise on the difficulties faced by CYP in separating themselves from their offender identities, leveraging their familiarity with the YJS to draw them into organised crime (Firmin, 2020). In such contexts, the presence of positive peer relationships and support networks may be beneficial in counteracting these negative influences and providing CYP with alternative pathways towards prosocial behaviour and reintegration into society (Parker et al., 2014).

The influence of peer relationships may encourage prosocial behaviour and discourage further engagement in criminal activities among CYP involved with the YJS (Eassey & Buchanan, 2015; Parker et al., 2014). The support and reinforcement provided by positive peer networks may empower CYP to make constructive choices, resist negative influences, and attempt to distance themselves from the ascribed offender identity that often persists even after interactions with the YJS (Bateman, 2020; Goldson & Muncie, 2015).

1.5.4 Barriers to Maintenance

The included studies suggest positive changes facilitated by the interventions, with two qualitative studies highlighting potential barriers to the maintenance of change (Parker et al., 2014; Tighe et al., 2012). This theme illuminates some factors that may undermine the interventions' enduring impact (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Thematic Network of Subgroups and Descriptive Themes as organised into Analytical Theme 'Barriers to maintenance.''
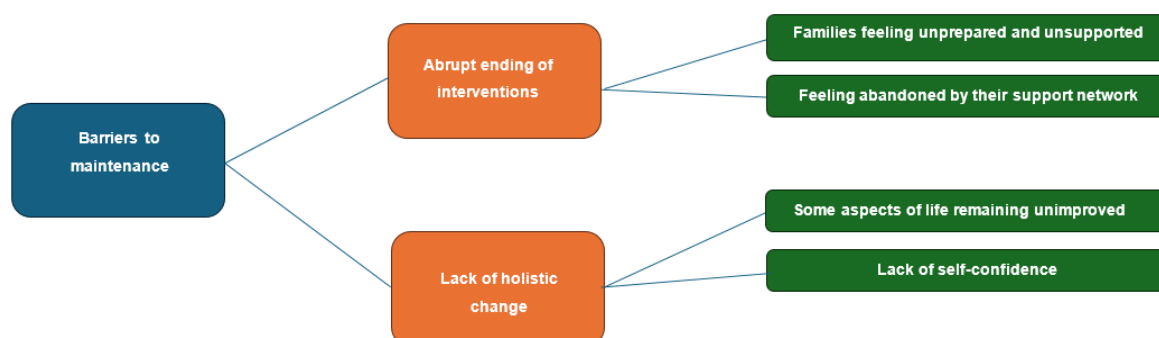
A concern expressed by participants was the ending of interventions, leaving them feeling unprepared and unsupported to sustain the positive changes achieved. Tighe et al. (2012, p. 8) reported that parents experienced "the ending too abrupt or too early, or felt that goals had not yet been met or that they were not ready to be left on their own again completely." The duration of interventions in the YJS is influenced by legal guidelines, case assessments, and judicial discretion, often necessitating the full allocated time for effective delivery (Bateman, 2020).

In the two papers, families highlighted the sudden ending to interventions and, subsequently, their support network, which they perceived hindered their ability to maintain the practices learned during the intervention. One parent expressed, "I think

it was quite abrupt. . . . it could have been a slower process to tail off. I think, you know, it's quite a big thing in a family's life, you know, sort of like you've got that support, then all of a sudden you haven't" (Tighe et al., 2012, p. 8).

Some participants acknowledged that holistic change had not been achieved, with some aspects of their lives remaining unimproved (Tighe et al., 2012). This suggests that while the interventions facilitated positive changes in specific domains, they may have failed to address the interconnected factors influencing a CYP's trajectory, such as educational, social, or psychological needs (Goldson & Muncie, 2015). Failing to address these interconnected dimensions could perpetuate cycles of offending and undermine the interventions' long-term effectiveness (Hampson, 2018).

Additionally, financial barriers to continued participation beyond the intervention may hinder the sustainability of interventions like music and sports programs (Parker et al., 2014). Without access to these activities, CYP may revert to previous habits and social groups, increasing the risk of recidivism (Eassey & Buchanan, 2015). Further research into how CYP reintegrate into their communities and utilise their acquired skills could inform strategies to support a smoother transition and maintain the interventions' positive effects (Goldson & Muncie, 2015).

1.6 Implications

This systematic literature review may have some implications for future research, practitioners, and professionals working within the YJ sphere (see Table 8).

Table 8. A table outlining some possible implications of this SLR for research and practitioners working in youth justice and/or practitioners working in support of youth justice.

Implication	Description	Support from this SLR
For Research	The findings highlight the need for more robust and comprehensive studies explicitly examining interventions implemented within the English and Welsh YJSs.	The limited number of studies included in this review underscores the paucity of evidence in this area, calling for further exploration and evaluation of existing

		interventions and their outcomes
	Researchers should also consider employing mixed-methods approaches to capture both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of intervention effectiveness, as well as the perspectives of key stakeholders, including CYP, families, and practitioners	Only one study included in this SLR had employed a mixed-methods approach (Caulfield et al., 2022), potentially highlighting a dearth of literature exploring both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of intervention effectiveness.
For practitioners working in YJ and professionals working in support.	Practitioners should consider integrating person-centred and collaborative approaches, fostering positive family and peer relationships, and addressing barriers to the maintenance of intervention outcomes elements into their practice.	This review offers valuable insights into the importance of adopting person-centred and collaborative approaches, fostering positive family and peer relationships, and addressing barriers to the maintenance of intervention outcomes. Practitioners should consider tailoring interventions to the unique needs and contexts of the CYP people they work with, and actively involving

		them in decision-making processes.
	Collaboration with diverse professionals and agencies may enhance the holistic nature of interventions	This may enhance the holistic nature of interventions, addressing the multifaceted factors contributing to offending behaviour.

1.7 Limitations

There are several limitations to this SLR that must be acknowledged. The limited number of studies (n=4) meeting the inclusion criteria highlights a paucity of research explicitly examining interventions within the English and Welsh YJS, limiting the comprehensiveness of the evidence base and the generalisability of the findings. Additionally, the heterogeneity of the included studies, encompassing diverse methodological approaches, intervention types, and outcome measures, posed challenges in synthesising the findings and drawing overarching conclusions. While the thematic synthesis approach aimed to integrate diverse forms of evidence, the variability in study designs and contexts may have influenced the interpretation and transferability of the results.

There is potential for bias in the selection, appraisal, and synthesis of studies, particularly given that this review was conducted by a single researcher. Despite the implementation of established methods and quality appraisal tools to maintain transparency and rigour, the inherent subjectivity in the synthesis process should be acknowledged as a potential limitation that could have shaped the interpretations and conclusions drawn.

While the process of quantifying qualitative data to facilitate integration in mixed methods research is well-documented, the reverse process of qualitising quantitative data poses unique challenges. Nzabonimpa (2018) highlights that qualitising quantitative data requires a significant reinterpretation and reconceptualisation of the

numerical data, which can be particularly challenging when the quantitative data lacks the rich contextual information typically present in qualitative studies, as in the case of Hubble et al. (2015). Additionally, the process of qualitising can introduce researcher bias and subjectivity, potentially compromising the objectivity and reliability of the original quantitative findings. I approached the qualitisation of Hubble's (2015) quantitative data with caution, attempting to ensure that the process maintains the integrity of the original data while facilitating meaningful integration and synthesis with the qualitative findings. To do this, I attempted to employ a systematic and transparent process of interpretation, triangulation with their discussion, and peer debriefing to minimise bias and maintain the integrity of the original data.

1.8 Conclusion

This SLR considered interventions aiming to reduce youth criminal behaviour. The Petticrew and Roberts (2006) systematic review method yielded the four heterogeneous studies to be included. Thematic synthesis of the data generated four themes: collaboration with other professionals, adopting a person-centred and collaborative approach, and relationships and barriers to the maintenance of the impact of the interventions.

Chapter 2. Bridging from the SLR to the Empirical Project

(Word count: 3,188)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines a shift in the project's trajectory as I move from the findings of the systematic literature review (SLR) to a two-phase empirical project exploring the perspectives of Educational Psychologists (EPs) and Youth Justice Practitioners (YJPs) in England and Wales on facilitators and barriers to interprofessional collaboration. I will provide an overview of this shift by reflecting on my personal motivations and experiences that have shaped this empirical project. I will then reflect on the guiding methodology, research methods, and ethical decisions I have made.

2.2 Bridging the SLR to the empirical project: reflecting on my personal influence

The theme of collaboration with other professionals emerged from the synthesis of the four papers from the SLR, considering heterogeneous interventions that aimed to reduce youth criminal behaviour across England and Wales. Although I recognise this involved a small number of papers, this theme resonated with me. My interest in collaborative working emerged from my previous professional experience and throughout my doctoral training. My previous experience as an assistant EP, particularly working with children and young people (CYP) exploited by organised crime groups, shaped my understanding of the complex challenges they face. I witnessed the changes that could occur through effective interprofessional collaboration; when professionals from different disciplines pooled their expertise and combined their unique perspectives and resources, new pathways for support and positive change for CYP emerged (see Appendix E). These experiences developed my appreciation for collaborative approaches. I was driven by the desire to further explore these collaborative strategies to consider how services might support some of society's most vulnerable CYP. This motivation propelled me throughout my doctoral studies, fuelling my interest in this area.

In reflecting on my positionality (see 1.1.4 Positionality Statement), I acknowledge that my background and experiences have shaped the lens through which I interpret the dynamics of interprofessional collaboration. This recognition has guided my decision to focus on the collaborative aspects of educational psychology and youth justice, understanding that my perspective may influence the interpretation of findings. Throughout this research, I have made conscious efforts to remain aware of these biases, striving for a balanced and equitable analysis.

Research suggests a role for EPs in working with YJPs (Gumbs, 2023; Howarth-Lees & Woods, 2022; Ryrie, 2006). However, through engaging with the literature and in my role as a trainee educational psychologist (TEP), I have encountered diverse perspectives on the potential for EPs to collaborate with YJPs and support CYP involved in the youth justice system (YJS). The literature highlights the overlap between the populations served by EPs (Ryrie, 2006) and the complex social, emotional, and mental health (Glendinning et al., 2021), speech, language and communication needs, as well as educational challenges (Costa, 2023) faced by many CYP involved with the YJS. This intersection points to the relevance and potential benefits of interprofessional collaboration between these two professional groups.

Despite these claims, I have not consistently observed this collaborative approach being implemented during my educational psychology training. There seems to be a disconnect between the potential outlined in the research and the realities on the ground. This misalignment piqued my curiosity and led me to wonder: Are EPs working with YJPs? What are the facilitators and barriers to this work, and how do these operate?

I was interested in exploring the facilitators and barriers to EP-YJP collaboration from the perspectives of those directly involved. Literature in this area has alluded to factors that may facilitate or present a barrier to this collaboration, but these are suggested to only apply to the specific LA contexts the research considered (Gumbs, 2023; Hall, 2013). Therefore, understanding the experiences, challenges, and enablers from the perspectives of EPs and YJPs could illuminate the dynamics that shape interprofessional practice in this context across England and Wales. Such

insights could be used to inform strategies to overcome barriers and capitalise on facilitating factors to enhance the support systems for CYP navigating the YJS.

2.3 Philosophical positioning

Reflecting on the ontological, epistemological and methodological underpinnings is considered essential when locating research within a particular paradigm. Transparency in my positioning is pertinent to understanding how I collect, analyse and make meaning from the data (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). For coherence, I will outline the philosophical assumptions underpinning this project.

Throughout my doctoral training, I have engaged in continuous reflective practice to understand my own worldview, which has ultimately shaped this thesis. My worldview has shaped the aims of this research and influenced my methodological decision-making. My philosophical positioning is informed by my understanding of the complex, interconnected nature of professional roles within youth justice and education. This stance is rooted in a commitment to social justice and equity (see 1.1.4 Positionality Statement), recognising that the interpretations and decisions made during this research are influenced by my values and beliefs. This awareness underpins the methodological choices and the interpretive strategies employed in this study.

The SLR and empirical project are guided by critical realism (CR) (Bhaskar, 2013a). Ontologically, CR acknowledges the existence of an independent reality governed by underlying mechanisms and structures (Bhaskar, 2013b). This aligns with the study's aim to explore the facilitators and barriers to EP-YJP collaboration. Epistemologically, CR recognises that our understanding of reality is shaped by subjective perspectives, experiences, and methods of investigation (Archer et al., 2013). This resonates with my focus on capturing the unique viewpoints and interpretations of EPs and YJPs, as their collaborative experiences are likely influenced by professional backgrounds, roles, and contexts. Furthermore, I perceive that CR's emphasis on the interaction between objective structures and subjective interpretations mirrors the complexities of interprofessional practice, where organisational policies and professional norms intersect with individual values, identities, and experiences. By embracing this philosophical position, the project

aimed to explore the interplay between objective and subjective dimensions, generating an understanding of the facilitators and barriers to EP-YJP collaboration.

2.4 Methodology

A two-phase project was designed to explore the perceived facilitators and barriers to interprofessional collaboration between EPs and YJPs. Phase one seeks to explore the extent to which EPs and YJPs collaborate and to identify the factors that enable or hinder this collaboration through two online questionnaires. Phase two, using the lens of third-generation activity theory (Engeström, 2001), aims to provide opportunities for deeper exploration of how these barriers and facilitators to collaborative practice operate from the perspectives and experiences of EPs and YJPs who volunteered for a semi-structured interview.

My values of inclusivity, respect for diverse perspectives, and a commitment to social justice have guided my approach to this research (see 1.1.4 Positionality Statement). I have strived to ensure that the voices of all participants are represented. Additionally, my belief in the importance of ethical research practices influenced my methodological choices both in the moment and in procedural decisions, particularly my commitment to maintaining the confidentiality and dignity of all participants.

My values and positionality have influenced this project (see 1.1.4 Positionality Statement), particularly in my approach to engaging with participants and interpreting their experiences. By centring the voices of EPs and YJPs, I have aimed to ensure that the research remains grounded in a commitment to inclusivity and social justice. This approach allows for a diverse range of professional experiences and perspectives to be heard, ensuring that the complexities of interprofessional collaboration are fully explored and that the findings reflect the realities faced by those directly involved in supporting CYP within the YJS. Additionally, my experience working in multidisciplinary teams has deepened my understanding of the intricate dynamics and communication challenges that can arise among professionals from different fields. This insight has directly informed my methodological choices, such as the decision to employ qualitative interviews with both EPs and YJPs, allowing me to explore the nuances of their collaborative efforts and the impact these have on practice. Furthermore, it guided my approach to data analysis, where I paid particular attention to themes related to interprofessional relationships, power dynamics, and

the coordination of services, all of which are critical in shaping the support provided for CYP.

2.4.1 Phase One

This empirical project aimed to explore the facilitators and barriers to collaboration between EPs and YJPs, warranting a multi-phase approach. I hoped to reach a geographically dispersed population to gather an overview of where collaboration is happening and a broad description of participants' experiences of this. Participants could then volunteer for a semi-structured interview to explore their experiences in greater depth. Using an online questionnaire was considered most suitable due to the requirement to reach geographically dispersed participants. It was also considered easy to distribute and cost-effective (Nayak & Narayan, 2019).

Other methods, such as telephone interviews or focus groups, were considered. However, given the geographical dispersion of the target population, this was considered logistically challenging and resource-intensive (Irvine, 2011; Secor, 2010). Additionally, focus groups, while valuable for in-depth exploration, may have introduced group dynamics that could influence individual responses (see 2.4.2 Phase Two).

2.4.2 Phase Two

Phase two aimed to explore, in greater depth, the perceived facilitators and barriers to EP-YJP collaboration in each participant's context. I decided to pursue a semi-structured interview method because of the ethical challenges associated with group methods. Also, due to the geographic dispersion of participants, an online interview was developed for logistical reasons: to limit time and travel costs as this project was conducted during the cost of living crisis and economic downturns have been found to limit engagement in face-to-face research (Sturgis et al., 2017).

Focus groups were considered for phase two of the empirical project as an effective method of data collection when participants share social identity and experience and are comfortable in the research environment (Gill & Baillie, 2018). Given that participants in the empirical project were recruited from youth justice and educational psychology, focus groups were considered as they would enable discussion around collaborative practice across localities.

Upon closer examination, ethical and practical challenges associated with the use of focus groups were identified. When exploring an individual's professional actions and the nuances of the local authority context, the group setting may undermine the anonymity required to discuss specific organisational challenges and differences (Gill & Baillie, 2018; Sim & Waterfield, 2019). Furthermore, the dynamic nature of consent and the right to withdraw is considered more complex within-group research, such as focus groups (Sim & Waterfield, 2019). Withdrawing from a focus group discussion is a public act that may be perceived as disruptive, and participants may perceive that this requires explanation. Thus rendering the right to withdraw less straightforward than in a 1-1 interview context (Sim & Waterfield, 2019).

Issues of confidentiality and privacy posed further concerns. Focus groups inherently limit the researcher's ability to maintain control over what is shared outside the group research space (Tolich, 2009). The use of online focus groups also introduced additional challenges in ensuring the availability of appropriate spaces for all participants to engage simultaneously (Rodriguez et al., 2011).

Some researchers suggest that group discussions can lead to the marginalisation of certain participants as the flow of conversation and idea sharing may not always allow for equal contributions (Sim & Waterfield, 2019; Tolich, 2009). Given that the aim of this research was to capture participants' nuanced perspectives and collaboration experiences, this limitation presented concern.

These ethical and practical considerations led to the decision to pursue semi-structured interviews in phase two. This approach was considered better suited to fostering an environment in which participants could freely share their experiences and perspectives while also more effectively addressing the complex issues of consent, privacy, and confidentiality.

I will now outline the logistical, ethical, and methodological considerations that guided the decision to pursue online research methods for both phases.

2.4.3 Using Online Research Methods

The development of communication technologies is recognised for allowing access to a geographically dispersed population (Carter et al., 2021). Such developments have enabled qualitative researchers to work across distances with greater ease and

limited expenditure (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014). This empirical project aimed to reach participants across England and Wales, logistically warranting the use of online data collection methods.

Online data collection methods, including questionnaires, email interviews, focus groups, and online interviews, grew during the COVID-19 pandemic, enabling the ease of access for participants and cost-effectiveness (De Man et al., 2021; Rogers, 2015). The shift from face-to-face methods to online platforms has received some critique as a result of the lack of physical presence, increased impact of power dynamics and difficulty interpreting body language, inflexions, emotional indicators and attitudes that are typical in face-to-face dialogue (Carter et al., 2021; Williams et al., 2021), particularly relevant for phase two. Rogers (2015) asserts that this can impact meaning-making and information exchange within the dialogic space. However, it is my view that power is present in any conversational exchange in research, with the researcher being viewed as the most powerful (MacLean & Mosley, 2013). Conscious of the presence of power, I took several steps to empower participants and adopt a curious position as I view that participants hold knowledge and expertise in their own experience (Zurn, 2023). I presented the consent forms, emails and interview questions in clear, concise language (see

Appendix F). In interviews, I attentively listened, allowing participants to express their experiences without interruption, validated their perspectives and acknowledged the expertise they brought. I also asked open-ended questions in both phases, encouraging participants to elaborate on their experiences and interpretations. I hoped this would help to mitigate some of the inherent researcher-participant power dynamics and, ultimately, the participants.

2.4.4 Ethical Considerations in Online Research

Ethical considerations were central to the planning and process of participant recruitment, data collection, data analysis and subsequent decisions regarding data storage.

In phase one, participants were not able to access any study content without completing an online consent form (Opara et al., 2023). To ensure ongoing consent for phase two, each participant was read a pre-prepared passage and provided verbal consent (see Appendix G). Participants were also asked to verbally consent to audio recording and transcription (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014). Withdrawal from online research can be considered easier than in face-to-face research, with participants able to leave the virtual space by pressing a button (Thunberg & Arnell, 2022). The right to withdraw without explanation was included in the pre-prepared passage.

Thunberg and Arnell (2022) contend that the quality of data collected through online interviews is equivalent to face-to-face methods. This is supported by Deakin and Wakefield (2014), who concluded that using online interviews did not impact the relationship or quality of dialogue between the researcher and participants. To build rapport, Deakin and Wakefield (2014) exchanged several emails and sent the research questions to participants before the interviews, a practice I chose to follow.

With online interviews, consideration must be given to participant experience, particularly pertinent to phase two of my project, as the online environment can present unique challenges and considerations that may impact the quality and depth of the data collected. Deakin and Wakefield (2014) argue that non-verbal cues may be missed when using online video platforms, and establishing a comfortable interview ambience can be more challenging. Additional challenges include the possibility that participants may be distracted by events in their environment (Gupta,

2017) or feel uncomfortable being on camera (De Man et al., 2021). Participants were offered the option of turning off their cameras.

Prior to each semi-structured interview, each participant was offered the choice of time slots to enable them to participate in an environment where they felt comfortable. It is also important to consider that since the COVID-19 pandemic, many professional meetings have taken place on video platforms, and so were likely familiar to the participants (Car et al., 2020; De Man et al., 2021). This was also helpful in maximising opportunities for participation.

2.5 The position of theory in the empirical project

While phase one of the empirical project employed questionnaires to gather broad perspectives on the facilitators and barriers to collaboration between EPs and YJPs, a theoretical underpinning was intentionally absent. This decision stemmed from a desire to capture participants' experiences without imposing a predetermined framework that could potentially constrain or influence their responses. The questionnaires aimed to serve as an exploratory tool, casting a wide net to garner diverse perspectives unencumbered by theoretical boundaries.

Following the thematic analysis of the phase one data, I used the lens of cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) (Engeström, 2001) in developing the interviews. This theoretical stance was adopted to provide a framework for a deeper exploration of the facilitators and barriers, allowing for a nuanced analysis of the complex dynamics that shape interprofessional collaboration.

2.5.1 Theoretical lenses considered for phase two of the empirical project

Several theoretical lenses were considered to guide phase two of the empirical project, leading to the decision to utilise third-generation activity theory (see Table 9).

Table 9. A Table outlining the theoretical lenses considered for phase two of the empirical project.

Theory	What the theory would offer the Empirical Project	Implications for the Empirical Project
Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2000)	May illuminate the environmental contexts	Primarily focuses on the nested ecological levels and may not allow

	influencing professionals' work.	discussion of the historically grounded, cultural-historical contexts influencing interprofessional collaboration, as emphasised in activity theory.
Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979)	Could elucidate how distinct professional identities and group dynamics shape interactions.	It may not fully capture the broader systemic contradictions and tensions arising from the interplay between different activity systems.
Role Theory (Kahn et al., 1964)	Could help to consider the socially constructed roles and expectations governing professional interactions.	It may not allow for discussion of the underlying historical, cultural, and systemic factors shaping these roles and expectations within the larger activity systems.
Third-generation activity theory (Engeström, 2001)	It offers a framework for exploring the complexities of interprofessional collaboration by conceptualising it as a phenomenon shaped by the dynamic interplay between individuals, mediating tools and artefacts, communities of practice, and overarching	CHAT was chosen because it provides a robust framework to investigate the complexities of interprofessional collaboration by considering the interplay between various elements, including historical and cultural

socio-cultural-historical contexts.	factors, within the larger activity systems.

2.5.2 Brief Overview of CHAT

CHAT is an umbrella term for the conceptual framework, activity theory, that has developed through three generations, each building upon the previous and positioned to offer a more comprehensive understanding of human activity and its relationship with the social and cultural context.

First-generation activity theory (Vygotsky, 1978) focused on the individual's interaction with their environment through the mediation of tools or artefacts (see Figure 7). The components of this model are the subject (the individual or group), the object (the goal or motive), and the mediating artefact (tools, signs, or instruments) (Leadbetter, 2017).

Figure 7. A model of the mediated action adapted from Daniels (2001).
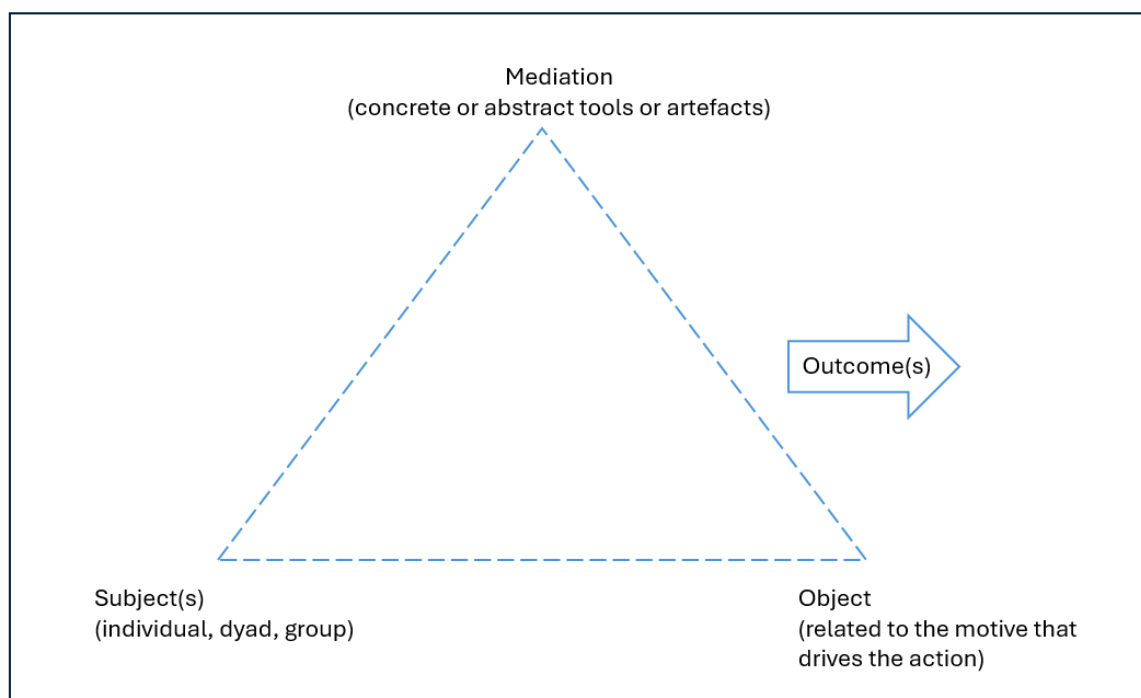
The second generation (Leontiev, 1978) expanded the model to include social and cultural aspects of human activity. It introduced the concept of the activity system, which consists of the subject, object, mediating artefacts, rules (regulations and norms), community (other people involved in the activity), and division of labour

(division of tasks) (Leadbetter, 2017). This generation emphasised the collective nature of human activity and the importance of social and cultural factors in shaping behaviour.

The third generation (Engeström, 1987; Engeström, 2001) added consideration of the interactions between multiple activity systems (see Figure 8). The model suggests that individuals may participate in interconnected activity systems and that these systems can influence each other. The key components include the subject, object, mediating artefacts, rules, community, division of labour, and the interactions between different activity systems (Leadbetter, 2017).

Figure 8. A model of third-generation activity theory adapted from Engeström (2001, p. 136)
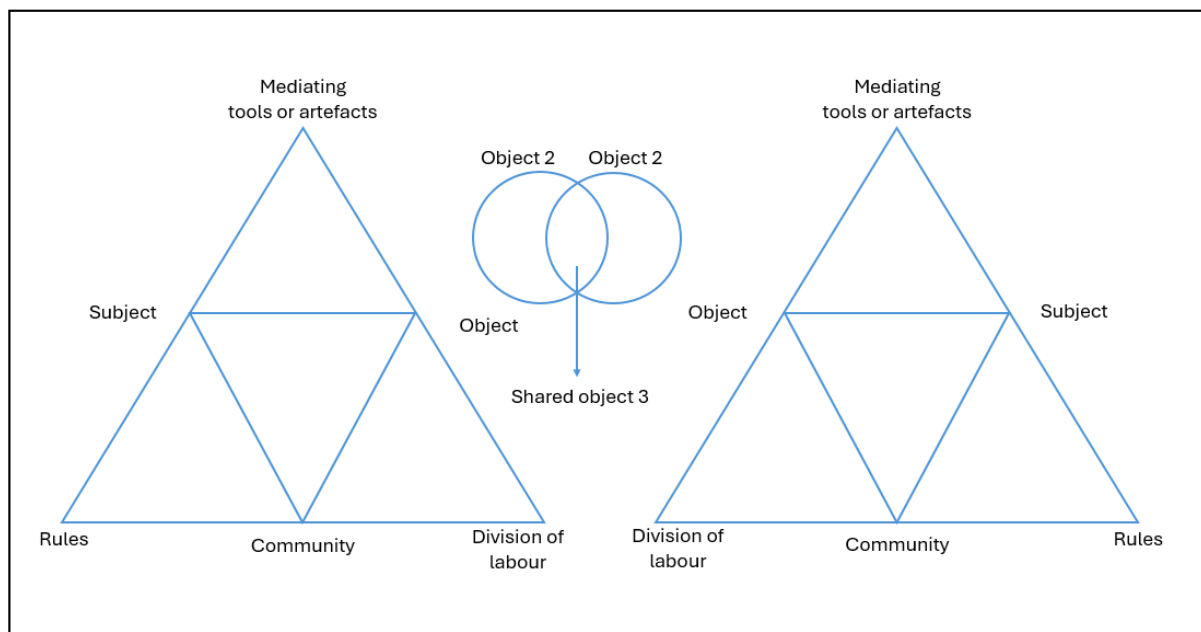
Throughout these generations, CHAT has evolved from a focus on individual actions to a broader consideration of collective activity, social and cultural factors, and the interactions between different activity systems. Third-generation activity theory is considered to provide a framework for understanding human behaviour within the context of their social and cultural environment (Engeström, 2012) and thus the most relevant to this project exploring the interactions between two interacting systems.

In this empirical project, third-generation activity theory was used to inform the generation of interview questions and then as a framework on which to map the findings of the inductive thematic analysis of EP and then YJP interview data (see Chapter Three for a detailed outline). By adopting third-generation activity theory to

structure questions for the semi-structured interviews, I aimed to capture the multifaceted nature of interprofessional collaboration, recognising the influence of individual perspectives, professional roles, organisational structures, and socio-cultural contexts (Engeström, 2005). The components of CHAT – subjects, objects, tools, rules, communities, and divisions of labour (Engeström, 2001) – provided a lens through which to explore the mechanisms underpinning the facilitators and barriers encountered by EPs and YJPs in their collaborative efforts.

2.5.3 Acknowledging and mitigating the limitations of CHAT

Critics have argued that CHAT can be deterministic, failing to account for individual agency and the dynamic nature of human activity (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). Additionally, the complexity of CHAT's conceptual framework has been subject to critique, as it can be challenging to operationalise and apply in research settings due to its abstract concepts compared to other theories (Wiser et al., 2019). However, I perceive this to reflect adaptability for different research purposes, as is echoed by its applications in health to software research (Engeström, 2014).

I attempted to mitigate these perceived limitations through the reflexive application of CHAT within the research. I used emails with participants to gradually introduce them to the ideas of CHAT and familiarise them with the key concepts for them to consider within their context (see

Appendix F). Providing clear definitions based on the work of Leadbetter (2017), the email communication with participants before the interviews helped to bridge the gap between the abstract theoretical notions and the practicalities of their experience to be explored further during the interviews.

The empirical project endeavoured to navigate the complexities of interprofessional collaboration by carefully integrating CHAT in the semi-structured interviews. It captured the voices and perspectives of EPs and YJPs while simultaneously illuminating the underlying structures and mechanisms that shape their collaborative experiences. This combined approach, grounded in both open exploration and theoretical depth, held the potential to generate rich insights into the facilitators and barriers of the intersection between EPs and YJPs.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter acknowledges how my personal motivations shaped by prior experiences have influenced this research. Grounded in a CR stance, the two-phase empirical project aims to explore the interplay between objective structures and subjective perspectives shaping EP-YJP interprofessional collaboration. Using online questionnaires and semi-structured interviews allows for capturing broad viewpoints and in-depth insights into the facilitators and barriers faced by EPs and YJPs.

The choice of online methods pragmatically addressed participants' geographic dispersion while carefully considering ethical implications, including informed consent, anonymity, and power dynamics. By anchoring the interviews within CHAT, the study provides a framework to consider how individual perspectives, professional roles, organisational contexts, and sociocultural factors influence collaborative experiences. This approach lays the groundwork for understanding the intersection between educational psychology and youth justice, exploring factors and mechanisms that practitioners perceive facilitate or hinder interprofessional practice.

Chapter 3. Exploring interprofessional collaboration between Educational Psychologists and Youth Justice Practitioners in England and Wales: a two-phase empirical project

This chapter has been prepared for submission to the *Journal of Educational Psychology*. This journal accepts papers with a word count of up to 12,000 words (excluding references, appendices and tables). This chapter has a word count of 7,178 (excluding references, appendices and tables).

Abstract

This two-phase project explored the perspectives of educational psychologists and youth justice practitioners in England and Wales on their interprofessional collaboration. Phase one used online questionnaires to provide an overview of the extent of and the facilitators and barriers to collaboration between educational psychologists and youth justice practitioners, with shared visions and the application of psychological theory identified as facilitators, and systemic barriers such as funding models. Phase two employed semi-structured interviews, using third-generation activity theory to generate the interview schedule. Thematic analysis of the interview data illuminated how the perceived facilitators and barriers represented contradictions within and between the activity systems of educational psychologists and youth justice practitioners. While initially aligned by shared aims, divergences in worldviews and divisions of labour required negotiation. The study highlights the need for professional development promoting co-construction of knowledge and transforming systemic factors to enable equitable interagency collaboration benefiting children and young people involved with the youth justice system. This research provides a systemic perspective on navigating interprofessional complexities to support young people interacting with the youth justice system.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a two-phase study exploring the perspectives of educational psychologists (EPs) and youth justice practitioners (YJPs) on their interprofessional collaboration. The first phase was preparatory, using online questionnaires to provide an overview of the extent of interprofessional collaboration between EPs and YJPs, and any perceived facilitators and barriers to their collaborative practice. Phase two utilised third-generation cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) to devise a semi-structured interview schedule, which was used with a smaller sample as a lens to further explore participants' perspectives on how these barriers and facilitators arise within the context of professional practice. This utilised a volunteer sample of EP and YPs who participated in the questionnaires.

3.1.1 Educational Psychology and Youth Justice: Background

Ryrie (2006) highlighted the overlap between the experiences of children and young people (CYP) supported by EPs and those involved with the youth justice system (YJS), suggesting there could be value in EPs working collaboratively with YJPs. The overlap identified by Ryrie (2006) may be explained by the high prevalence of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) (Glendinning et al., 2021), special educational needs (SEN) (Costa, 2023), speech, language and communication (SLC) challenges, and social, emotional or mental health (SEMH) difficulties (Ministry of Justice and Youth Justice Board, 2021) among the CYP in the YJS. Given EPs' professional competencies in addressing these types of experiences (Beaver, 2011), they could potentially make important contributions to supporting CYP involved with the YJS. There may be CYP involved with the YJS who have unmet or unrecognised needs related to ACEs, SEN, SLC, or SEMH (McElvaney & Tatlow-Golden, 2016) or experience multiple of these needs and subsequently may benefit from EP involvement.

Unrecognised needs or difficulties are considered to limit access to specialist services, support, and resources for CYP, potentially exacerbating their risk of reoffending upon reintegration into the community (Kim et al., 2021). This emphasises the potential for EPs to identify and support CYP involved with the YJS (Ryrie, 2006). Rather than positioning EPs as a single service solution, research recognises the importance of integrating their expertise within a multi-disciplinary

framework that draws upon the diverse skills and knowledge of various professionals (McClain et al., 2022).

3.1.2 Defining Interprofessional Collaboration in this Empirical Project

Approaching the literature in this area requires grappling with a semantic quagmire (Perrier et al., 2016). Literature interchangeably employs terms such as collaboration, interagency, interprofessional, joint, and multi-agency working despite their nuanced differences. This ambiguity has implications for understanding the nature and dynamics of collaborative practices between professionals from different services.

While the prefix multi- typically refers to collaborative practices centred around individual CYPs, the prefix inter- encompasses broader collaborations between systems and services (Perrier et al., 2016). The terms interagency and interprofessional have been distinguished, with the former denoting collaboration between services and the latter referring to interactions between individual professionals (Bruns, 2013). This project adopts the term interprofessional collaboration as it explores individual professionals' perspectives on collaboration.

Interprofessional collaboration is increasingly recognised as beneficial in supporting the multiple needs of complex and/or vulnerable populations across health and social contexts (Iachini et al., 2015; Morgan et al., 2019), including CYP in the YJS (Bateman, 2020). As discussed, CYP involved with the YJS often face a complex interplay of challenges (Bateman, 2020; Costa, 2023; Glendinning et al., 2021). Collaborative working is considered to enable the sharing of knowledge, resources, and perspectives, permitting a more comprehensive understanding of each individual's unique circumstances (Mattessich & Johnson, 2018). By breaking down siloed approaches and fostering open communication, interprofessional collaboration is reported to enhance positive outcomes for vulnerable populations and those with complex needs (Solomon, 2019), including for CYP involved in the YJS (Bateman, 2020).

Drawing on the unique expertise of EPs, Ryrie (2006) emphasised the benefits of EP-YJP collaboration. EP knowledge of child development, psychological theory, and evidence-based interventions alongside the skills and knowledge of YJPs could lead to more comprehensive and effective support for CYP. Building on Ryrie's (2006)

work, Howarth-Lees and Woods (2022) synthesised research considering the role of EPs in supporting the YJS. This review highlighted the potential benefits of EP-YJP collaboration, including improved assessment and intervention strategies, enhanced staff training and consultation, and a more holistic understanding and support of CYP's needs. Howarth-Lees and Woods (2022) identified a limited research base exploring EP work in the YJS, implying a need for further exploration of the landscape of EP involvement in this context.

3.1.3 The role of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) in exploring interprofessional collaboration

This project used Third Generation activity theory (Engeström, 2001) to explore interprofessional collaboration between EPs and YJPs (see Figure 9). Chapter two provides an outline of the three generations of CHAT as the theory has developed. Third-generation activity theory was judged to offer a helpful lens for considering the socio-cultural and historical factors shaping the complex human activity systems involved in the interprofessional collaboration between EPs and YJPs. While several alternative theories were considered (described in Chapter 2.5.2) that could shed light on specific aspects of this collaborative dynamic, activity theory stood out for its holistic and systemic approach to understanding the multi-layered forces at play.

Figure 9 illustrates the conceptual model of an activity system as used in Third Generation Activity Theory (Engeström, 2001). This diagram depicts the complex interrelationships within and between activity systems, which is particularly relevant for analysing interprofessional collaboration. The model consists of two interconnected triangular structures, each representing a distinct activity system. Each triangle is composed of six key elements: Subject (the individual or group engaged in the activity), Object (the goal or motive), Mediating tools/artefacts (instruments, signs, or tools used), Rules (regulations and norms), Community (other people involved in the activity), and Division of Labour (division of tasks, roles, and responsibilities). The diagram shows how these elements interact within each system and how the two systems can potentially interact through a shared object (labelled as "Shared object 3" in the figure). This shared object represents the potential for collaborative outcomes or goals that emerge from the interaction between the two activity systems.

In the context of this project, this model provides a framework for examining how EPs and YJPs, as distinct professional groups with their own activity systems, collaborate and potentially create new, shared understandings or practices. It allows for the exploration of how various factors - such as professional tools, community norms, organisational rules, and division of responsibilities - influence and shape this interprofessional collaboration.

This visual representation underscores the complexity of human activities within their social and cultural contexts, making it a valuable tool for analysing the multifaceted nature of interprofessional collaboration between EPs and YJPs in youth justice settings.

Figure 9. A diagram outlining the components of an activity system, defined based on the writing of Leadbetter (2017).
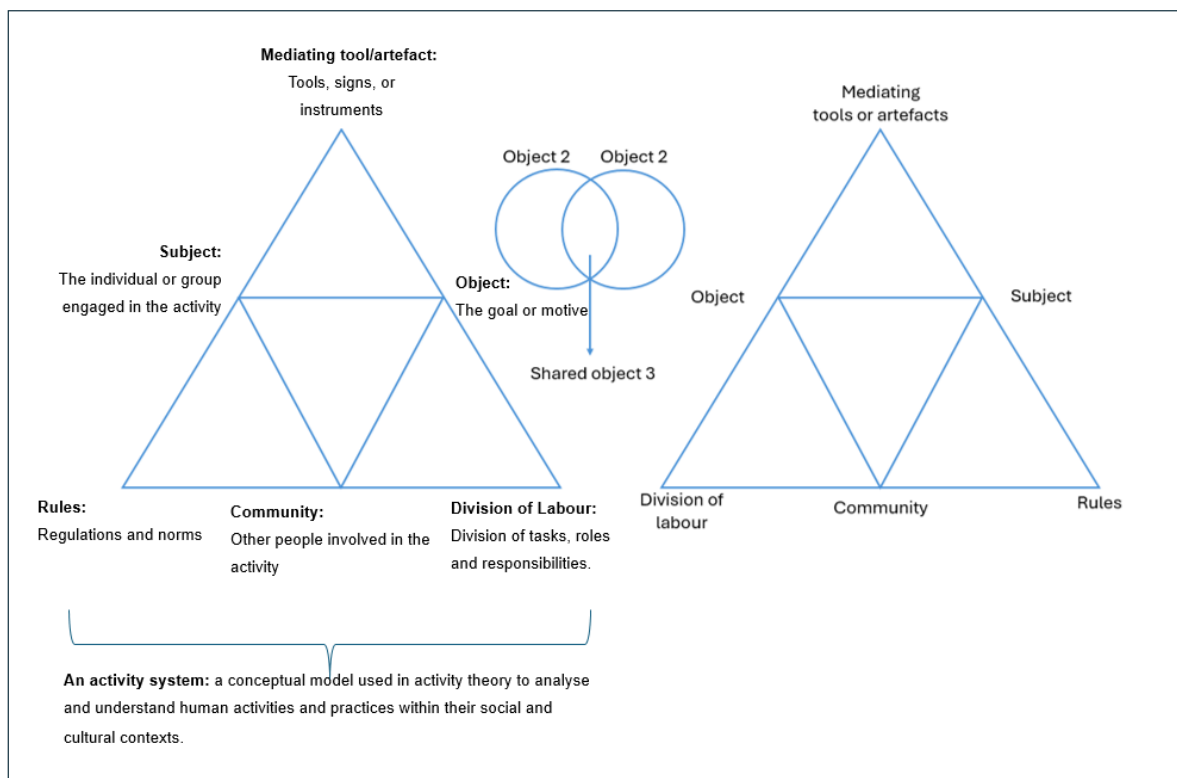
CHAT has been applied to explore professional collaboration across health and education (Gedera & Williams, 2015; Spinuzzi & Guile, 2019). Leadbetter et al. (2007) employed second-generation activity theory as a framework to explore multi-agency practice as part of a larger-scale research project, illuminating the tensions and contradictions within and between activity systems. CHAT highlighted the complex interactions between practitioners, their tools/resources, communities,

rules, and divisions of labour governing practices. Similarly, Warwick (2023) used third-generation activity theory to investigate the role of EPs in multi-disciplinary teams supporting looked-after children.

More broadly, CHAT has served as a theoretical and methodological framework for educational psychology research (Colville & Eodanable, 2023), as Daniels (2004) suggests CHAT can provide a holistic lens for exploring factors shaping professional practice. Its concepts of activity systems, objects, contradictions, and cultural mediation from second-generation activity theory are considered to enable the study of how people learn, collaborate and drive change across systems (Engeström, 2001; Leadbetter, 2017) (see 2.5.2 Brief Overview of CHAT). In developmental work research, third-generation activity theory has been used to facilitate psychologists partnering with organisational leaders to understand systemic tensions, reconfigure services and generate new models to meet children's needs (Colville et al., 2023). Importantly, third-generation activity theory has been employed as a lens to investigate the differing motives and spectives that shape interagency collaborative work between professionals from distinct disciplines, such as Warwick's (2023) study examining the role of EPs in multi-disciplinary teams supporting looked-after children and exploring factors influencing trainee EP development (Colville & Horribine, 2023). CHAT, therefore, appears to offer a helpful theoretical perspective for exploring the interprofessional context, allowing different perspectives to contribute to and expand our understanding (Edwards, 2023).

3.1.3.1 Using Third-generation Activity Theory

Third-generation activity theory is considered the most suitable framework for comprehensively studying the interprofessional collaboration between EPs and YJPs. It provides a lens for exploring the factors and contradictions that shape how these two professional groups work together (Dafermos, 2015).

Third-generation activity theory conceptualises collaboration as a phenomenon shaped by the interplay between individuals, mediating tools and artefacts, communities of practice, and overarching socio-cultural-historical contexts (Engeström, 2001) (see 2.5.2 Brief Overview of CHAT). By mapping the interacting activity systems of two different professional groups e.g. EPs and YJPs, each with their distinct objects, tools, communities, rules, and divisions of labour, this study

endeavoured to explore the underlying contradictions, power dynamics, and systemic factors influencing their collaborative efforts and can situate them within the broader contexts in which they exist and interact.

By considering the rules, divisions of labour, and systemic contradictions, third-generation activity theory holds the potential to elucidate how the facilitators and barriers influence interprofessional collaborative processes (Warwick, 2023). It recognises the interplay between subjective experiences and objective structures, aligning with a critical realist perspective (Nunez, 2013). Ultimately, this framework offers the potential to generate a nuanced understanding of how EPs and YJPs collaborate and may help to inform strategies for enhancing interprofessional practice and support for children and young people within the YJS.

3.1.4 Rationale and Aims of this Project

While prior research has identified a role for EPs in supporting the YJS (Howarth-Lees & Woods, 2022; Ryrie, 2006) and explored EPs' work with CYP convicted of offences (Gumbs, 2023; Hall, 2013), there remains a gap in understanding the perspectives of both EPs and YJPs on their interprofessional collaboration. Although some researchers exploring the perspectives of one group have indicated factors that may facilitate or hinder effective cooperation between these two professional groups (Gumbs, 2023; Parnes, 2017), direct exploration of the views of EPs and YJPs on the facilitators and barriers to such collaboration across England and Wales is absent. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the perspectives of both professional groups.

This empirical project aimed to explore the perspectives of EPs and YJPs in England and Wales on the factors that facilitate or act as barriers to effective interprofessional collaboration. By drawing on the perspectives of professionals working across regions of England and Wales and utilising the lens of CHAT, the overarching aim of this empirical project is to provide an understanding of the facilitators and barriers to collaborative practices between EPs and YJPs across England and Wales.

3.2 Research Questions

This research utilised a two-phased approach to explore EPs' and YJPs' perspectives on the facilitators and barriers to interprofessional collaboration across

England and Wales. Phase one aimed to generate a broad overview of the current landscape of EP-YJP collaboration. This initial phase aimed to offer a descriptive overview of collaboration between EPs in England and Wales, as prior research has often been limited to single local authority contexts (Parnes, 2017; Ryrie, 2006). The second phase aimed to use third-generation activity theory as a lens to explore how barriers and facilitators to collaborative practice might arise within the sociocultural context of EP and YJPs' professional practice.

This empirical project is guided by the following research questions:

Phase one:

> To what extent are EPs and YJPs in England and Wales engaged in collaborative practice and what do they perceive to be the barriers and facilitators to collaboration?

Phase two:

> Using the lens of third-generation activity theory, how do these barriers and facilitators operate?

3.3 Philosophical positioning

This empirical project adopts a critical realist worldview, which acknowledges the existence of an objective reality while recognising that our understanding of reality is shaped by our perspectives, experiences, and methods of investigation (Bhaskar, 2013b). Critical realism (CR) posits that there are underlying mechanisms and structures that govern the phenomena we observe, but our ability to perceive and comprehend these mechanisms is influenced by our subjective lenses and the contexts in which we operate (Archer et al., 2013).

Within this study, CR acknowledges that the facilitators and barriers to collaboration between EPs and YJPs exist as objective realities shaped by various systemic, organisational, and contextual factors. However, participants' perceptions and experiences of these facilitators and barriers are inevitably influenced by their professional backgrounds, roles, and the specific contexts in which they operate.

This interplay of objective structures and subjective experiences aligns with the principles of CHAT, which emphasises the dynamic interrelationship between individuals and their socio-cultural environments (Engeström, 2001; Nunez, 2013).

Underpinned by CR, this research aims to explore the underlying mechanisms and structures that shape the collaborative experiences of EPs and YJPs while also recognising the subjective interpretations and perspectives of participants. CR acknowledges the potential for my subjective lens to influence the interpretation and analysis of the data. By being transparent about the methodological choices made throughout the study, this research endeavours to maintain a critical and reflexive stance, recognising the limitations and assumptions inherent in the research process.

The decision to utilise CHAT as a framework for this study stems from my commitment to understanding the systemic and relational dynamics within interprofessional collaboration. Recognising my positionality, I approached this framework with an awareness of how my own experiences as a trainee educational psychologist may shape my engagement with the data and the interpretations I draw. I have endeavoured to maintain reflexivity throughout the research process, continually reflecting on how my position influences my understanding of the collaboration between EPs and YJPs.

3.4 Ethical considerations

3.4.1 Ethical Approval

Ethical approval was sought and granted by Newcastle University in May 2023. The research also adhered to the British Psychological Society (2021) Code of Human Research Ethics. Ethical consideration continued throughout the research process and was not confined to seeking ethical approval (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). My approach to this study has been guided by an ethical framework that emphasises ethics in practice, ensuring that participants' voices and experiences are respected and valued beyond procedural compliance (see Positionality Statement and 2.4.4 Ethical Considerations in Online Research). This commitment is reflected in my decision to exchange emails with participants before their interviews to confirm that they had a private space for our conversation. Additionally, I read a prepared passage to each participant, clearly outlining their right to withdraw and underscoring

the importance of anonymity. During interviews, I took notes and actively listened, ensuring that any interruptions were minimal, thereby maintaining the flow and integrity of the conversation.

3.4.2 Anonymity

Participants completed the questionnaire anonymously, only providing an email address if they were interested in participating in a semi-structured interview (see

Following the semi-structured interviews, any identifiable information was manually eliminated from the transcripts.

3.4.3 Storage of data

All data was held on a password-protected hard drive, backed up by Newcastle University's Office 365 cloud storage, OneDrive (which has two-factor authentication). Semi-structured interviews were audio recorded on Microsoft Teams and manually transcribed. Audio recordings and transcriptions were stored on an encrypted, password-protected electronic file.

3.4.4 Right to withdraw

Participants were informed they could withdraw from the study until 31st January 2024, after which all data was given a random code. No participants have withdrawn their data from this project.

3.5 Design

3.5.1 Phase One: Online Questionnaire

This empirical project utilised an online method. Logistical considerations were central to this decision, given the geographic dispersion of my target populations (see Chapter 2). I selected an online method in an attempt to maximise participation by limiting travel requirements associated with face-to-face research methods. Furthermore, research has considered online methods equivalent to face-to-face methods in the quality of data generated and participant experience (Nayak & Narayan, 2019),

3.5.1.1 Methodology

Phase one was delivered through online questionnaires (see Appendix I). Two online questionnaires were constructed on Microsoft Forms to gain an overview of what

EPs and YJPs perceive are the facilitators and barriers to collaboration, where collaboration is happening and the funding arrangements underpinning such collaborative practices.

The questionnaires asked participants to share information about collaborative practice in the period from 2019. This was because I recognise that practice may have shifted following the COVID-19 pandemic, changes in service delivery models (Atfield et al., 2023), evolving mental health needs (Adegboye et al., 2021), and updated legislative guidance promoting collaborative working (Department for Education, 2019). This timeframe was set as I hoped to capture current practice (see Table 10).

Table 10. A table outlining the justification for exploring collaboration between EPs and YJPs since 2019

Legislation and context	Justification
Keeping children safe in education (Department for Education, 2019)	Emphasised the role of EPs in supporting CYP with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), who are disproportionately represented in the YJS (Day, 2022).
Research on the Educational Psychologist Workforce (Atfield et al., 2023; Lyonette et al., 2019)	This review highlights the increase in statutory demands on the EP workforce, which may have influenced whether and how EPs work with YJPs.
COVID-19 pandemic during the 2019-2020 academic year	The COVID-19 pandemic began during the 2019-2020 academic year and led to significant disruptions in the provision of support services for CYP, including those involved in the YJS (Hampson et al., 2023). Many educational and youth justice services had to adapt rapidly to remote delivery models, which may have influenced the nature and effectiveness of interprofessional collaboration (Hallett, 2022).

	The COVID-19 pandemic has been linked to an increase in mental health challenges among CYP, with potential implications for their involvement in the YJS (Adegboye et al., 2021). This heightened the need for mental health support and intervention, underscoring the importance of effective collaboration between EPs and YJPs during this period.

To ensure clarity, both questionnaires were piloted with members of the relevant participant groups, EPs (n=2) and YJPs (n=2), requiring no changes.

3.5.1.2 Recruitment

This project utilised a purposive volunteer sampling strategy. Emails were used to contact Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) and Educational Psychology Services in England and Wales, inviting them to participate in the questionnaire and volunteer for a semi-structured interview (see Table 11).

Table 11. A table outlining the participant recruitment process.

Date	Method of Contact	To whom	Number of contacts made
October 2023	Email	YOT Team Managers in England and Wales	157 (number of contact details available to researcher)
	Email	Principal Educational Psychologists in England and Wales	86 (number of contact details available to researcher)
	Recruitment Poster	Twitter. Potential participants were asked to contact me to determine if they met the participant criteria. Eligible	6

		participants were sent the links to the appropriate questionnaires (see Appendix J).	
November 2023	Email	YOT Team managers where management has changed since records were published at <u>Youth justice services contact details - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u> and an updated contact email was provided in the automated responses to the original email.	7
December 2023	Email	Participants who volunteered for a semi-structured interview were contacted to arrange a date and time for an interview to take place.	12 (EPs n=6, YJPs n=6)

Any YJP working in a YOT or any qualified EP was invited to participate in this study (see Table 12). Participants completed an online consent form before accessing the questionnaire (see Appendix H).

Table 12. Participant inclusion criteria.

Description	Justification
Participants must be qualified EP or practitioners working in the YJS in England or Wales.	To ensure the perspectives and experiences captured were directly relevant to the focus of this study on the facilitators and barriers to EP-YJ collaboration.

Service leaders were asked to identify team members who work with EP or YJ. The email also invited participation from individuals who may be interested but do not currently collaborate with YJ or EP.	To ensure the most relevant individuals were able to contribute to this research. Those interested but not currently engaging in collaborative practice with EP or YJ may offer valuable insights into the barriers they experience to this work.
EPs employed by local authorities, working privately or for other organisations, e.g. CAMHS, NHS and/or Academies, were invited to participate in this study through public dissemination of the poster. Any practitioner working within the YJS in England and Wales.	To allow the study to capture potential variations in facilitators and barriers to collaboration based on different employment structures, funding models, and organisational cultures. Similarly, including any practitioner working within the YJS in England and Wales as potential participants enabled me to gather insights from professionals with varying roles, responsibilities, and experiences within the YJS.

42 EPs and 47 YJPs from local authorities across England and Wales completed the questionnaires (see Table 13).

Table 13. A table outlining the participation by region across England and Wales.

Region	Respondents by region (number of local authorities)	EPs	YJPs
East of England	3	3	5
London	9	11	13

Midlands	5	5	5
North East and Cumbria	6	6	6
North West	3	3	3
South East and Central	4	4	5
South West	2	2	2
Wales	4	4	4
Yorkshire and the Humber	3	4	4
Total	39	42	47

3.5.1.3 Data analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaires was analysed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods.

The quantitative data from the closed-ended questions was coded and entered into the statistical software program SPSS. Percentages were calculated to summarise the responses related to the prevalence of collaboration between YJPs and EPs, as well as the contexts in which this collaboration occurred. Specifically, the analysis focused on determining the percentage of YJPs who reported collaborating with EPs and EPs who reported working with the YJPs.

Following this, two thematic analyses of the remaining questionnaire data were conducted first with EP and then with YJP data, each following the Braun and Clarke (2006) method (see Table 14).

Table 14. Stages of the thematic analysis of questionnaire data

Stage of thematic analysis	Method	My Process

Familiarisation	Questionnaire data was read and reread on Microsoft Forms.	I read and reread the responses to each questionnaire. This process involved note-taking and recoding initial thoughts.
Line by Line coding	I used Nvivo14 to semantically code interesting features of the data across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.	Conducted initial coding in NVivo 14, creating a node structure for codes.
Development of descriptive themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.	Exported coded data from Nvivo 14 and manually sorted codes into potential themes using Post-it notes and paper, creating thematic maps. This enabled me to move themes around more easily than using Nvivo14.
Reviewing descriptive themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.	I manually reviewed themes against coded extracts and the entire data set, refining and merging themes as needed, and creating a final thematic map.
Development of analytic themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.	Defined and named themes, ensuring clear distinctions and coherent narratives, with quotes from the data to support each theme.

3.5.2 Phase two: Semi-structured interviews

The facilitators and barriers described in the questionnaire data appeared to indicate complex interactions between stakeholders operating within distinct professional contexts, roles, rules, and agendas. The diversity of themes highlighted potential tensions between EPs' and YJPs' perspectives and the preference for integrated practices. Recurring issues related to the division of labour and resources suggested underlying structural constraints and power dynamics shaping collaborative activities.

It was my view that the patterns from the thematic analysis resonated with the concepts of CHAT, which conceptualises human activity occurring within complex, interrelated systems. As discussed in section 3.1.3, CHAT offers a lens to explore the objective structures and mechanisms governing collaborative activities by analysing activity systems with multiple components (subjects, tools, communities, rules, divisions of labour).

Third-generation activity theory's dialectical perspective, emphasising multi-voicedness and contradictions as drivers of change and development, appeared to mirror the tensions between participants' experiences as expressed in the online questionnaires. The data reflected the interplay between subjective experiences and objective systemic factors, acknowledging observable qualities and underlying mechanisms. In this research, EPs and YJPs were considered separate systems influenced by their own socio-cultural-historical contexts, tools, and communities of practice, promoting the use of third-generation activity theory.

Considering these reflections, immersion in questionnaire data led to the recognition that third-generation activity theory may help contextualise facilitators and barriers within systems shaping collaboration. Grounding interviews in the components of third-generation activity theory aimed to explore the mechanisms participants perceived to be influencing EP-YJP interactions beyond descriptions.

3.5.2.1 Recruitment

At the end of the questionnaire, participants were asked to consider volunteering to participate in a semi-structured interview to explore their perspectives on barriers and facilitators of EP/YJP collaboration in more depth. Interested participants were

asked to provide an email address to allow negotiation of a mutually convenient time for this to take place and to enable me to send the questions prior to the interview.

3.5.2.2 Design

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with all participants (n=12) who expressed interest in further involvement, EPs (n=6) and YJPs (n=6). Employing third-generation activity theory as a theoretical lens, this phase aimed to explore participants' perspectives on how and why certain factors emerged as facilitators or barriers to effective EP-YJP collaborative practices. The interviews were designed to elicit participants' subjective experiences while also considering the objective systemic factors that shape these interprofessional collaborative relationships.

Interviews took place on Microsoft Teams and lasted an average of 1 hour and 15 minutes, exceeding the anticipated time. If interviews were anticipated to exceed one hour, participants were offered to end their interviews at that point. All participants chose to continue their interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted online to limit travel costs due to the geographic dispersion of participants. Online methods are increasingly used in research since the COVID-19 pandemic (De Man et al., 2021; Hooley & Buchanan, 2024). Researchers have considered that data quality has not been negatively impacted by the use of online interviewing (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014). This may be a result of online video conferencing being a dominant form of social and professional communication during and since the COVID-19 period (Car et al., 2020; Opara et al., 2023).

As discussed, the semi-structured interview questions were constructed using the components of third-generation activity theory (Engeström, 2001) (see Table 15). I used the definitions provided by Leadbetter (2017) to aid this process. In order to ensure research questions were accessible, the questions and definitions of each component were emailed to each participant beforehand, enabling them to prepare responses (see Appendix K). These questions were not piloted as each interview was considered a unique human encounter, and as such, it was important for participants to be able to reflect on and respond to these questions within their own local authority context.

Table 15. Guiding questions for the semi-structured interviews

Component of Cultural-historical Activity Theory	Guiding interview questions
Subject	What is your job title? Can you describe your professional role?
Object/Shared object	What are you working on with EP/YJP? What are the shared goals or outcomes you are working towards?
Outcome	What are the outcomes of your work with EP/YJ? Who are these outcomes for? How do these outcomes facilitate or hinder your work with EPs/YJPs?
Rules	What supports and/or challenges the work with EPs/YJPs? How do these identified rules facilitate or hinder your work with EPs/YJPs?
Community	Who else is involved in the collaborative work? How does this facilitate or hinder to your collaborative work with EPs/YJPs?
Division of Labour	How is your collaborative work with EP/YJ negotiated? How does this negotiation facilitate or hinder your work with EPs/YJPs?
Tools	What tools, resources, information and/or evidence are being used to inform this work? How do the tools you use facilitate or hinder your work with EPs/YJPs?
Additional questions	Is there something else that facilitates or hinders your work with EPs/YJPs?

3.5.2.3 Transcription

Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed following verbal consent from each participant. Participants were also asked to verbally consent to quotes from their interview being used in this thesis and any subsequent publication at the start of the interviews and were informed that these would be anonymised. Any identifiable information was removed during transcription, which was completed by hand from audio recordings.

3.5.2.4 Thematic analysis of interview data

I conducted two separate thematic analyses guided by (Braun & Clarke, 2006), using Nvivo 14 and manual coding for the EP and then the YJP interview data. This approach allowed for an exploration of the unique facilitators and barriers experienced by each professional group, recognising their distinct professional cultures, histories, and contexts that shape their respective activity systems.

By conducting separate analyses, I hoped to capture the nuanced perspectives and contextual richness of each profession. A combined analysis risked diluting the authenticity of participants' voices by imposing predetermined frameworks or blending their unique experiences.

The critical realist approach underpinning this study acknowledges that EPs' and YJPs' knowledge and experiences are shaped by their professional cultures and histories. Separate analyses enabled an understanding of each group's perspectives, ensuring themes were grounded in their respective contexts.

While deductive coding using the CHAT framework was considered, an inductive approach was conducted to allow for a broader range of themes to emerge (Warwick, 2023). I followed the Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis method for EP and YJP data (see Table 16).

Table 16. A table outlining my thematic analysis process (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Stage of thematic analysis	Method	My Process
Familiarisation	Transcribing data, reading and re-reading the data, and noting initial ideas.	Transcribed interviews, imported transcripts into Nvivo 14, read and re-read transcripts, and made initial notes and observations (Appendix L).
Line by Line coding	I used Nvivo14 to semantically code interesting features of the data across the entire data	Conducted initial coding in Nvivo 14, creating a node structure for codes.

	set, collating data relevant to each code.	
Development of descriptive themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.	Exported coded data from Nvivo 14 and manually sorted codes into potential themes using Post-it notes and paper, creating thematic maps. This enabled me to move themes around more easily than using Nvivo14 (see Appendix M)
Reviewing descriptive themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.	Manually reviewed themes against coded extracts and entire data set, refining and merging themes as needed, creating a final thematic map.
Development of analytic themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.	Defined and named themes, ensuring clear distinctions and coherent narratives, with quotes from the data to support each theme (see Appendix N).

3.6 Findings and Discussion

3.6.1 Phase One: To what extent are EPs and YJPs in England and Wales engaged in collaborative practice, and what do they perceive to be the barriers and facilitators to collaboration?

The questionnaire data identified that since 2019, of the YJPs, 63.83% (30 of the 47 who responded) responded that they have collaborated with an EP across statutory and regular interagency forums. Similarly, of the EP respondents, 69.05% (29 of the 42 who responded) reported working with the YJS. This collaboration occurred

across statutory obligations and regular interagency forums. A diverse range of funding arrangements underpinned this interprofessional work, including service level agreements between YOTs and EP Services, education endowment funding, EP Service core offers encompassing youth justice work, and schools purchasing EP time through a traded agreement.

Two thematic maps were created for EP and YJP data; due to the overlap of their common objectives, these were merged into a single thematic map (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. A combined thematic map of the thematic analysis of EP and YJP questionnaire data.

3.6.1.1 Facilitators

The findings of the thematic analysis suggest that both EPs and YJPs identified a shared vision and commitment to promoting positive outcomes for CYP involved with the YJS as a facilitator for their collaboration. YJPs reported valuing the opportunities to engage with EPs in joint problem-solving spaces, such as "supervision, multi-agency panels, consultation, and intervention planning meetings" (YJP). YJPs reported that these collaborative contexts enabled them to develop "a comprehensive understanding of CYP's needs" (YJP). They considered this was achieved through EPs' application of psychological theory and frameworks and EPs "bringing together the perspectives and insights of a range of professionals" (YJP), including speech and language therapists, social workers and YJPs.

Similarly, EPs reported the opportunity to flexibly apply their diverse psychological expertise as facilitators of collaboration with YJPs. The ability to draw upon a range of psychological theories and approaches, such as community psychology, narrative therapy, attachment theory, trauma-informed practice, neurodevelopmental perspectives, solution-focused approaches, and strengths-based psychological ideas, was perceived by EPs to "generate a holistic understanding of CYP's needs" (EP) and enrich their collaborative work with YJPs. This finding reflects the concept of tool mediation in CHAT, where EPs' psychological knowledge and application of frameworks serve as mediating tools shaping their collaborative activities (Dafermos, 2015).

YJPs highlighted the facilitating role of EPs' application of trauma-informed and relationally focused approaches. These psychological perspectives were perceived to enhance YJPs' depth of understanding regarding CYP's experiences, thereby informing "the creation of supportive environments" (YJP) and the integration of "trauma-sensitive practices" (YJP) into their work (Brierley, 2021).

YJPs reported that collaborative work was easier where there was either an SLA with the EP Service or supporting CYP involved with YJPs was part of the EPS core offer. Such arrangements were considered to secure the allocation of EPs' resources and expertise and mitigated some of the barriers involved in the traded model of service delivery, which was considered to privilege school priorities. One YJP shared, "When

schools held the EP time, it was really difficult to get their buy-in and prioritisation for our cases. Now, with dedicated EP allocation through the SLA, we're on the same page. […] It's helped us overcome those difficult conversations around whose needs come first and who gets access to the limited EP resource." This resonated with EPs who shared, "I see the arrangement we have [traded time] as a privilege; they can have my dedicated time without having to consider the priorities of other stakeholders [schools]". Consequently, these formalised agreements were considered to support interprofessional working.

3.6.1.2 Barriers

Several of the EPs who reported not working with YJPs considered "a lack of guidance in this area" (EP), a perception of "professional saturation" (EP), and a lack of clarity about an EP's unique role within the YJS as barriers to interprofessional collaboration with YJPs. EPs also reported, "a lack of LA leadership understanding about EP funding" as a barrier to developing a traded relationship with the YJS, limiting their role to the statutory EHCP process in their local authority.

Where YJPs were not working with EPs, some reported working with clinical psychologists, raising questions about the unique role of the EP. Systemic barriers, such as the traded model of EP service delivery and limited access to EPs, emerged as barriers to collaboration for YJPs. The traded model was considered to "restrict access to EP support" (YJP), particularly for CYP who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET), which was considered to further marginalise an already vulnerable population (Shiner, 2004). One YJP shared, "They are going off into the sunset. And I know that that child doesn't have what they need to get education, training and employment because they just maybe have been, in my opinion, failed by the system." This systemic issue reflects broader societal and historical factors shaping the activity systems, emphasising the need to consider the broader socio-cultural context in which collaboration occurs (Engeström, 2001).

YJPs perceived the traded model of EP service delivery, where schools purchase EP time, as a barrier to collaboration. This model, coupled with the statutory demands placed on EPs to conduct Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) assessments, was seen as limiting the availability and capacity of EPs to engage with the YJS.

3.6.2 Phase two: Using the lens of third-generation activity theory, how do these barriers and facilitators operate?

Thematic analysis of EP and then YJP interview data led to the development of two thematic maps (see Figure 11 and Figure 12).

Figure 11. Thematic map of EP interview data.

Figure 12. Thematic map of YJP interview data
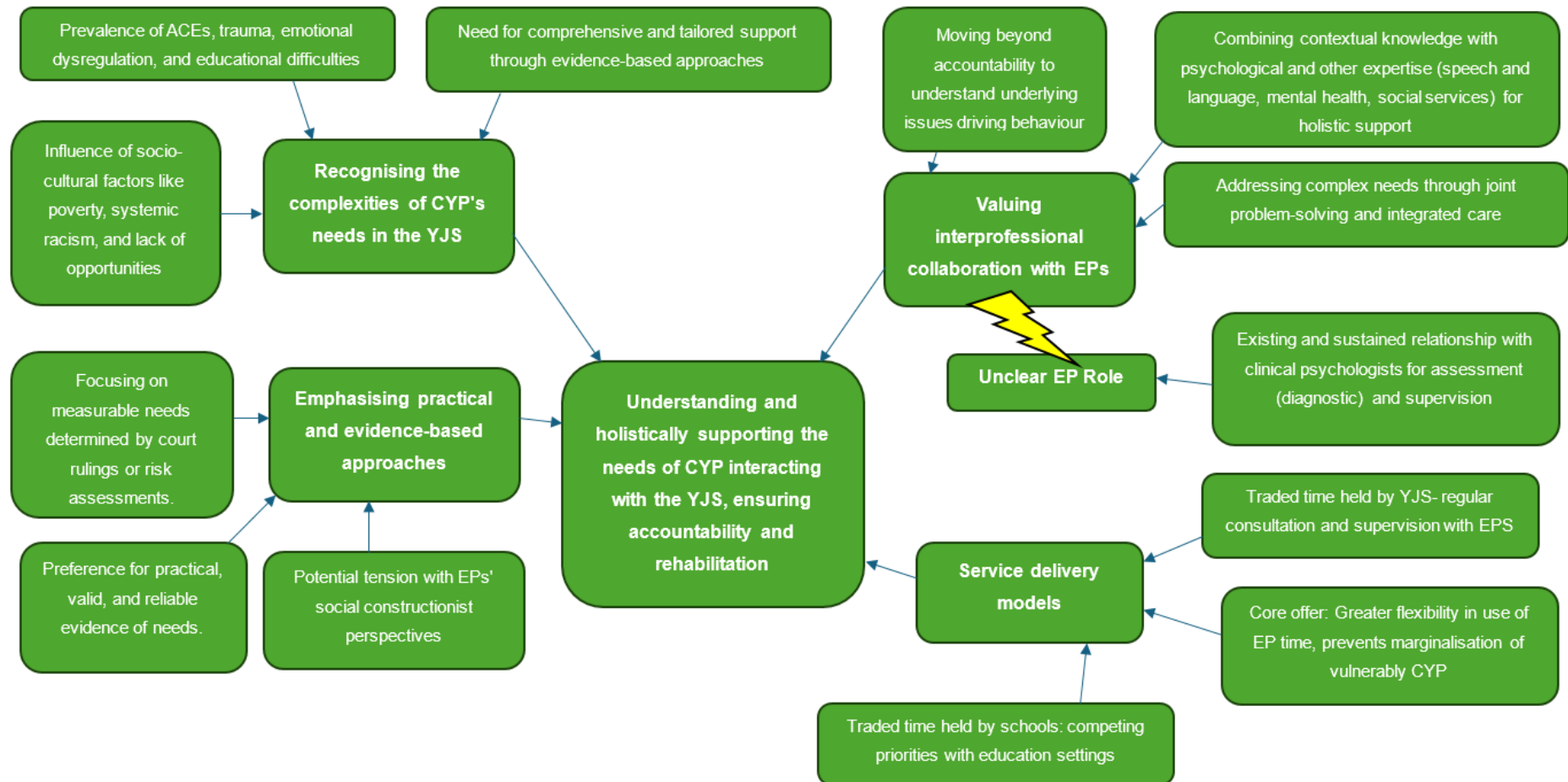
The thematic analysis of the EP and YJP interview data has been visually represented through an activity theory framework in Figure 13. This diagram maps the emerging themes onto the different nodes of an activity system, providing a way of understanding the complex interplay of factors influencing interprofessional collaboration between EPs and YJPs. The subject represents the distinct professional groups of EPs and YJPs, each operating within their own activity systems shaped by differing rules, community contexts, divisions of labour, and mediating tools. The potentially shared object of providing holistic, informed support for CYP interacting with the YJS to make positive changes in their lives is depicted. The diagram also highlights how contradictions and tensions can arise from the divergent worldviews, approaches, and models of service delivery that characterise the two professional groups' activity systems, which will now be discussed. By mapping the identified facilitators and barriers onto this framework (see Figure 13), the diagram elucidates how interprofessional collaboration emerges from the dynamic interactions, contradictions, and boundary-crossing efforts between the interlinked EP and YJP activity systems.

The following paragraphs do not present the facilitators and barriers separately. The data from the thematic analysis suggest that these factors are more intricate and intertwined than a simple separation would imply. Consequently, the following headings have been developed to capture the complex interplay between the identified facilitators and barriers, as revealed through the thematic synthesis.

Figure 13. The themes from the thematic analysis of EP (orange) and YJP (green) interview data mapped onto a third-generation activity theory model

Tools
Facilitators: Application of psychological theories and practices e.g. trauma-informed approaches, social constructionist methodologies, life story work, and collaborative dialogue techniques.

Shared Object
Providing holistic, informed support for CYP interacting with the YJS to support them in making positive changes in their lives

Tools
Facilitators: Risk assessments, evidence-based interventions, practical measures for addressing needs, legal frameworks, and empirical data collection tools.

Barriers
Perceived professional saturation in YJ.
Unclear role for EP

Object
Facilitators: Equitably supporting the positive developmental and educational needs of CYP involved in the Youth Justice System

Object
Facilitators: Understanding and holistically supporting the needs of CYP interacting with the YJS, ensuring both accountability and rehabilitation.

Barriers
Unclear role for EP

Subject
Educational Psychologists

Subject
Youth Justice Practitioners

Barriers
Schools hold traded EP time, marginalising needs of NEET CYP

Barriers
Limited EP capacity due to overburdened caseloads and statutory responsibilities.
CYP have NEET status

Barriers between the activity systems
- Limited access to EPs
- Conflicting worldviews
- Conflicting organisational priorities
- Professional silos
- Lack of LA leadership understanding EP service commissioning.
- Models of EP Service delivery.

Rules
Facilitators: Ethical guidelines, social constructionist principles, emphasis on subjective experiences, and co-construction of narratives. Educational policies and institutional protocols also guide practice, service delivery models (core offer, traded time held by YJS)

Community
Facilitators: CYP interacting with the YJS, schools, families, other professionals within the YJS, social services.

Division of Labour
Facilitators: EPs focus on assessing psychological and educational needs, developing intervention plans, and working collaboratively with other professionals to address the holistic needs of CYP.

Division of Labour
Facilitators: YJPs focus on assessing risks, ensuring legal compliance, providing practical support, and collaborating with other professionals to manage and rehabilitate CYP.

Community
Facilitators: Legal professionals, social workers, probation officers, educational psychologists, families, speech and language therapists, and other stakeholders within the YJS

Rules
Facilitators: Legal guidelines, positivist approaches, emphasis on empirical evidence and measurable outcomes, court rulings, and institutional policies.

Facilitators from EP interview data

Facilitators from YJP interview data

Barriers from EP and YJP interview data

3.6.3.1 Navigating the emerging differences in worldviews

The EP and YJP questionnaire data suggested a shared commitment and vision to support positive outcomes for CYP involved in the YJS. This shared vision appeared to provide a common motive for EPs and YJPs to engage in joint problem-solving, consultation, supervision, intervention planning and attending multi-agency meetings and panels aligning with the literature on the facilitating role of shared objectives in collaboration (Alderwick et al., 2021; Sloper, 2004). Furthermore, it may represent an alignment of the underlying values, beliefs, and motivations that drive the actions and practices of EPs and YJPs. However, it is important to recognise that the interview data suggests that EPs and YJPs interpret and enact this shared vision differently, which appears to be influenced by their distinct worldviews and the social and institutional contexts in which they operate. From a CHAT perspective, these differing worldviews can be understood as divergent rules that guide the practices of EPs and YJPs within their respective activity systems.

In the interviews, two EPs reflected that they perceived a *"misalignment of priorities with some youth justice practitioners" (EP1)*. At times, these EPs felt their psychological, child-centred perspectives contrasted with the perceived punitive, risk-focused orientations within elements of the YJS (McAlister & Carr, 2014; Sander & Bibbs, 2020), with EP3 sharing, *"My experience, at times, has been that practitioners seem to be pushed away from trying to understand the complexities of the child's context, perhaps because their time is so limited […] I guess that there may be an understanding that seems to run away with everyone, a narrative that everyone quickly buys into, and my role can be to hit pause and ask questions about some other things that might be going on based on my work with the young person or something someone else shared that made me think there is something else at play here that we need to think about together."* The presence of differing paradigms was perceived to pose barriers to collaboration and highlighted the need for proactive dialogue and negotiation to reconcile discrepant values, agendas and professional identities. Some research suggests that sustained interprofessional interactions facilitate the development of shared models, mutual trust and respect and understanding for respective professional roles - key prerequisites for overcoming initial differences in values and agendas (Khalili et al., 2013). The EPs' reflections underscore how navigating differences in priorities and philosophical

stances is an ongoing process in interprofessional collaboration, requiring continuous negotiation and commitment to a common vision to avoid fragmented, siloed practice.

The data suggests that contrasting perspectives of EPs and YJPS may be a result of them holding different worldviews that guide their practice and subsequent interactions. YJPs discussed a preference for *"practical, valid and reliable evidence of needs"* (YJP3). Whereas EPs who participated in the interviews appeared to align with a social constructionist epistemology, discussing placing greater emphasis on the *"experiences, attitudes and stories"* (EP5) of CYP, recognising that their behaviour and development are shaped by the social, cultural, and linguistic contexts in which they are embedded (Gergen, 2015). EP6 reported valuing *"working with [the YJS] in a way that allows us to co-construct our understanding of their story, bringing in the knowledge of other professionals through collaborative dialogue and exploring the other perspectives and narratives in the room."* Ontologically, social constructionism challenges the idea of a fixed, objective reality and instead views reality as fluid, malleable, and shaped by social processes and interactions (Burr, 2015). EPs who appeared to operate from this ontological perspective discussed conceptualising CYP's experiences and identities as *"dynamic and constantly evolving"* (EP1), influenced by the social, cultural, and discursive contexts in which they are situated. EP5 shared that they often drew on life story work, seeking to "map the multiple emerging identities of CYP across the different social contexts they interact with".

Through the lens of CHAT, we can understand these differing worldviews as divergent rules and division of labour elements within the activity systems of EPs and YJPs. The rules that guide the perspectives of the EPs' who were interviewed appear to emphasise a social constructionist approach, valuing subjective experiences and co-constructed narratives. In contrast, the rules guiding YJPs' practice appear to prioritise positivist, empirical evidence and objective measures of needs, as *"determined by court rulings or risk assessments"* (YJP3). Similarly, the division of labour reflects these differing perspectives. EPs suggested they focused on understanding CYPs' life stories, identities, and contextual influences, while YJPs appeared to be guided by assessing and addressing specific, measurable needs.

These contrasting rules and division of labour within the activity systems of EPs and YJPs appear to create tensions and barriers to interprofessional collaboration, as the two professions may have differing approaches to enacting what initially appeared to be a shared objective of their work with CYP in the YJS. Where EPs and YJPs had worked to overcome some of these possible differences in worldviews, they reported finding ways to bridge these divides, such as through *"regular consultation and supervision"* (EP2) that allow for the co-construction of shared understandings and the integration of different forms of knowledge and expertise to generate a consistent and holistic understanding of the needs of CYP involved with the YJS. For example, EP4 described participating in monthly *"joint formulation meetings"* with YJPs where they discuss new cases together. EP4 stated: *" [YJP] brings the information from their assessments and reports from other professionals or the court and we try to dig into the different narratives and experiences to try build a comprehensive understanding of what is going on for that young person. It can be hard, when paperwork presents a child in a particular way or a child presents in a way that can be difficult to engage them. I find that through these meetings and applying a psychological lens to their presentation, we can build up a more comprehensive understanding."*

3.6.3.2 The application of psychology

A key facilitator for both EPs and YJPs emerging from the questionnaire data was the application of a range of psychological theories. In interviews, both EPs and YJPs recognised the increasing complexity of needs faced by CYP involved with the YJS, necessitating *"close collaboration to provide appropriate and comprehensive support"* (YJP2). The prevalence of ACEs, SLC, educational difficulties, and the influence of socio-cultural factors such as poverty highlighted the multi-faceted and intersecting challenges these CYP navigate. EP3 noted, *"So many of the young people we work with have experienced significant trauma and adversity, which manifests in dysregulated behaviour and challenges in school. We have to approach their needs through a trauma-informed lens."* YJP5 echoed this, stating, *"The kids I work with have been through so much, it's no wonder they have difficulties with things like emotional control and just engaging with education."*

EPs also emphasised the high rates of SLCN, with EP6 explaining, *"Communication difficulties are extremely common and can seriously impact their ability to access*

support, express themselves, and particularly navigate the complex and demanding legal processes." Regarding socio-cultural influences, YJP2 shared, *"Poverty, lack of opportunity, systemic racism—these factors create such an uphill battle for many of the families we work with. They are powerless to these forces."*

Both professions recognised that addressing these intersecting needs required a collaborative approach. As EP4 stated, *"By combining our psychological expertise with the contextual knowledge YJPs and other professionals bring, we can develop support plans that truly meet the complex needs of these young people."* YJP1 agreed, *"Working closely with EPs allows us to move beyond just consequence and accountability to really try to understand and support the underlying issues driving behaviour."*

Through the synergy of perspectives, EPs and YJPs who participated shared that they were able to co-construct holistic, tailored support for this vulnerable population. As EP1 summarised, *"It's about bringing all the pieces together - psychological, educational, cultural, systemic - to wrap around the young person with appropriate, joined-up care."*

3.6.3.3 Models of EP Service Delivery

EP services operate under a range of service delivery models, which participants reflected directly impacted EP-YJP collaboration. The range of funding arrangements, including service level agreements, education endowment funding, core EP service offers, and schools' purchased traded EP time, appear to shape the underlying mechanisms that facilitate or constrain collaboration between EPs and YJPs. These funding models appear to introduce structural conditions that interact with agency and cultural factors that influence interprofessional work. Through the lens of CHAT, the varying funding models represent contradictions between the activity systems of EPs and YJPs. These contradictions both enable and constrain opportunities for interprofessional collaboration.

The traded model, where schools purchase EP time, appeared to create tension within the EP activity system between the rules governing resource allocation and the object of supporting all CYP needs equitably. As EP2 noted, schools may be *"reluctant to use traded time for justice-involved CYP, marginalising their needs."*

This resonates with Engeström's (2001) analysis of systemic contradictions arising from the introduction of market-driven rules into public sector activity systems.

From a CHAT perspective, the traded model of EP service delivery was identified as a barrier that reflects a historical structural tension between the use-value of EP expertise in meeting the needs of CYP, and the exchange-value of EP time as a commodified service governed by schools as consumers (Tateo, 2019). As such, the current system was viewed to prioritise how much time a school gets from an EP, rather than focusing on how best to use the EP's skills to meet the needs of CYP. This commodity relationship between EPs and schools was considered to distort the object of the EP activity system (Holland & Fitzgerald, 2023) away from its discussed intent of supporting vulnerable populations.

The traded model was considered to create contradictions within the interacting activity systems. The object of the YJP activity system identified was to provide holistic support and interventions for CYP involved in the YJS, which may require accessing EP expertise. However, the commodity exchange relationship positions *"schools as the primary consumers of EP services, potentially deprioritising the needs of CYP in the youth justice context"* (YJP1). This structural tension echoes critiques of the marketisation of public services, where the introduction of market-based principles can lead to a misalignment between the intended social purpose and the economic imperatives driving service provision (Wilson & Post, 2013).

The commodity relationship positions schools as the primary consumers of EP services, potentially distorting the object of the EP activity system away from supporting vulnerable populations. EPs interviewed shared that the traded model was considered to contribute to the marginalisation of vulnerable CYP, as those outside of mainstream educational settings may face barriers in accessing essential EP support, an issue picked up by Fallon et al. (2010). This resonates with concerns about the inequitable distribution of educational resources and the perpetuation of disadvantage for marginalised populations under market-driven systems (Ball, 2020).

Conversely, funding options like service level agreements, endowments, and core offers encompassing justice-involved CYP were perceived to potentially resolve this contradiction within the EP activity system. By realigning the rules and division of

labour to equitably resource support for CYP, these models may facilitate boundary-crossing and joint co-construction of shared objects between EPs and YJPs.

However, scholars caution that introducing new "models" or tools may not resolve contradictions (Foot, 2014). Professional agency, critical dialogue and the ongoing renegotiation of practices may be helpful for drawing attention to and working through tensions that may still exist. As EP3 advocated, EPs must continually *"ensure practice remained responsive"* despite changing conditions.

I would contend that using CHAT as a lens to explore these issues highlights how funding arrangements may not be neutral enablers/constraints as was suggested by participants but instead represent historical contradictions within the value practices and social relations of public services. While certain models were considered to better tackle systemic contradictions, transforming interprofessional practice requires ongoing collective efforts to redefine the shared understanding of what the goal or purpose of the activity is. In this case, it might involve moving beyond traditional, siloed views of children's services to a more holistic, equitable approach that considers all aspects of children's needs and involves all relevant agencies (Engeström, 2012).

This resonates with CHAT's emphasis on contradictions as drivers of development and opportunities for critical praxis (Warmington, 2008). By surfacing the contradictions implicit in funding models and engaging in boundary-crossing dialogues to resolve them, EPs and YJPs may co-construct new models of interprofessional collaboration grounded in equitable service provision.

3.7 Limitations

One potential limitation of this empirical project is its reliance on self-reported data from participants. While the qualitative approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the subjective experiences and perspectives of EPs and YJPs, these accounts may be influenced by various biases, such as recall bias or social desirability bias. Participants' responses may not fully capture the objective reality of the facilitators and barriers to interprofessional collaboration, as their perceptions are shaped by their individual contexts, roles, and experiences.

Another limitation lies in the sampling approach. Although I aimed to capture a broad range of perspectives by recruiting participants from across England and Wales, the self-selection process may have introduced sampling bias. Those who volunteered to participate might have had particularly strong views or experiences related to EP-YJP collaboration, potentially skewing the findings and limiting their generalisability.

Furthermore, while the study acknowledges the influence of my subjective lens on the interpretation and analysis of data, the measures taken to mitigate this influence, such as maintaining a reflexive stance and transparency in methodological choices, may not fully eliminate the potential for researcher bias.

Finally, while the study employed rigorous qualitative methods, such as thematic analysis and the use of a theoretical framework (CHAT), the findings remain grounded in the specific contexts of the participants and the English and Welsh YJ and educational psychology systems. The transferability of the findings to other contexts or settings may be limited, necessitating further research to explore the generalisability of the results, however, the research was intended as exploratory.

3.8 Implications

This section will outline the potential implications of this empirical project for research (see Table 17) and practice (see Table 18).

3.8.1 For research

Table 17. A table outlining the possible implications of this empirical study for research.

Implication	Description
Methodological contributions	The study demonstrates the value of employing a critical realist perspective and using CHAT as a lens to understand the complexities of interprofessional collaboration. This approach can be further explored in future research to gain deeper insights into the underlying mechanisms and systemic factors shaping collaborative practices.
Theoretical insights	The findings may contribute to the theoretical understanding of interprofessional collaboration by highlighting the importance of navigating differences in worldviews, the role of psychological

	theory application, and the influence of service delivery models. Future research may build upon these insights to develop more nuanced theoretical frameworks for effective interprofessional collaboration.
Comparative studies	The study focuses on the perspectives of EPs and YJPs in England and Wales. Comparative studies across different regions or countries could provide valuable insights into the potential variations in facilitators and barriers to interprofessional collaboration due to cultural, systemic, or policy differences.

3.8.2 For practice

Table 18. A table outlining the possible implications of this empirical project for practice.

Implication	Description
Professional development	The findings underscore the need for professional development opportunities that promote dialogue, shared understanding, and the co-construction of knowledge between EPs and YJPs. Such opportunities can facilitate the navigation of differing worldviews, fostering effective interprofessional collaboration.
Service delivery models	The study highlights the potential impact of service delivery models, such as the traded model, on interprofessional collaboration and equitable access to support for CYP interacting with the YJS. These findings may help to inform discussions and decision-making processes related to the design and implementation of service delivery models that prioritise the needs of all CYP, regardless of their circumstances.
Advocacy and policy implications	The identified systemic barriers and contradictions within and between the activity systems of EPs and YJPs highlight the need for advocacy efforts and policy changes. Findings from this study can contribute to discussions around funding mechanisms, resource allocation, and the development of frameworks that

	support effective interprofessional collaboration and address the marginalisation of vulnerable populations, such as CYP involved with the YJS.
Reflective practice	The study emphasises the importance of ongoing critical reflection and dialogue among professionals to navigate contradictions, renegotiate practices, and co-construct shared understandings and approaches to supporting CYP involved in the YJS. I hope that practitioners can use the findings to inform their reflective practices and engage in continuous professional development.
Multi-agency collaboration	The study underscores the value of collaborative, interprofessional approaches in addressing the complex and intersecting needs of CYP involved in the YJS. The findings may help to inform the development of frameworks and guidelines for effective interprofessional collaboration, ensuring that the combined expertise of different professionals is leveraged to provide holistic support.

3.9 A brief reflection on using CHAT in this empirical project

The use of third-generation CHAT as a theoretical framework has facilitated a comprehensive exploration of the complex, multi-layered factors influencing this collaborative dynamic. By grounding the semi-structured interview questions in the components of an activity system, the interviews captured rich data illuminating how these distinct elements shape EP-YJP collaboration. I was surprised by how well the questions flowed in the interviews, and participants grappled with each concept with me.

Mapping the emergent themes from the thematic analysis onto the CHAT model visually represented the interplay between these components across the intersecting activity systems of the two professional groups. Overall, CHAT has provided a helpful conceptual toolkit for unpacking the facilitators and barriers to effective EP-YJP collaboration, offering valuable insights to inform strategies for enhancing interprofessional practice and support for CYP within the YJS.

3.10 Conclusion

This study explored facilitators and barriers to interprofessional collaboration between EPs and YJPs in England and Wales. Questionnaire data revealed shared visions and psychological theory as facilitators and systemic barriers, like funding models, as impediments. Interviews through a CHAT lens illuminated how perceived facilitators and barriers represented contradictions within and between the complex activity systems of EPs and YJPs. While initially aligned by shared aims, divergences in worldviews and divisions of labour required negotiation. The findings highlight the need for professional development promoting co-construction of knowledge and transforming systemic factors to enable equitable access to specialist support to improve outcomes for CYP involved with the YJS. This research provides a systemic perspective on navigating interprofessional complexities.

Chapter 4. Reflective Commentary

(Word count: 1994)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a reflective commentary on my professional and academic learning through completing this research journey. It will outline the possible contributions of this research project and the impact completing it has had on my practice as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP). I will also consider the future implications and next steps as a practitioner and researcher.

In this empirical project, I have chosen to focus on the perspectives of EPs and YJPs rather than directly incorporating the voices of CYP. This decision was guided by my understanding, as outlined in the Positionality Statement (see 1.1.4), that those who work closely with CYP in the YJS play a crucial role in shaping the support and interventions provided to this population. While the young people's voices are central to my values and the broader context of this research, I recognised that exploring the insights and experiences of EPs and YJPs was vital in understanding the systemic factors and professional practices that impact these young individuals. By exploring the perspectives of these professionals, I aimed to uncover the ways in which their roles, attitudes, and collaborations influence the outcomes for young people within the YJS. This approach reflects my commitment to social justice and inclusivity, as it seeks to ensure that the structures and systems surrounding young people are scrutinised and improved. While young people's voices are not directly included in this empirical project, the focus remains on better understanding and ultimately enhancing the support structures that serve them.

4.2 Positioning myself as a researcher

Qualitative inquiry necessitates an acknowledgement of my indelible presence throughout the process, permeating data collection and analysis (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Consequently, a reflective consideration of my positionality within this research journey is imperative before elucidating its potential contributions. This project has afforded me the privileged opportunity to explore the narratives of Educational Psychologists (EPs) and Youth Justice Professionals (YJPs) engaged in collaborative endeavours, at times drawing upon specific case examples. On

occasion, my sense of the value of interprofessional collaboration has been challenged. A YJP shared an experience where conflicting professional perspectives and a lack of shared understanding among the team were perceived to lead to disjointed support for a CYP. The professionals struggled to find common ground, resulting in fragmented interventions that failed to provide the cohesive and holistic support intended. This experience challenged my assumption that interprofessional collaboration leads to positive outcomes, underscoring the importance of fostering a shared vision and effective communication among collaborators. In acknowledging such narratives, I must concede that my personal experiences within the youth justice system (YJS) are limited. To mitigate this, I have endeavoured to privilege the profound knowledge and lived experiences of my participants. As a TEP with limited exposure to the YJS, I cannot be considered an 'insider' within this context (Aiello & Nero, 2019). The insider status is widely regarded as fostering openness, facilitating deeper narratives and engendering trust (Breen, 2007). Throughout my interactions with participants, I have been transparent about my outside positioning, ensuring that any assumptions or uncertainties regarding my knowledge or awareness could be explored, thereby safeguarding against any impediments to my comprehension arising from a lack of system-specific knowledge (Komalasari et al., 2022).

The insider-outside research dichotomy has been critiqued for its reductionist framing of the intricate and multifaceted nature of human interactions (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). The rich and complex space between myself and the participants within each interview enabled the exploration of prior knowledge, experience, and value systems- factors deemed pivotal in qualitative research (Komalasari et al., 2022). My employment of interviews and subsequent use of supervision and reflective practices have facilitated consideration of my positionality in this project. Inevitably, I have privileged certain themes during data analysis and interpretation, influenced by prior reading and my own experiential lens, resulting in the emergence of themes shaped by my subjective perspectives, experience working in the youth justice sphere and the unique interpersonal dynamics of each interview. This phenomenon can be construed as reinforcing the inextricable presence of my personal perceptions of collaboration throughout this research.

4.3 Research contributions

The findings from this research project contribute to the extant knowledge base in several ways. First, the systematic literature review represents a novel contribution to the understanding of factors within interventions that aim to reduce youth crime. Interventions in the YJS are arguably under-researched, as evidenced by the paucity of published literature, and this SLR provides an initial elucidation of the complexity surrounding the efficacy of such interventions, particularly non-pharmacological modalities. The dearth of research and synthesis within this area underscores the intricate nature of the delivery and monitoring processes encompassing specific interventions. Furthermore, the time demands, pressures on workload and requisite research skills may inhibit publication by YJPs, thereby contributing to the scarcity of literature exploring interventions in youth justice. This challenge was reflected in my interview process and captured by a YJP: "If I was going to have a more perfect team than I've got at the moment, I would have even more active practitioner-researchers; we don't have time, and we don't have the doctoral research skills needed to unpick and present the complexities of what we are delivering. We evidence our practice, of course, but we can't evidence it as well as we could be doing if we had the time and skills."

To the best of my knowledge, the empirical study represents the first endeavour to explore the mechanisms of the facilitators and barriers to collaboration between EPs and YJPs across England and Wales. The findings may contribute towards elucidating the potential for such EP-YJP collaboration whilst also contributing to specific guidance for EPs operating within the YJ sphere. Such guidance, serving as a foundational document shaping ethical conduct, professional standards, and decision-making, plays a pivotal role in promoting and safeguarding the ethical practice of psychology and the well-being of stakeholders (Hailes et al., 2021). The empirical study's contributions may help bridge the current absence of guidance in this area for EPs, which this project highlighted as a barrier to collaboration for some EPs.

4.4 Implications for a Trainee Practitioner

The SLR has developed my understanding of factors contributing to interventions within the YJS. Drawing upon my experiences, I acknowledge that contextualising

these factors is pivotal in facilitating positive change for interventions targeting all CYP. When implementing interventions in line with BPS competency group 6 (Psychological Intervention and Evaluation) as a TEP, I have employed the model derived from my SLR as a catalyst in discussions with families and school staff, ensuring a reflexive consideration of how these factors manifest within each intervention's unique context (see Figure 14).

Using this model reflects my values as a practitioner, which include ensuring people feel involved in the change process that impacts them and the value I place on conducting research that will enhance and translate into my own practice.

Figure 14. . A practical example from casework considering how the framework emerging from the SLR has been used to support the delivery of therapeutic intervention for Jayden (pseudonym).

Collaboration with other professionals:
I worked closely with Jayden (pseudonym), his new foster parents, class teacher and teaching assistant to develop a bespoke emotional regulation intervention. I trained school staff in using comic strip conversations and emotion coaching strategies to reinforce learning across contexts. Following a parent-school staff consultation, both were provided with a handout I created that shared emotion validation techniques to try at home and in the classroom.

Adopting a person-centred and collaborative approach:
We each placed Jayden at the centre of the process, seeking to understand his unique strengths, challenges, and perspectives. They involved him in setting goals and making decisions about his support whenever possible. His preferences, interests and cultural background were considered to ensure a tailored and engaging approach.

Barriers:
We held bi-weekly meetings to review the outcomes and make adaptations to the strategies parents and school were applying. This led to the introduction of a classroom emotional regulation toolkit that each pupil in Jayden's class contributed to and could access, and teachers began to use visuals with Jayden during periods of emotional regulation when they perceived it became difficult for him to process and respond to verbal prompts to keep himself safe.

Relationships:
Throughout, parent-child and child-teacher relationships were central and we emphasised the importance of positive, safe and predictable adult relationships for Jayden as a foundation for Jayden's emotional development and self-regulation skills

The empirical study was driven by my specific interest in and value of collaborative practice as a means of supporting CYP, stemming from my prior experience. Through collaborative approaches like co-creating safe spaces and inviting CYP to meetings, I have been able to build trust and rapport with CYP, facilitating the sharing of their narratives and lived experiences. I have directly engaged with CYP who have expressed their vulnerabilities while sharing their narratives with me, often underpinned by experiences of trauma. I have celebrated their successes and

moments of hope and joy. While maintaining appropriate professional boundaries, the collaborative process fostered a strong rapport and trusted connection (Lyon, 2018) that facilitated open dialogue and mutual understanding. I have often contemplated how these relationships may have facilitated the change process within the broader context of their interventions.

As I transitioned into EP training, I was struck by the often siloed nature of my involvement with CYP and families supported by other services. My interactions with other professionals were frequently limited to reading their reports or sporadic email exchanges. However, when opportunities for collaborative working presented themselves, I found that I developed my practice and constructed support plans that promoted holistic development for CYP.

This way of working aligns with my values, enabling me to explore other professionals' perspectives and expertise to adapt methods of support in response to the CYP's unique context rather than operating in isolation through desk-based literature reviews and email correspondence. The value I place on collaboration is inextricably woven through this project and may be mirrored by the participants who have contributed. However, I posit that this value is held for a reason: I have witnessed the positive impact collaborative practice can have for CYP, particularly those who are vulnerable and/or have complex needs.

4.5 The impact conducting this research has had on me

At the outset, I harboured assumptions and preconceptions about the nature of collaboration between EP and YJ. However, as I immersed myself in the lived experiences of my participants, I found my worldview being challenged and expanded. The nuances and complexities that emerged compelled me to confront my own biases about EP service delivery models, reflecting how the traded model can serve to marginalise the needs of vulnerable CYP. An EP recounted a case where a collaborative multi-agency meeting for a CYP involved excessive paperwork, rigid procedures, and an overwhelming number of professionals present. The CYP felt overwhelmed and intimidated by the bureaucratic nature of the process, diminishing their ability to openly engage and share their perspectives. This account highlighted how well-intentioned collaborative efforts can sometimes inadvertently create a suffocating bureaucratic environment for CYP at the centre.

The methodology used necessitated a heightened level of reflexivity, constantly prompting me to interrogate my positionality and its influence on the research process. This self-examination has cultivated a deeper sense of humility and an appreciation for the inherent subjectivity that permeates human inquiry. Personally, this research journey has been an exercise of perseverance and resilience. The challenges and setbacks encountered along the way have tested my determination and commitment to the pursuit of knowledge. However, these challenging times have also instilled in me a greater sense of self-efficacy and confidence in my ability to navigate complex terrain.

Conducting this research has deepened my understanding of the importance of positionality in academic work. It has highlighted the ways in which my personal and professional background influences my interpretations and has underscored the need for ongoing reflexivity. This awareness has not only shaped the findings of this study but has also influenced my development as a reflective practitioner, committed to equity and social justice in both research and practice (see 1.1.4 Positionality Statement).

4.6 Future Implications

I aspire to progress through the publication process to contribute to the gaps in the literature discussed. Through publishing, I endeavour to raise the profile of the possibilities emerging from EP-YJP collaboration. I hope that the activity theory model presented in Chapter 3 can provide a framework for EPs working or interested in this area to consider within the context of their own practice.

4.7 Next steps

In conducting this thesis, I find myself in the unique position of understanding the facilitators and barriers to EP-YJP interprofessional collaboration and how we can understand these facilitators and barriers are working. However, I do not perceive myself as a gatekeeper to this information but rather as an agent to propel momentum in the area of EP-YJP collaboration. Commencing with my participants, I endeavour to initiate this momentum, as I acknowledge that collectively, we are in a unique position to collaborate and share ideas and practices. In the feedback form I will disseminate to participants, I will inquire about their interest in forming an interest group. The understanding I have gained from the SLR is not limited to interventions

in YJ may extend to how effective collaborative working can be considered more generally. I perceive that the creation of an interest group mirrors the findings of my SLR (see Figure 15).

Figure 15. The SLR model adapted to consider how the formation of a EP YJ interest group mirrors the findings from the SLR.
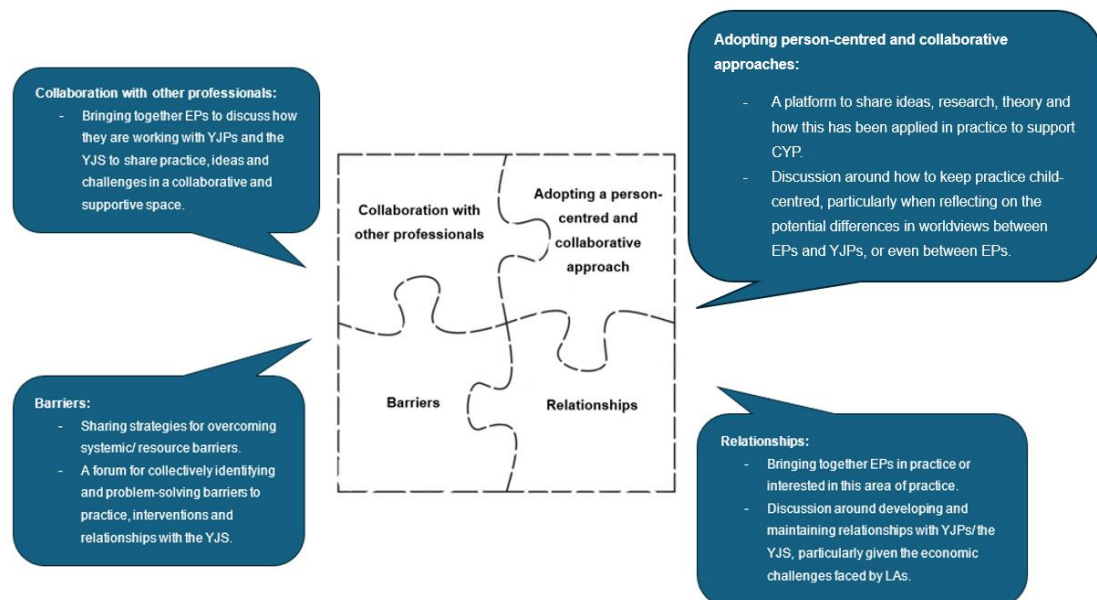
4.8 Concluding Reflections

Conducting this research has influenced my practice as a TEP and highlighted the paucity of literature surrounding the YJS, particularly regarding how EPs work with YJPs (Howarth-Lees & Woods, 2022). Amongst other aspects, the research has elicited reflections about my positionality as a researcher, fostering a deeper understanding of what informs collaboration between EPs and YJPs in England and Wales and illuminated possible implications for EP practice in this area.

This project has highlighted the range and flexibility of practice between EPs and YJPs, drawing upon a diverse array of psychological theories and approaches to respond to the unique needs of CYP interacting with the YJS. The next steps of this research may include exploring the perspectives of other professionals who work within the YJS, as well as those of CYP and families, to elucidate their roles and the resulting changes for CYP and families. I endeavour to continue developing my knowledge and practice in this area to facilitate lasting positive change for the CYP I work with. Moreover, this research has highlighted the complexities of collaboration

between two LA services, particularly Educational Psychology Services, using the traded model of service delivery, which was considered to prevent some of the most vulnerable children in society from accessing psychological support. The systemic tensions identified by this research project may prompt LA leadership to consider how their services can best support vulnerable CYP, including those in the YJS who benefit from a multi-agency response, possibly including an EP. As articulated by a YJP: "We need to work together more than ever – our most vulnerable children need us to, so we can help them make positive changes in their lives."

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Appendices

Appendix A

Familiarisation with included studies

An example of the notes taken during the data familiarisation process.
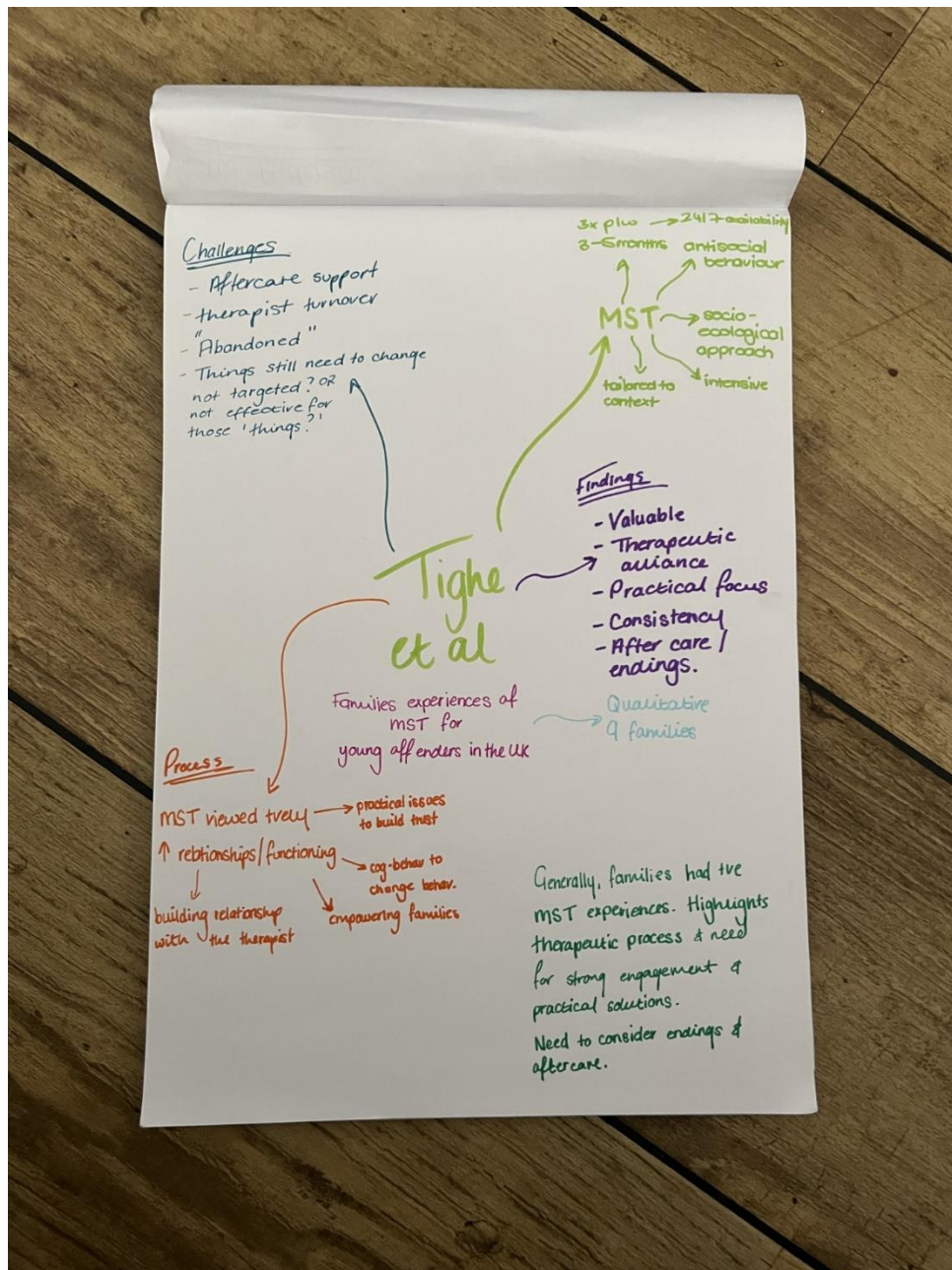
Appendix B

Line-by-line coding

A screenshot taken at the start of the line-by-line coding process of the included studies.

Appendix C

Development of descriptive themes
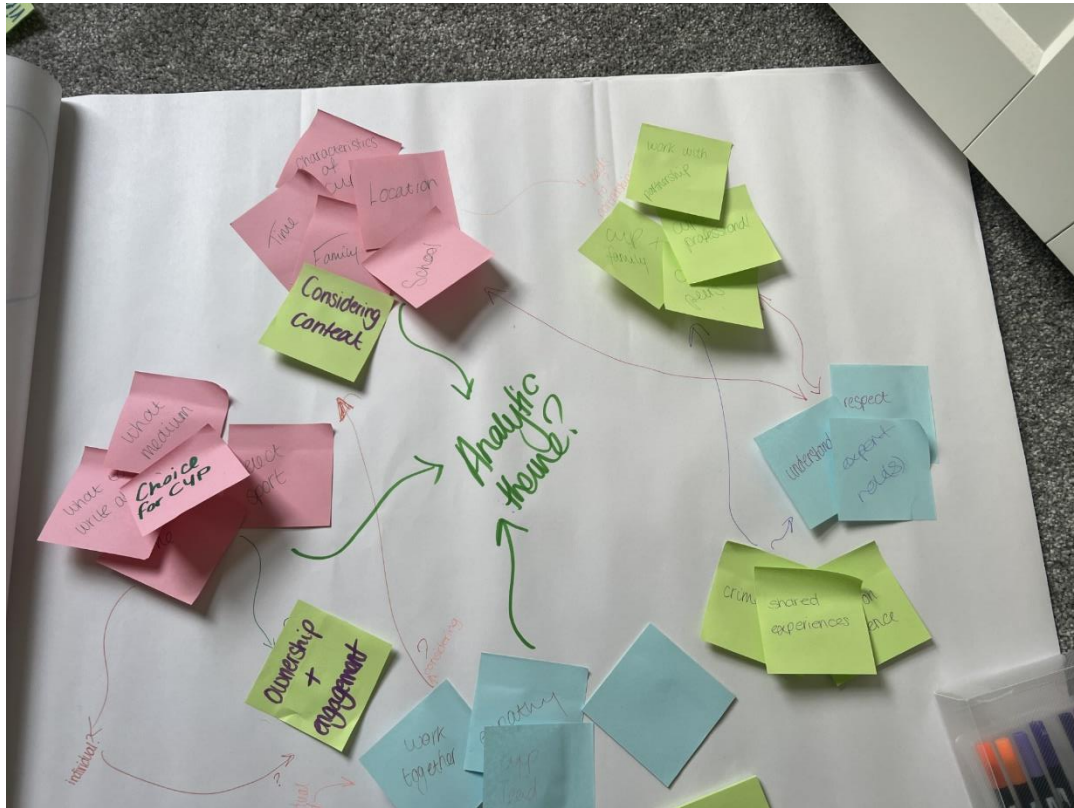
Appendix D

Development of analytic themes from EP questionnaire data

Appendix E

Vignette of my work with Sam (pseudonym)

Sam (pseudonym), a 14-year-old boy, had been recruited by a local gang and was being exploited for drug trafficking and other criminal activities. His situation came to light when he was arrested during a police raid on the gang's operations.

Initially, Sam was referred to the Youth Offending Team (YOT), where he was assigned a case worker. However, recognising the complexity of Sam's circumstances and the potential that he was a victim of child criminal exploitation, the YOT case worker initiated a multi-agency response.

An interprofessional team was created, including a social worker from the local authority's children's services, an educational psychologist (my supervisor), myself, a youth worker from a local charity supporting exploited children, and an education welfare officer.

Together, we collaborated to develop a comprehensive support plan tailored to Sam's needs, addressing the factors potentially contributing to his vulnerability resulting in his exploitation and involvement with County Lines.

The social worker conducted an assessment of Sam's family situation, identifying potential safeguarding concerns and providing support services to his Mum, who was struggling with financial difficulties and housing instability. The EP and I worked with Liam to explore the psychological impact of his exploitation, providing trauma-informed therapy and developing coping strategies to help him express and process his experiences. I worked with Sam to explore his story, creating a life map of his important memories and events to contribute towards identifying his strengths and motivators. The youth worker connected Sam with positive role models and mentors, introducing him to alternative activities and opportunities that could help him avoid the gang's influence and build his self-esteem. The education welfare officer ensured that Sam had access to educational resources and tutoring support, as his schooling had been disrupted due to his involvement with the gang.

Through this coordinated effort, involving professionals from various disciplines, Sam received holistic support that addressed his emotional, social, and educational needs. The interprofessional collaboration allowed for a comprehensive approach

that not only aimed to disengage Sam from the county lines gang but also addressed the underlying vulnerabilities that had made him susceptible to exploitation.

Over time, with consistent support and guidance, Sam gradually disengaged from the gang, rebuilt positive relationships, and regained a sense of purpose and direction in his life.

Appendix F

Email to participant outlining interview questions

An email was sent to participants prior to the semi-structured interviews. I hoped to provide an image of the email, but due to issues with anonymity, the text has been copied below.

Hi X!

I'm really looking forward to our interview. As previously discussed, I said I would send the questions in advance. These questions are theoretically rooted, but please don't worry about this. I hope that, as part of the interview, we can discuss the thoughts that these questions evoke. Here are the questions for the interview:

Component of Cultural-historical Activity Theory	Guiding interview questions
Subject	What is and how would you describe your role?
Object	What are you working on with EP/YJP?
Outcome	What are the outcomes of your work with EP/YJ? Who are these outcomes for? How do these outcomes facilitate or hinder your work with EPs/YJPs?
Rules	What supports and/or challenges the work with EP/YJ? How do these identified rules facilitate or hinder your work with EPs/YJPs?
Community	Who else is involved in the collaborative work? Does this have any facilitatory or hindrance to your collaborative work with EPs/YJPs?
Division of Labour	How is your collaborative work with EP/YJ negotiated? How does this negotiation facilitate or hinder your work with EPs/YJPs?
Tools	What tools, resources, information and/or evidence are being used to inform this work? How do the tools you use facilitate or hinder your work with EPs/YJPs?
Additional questions	Is there something else that facilitates or hinders your work with EPs/YJPs?

So we aren't starting from a total state of unknown; here is how someone conceptualised these components in literature. I hope this provides some guidance to your initial thinking before we meet. If you want to look at these, they're in Chapter 13 of a book called Frameworks for Practice in Educational Psychology: A Textbook for Trainees and Practitioners.

Node of cultural-historical activity theory	Definition
Subject	The perspective from which the activity system is considered. This is you and your role.
Object	The work that is completed by the subject. This is the work you carry out with an EP.
Mediating tools/ artefacts	External objects or artefacts that mediate the human activity and facilitate the accomplishment of an identified goal. These are the explicit things you use to support the work such as assessment tools but also the ideas you bring.
Rules	Implicit or explicit regulations that constrain or allow the activities to occur and inform participants about the accepted interaction norms. These are the policies, procedures and guidelines that inform your work.
Community	The group to which the subject belongs while participating in the activity. This is the group in which you work with, that an EP may be involved with.
Division of Labour	The negotiation of tasks and the division of power that members of the community share. How do you negotiate and distribute work?
Outcome	The resulting impact of the activity system. What is the impact of this collaboration, for you and the young people?

I hope these provide some guidelines for initial thoughts. Any questions, don't hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,

Hayley

Appendix G

Passage for Ongoing Consent - Phase Two

Thank you, [name], for your participation in this study so far. Before we proceed to phase two, I want to explain what will be involved and make sure you understand your rights as a participant.

We will be engaging in a semi-structured interview. I have sent the questions in an email to allow you to prepare responses, but there was no expectation of doing so. This phase is expected to take approximately one hour. There are no expected risks but if you wish to take a break at any point, please just let me know. Also, if you draw on any case examples, please do so anonymously. If there is any identifiable information given, I will remove this during the transcription of this interview.

Your participation remains completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the at any point without explanation- please just leave this virtual space.

Do you have any other questions before we proceed? [Allow time for questions]. If you agree to continue, please indicate so by saying, "I consent." Otherwise, simply say you do not want to proceed further. Once you have given consent, I will begin audio recording this interview.

I will now step away briefly to allow you privacy in making your decision. Please let me know when I can return. Thank you again for your valuable participation.

Appendix H

Participant Consent form

A parallel consent form was produced for the youth justice questionnaire, substituting Educational Psychologist for Youth Justice and vice versa.

This study aims to develop an understanding of the facilitators and barriers to collaboration between Educational Psychologists and Youth Justice practitioners (YJPs). I am hoping to recruit EPs and YJPs to take part in a questionnaire that explores their views, opinions and perspectives on what facilitates and is a barrier to the professions working together. As a participant, you will be asked to take part in an online questionnaire. There will be an option to volunteer for a virtual 1-1 semi-structured interview with the researcher lasting 45-60 minutes in autumn-winter 2023. The questions will be emailed to you prior to the interview to enable you to have time to consider a response, should you wish to.

You have been invited to participate in this study because you are an Educational Psychologist. I am interested in your experiences of multi-agency collaboration with youth justice and the barriers to this work.

Benefits for participants:
· Involvement in research, which will aim to explore how you work with other professionals to support children and young people who interact with the youth justice service.
· An opportunity to share and reflect on practice with an outsider researcher.

What are the aims of this research?
· To help develop an understanding of how Educational Psychology and Youth Justice professionals are currently working together and perspectives on the barriers to this.
· To deepen our understanding of how multi-agency relationships are formed and maintained between youth justice services and Educational Psychology Services to support children and young people.

All non-identifying information you provide, will be kept in a password-protected electronic database, tagged with an anonymous ID number. Pseudonyms will be used during the following data analysis and write up, and anything said which could identify individuals will be redacted during transcription. You have the right to withdraw your data until 31st January 2024, after this date all data will be given an anonymous code.

Newcastle University needs to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate under UK General Data Protection Regulations. If you withdraw from the study, Newcastle University will keep the information about you that has already been obtained. To safeguard your rights, the minimum personally-identifiable information will be collected and will be destroyed on completion of the Doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology. 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).

This study has been reviewed and approved by the School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences Ethics Committee at Newcastle University (date of approval: 11th May 2023). Please direct any questions to Hayley Marsden on h.l.marsden3@newcastle.ac.uk.

Please confirm using the form below is you are happy for quotes from this questionnaire.

Thank you in advance for your time.

Hayley

Appendix I

The online questionnaire administered to Educational Psychologists

This appendices contains the questionnaire for EPs. For YJPs, the same questions were asked but substituted EP and YJP and vice versa.

Declaration of informed consent

1. I confirm I have read and understood the above information and consent to my responses being used for the purposes of this research *

   ○ I consent

   Next

* Required

Personal Information

2. Which Local Authority do you work for? (if you do not work for a local authority, please say who employs you) *

   Enter your answer

3. What is your job title? *

   Enter your answer

   Back   **Next**

Collaborative Practices

4. Have you worked with Youth Justice in the since 2019? *

   ◯ Yes

   ◯ No

5. Can you describe any instances where you have worked with Youth Justice in your practice as an Educational Psychologist?

   Enter your answer

6. What are some examples of collaborative projects or initiatives you have been involved in with Youth Justice?

   Enter your answer

7. Have you established working relationships with professionals in Youth Justice? How and why were these developed?

   Enter your answer

8. What are the challenges or barriers you have encountered in working with Youth Justice?

Enter your answer

9. What knowledge or expertise do/could you bring to collaboration with Youth Justice?

Enter your answer

Back   Submit

10. If you work with Youth Justice, how is this work funded?

Enter your answer

Appendix J

Participant recruitment poster

Appendix K

Email to participant outlining interview questions

An email was sent to participants prior to the semi-structured interviews. I hoped to provide an image of the email, but due to issues with anonymity, the text has been copied below.

Hi X!

I'm really looking forward to our interview. As previously discussed, I said I would send the questions in advance. These questions are theoretically rooted, but please don't worry about this. I hope that, as part of the interview, we can discuss the thoughts that these questions evoke. Here are the questions for the interview:

Component of Cultural-historical Activity Theory	Guiding interview questions
Subject	What is your job title? Can you describe your professional role?
Object	What are you working on with EP/YJP?
Outcome	What are the outcomes of your work with EP/YJ? Who are these outcomes for? How do these outcomes facilitate or hinder your work with EPs/YJPs?
Rules	What supports and/or challenges the work with EPs/YJPs? How do these identified rules facilitate or hinder your work with EPs/YJPs?
Community	Who else is involved in the collaborative work? How does this facilitate or hinder your collaborative work with EPs/YJPs?
Division of Labour	How is your collaborative work with EP/YJ negotiated? How does this negotiation facilitate or hinder your work with EPs/YJPs?
Tools	What tools, resources, information and/or evidence are being used to inform this work? How do the tools you use facilitate or hinder your work with EPs/YJPs?

Additional questions	Is there something else that facilitates or hinders your work with EPs/YJPs?

So we aren't starting from a total state of unknown; here is how someone conceptualised these components in literature. I hope this provides some guidance to your initial thinking before we meet. If you want to look at these, they're in Chapter 13 of a book called Frameworks for Practice in Educational Psychology: A Textbook for Trainees and Practitioners.

Node of cultural-historical activity theory	Definition
Subject	The perspective from which the activity system is considered. This is you and your role.
Object	The work that is completed by the subject. This is the work you carry out with an EP.
Mediating tools/ artefacts	External objects or artefacts that mediate the human activity and facilitate the accomplishment of an identified goal. These are the explicit things you use to support the work such as assessment tools but also the ideas you bring.
Rules	Implicit or explicit regulations that constrain or allow the activities to occur and inform participants about the accepted interaction norms. These are the policies, procedures and guidelines that inform your work.
Community	The group to which the subject belongs while participating in the activity. This is the group in which you work with, that an EP may be involved with.
Division of Labour	The negotiation of tasks and the division of power that members of the community share. How do you negotiate and distribute work?
Outcome	The resulting impact of the activity system. What is the impact of this collaboration, for you and the young people?

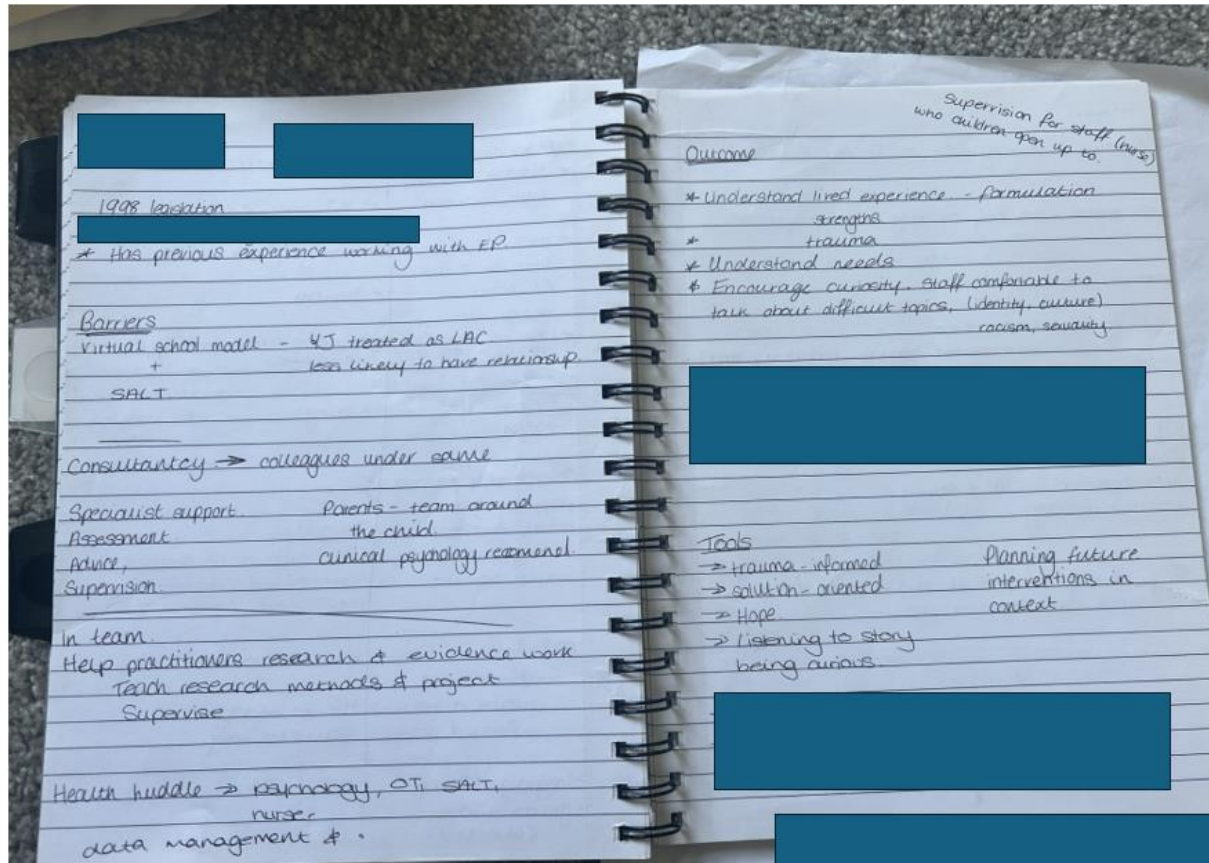I hope these provide some guidelines for initial thoughts. Any questions, don't hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,

Hayley

Appendix L

Example of notes from interview transcripts
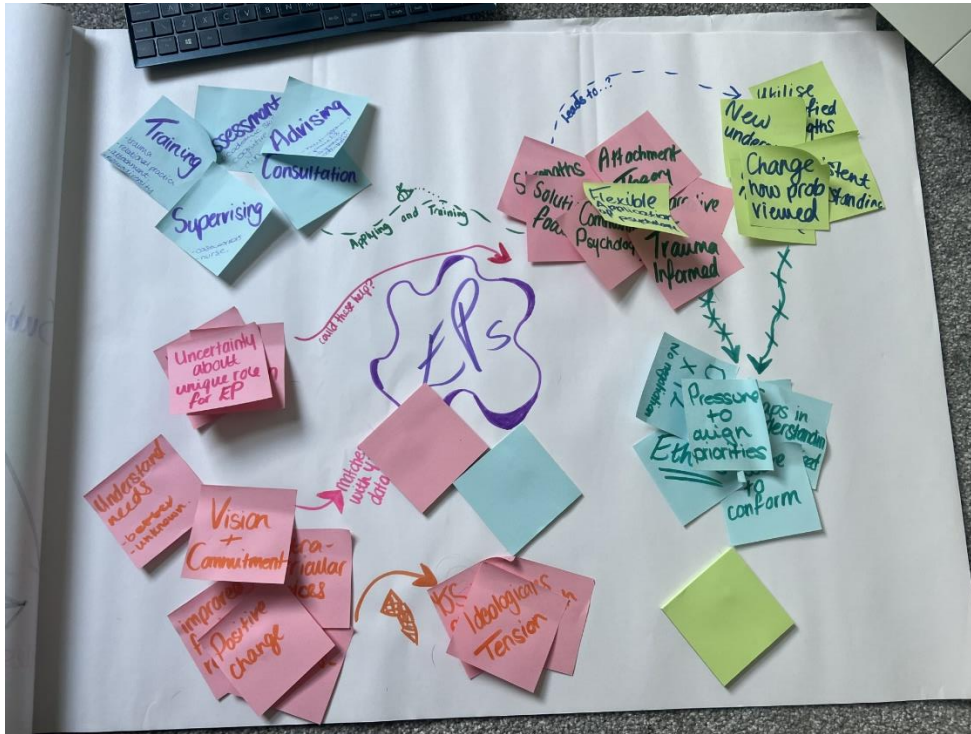
Parts of these notes have been redacted to maintain the anonymity of participants.

Appendix M

A photo taken during the process of the development of descriptive themes

Appendix N

A photo taken during the development of analytic themes