Person-Centred Planning Within Education: What does the Research Say and How Can it be Used to Support Vulnerable Pupils with SEMH Needs?

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Thesis Abstract

Background:
Opportunities for children to be involved in the decisions made about them is a part of current statutory educational legislation. Person-centred planning (PCP) has been proposed as an appropriate method of meeting statutory requirements. However, there is a dearth of research into its application within education. Young people within alternative provisions (APs) may be prone to lacking opportunities of being heard.

Methods/Participants:
The first paper describes a systematic literature review of current research into PCP within education, pupils with SEMH and the associated outcomes. The second paper reports on an action research project with staff from an AP for children at risk of exclusion, who opted to trial the use of the PCP approach ‘MAPs’ (carried out virtually due to Covid-19 social restrictions). Evaluation of the MAPs trial involved two focus groups exploring the staff members’ observations and views.

Analysis/Findings:
More rigorous research is needed into PCP and its effectiveness, including the use of standardised and observable outcome measures, more varied ranges of contexts and participants, and longitudinal and child-led designs. Findings from the action research indicate that (virtual) use of MAPs requires staff to carefully consider their setting’s structure, needs, capacity and capabilities. Pre-meeting preparation and adapting the MAPs process with technology can improve engagement, access and provide alternative ways of working. The MAPs process provides a range of positive outcomes as a by-product of its implementation, e.g. improved relationships, increased information sharing.

Conclusion/Implications:
PCP appears to be an effective way of engaging children, young people and their families but research within education is currently limited and methodologically weak. A dissemination strategy for sharing the present findings with participants and the EP community is discussed.
Declaration

I, Anthony Gray, declare that no portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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For Kevin, Caroline and Cathy – for living up to the EP rhetoric where others failed. For your forward thinking, open-mindedness and receptiveness to change and equality, I will be forever grateful. Thank you for restoring my faith in the ability to address broken systems and for giving me the platform to push on from.

To Clare and all the participants who went that extra mile to help me get this over the finish line, in the most unusual of circumstances, I have nothing but deep gratitude and the upmost respect for your dedication, perseverance and patience. I will make that trip up north very soon to thank you in person…mainly because I really just couldn’t face another Zoom!

To my family and friends, you all played your part in shaping my growth and development. Every conversation, every choice, every shared moment, every bellyache laugh, every drop of blood, sweat and tears brought me to this precise point in time. I thank you, very much, for sticking with me and my trajectory whilst I worked it all out.

Last, but by no means least, for Hazel. I wish you were here to see how it all panned out and the amazing journey it took to get here. Now, more than ever, I appreciate everything you did for me.
Background

The Author

I have had, what many may consider, an unconventional route into educational psychology and research due to my upbringing, life experiences, and numerous career paths. Prior to starting the Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology, working in roles as: youth and community worker; project development officer; learning mentor; teacher at a pupil referral unit and child exploitation and serious youth violence officer helped me to develop my life-long interest in supporting disadvantaged children and young people. The interest to try and make a change to young people’s lives arose from being a disadvantaged child myself and knowing first-hand the hardships of poverty, racism, discrimination, identity issues arising from a sense of not belonging, or being accepted anywhere, and generally unkind actions, people, thoughts and behaviours. From a young age, the inequality of the world alongside the natural tendencies of the majority of people I encountered to not listen to the stories of others; not care about other peoples’ feelings; not say what they mean and/or tell half-truths has fascinated me. Hence, when I learnt about the notion of humanist psychology, in particular the values of being person-centred, there was a natural resonance. For many years, colleagues, clients and service users would comment positively about my work and how my approach to them and my work was different (i.e. underpinned by person-centred values). However, a lack of deeper self-confidence and a poor mind-set from my upbringing would serve to prevent me accepting those comments as true and applying those same person-centred values to my own life. Only with age and varying experiences have I learnt to be kinder to myself and how to interweave lived experience and personal moral values in to practice.

Rationale for Engagement

Having worked in mainstream primary, secondary and tertiary educational settings, as well as pupil referral units and alternative provisions (APs), I have always adhered to the central tenant that listening to young people and treating them as equals, to understand their situations, needs and wants, is a much better way of achieving desired outcomes. Naturally, when the thesis topics were presented to my cohort the research commission for person-centred practice (PCP)
within alternative provision was the first choice. From my personal experience, I knew that the Department for Education and Department of Health’s Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice (SENDCoP, 2015) required professionals to work in more person-centred ways but the reality of how to be more person-centred perplexed many of the professionals I worked with, including myself to some degree. Therefore, the opportunity to deepen my understanding and knowledge of PCP and fuse that with my lived experiences and values meant that this project was the one I really wanted to engage with. The design of the research commission, which took the form of a two-stage investigation into the use of person-centred practices within AP, also felt like a well-structured approach to developing my understanding. The first stage of the research involved a pilot study looking at what staff understood by the term PCP and how it applied to their work, whilst the second stage formed the body of the following thesis.

Participants in the research all voiced similar reasons for wanting to participate, i.e. to find new ways of engaging with their pupils so they could hopefully improve their future outcomes. The pilot study, and indeed the final thesis research, identified that underpinning staff ethos in an AP in the North of England was the inherent person-centred values (e.g. genuineness, honesty, empathy, showing mutual respect, fostering trust, listening to the pupils’ stories and focusing on strengths not deficiencies) and what they required was a framework to help direct those values into tangible long-term benefits. Thus, engaging with PCP research would be a logical step in their own personal and professional development to possibly become better practitioners.

**Research Aims and Questions**

The aim of this research was to explore the role of PCP within education. The two papers that follow had a specific focus on PCP within education and both used different approaches to gather data as outlined here:

- **Paper 1:** A systematic literature review of current evidence that sought to identify what range of outcomes is associated with using specified PCP processes with pupils with SEMH in education?
- **Paper 2:** An empirical research paper that used an action research design and focus group interviews to answer the following question, “How can APs
effectively utilise a PCP framework with potentially vulnerable young people?"

**Positioning for Data Strategy**

The research presented in Paper 2 took place in a local authority in the North of England. Staff at the AP extended an invite to me, as the researcher, via their link educational psychologist (EP). The invite was to assist them with their understanding and development of PCP and exploring new ways of engaging with and improving outcomes for their pupils. As a trainee EP, I was afforded travel expenses and designated research days in which to complete the data gathering. This meant that I was able to travel to meet the AP staff and the link EP on two occasions before the impact of COVID-19 and the national lockdowns. Once the nation was restricted in movement, the data strategy was managed via video conferencing platforms (i.e. Microsoft Teams and Zoom). This significantly altered the planned data gathering and management strategies and is outlined in Paper 2.

**Axiological, Ontological and Epistemological Position**

What any person does, thinks and feels is to some extent influenced by any number of interactions between their lived experiences pertaining to the spiritual, social, environmental, and economic factors they are exposed to. It is therefore imperative to acknowledge that no research can be undertaken from a truly objective stance and due diligence must be given to the subjective perspectives held by a researcher, and indeed any participants, when considering any piece of research and its subsequent findings. Although, unless specifically researched, finding and understanding a participant’s axiological, ontological and epistemological stance would not be an easy task and cannot therefore be accounted for accurately in research findings. However, a researcher should ensure that their axiological, ontological and epistemological stance is expressed clearly, highlighting how they have impacted their research findings and decision making (Scotland, 2012).

**Axiology.**

What a researcher considers to be valuable and ethical in research shapes their axiological position. Those values and ethical judgements inform how a researcher interacts with and shapes their decision making relating to the research
Given my previous work experience and upbringing, what I hold to be valuable and ethical will have impacted my perceptions and interactions with the research and subsequent data. It is therefore important to identify some of my preconceived beliefs that relate to this research, which include:

- Treating pupils with the same level of respect as you would an adult – they have a story to tell and adults do not always know what is best for them
- It is rare to find people who genuinely listen, especially to children, so when you are working with pupils it is imperative to try and understand their position, from their perspective
- PCP works best through fostering relationships which are built on genuine interest, honesty, trust and openness. However, not all educational professionals inherently have those skills and values. In my experience, those that do are usually the educators who work outside of the traditional, neo-liberal education system (for various reasons)
- PCP has been rushed into the educational arena without a strong research evidence base but has general support amongst the EP profession
- engaging in a humanist approach, highlighting positives, and working on solutions is more beneficial to those who feel marginalised/disenfranchised.

**Ontology.**

In research, when we discuss ontology, we are exploring the realms of what we know, what it means to exist, the fundamentals of nature and reality and what a researcher’s particular beliefs about existence are (Killam, 2013). Within ontology, two major paradigms exist which help to shape a researcher’s approach to their work – relativism and realism. Relativism prescribes to the notion that there are multiple realities which are subjective to every individual’s understanding and experience of what is real (Nola, 1988). This means that factors such as a person’s beliefs, values, culture, current mental health, political stance, socio-economic status and religion – and the interplay between them, will impact on what constitutes reality and the truth. By the nature of those factors, which are not necessarily static, these realities may alter over time due to changing circumstances and developments. Realism on the other hand, is the idea that ‘the truth’ is fixed, does not change and exists independent of our understanding and
observation but, however, can be observed through careful measurement of particular factors and variables (Maxwell, 2012).

**Epistemology.**

Epistemological stances are closely linked to the ontological beliefs of a researcher in that it explores the ‘how’ of knowledge (Killam, 2013), i.e. how do we come to know what we know? Epistemology can be viewed as being of a positivist or a constructionist nature, where positivists believe that knowledge is gained from objective and controlled scientific measurements and constructionists believe that knowledge is constructed through the human experience, i.e. developments in contextual factors over time, e.g. historical culture and language (Burr, 2015).

**Evaluation of the Research Paradigm**

The ontological and epistemological stance that resonates with my experience and understanding of the world is that of critical realism. The critical realist paradigm is described by Maxwell (2012) as combining, a realist ontology (the belief that there is a real world that exists independently of our beliefs and constructions) with a constructivist epistemology (the belief our knowledge of this world is inevitably our own construction, created from a specific vantage point, and that there is no possibility of our achieving a purely “objective” account that is independent of all particular perspectives) (p. vii).

Further, Maxwell (2012) highlights that critical realists treat an individual’s ideas and meanings (e.g. feelings and intentions) as equal to concrete objects and processes, combining both the tangible and intangible into a reciprocal process of influence. This view of reciprocity sits well with my axiological beliefs that pupils (regardless of their experience in relation to adults) should be treated with respect in line with adult-led policies and procedures and that some staff poses inherent humanist values that impact how they interact with the physical systems which they find themselves working within. Holding axiological beliefs such as those listed above means that the following research was susceptible to confirmatory bias from myself (e.g. if participants said PCP provides a voice for the pupils I may have been more likely to draw on that as a key finding). Conversely, the research could have been impacted by my view that the evidence base for PCP is inadequate for it to be translated into current legislation and may have driven me to view and report all the
findings negatively. Further, the fact that all participants would have experienced the reality of the research through their own axiological, epistemological and ontological lenses, which may or may not have corresponded with my own, meant that measures needed to be taken to try and reduce any bias and misinterpretation. To try and overcome these issues, the following methods were employed:

- an action research design – this gave the AP staff ownership of the direction of the research and meant that I also became a participant, rather than someone who imposed their ideas and beliefs onto the process
  (It should be noted that the action research design was chosen due to its alignment with PCP and congruence with critical realism as they all recognise the value of the collaborative approach, other people’s perspectives and exploring ‘their truth’)
- focus group interviews to allow all participants to share their views in an open forum
- themes were devised inductively from data analysis to reduce the potential for my interests and beliefs to impact the findings
- member checking with final themes as a way of ensuring I had captured participant views accurately. This was more appropriate than inter-rater reliability as it re-engaged the participants in the research whilst providing a higher level of reliability from the people who had participated in the research, knew the actions taken and whose views were being represented

Despite these measures, there is still the possibility that participants deducted that I had an interest in the PCP research and may have led to a socially desirable bias amongst their responses. Furthermore, this socially desirable effect could have been present in the focus group interviews and may have been reinforced through an awareness of our shared interests and aims (i.e. working to try improve the life chances of vulnerable and disadvantaged young people). Whilst we must acknowledge these issues, they exist in all research and we therefore must revert to a position of trust within the integrity, honour and reputation of the researcher and the intentions of those who commissioned it.
References


Abstract

Opportunities for children to be involved in the decisions made about them is a part of current statutory educational legislation. Person-centred planning (PCP) has been proposed as an appropriate method of meeting statutory requirements. However, there is a dearth of research into its application within education. The paper describes a systematic literature review of current research into PCP within education for pupils with SEMH and the associated outcomes. PCP appears to be an effective way of engaging children, young people and their families but research within education is currently limited and methodologically weak. More rigorous research is needed into PCP and its effectiveness and should include use of standardised and/or observable measures, more varied ranges of contexts and participants, and longitudinal and child-led designs.

Key Words: Person-centred Planning, Education, SEMH,
The 1870 Elementary Education Act was the major turning point in transforming the UK’s education system as it provided a framework for the development of compulsory education of the masses by requiring (but not enforcing) children from the ages of five to twelve to attend an educational setting and also placing more power and responsibility for education with central government, rather than with religious settings (Arnold, 2017; Hill, 2017; Gillard, 2018; Stephens, 1998; Williams & Goodley, 2017). At a similar time, there was pressure to address children’s working conditions and, in conjunction with educational reforms, this led to changes in employment law (e.g. Elementary Education Act 1899). These developments extended the notion of ‘childhood’, as they created systems that incrementally fostered age-related ‘dependency’ on adults (Kamp, 2001). As education became compulsory and more accessible to the masses, attendance levels began to rise and it became apparent that some children, who would not have attended school previously, had trouble accessing aspects of school life (Arnold, 2017). Over time, the idea that children had rights (which should be protected through legislation) and voices that should be heard, valued, actively sought and encouraged gathered momentum (Franklin & Franklin, 1996; Kamp, 2001; Schnell, 1978) – culminating in The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC; 1989). However, it has been suggested that children and young people are often not consulted about or afforded their rights, with issues and solutions relating to children often being shaped by adults’ understanding and interpretations (Kellet, 2010); indeed some researchers have commented that current educational practice and research methods do not encourage true dialogue with children or promote children’s rights (Kellett, 2010; Sargeant, 2018; Tisdall, 2017).

In an attempt to encourage more dialogue however, the Children and Families Act (2014) made it a statutory requirement for children and their families to be
consulted about, and partake in, decision making that impact their lives – albeit within a framework where a particular local authority determines the child’s needs and what resources and provision are available. The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice (SENDCoP) (Department of Education [DfE] & Department of Health [DoH], 2015) specifically identifies PCP as a way to enable children, and their families, to express their views, wishes and feelings in the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) assessment and planning process (Norwich & Eaton, 2015) which would indicate that children’s views about their education, and in turn their rights and participation, are being considered. However, Kellet (2010) states, “Listening to children’s views is not the same as sharing decision-making processes” (p.196), whilst Sargeant (2018) posits “Enabling children's participation, providing for them and ensuring they are protected makes good common sense — to child rights advocates, but is anyone else actually paying attention?” (p.314).

**Social and emotional needs in education**

As the socio-political landscape continued to change, educational psychologists (EPs) found they continued to be involved with ‘challenging behaviour’ (Faupel & Hardy; 2017). However, challenging behaviour is not a universally agreed upon construct and this has been reflected in the transient terminology, e.g. emotional and behavioural difficulties, social emotional behavioural difficulties and now social, emotional mental health or SEMH. The recent removal of ‘behaviour’ from the overarching terminology, however, locates behaviour as an outcome of unmet SEMH needs and aims to remove the negative connotations of problematic behaviour being located solely ‘within child’ (Cosma & Soni, 2019; Law & Woods, 2019) and encourages professionals to consider other contextual factors within the systems around the child.

SEMH currently accounts for the third largest proportion of SENDs in the UK (DfE, 2020a) and SEMH-related exclusions (both fixed term and permanent) are the highest of all SEND classifications (DfE, 2020b). Therefore, SEMH should form an integral part of EP thinking; especially as the DfE data (2020a; 2020b) do not account for SEMH’s co-morbidity with other SENDs (e.g. excluded pupils with hearing impairments may have unidentified SEMH needs from communication
difficulties). Research into the effects of exclusion and the perception of pupils with SEMH have consistently shown increased susceptibility to negative life outcomes, yet pupils who present with challenging behaviours are often the least empowered and misunderstood, therefore lacking opportunity to be heard through professionals’ inability to actively engage with them (Caslin, 2019; Cosma & Soni, 2019; Sheffield & Morgan, 2017; Timpson, 2019). Cosma and Soni (2019), in their systematic literature review of the educational experiences of pupils with SEMH, conclude that relationships, focusing on individual strengths, adapting curriculum to meet individual needs and working innovatively to capture the voice of pupils with SEMH are important factors to assisting those pupils feeling involved in and implementing plans that affect them. Research into SEMH and pupils’ educational experiences is limited but evidence is starting to grow, and findings are highlighting that capturing the voice of pupils with SEMH is key to increasing positive educational outcomes (Caslin, 2019; Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). One of the more recent methods that have been proposed to capture the voices of young people and their families is the utilisation of person-centred planning.

Person-Centred Planning

When the other person is hurting, confused, troubled, anxious, alienated, terrified; or when he or she is doubtful of self-worth, uncertain as to identity—then understanding is called for. The gentle and sensitive companionship offered by an empathic person… provides illumination and healing. In such situations deep understanding is, I believe, the most precious gift one can give to another


PCP originated within the health and social care professions and was designed as a way to assist service users with intellectual and developmental disabilities to try and improve their quality of life through collaboration with key stakeholders (Claes et al., 2010; Miller, et al., 2017). PCP incorporates values of the humanist approach (Rogers, 1951) with aspects of positive psychology and solution-focused approaches, to identify individual strengths, rather than deficiencies, whilst encouraging co-constructed and realistic solutions, rather than solutions being
service led (Bouvier, 2018). Holbourn (2002) identifies the following core elements of PCP:

- placing individuals at the centre of planning and decision making
- creating a shared vision for the future
- identifying strengths and support needs
- building relationships and community connections
- developing action plans and reviewing them
- creating accountability for following up

With the above core elements, ties to the humanist approach and applications to improving quality of life and service user outcomes in health and social care, it is easy to see how PCP began to gain traction in the educational arena. Since 2001 successive governments in the UK began to introduce PCP as a way of meeting the needs of children with disabilities within social care. By 2010, the idea of PCP was introduced to the wider educational context and became a statutory requirement when assessing a pupil’s educational needs (Children & Families Act, 2014).

There are several methods of engaging in PCP such as MAPS (Making Action Plans; Forest et al., 1996) PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope; O’Brien et al., 2010), Essential Lifestyle Planning and Personal Futures Planning (Kilbane & Sanderson, 2004). Other methods used within education include one-page profiles, person-centred reviews and individualised education plans. However, many researchers have noted that PCP is not just about the methods used but also about incorporating the values that underpin the humanist approach (Griffiths, 2015; Partington, 2016; Taylor, 2011), e.g. holding the person central, mutual respect, congruence and collaboration.

**Rationale for Current Research Review and Research Question**

Whilst limited research of PCP in the health and social care sector indicates a moderately positive impact on service-user outcomes, it also suggests its methodological quality is weak (Claes et al., 2010; Ratti et al., 2016). Further, despite being part of UK law now, there is a deficiency of research to support the notion that PCP can be transferred to the education field seamlessly (Partington, 2016). Nonetheless, in relation to SEND, PCP is being encouraged to help
professionals focus more on pupil voice, yet the voices of pupils with SEMH are still being overlooked in the majority of SEND research (Caslin, 2019; Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). Whilst an evidence base is beginning to grow for PCP, the focus so far has mainly been around the issue of transition (to and from mainstream schools and pupil referral units [PRUs] / alternative provision [AP] and from school to adult life) and the engagement/participation of pupils in the PCP process (Partington, 2016). It stands to reason that pupils who transition (temporary or permanent exclusion) from mainstream to alternative provision, and vice-versa, are likely experiencing some form of SEMH. As yet, to the authors’ knowledge, there has been no syntheses of existing research to address the following research question:

- What range of outcomes are associated with using specified PCP processes with pupils with SEMH in education?

Review Methodology

Having explored some of the historical and more recent developments that have helped propel PCP to the fore of SEND legislation, guidance and educational practice, the following section provides an overview of the current, relevant educational research. To ensure only relevant data to the research question were gathered, a systematic literature review was conducted.

Literature Search and Review Process

The following databases were searched for relevant published papers and doctoral theses: Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA); Education Resources Information Center (ERIC); PsycINFO; British Education Index (BEI); Electronic Theses Online Service (EThOS) and Google Scholar. Initial scoping searches (i.e. using broad search terms and applying different search parameters) took place in September 2019. In October 2019, after completing the scoping searches, the following search terms were identified to encompass this review’s aims: person cent* AND special educat* AND school*. Main searches were conducted between November 2019 and February 2020. A total of 164 papers was sourced, of which 158 were discarded after removing duplicates and title and abstract screening. In order to focus upon the literature review question, resulting studies were screened against the inclusion and exclusion criteria outlined in Table
1. The remaining six published papers and theses were then cross-referenced using Google Scholar and the ‘cited by’ function which was used to source any further papers of relevance, yielding seven more papers (see Appendices A & B for searches and their results). The final 13 papers were read in-depth at least twice - subsequently the total number of papers were reduced to 10 by further application of the inclusion/exclusion criteria. Update searches were carried out between March 2020 and July 2020 but no further literature was sourced, therefore the literature review consisted of three peer-reviewed papers and seven theses.

Table 1: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for the systematic review

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<th>Inclusion</th>
<th>Exclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Written in English</td>
<td>• Participants under 5 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Published between 1st January 2010 and 1st August 2020</td>
<td>• Post-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conducted in educational settings</td>
<td>• Any study where the sole focus was on participants with learning/intellectual disability, moderate learning difficulties or disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• SEMH – either mentioned explicitly or inferred from participant descriptions</td>
<td>• Organisational impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Any books (due to weight of evidence not being testable)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Analysis and Synthesis**

Due to the terms used in the literature search, some of the studies identified had to be screened several times to ensure they were relevant. This was due to the paucity of research on SEMH and PCP and because several studies had overlapping areas of need within their participants (e.g. Autism & SEMH). This meant the author had to engage in careful extraction of data to reliably inform this review’s focus question around SEMH. Data were extracted and evaluated against Gough’s (2007) ‘weight of evidence’ criteria, to identify the key features, outcomes and processes used within the final 10 papers of this review. This extraction and evaluation enabled an aggregative synthesis (Newman & Gough, 2020) of the current research (see Table 2) to be completed. In order to complete the synthesis,
each paper was read with notes being taken on the key points (e.g. who were the participants? Is the research design suitable? Where did the research take place and with whom?). From the notes, key outcomes and patterns began to emerge about the nature of the findings (in relation to the paper’s RQ and research design) and the overlapping conclusions that many studies were reporting, e.g. pupils with SEMH felt heard and experienced the process positively. The findings section of each paper was then read again to ensure the identified themes were being reported as perceived, and to check if there were any further points to consider. Once complete, the outcomes were cross-referenced against each other and combined into the overall findings of this review. Engaging with the data in this manner, alongside the critical appraisal of studies, allowed for data to be formulated into a table (Table 2) as well as for the quality of synthesis to be checked in relation this review’s RQ.

**Critical Appraisal of Studies**

Gough (2007) proposes a framework with which to assess the quality of research through ‘weight of evidence’ (WoE) criteria. These criteria relate to:

- methodological quality (WoE A)
- methodological appropriateness (WoE B)
- relevance of focus (WoE C)

and
- overall weight of evidence (WoE D)

The University of Manchester’s (UoM) qualitative research framework (Woods, 2020; see Appendix C) was used to assess WoE A in the final studies. All the studies used qualitative methods and where quantitative methods were employed, the authors noted this was not their primary focus or was not presented as such in their findings. Using the UoM’s framework, each paper was given a score out of 14, with each of the 12 categories being scored through a range of quarter points. Papers scoring below 4.5 were deemed ‘low quality’, whilst 4.5 to 9.5 was considered ‘medium quality’ and above 9.5 was classed as ‘high quality’. To ensure that studies were evaluated fairly, five of the final 10 papers were independently read and evaluated for methodological quality by the first and second author. The
inter-rater agreement was on average 72% before comparison and 96% after discussions. For WoEs B & C the author rated the final studies based on the following criteria:

- **WoE B** – studies that described the methods of applying person-centred approaches a) in sufficient detail for replication of the study to occur, b) clearly presented outcomes relating to the PC approach and c) reflected on the impact of the methodology, were classed as high. Studies that described a) and b) or a) and c) were classed as medium quality. Studies which did not address any of the above aspects or only described a) or b) or c) were classed as low quality.

- **WoE C** – studies that focused on participants with SEMH only or where the majority of participants had only SEMH were classed as high relevance. Studies where participants had only SEMH but were a minority or where they were a majority but SEMH co-occurred with other conditions were classed as medium relevance. Studies where participants had SEMH that co-occurred with other conditions but were a minority or where there was no mention of participants’ needs were classed as low relevance.

WoEs A, B & C were combined to determine an overall weight of evidence of the paper (WoE D, see Appendix D) in relation to the aims of this literature review. After applying the WoE criteria, none of the studies was classed as low quality and all were therefore included in the final synthesis of findings. The ratings for each paper are listed in Table 2 below. The following section outlines the findings of the systematic literature review before the implications are explored in the ‘Discussion’ section.

**Findings**

**Study Characteristics**

From the 10 studies in this review, three were classed as high quality whilst seven were medium quality. Seven were doctoral theses and three were peer-reviewed, published papers. Nine studies were conducted in the UK and 1 in Australia. Six studies were conducted solely in mainstream school settings, whilst four involved PRUs/APs, of which only one focused solely on PCP; three studies
Table 2: Final research papers included from systematic literature review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors, Year &amp; Country</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Participants / Setting</th>
<th>Design and Methods</th>
<th>Summary of Key Outcomes</th>
<th>Weighting Score (Gough 2007)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birney (2015) (UK)</td>
<td>What accounts do young people give of their experience of person-centred annual review (PCAR) meetings? What can be understood from these accounts?</td>
<td>6 pupils with SEND, aged 6 to 11 (3 male, 3 female). 1 primary school SEMH inferred through participant descriptions</td>
<td>Idiographic, exploration (survey of students) Individual narrative interviews Narrative analysis</td>
<td>YP felt:  - largely positive about the process  - central to the meeting  - better understood and supported  - it provided clarity on expectations and plans  - able to identify strengths and areas for development</td>
<td>WoE A: High  WoE B: High  WoE C: Low  WoE D: High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristow (2013) (UK)</td>
<td>How do pupils, their parents/carers, school staff and other professionals describe their experience of PATH? How do decision-makers and PATH facilitators perceive the role of PATH and its strengths and limitations in supporting vulnerable and challenging pupils?</td>
<td>9 young people (2 female, 7 male), aged 9-15, in PRU/AP settings. 6 interviewed. 6 parents, 5 mainstream school staff, 5 PRU/AP school staff, 6 ‘other’ professionals 3 senior staff members from PRU/AP settings and 1 senior EP</td>
<td>Exploratory (in-depth survey) Semi-structured interviews, thematically analysed 16 questionnaires completed by EPs</td>
<td>PATH:  - supports positive parent/pupil and parent/school relationships  - improved pupils’ behaviour and effort  - increases confidence and self-belief  - aids inclusion and future planning  - development of facilitator skills is essential</td>
<td>WoE A: High  WoE B: High  WoE C: Low  WoE D: Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>WoE</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Corrigan (2014) (UK)</td>
<td>6 young people aged 5-15 (1 female, 5 male)</td>
<td>Action research</td>
<td>PCP transition meetings:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-report questionnaires, conducted at two time points and thematically analysed</td>
<td>useful for facilitating positive transitions back to mainstream settings</td>
<td>WoE A: Medium</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>time consuming process (but worth the investment)</td>
<td>WoE B: Medium</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>may benefit from involving an advocate (‘champion’)</td>
<td>WoE C: Low</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>effectiveness can be optimised</td>
<td>WoE D: Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumming &amp; Strnadova (2017)</td>
<td>1 secondary school male, 17 years old.</td>
<td>Exploratory single case study design</td>
<td>Flexible integration model:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Australia)</td>
<td>5 staff members (3 x specialist school staff, 2 x mainstream staff)</td>
<td>Pre &amp; post interviews with staff, thematically analysed</td>
<td>improved student behaviour, attendance, interpersonal skills, self-esteem, self-control and independence</td>
<td>WoE A: Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specialist education provision back to mainstream</td>
<td>Student attendance &amp; behaviour logs content analysis</td>
<td>improved mainstream staff’ attitude towards student and improved communication between schools</td>
<td>WoE B: High</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>aided by dedicated teaching assistant</td>
<td>WoE C: High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griffiths (2015)</td>
<td>19 Students (3 female, 16 male).</td>
<td>Exploratory (Case Study?)</td>
<td>PCARs:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>WoE A: Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Findings</td>
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<tr>
<td>(UK)</td>
<td></td>
<td>How did Year 6 pupils experience the transition to secondary school, when PCP was used to support them through the process?</td>
<td>3 Year 6 pupils (1 female, 2 male), all 11-years old</td>
<td>PCP meetings held at primary schools SEMH inferred from author's contextualising of research, the visual example and participant excerpts</td>
<td>PCP transition meetings: - pupils felt more organised, supported and informed about secondary school - allowed stakeholders to foster relationships prior to attending a new school - unfamiliarity of process created pupil anxiety - longer term impact not measured due to time constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partington</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>(UK)</td>
<td>10 SENDCos/ Inclusion Co-ordinators</td>
<td>Exploratory and explanatory qualitative study</td>
<td>PCARs: more positive experience than traditional ARs increased student and parent participation Better relationships with, and between, all stakeholder could impact positively on student engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutcliffe</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>What changes have come about in primary schools that have been running person</td>
<td>3 parents/carers (1 father, 1 mother, 1 carer), 3 school staff 2 local authority mainstream schools SEMH identified in appended participant data</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews with parents/carers and school staff Focus groups with students Thematic analysis (in 3 stages)</td>
<td>more positive experience than traditional ARs increased student and parent participation Better relationships with, and between, all stakeholder could impact positively on student engagement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Year 8 - Year 9 - Year 10 - Year 11
- 9 in Year 8
- 5 in Year 9
- 2 in Year 10
- 3 in Year 11
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(UK)</th>
<th>centred annual reviews as part of the local pilot project, according to SENCos who have been leading them? How, according to SENCos who were leading person-centred reviews, have these changes come about? SEMH discussed by participants as a key area of need to benefit from PCP and in the broader context relating to PCP purpose and process</th>
<th>(survey of 10 SENDCos) Semi-structured interviews Grounded theory analysis</th>
<th>• improved relationships, teamwork and developed a caring community • improved some students’ skills and self-determination • fostered positive adult perceptions of young people • provides a space to express strong emotions</th>
<th>WoE B: High WoE C: Low WoE D: Medium</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tabassum (2013)</td>
<td>How is the solution-focused pupil support meeting (SFPSM) perceived by stakeholders? How do participants perceive SFPSMs could work successfully in the future? How does an EP perceive their role in developing the SFPSM?</td>
<td>3 Year 6 males deemed 'at risk' of exclusion 3 members of school staff 2 ‘other’ professionals 1 Specialist Senior Educational Psychologist (SSEP) 2 mainstream secondary schools</td>
<td>Pilot project - case study design using semi-structured interviews 3 x pupil interviews (pre, post and follow-up) Interviews with staff, professionals and SSEP at follow-up stage Thematic analysis</td>
<td>SFPSMs: • regarded positively by most participants • participants commitment and understanding of the process improved outcomes • noted a reduction in multi-agency working over time • may be less accessible to parents with difficult home lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor (2011)</td>
<td>How did young people identified as showing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties experience a person-centred review process?</td>
<td>3 Year 9 males (aged 13-14) 1 SEBD School</td>
<td>Idiographic exploration (survey with pupils) Semi-structured interviews with</td>
<td>PC transition review meeting: • reduced power imbalances • increased participation for families and pupils • unfamiliarity of process and ethos created anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White &amp; Rae (2016) (UK)</td>
<td>What are the views of young people with SEN and their parents/carers on PCRs? Do the young people and their parents/carers feel they are listened to? Does the process impact on the young person’s locus of control (LOC), their feelings of motivation and positivity towards school? Do the young people display greater knowledge of their learning targets following the review?</td>
<td>16 ‘vulnerable’ young people with SEND (4 female, 12 male) from Year 6 (aged 10-11) and Year 9 (aged 13-14). 18 parents, 2 grandparents and 1 sibling Mainstream schools</td>
<td>open-ended questions IPA</td>
<td>• beneficial for school resources and timetabling when kept to an hour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

( ) = design specified by review authors where not stated by study authors

N.B. SEMH is inferred automatically where a study involved pupils from an AP / PRU, this is by default of general pupil characteristics in AP / PRU settings (Timpson, 2019)
involved mainstream schools. Three studies were conducted with secondary school ages, three with primary schools ages, three with both secondary and primary school ages, and the remaining study was conducted with primary school SENDCos. The age range across all studies was 5 to 17-years-old (17-years old is secondary school age in Australia), except for the study involving SENDCos, which reported about PCP relating to primary school aged children. The number of participants in each study ranged from 1 to 19. Six studies involved a mixture of male and female pupils, three involved only male participants, none had female only participants. Other participants included in the studies were parents (in four), school staff (in seven), EPs (in two) and ‘others’ (in three).

Four studies gathered participant views of person-centred annual reviews; four focused on person-centred transitions; two on the use of specific PCP frameworks. The most common aims of the studies were about capturing participants’ views/experiences/perceptions of PCP. Only three studies focused purely on pupils’ views whilst only one study looked at pupil and familial views. Three studies focused on the views of pupils, parents, teaching staff and ‘other professionals’, two studies looked at the views of staff only (one of which was due to not interviewing the pupil) and one study on the views of children, parents and staff. Of the 10 studies, three focused solely on pupils with SEMH, four studies did not specify pupil needs (although SEMH could be inferred from the descriptions provided), one study had a minority of pupils with SEMH needs (six out of nineteen) and one study had one SEMH pupil and two pupils with co-occurring SEMH needs (out of 16 participants). The remaining study focused on SENDCos’ views.

Regarding research design, many of the studies were described as exploratory and, as such, the majority of the designs were very small-scale surveys using interview methods (seven). Two studies utilised a case study design (one single case and one multiple embedded) and one was classed as action research. All studies were qualitative in their primary design and analysis; quantitative data were provided in three studies as additional information.
Outcomes of Using a PC Approach with Children and Young People With SEMH in Education

*Pupils held central, cared for and provided with a ‘voice’ which was listened to.*

There are consistent findings that indicate children and young people were central to the PC meetings, were treated as individuals, listened to and, after their meetings, felt that people had come together to support them to create plans and discuss their strengths (Bristow, 2013; Griffiths, 2015; Partington, 2016; Taylor, 2011; Tabassum, 2013). The pupil being ‘given a voice’ was posited as a reason for improvements in the various social and academic outcomes (Birney, 2015; Corrigan, 2014; Griffiths, 2015; Sutcliffe, 2015). A cyclical nature was described in most of the literature about aspects such as the structure of PCP meetings (especially the visual supports), hearing positive things from adults, equal weighting being given to all voices and pupils highlighting their own strengths that created a sense of belonging, improved effort, increased motivation and self-efficacy and a reduction in power imbalances (Birney, 2015; Corrigan, 2014; Bristow, 2013; Cummings & Strndova, 2017; Tabassum, 2013; Taylor, 2011; White & Rae, 2016). Further, it is suggested that holding the pupil central and exploring their positive qualities, whilst being solution-focused and planning for the future, encourages pupils to develop their meta-cognitive skills, thus assisting pupils to become more aware of themselves as learners and other peoples’ expectations (Birney, 2015, Partington, 2016; Sutcliffe, 2015). These outcomes appear to be linked to humanist values due to holding the person central and showing respect and congruence through collaboration.

*Improved behaviour, self-esteem, confidence, motivation and various aspects of academic and social engagement.*

Whilst all the research suggests there are improvements both socially and academically, as all the studies are qualitative in their primary design, there is very little use of standardised or observable outcome measures which would improve the external validity of the positive claims being made. Indeed, it is notable that where quantified outcome data are presented, findings are mixed and / or show few positive changes.
Corrigan (2014), used a TME tool that showed pupils’ learning targets were met ‘at’ or ‘above’ the expected progression level. On closer inspection, it could be argued that those targets closely related to SEMH outcomes, whilst Corrigan’s overall findings could support the notion that pupils with SEMH benefit from PCP. In addition, Sutcliffe (2015), despite suggesting that somethings may not change after PCP meetings, posited that PCARs may be more beneficial for pupils with SEMH and language and communication difficulties. However, he suggests that only those “who are at a higher level of development overall” (p.152), will benefit whilst younger pupils and “those with the most severe learning difficulties may not gain as much from taking part in person centred reviews” (p.153); unfortunately, there is no hypothesis presented about why this may be.

Bristow (2013) states that up to six weeks after the PCP meeting pupils were reporting positive change but provides no indication of what that meant to the pupils or school staff or if there were any other pupil data to support the claim (e.g. behaviour logs, attendance records etc.). One study (Cummings & Strndova, 2017) did however show, that over a term, attendance increased from 78% to 90%, whilst completion of behaviour targets rose from 34% to 71%. Although, this was only with one pupil already identified as making behavioural improvements and being ready for transition prior to participating in the research. There is no further mention of the behavioural or emotional starting points of participants in the remaining literature but Tabassum (2013) highlighted that having the ‘right pupils’ was a factor to successful outcomes/planning and it stands to reason that pupils who are ‘ready’ or ‘right’ for the PCP process would be successful. Further, a few studies also highlighted the need to have the right adults present, with some suggesting the meeting should involve other key people from the community (Corrigan, 2014; Griffiths, 2015; Tabassum, 2013).

*Emotional responses.*

PCP meetings appear to evoke initial apprehension and anxiety in pupils and their parents. This is clearly linked in the research to failing to provide appropriate information prior to the meetings (Bristow, 2013; Griffiths, 2015; Tabassum, 2013; Taylor, 2011; White & Rae, 2016). As the PCP meetings progressed, many participants reported a reduction in anxiety as they realised the structure of the
meeting was different to traditional reviews, i.e. they were relaxed, with an informal atmosphere, more fun and encouraged ‘bi-directional’ participation (Bristow, 2013; Griffiths, 2015; Partington, 2016; Sutcliffe, 2015; Taylor, 2011). Birney (2015) suggests that being part of a PCP meeting, over a traditional review meeting, helped foster a safe and emotionally containing space which helped pupils to identify both positives and areas for development in their lives. Attention is drawn to the fact that PCP meetings allow difficult subjects to be addressed openly and honestly, e.g. discussions about ‘what isn’t working’ or historical issues, allow for all participants to voice their experience and concerns without feeling blamed or judged (Sutcliffe, 2015; Taylor, 2011). The literature indicates that most participants, after their initial anxiety, experience positive emotions relating to the process, themselves and towards other people. Partington (2016) for example, discusses the difficulty of secondary school transition for pupils and parents (e.g. becoming young adults with independence), and highlights how the PCP process provided insight and information, from key people, that the pupils (and their parents) needed to feel prepared for the next stage of their educational journey - thus, reducing their anxiety in a wider context too. The research suggests this was a reciprocal process, with school staff and other professionals altering their emotional responses to pupils by getting to know their background and identify better ways to support them (Cumming & Strndova, 2017; Partington, 2016; Taylor, 2011).

_Collaborative working, sharing of information and improved relationships amongst stakeholders._

Having pupils, parents/carers and professionals in the same meeting provides opportunities to pool experiences, ideas, resources and to potentially form effective working relationships. However, unlike traditional review meetings the literature suggests that pupils benefit from PCP meetings as they promote more collaboration and co-operation by “bringing together multiple perspectives” (Corrigan, 2014, p.276). This in turn directs energy towards a co-produced plan which helps increase student engagement and ownership (Corrigan, 2014), arguably fostering more positive relationships in the process. One of the main factors identified in the literature for improving relationships, collaboration and sharing of information are the use of visual aids. Visual aids were identified as helping to create an informal atmosphere which helped to reduce the use of ‘jargon’ and the amount of talking.
done by professionals (thus encouraging participants to engage more), address power imbalances, provide a reference point for participants during and after the meeting (potentially allowing parents/carers to support their child in place of a professional), and remove potential barriers faced by participants, e.g. reading difficulties (Bristow, 2013; Corrigan, 2014; Griffiths, 2015; Taylor, 2011; White & Rae, 2016). Bristow (2013) also suggests that the graphic could act as a report for EPs, thus reducing workload and potentially allowing more children (with SEMH potentially) to be seen.

The evidence from the research in this review suggest that PCP also encourages improvements in relationships between, and within, all participant groups. The evidence indicates PCP meetings increased parental involvement in their child’s education and improved communications and relationships by: fostering the opportunity for better team work between pupils, parents/carers and staff; remodelling the narrative surrounding pupils (thus positively altering staff and pupil perceptions of each other); providing parents with deeper insight about their child’s needs; allowing professionals to pool their resources together; creating a space for difficult conversations to be had and assisting educational settings to potentially improve the quality of their teaching/SEN provision (Bristow, 2013; Corrigan, 2014; Cummings & Strndova, 2017; Griffiths, 2015; Partington, 2016; Sutcliffe, 2015, Tabassum, 2013; Taylor, 2011).

**Barriers and Facilitators Impacting Outcomes.**

Whilst the visual aspects of some PCP meetings have been shown to be a positive factor, this is appears to be counterbalanced by the facilitator’s skills, which are recognised as underpinning the success of the meeting (Bristow, 2013; Corrigan, 2014; White & Rae, 2016). The facilitator is responsible for maintaining/utilising the visual, dictating the pace of the meeting, ensuring equality is provided for all voices, addressing power imbalances and time-keeping but also for monitoring, navigating, resolving and potentially defusing any difficult conversations, feelings and impasses that may arise (Corrigan, 2014; Sutcliffe, 2015; Taylor, 2011). All of which must be conducted in line with the underpinning humanist, person-centred values (Griffiths, 2015; Partington, 2016; Taylor, 2011). As such, facilitators may need to be trained and have time to practice and improve their competency (Bristow, 2013).
One barrier, and also posited solution, identified to ensuring PCP meetings are effective, was the lack of pre-meeting preparation for participants; this included consideration being given to the time commitment needed for PCP processes, parental needs/educational levels and the overall meeting expectations and aims (Bristow, 2013; Griffiths, 2015; Taylor, 2011: White & Rae, 2016). One suggested method which may benefit future PCP meetings is that of preparing a short video, outlining the process, potentially allowing participants to prepare and giving them “permission to be honest” (p. 111; Bristow, 2013). In line with pre-meeting preparation, the issue of post-meeting maintenance and reviewing agreed action plans was discussed. Research indicates that adults need to be clear from the outset that there is a commitment to supporting any agreed action plan(s) and sharing relevant information with appropriate people, including pupils, after the meeting (Bristow, 2013; Corrigan, 2014; Griffiths, 2015; Tabassum, 2013).

Further, some researchers highlight the need for participants’ due diligence to ensure that pupil involvement is not / doesn’t become tokenistic and to remain mindful that while relationships may improve, they don’t necessarily become, or remain, equal (Birney, 2015, Bristow, 2013; Griffiths, 2015; Sutcliffe, 2015); suggesting that adults may still make decisions / assumptions about what is best for pupils based on their understanding and available resources. For example, one school complained that the process was too time consuming and did not focus sufficiently on the pupil’s difficulties, suggesting they did not understand the PC approach and would rather follow their own agenda (Corrigan, 2014), whilst a specialist setting felt they did not have the resources to continuously offer pupil support within the mainstream school (Cumming & Strndova, 2017). Additionally, some pupils are just shy and/or will find the process stressful and difficult to engage with, therefore ensuring the meeting is set-up to account for all needs and encourage participation is essential (Sutcliffe, 2015; White & Rae, 2016).

Indirect threats may be posed to any PCP process / meeting from contextual factors such as an incompatible school ethos (i.e. a school that does not embody humanist / person-centred values), or conversely where a supportive ethos already exists, potentially reducing the value of PCP. Other threats may be linked with lack of ‘buy-in’ from senior leadership, the availability of reciprocal and willing partnerships, or the local authority’s current political stance and direction (Bristow, 2013; Corrigan,
Discussion

This review has shown that PCP can help to challenge, and change current, educational practice (e.g. influencing school wide practices) and research methods (e.g. ways to gather pupil voice and conduct data gathering procedures) to encourage true dialogue with children and promote their rights, something previous research has identified as not occurring (Kellett, 2010; Sargeant, 2018; Tisdall, 2017). In this sense, it appears that PCP can assist in meeting the requirements of the SENDCoP (DfE & DoH, 2015) by including young people and their families in decisions that affect them by capturing their views and opinions. There is an apparent relationship between the approaches of PCP and positive outcomes that, based on the evidence available, suggests pupils, parents, school staff and external professionals, see improvements in a range of academic and social markers (e.g. increased motivation, better inter/intra-personal relationships, improved attendance and behaviour etc.). From the research reviewed here, the underlying mechanisms that help facilitate this relationship are:

- providing young people with space in a meeting that focuses on them and their needs (i.e. to be heard and considered)
- having a skilled and confident facilitator
- using visual aids (where used) within PCP meetings
- having a shared understanding and collaborative working, which in turn improves relationships between stakeholders by changing the narrative around the young person
- the PC values that underpin, and are interwoven in, the entire process.

It is also clear from the research presented here that, given the time investment needed and the pivotal role of relationships, PCP should not be a ‘one-off’ meeting; it needs to be maintained and monitored, to hold people to account and to see if any immediate positive outcomes are sustainable. Nonetheless, the evidence from this review that PCP makes a difference to standardised outcomes (i.e. pupil academic levels, self-esteem, reduced exclusion rates etc.) is very limited. Neither, due to a distinct lack of longitudinal research designs, does current research provide a clear
picture on whether PCP can sustain long term impact. Furthermore, the methodologies used for the identified literature in this review do not reliably support (or even claim to support) transferability or trustworthiness of findings (Birney, 2015; Partington 2016) as most studies in this review were qualitative, idiographic and used relatively small, localised samples. Indeed, some studies in this review fail to clearly identify a research design at all. By not clearly stating their design, and subsequently not identifying the associated reliability and validity implications, researchers run the risk of producing inherently limited evidence on PCP. However, it is important to note that, despite the lack of explicit considerations to secure improved transferability (and maybe in some cases generalisability) of findings, there is considerable homogeneity in the themes identified in this review, which Griffiths (2015) suggests may be due to the underlying values of PCP, e.g. showing respect, holding the person central. It could therefore be argued that PC values produce similar findings/themes/outcomes regardless of context or a particular framework (Sanderson, 2000; Taylor, 2011).

From the research presented here it seems that the crux of PCP lies with the facilitator’s ability to foster a relaxed and supportive environment whilst maintaining and guiding the development of the participants’ relationships to co-construct outcomes. One instrumental feature of PCP’s ability to create a collaborative agenda, encourage more participation and feelings of equal inclusion (especially for pupils with SEMH; White & Rae, 2016) is the use of visual aids which draw participants’ attention to one, shared focal point. The visual provides detailed information through a clear structure, relevant outcomes, apportioned accountability and a tangible, portable reminder for all key stakeholders. Visual aids have been championed by previous researchers as a way to provide richer data and aid engagement and understanding by providing instant feedback that participant views have been heard and acknowledged (Hayes, 2004; Partington, 2016).

The evidence of this review demonstrates the multi-directional, relational impact of PCP to show improvements within, and across, all relationships (e.g. student-teacher; student-parent), allowing for narratives to be reauthored and connectedness rebuilt, which for pupils with SEMH could lead to improved well-being and feelings of connectedness / belonging (Bristow, 2013; Cummings & Strndova, 2017; Sutcliffe,
2015). Furthermore, research falling outside this review, involving pupils with SEMH, has shown that relationships, focusing on individual strengths, adapting the curriculum to meet individual needs and working innovatively to capture pupil voice are important factors to encouraging their involvement in plans that impact them and improving educational outcomes (Caslin, 2019; Cosma & Soni, 2019; Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). Positive relationships, across various stakeholders, can impact feelings of school-connectedness, which in turn can improve pupils’ educational, well-being and social outcomes (Allen et al., 2018; Barger et al., 2019; Beveridge, 2004; Cornelius-White, 2007; Fan & Chen, 2001; Šeboková et al., 2018). Notably, the DfE (2018) indicates positive relations and a sense of belonging act as protective factors, within an educational setting, for mental health. However, and most importantly for pupils with SEMH, Cornelius-White (2007) indicates that the benefits of positive relationships were most effective for students who “are actively not complying with school structures” (p.131), as there was almost no effect found for pupils only passively avoiding engagement with school structures.

Much of the research in this review highlighted that the role of the EP (mainly as the facilitator) was crucial to the success of the meetings. The EP’s skillset (e.g. active listening, consultation) makes them ideal facilitators but also perfectly places them to train others in PC practices by drawing on their knowledge of the underpinning psychological concepts (e.g. positive and humanistic psychology) and the processes involved in advocating for, and preparing and containing, potentially disempowered participants (White & Rae, 2016). Further, EPs are well placed to assist schools and local authorities to make systemic changes that address some of the barriers highlighted in this review to enable young people to communicate their views by changing “culture”, “attitudes”, “environment”, and “systems” (Ashton & Lambert, 2010).

**Limitations and Future research**

The research in this review contained no findings highlighting female only experiences of PCP. Adolescent females are more likely, amongst other things, to ruminate, engage in more social conversation, seek support, display more prosocial behaviour and favour mutual participation, friendliness and supportiveness when
working towards peer-related goals than males (Rose & Rudolph, 2006). Certain PCP processes may therefore show more positive impact with females than males. Exploration of gender-specific studies or gender-specific analysis may identify ways to tailor support more effectively. Similarly, with the majority of papers in this review taking place in the UK there is also scope for further exploration of how / if PCP and PC values translate on an international scale within different cultures.

Most of the research in this review focused on PC review meetings (either transition or annual) meaning there was limited evidence on the use of PCP in other situations (e.g. pre-exclusion). Future research could investigate PCP in various other contexts to see if any alternative outcomes are identified.

Another concern identified in this review was the lack of standardised or observable outcome measures (e.g. a checklist or questionnaire) that allow for external validation and comparability. Future research could utilise a range of standardised and observable outcome measures. Extending to larger sample sizes where possible, in order to increase validity, reliability and transferability of findings. Longitudinal research to build a more robust evidence base is also needed and would provide an option to ensure accountability for follow-up reviews.

Researchers have discussed the importance of avoiding ‘tokenism’ and improving children’s participation and whether adult / professional / pupil perceptions may align in what is deemed important (Birney, 2015; Fox, 2015). As such, a child-led research project to design a PCP framework or approach – whilst also focusing solely on gathering pupil views - would be beneficial for congruence to PCP values and holding the pupil central (SENDCoP; DfE & DoH, 2015).
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Paper 2.

An exploration of staff perceptions of using a person-centred framework in an alternative provision

Abstract

Opportunities for children to be involved in the decisions made about them is a part of current statutory educational legislation. Person-centred planning (PCP) has been proposed as an appropriate method of meeting statutory requirements to gather pupil views. However, young people within alternative provisions (APs) may lack opportunities to be heard.

This paper reports on an action research project with staff from an AP for children at risk of exclusion. Participants opted to trial the use of the PCP approach ‘MAPs’ (carried out virtually due to Covid-19 restrictions) and evaluated the project through two focus groups.

Findings indicate that (virtual) use of MAPs requires staff to carefully consider their setting’s structure, needs, capacity and capabilities. Pre-meeting preparation and adapting the MAPs process with technology improved engagement, access and alternative ways of working. The MAPs process provided a range of positive outcomes as a by-product of its implementation.

Key Words: person-centred planning, MAP, alternative provision, SEMH
Background

Since 2014, in the United Kingdom (UK), the importance of capturing the views and opinions of pupils, and their families, in decisions that affect their lives has become a key focal point of educational guidance and legislation. The implementation of The Children and Families Act (CFA; 2014) encourages all professionals who work with children and young people (CYP) with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), to improve the participation of CYP, and their carers, in the decisions that are made about their lives. The Department for Education (DfE) and The Department of Health’s (DoH) Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (SENDCoP; 2015) provides statutory guidance for all professionals working with SENDs to meet their obligations under the CFA (2014). The SENDCoP (DfE & DoH, 2015) suggests that one particular way of increasing service user participation is through the use of ‘person-centred approaches’.

Research has shown that Educational Psychologists have approached being person-centred by using person-centred planning (PCP) frameworks (Bristow, 2013; White & Rae, 2016; Wood et al., 2019).

Whilst PCP is not a new concept, existing as an approach in the health and social care sector since the 1980s (Claes et al., 2010), its application within the education arena is still quite novel and under-represented in educational research (Corrigan, 2014; Partington, 2016; White & Rae, 2016; Wood et al., 2019).

PCP and Education

PCP was originally developed in North America to assist people with learning and developmental disabilities to become more involved in the decision making processes being made about their lives and to have more of a say about the actual services they need (Claes et al., 2010). It has been described as “a process of learning how a person wants to live and then describing what needs to be done to help that person move towards that life” (p.7, Smull et al., 2005). PCP is positioned within the humanist and positive psychological theories as, amongst other things, it prescribes to the values of growth, holding the person central, mutual respect, focusing on an individual’s strengths, choice, equality and collaboration (Corrigan, 2014; Griffiths, 2015; Partington, 2016; Taylor, 2011; Wood et al., 2019).
Overtime, as PCP’s popularity grew, the UK government became a proponent of PCP and numerous publications were produced advocating for the use of PCP for people with learning and developmental disabilities (DoH, 2001a, 2001b, 2009). In 2010 the UK government’s statutory processes were reviewed and were identified as inadequate for helping young people achieve their goals, whilst young people themselves spoke of needing positive relationships, control, choice and independence (Ofsted, 2010). However, researchers have since highlighted the paucity of PCP research from the health and care sectors that actually involved young people and, furthermore, where evidence does exist it is based on poor quality methodological designs which only indicate moderate positive impact on outcomes for service users (Claes et al., 2010; Ratti et al., 2016). Correspondingly, research into the use of PCP in education is even less well documented and, despite indicating positive experiences and outcomes for participants, where it does exist it mostly has methodological weaknesses (Gray et al., 2021). Nonetheless, the SENDCoP (DfE & DoH, 2015) has included PCP as a means of potentially addressing educational issues and as an effective method of involving participants, including those who don’t necessarily have learning or developmental disabilities (e.g. students with Social Emotional and Mental Health [SEMH] needs).

PCP Frameworks and Representation in Educational Research

Literature relating to PCP regularly mention four established forms of PCP: MAPS (Making Action Plans), Essential Lifestyle Planning, PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope) and Personal Futures Planning (Corrigan, 2014; Kilbane & Sanderson, 2004; Wood et al., 2019). It is important to note that:

Although different, each planning style is based on the same principles: all start with who the person is and end with specific actions to be taken. They differ in the way in which information is gathered and whether emphasis is on the detail of day-to-day life, or on dreaming and longer-term plans (Kilbane & Sanderson, 2004, p.19)

A recent systematic literature review (SLR; Gray et al., 2021), looking at the use and outcomes of PCP in education in relation to pupils with SEMH, highlighted that the majority of PCP research within education was focused on person-centred review meetings (transitional and annual) within mainstream settings. Furthermore, the SLR
identified that of the 10 papers that matched the inclusion criteria, only three were peer reviewed and the remaining seven were doctoral theses. Of the peer-reviewed papers, none focused on any of the four main PCP frameworks. In relation to the doctoral theses, one made explicit links to PATH, one to MAPs (adapted, and not the focus of analysis) and one to an amalgamation of MAPs and PATH, neither of which were the focus of the paper. However, Wood et al. (2019), whose research fell outside of the SLR inclusion criteria, recently published the first peer-reviewed paper into the use of PATH.

**SEMH and School Exclusion**

Latest data figures from the DfE (2020) show that for the academic year 2018-to-2019, SEMH, where identified, was the number one reason for both permanent and temporary exclusions across all SEND categories in specialist and state funded primary and secondary schools. Many children who are excluded from mainstream attend alternative provision (AP), defined in this context as “education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion [fixed-term or permanent], illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education…[including being] directed…to off-site provision to improve their behaviour” (DfE, 2013). Research has indicated that pupils are sometimes placed in APs at short notice, usually when they are experiencing crises in their lives, and resultantly, in some cases, this impacted an AP’s ability to allocate resources to more preventative work (Timpson, 2019). Further, rates at which pupils return to mainstream school (65% at primary age, 64% at Key Stage 3, 53% in Year 10 and 10% in Year 11), draw out the distinction of how AP is utilised with different age ranges, i.e. primary and Key Stage 3 pupils are equipped to return to school with new coping strategies and improved resilience but Key Stage 4 pupils are more likely to be prepared for adulthood rather than returning to mainstream schooling (Timpson, 2019).

Evidence suggests that pupils who experience exclusions are more likely to display internalising and externalising behaviours; become involved in crime; engage in negative ‘self-fulfilling prophecy’ behaviours and are more likely to be the ‘hard to reach’ pupils with various other contextual risk factors, e.g. safeguarding issues (Obsuth et al., 2017; Timpson, 2019). When contextual
evidence is considered, exclusions may lose their power, rendering them ineffective, and may further weaken the bonds of trust, engagement and sense of belonging between the pupil and their school (Obsuth et al., 2017). It could therefore be argued that this might start a reciprocal cycle of negativity, resulting in further SEMH issues and exclusions.

**Alternative Provision and PCP**

Research with APs has indicated that by engaging in PCP meetings, pupils may experience reintegration to mainstream more positively and display improvements in various academic and social markers (e.g. improved relationships with peers and adults, increased motivation; achievement; confidence, attendance; emotional literacy and ability to accept consequences; Bristow, 2013; Cumming & Strnadová, 2017; Taylor, 2011). In addition, it is also important to note that many APs are able to use varied approaches and methods (e.g. smaller classes, differentiated timetables, vocational education) to engage with pupils and understand the barriers and contextual factors they face to academic progress (Timpson, 2019). This would suggest that APs are well placed to utilise PCP frameworks which may provide a platform to assist in interrupting negative cycles, increasing pupil engagement and improving various social and academic markers.

Various factors and barriers and facilitators related to achieving successful outcomes from PCP meetings were identified in the SLR by Gray et al (2021), but, interestingly, they found limited evidence of how to set up and use PCP frameworks in educational settings and that extra preparation time was required prior to PCP meetings taking place.

**Rationale for Current Research and Research Question**

Evidence suggests that PCP can encourage positive outcomes for pupils who may have SEMH needs. However, there is limited published, peer-reviewed research on PCP within education, and none, to the researcher’s knowledge, that focus on how to set up PCP frameworks in APs to possibly maximise positive outcomes.
The following research was undertaken with an AP in the North West of England that had identified a desire to work with pupils and their families in ways that may help reduce or prevent exclusions. The AP is an off-site provision which aims to support the SEMH and engagement of young people who are at risk of exclusion. The overall aim of the research was to enable the AP to develop its practice in relation to PCP and to explore ways that it may support the AP’s preventative work. The RQs, in line with an action research approach, were devised as the research progressed and resulted in the following question being asked:

- How can APs effectively utilise a PCP framework with potentially vulnerable young people?

**Methodology**

**Design**

The research was undertaken using an action research design that utilised the Research and Development in Organisations (RADIO) model. Action research aims to “influence or change some aspect of whatever is the focus of the research” (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p. 199). Robson & McCartan (2016) highlight that action research is about improvement and involvement for participants and go on to specify three types of improvement; “the improvement of a practice of some kind…the improvement of the understanding of a practice by its practitioners and…the improvement of a situation in which the practice takes place” (p.199). Researchers suggest that action research achieves meaningful, positive change through ongoing collaboration and participation of the stakeholders (i.e. anyone who is directly involved with the systems being researched or whom will be impacted by the outcomes) which increases participants’ sense of ownership and accountability (Timmins et al., 2003; Robson & McCartan, 2016). The RADIO model has been utilised in previous research involving educational psychologists seeking to bring about organisational change (Ashton, 2009; Douglas-Osborn, 2017; Law & Woods, 2018; Timmins et al., 2003) and was deemed by the researcher and AP staff as a suitable framework to assist in structuring, and helping participants to progress through, the research project. The RADIO model and the associated activity at each stage are documented in Table 3.
### Table 3: Stages of the RADIO model and research activities undertaken (adapted from Timmins et al., 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RADIO Steps</th>
<th>Typical Radio Activity</th>
<th>Activities Undertaken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Awareness of a need</td>
<td>EP’s contact with school / LEA /teacher / pupil may result in identification of potential need for research or “systems” work</td>
<td>A drive to develop person centred practice was identified by staff in the AP and discussed with the link EP.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2. Invitation to act                 | EP contacts research sponsors / stakeholders in a position to approve and resource the research / development work and negotiates role. Here, the EP as LEA worker may need to press for an invitation to act because of professional or ethical considerations | Link EP contacted the researcher to discuss a research project.  

The potential benefits of research and systems work was then discussed between the researcher, AP headteacher and link EP.                                                                                                                                 |
<p>| 3. Clarifying organisational and cultural issues | Initial exploration of factors likely to support or impede the initiative | An initial meeting with AP senior leaders explored current staffing structure, pupil referral system, intended purpose of provision, relationships between AP and parents/mainstream school etc. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Identifying stakeholders in area of need</th>
<th>The identification and involvement of major stakeholders in the research</th>
<th>AP senior leaders identified AP staff, link EP, pupils, pupils’ family and mainstream staff as stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Agreeing focus of concern</td>
<td>Research facilitator and major stakeholders agree the research aims</td>
<td>AP staff agreed to the overarching focus being:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• How can an AP effectively utilise a PCP framework with potentially vulnerable young people?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Negotiating framework for information gathering</td>
<td>An appropriate methodology and research design is selected to address the research aims</td>
<td>Discussions between the researcher and AP staff led to an agreement that the RADIO model would be used to guide our research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AP staff requested that the researcher gather and disseminate relevant literature pertaining to PCP frameworks and ways of gathering information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Gathering information</td>
<td>Information is gathered using agreed methods</td>
<td>Researcher presents findings from a literature review of PCP and a selection of data gathering methods to the AP staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Processing information with research sponsors/stakeholders</td>
<td>Research findings are shared and their implications discussed with research stakeholders and sponsors</td>
<td>It was decided that the AP staff would like to use MAPs as their framework and use focus group interviews to evaluate peoples’ perceptions.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **9. Agreeing areas for future action** | Activities associated with organisational development and improvement may stem from the previous phase | Following training it was decided that:  
- the AP staff would hold two staff meetings to discuss what/how they would move forward with MAPs considering the COVID-19 pandemic  
- they would run trial sessions to get a feel for the MAP  
- AP staff would run the actual MAP sessions in April 2020 and follow up in October 2020 |
| **10. Action planning** | AP staff planned how to utilise the MAP based on the trial runs and ensuing COVID-19 restrictions |   |
| **11. Implementation of action** | AP staff conducted the MAP with two secondary school pupils via a video platform.  
School staff and family/carers in attendance virtually |   |
| **12. Evaluating action** | A focus group was held over two sessions with the key members of AP staff and the link EP. |   |
Setting & Participants

The AP catered for both primary and secondary school pupils, across two sites, with a main staff body of 12. Generally, pupils attended the AP for a 12-week period to access support with their SEMH needs and engagement in learning. Pupils were expected to attend the AP for two days every week and would return to the mainstream setting for the remaining three days (with support from an AP staff member for one of those days).

As illustrated in Table 3 an invitation to act was received from the AP and link EP after they identified they would like to consider alternative methods of engaging their pupils (step 1 & 2). Meetings were held with senior leaders, where contextual issues, possible stakeholders, key findings of a literature review into PCP, the main PCP frameworks and research gathering methods were discussed (Step 3, 4 5, 6 & 7). After discussing the project in staff meetings, the head teacher of the AP confirmed that seven members of staff wanted to participate in the research. As such a convenience sample was used. Once all staff members had consented to participate, they requested training to learn more about MAPs and from that session they identified some future directions (step 8 & 9). After the trial runs, AP staff reflected on their findings and considered how to run their actual MAP sessions and identified potential pupils, families, and mainstream staff to participate (step 10 & 11). Table 4 indicates the participants in each MAP meeting and Appendix E outlines attendees at all other associated meetings and any documentation presented.

Table 4: Participants in each MAP meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map Meeting 1</th>
<th>Map meeting 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Pupil A (14)</td>
<td>• Pupil B (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• AP staff member: Main Facilitator (Deputy Head)</td>
<td>• AP staff member: Main Facilitator (Higher Level TA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• AP staff member: Graphic Facilitator (GF; TA)</td>
<td>• AP staff member: GF (TA; different to meeting 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mainstream school’s representative (Head of Year)</td>
<td>• Mainstream school’s representative (Year 8 Pastoral and Attendance Officer &amp; Inclusion Manager)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Grandparents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MAPs & Information Dissemination

The MAP consists of eight stages that aim to provide participants with a deeper insight in a person’s, team’s or organisation’s journey so far and what they hope for the future. The stages form part of a planning process that elicits information to inform a colourful, well-structured visual (or ‘graphic’) action plan for future direction (see Appendix F). An interesting feature of the MAPs process is the ‘nightmare’ stage, which allows participants to hear, and see, the fears of the focal participant(s) and identify what their support should aim to avoid; this was a key feature of consideration for the AP staff (see Discussion).

From the research literature on PCP in education, it seems many facilitators have been EPs but this is not a necessary requirement and when the researcher conducted a training session to disseminate MAPs information with the AP staff (stage 8 in Table 3), they decided they had the required skills and were best placed to facilitate the meetings through their knowledge of the pupil and their setting. During the dissemination of information meeting AP staff decided to undertake trial runs of the MAPs process to gather data about how best to run the meetings based on their setting’s structure and to understand more about what was required of them (stage 9 in Table 3). Key findings from the trial runs (see Appendix G) were used to informally guide the final MAP meetings.

Data Gathering: Evaluating Actions

A focus group was held, over two sessions due to the impact of COVID-19, with three senior leaders of the AP who were involved with the MAP process, and the link EP (step 12 of RADIO model). To gather the views of the participants pre-devised questions and prompts were used (see Appendix H) to help the group think about keys areas in relation to their overarching focus. Furthermore, field notes were kept in the form of a journal to capture emails, conversations, actions and the researcher’s thoughts and feelings and decisions made at key times. These notes were used to corroborate the analysis of the focus group data and themes for meaning. Due to COVID-19 restrictions the focus group sessions could not be held in person and were conducted and recorded on the Microsoft Teams video conferencing software (to which relevant GDPR implications were explained and verbal consent to record the video was sought). The video recording was used to cross reference the resultant written transcript.
COVID-19 and subsequent adjustments

The AP staff originally decided that they would like to conduct four separate focus groups, one for each pupil who participated. In addition, the families/carers, AP staff, mainstream staff and any other professionals involved in the MAP process would have been invited to participate in the focus groups; although, there was an understanding that the pupil may have chosen not to invite any of these people to the MAP meeting and could choose other key people to attend. The AP staff also planned to gather information pre-and-post MAP by completing the Boxall Profile and to follow up behavioural and academic markers (i.e. attainment levels, behavioural records etc.) six months later to assess if there was any lasting impact. However, the COVID-19 pandemic meant the AP’s plans became untenable and a delay of eight months in data gathering meant that only the senior AP staff, and the link EP, could participate directly in the focus group sessions. The senior AP staff sought and represented the views and opinions of the staff who could not participate in the focus group. Adjustments were also made to the research focus, i.e. the views of other participants could not be gathered, follow up/monitoring of outcomes was not possible and the MAP sessions could only be run with two secondary pupils.

Data Analysis

Once transcribed the focus group data were inductively, thematically analysed using NVIVO 12 software and following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) model of thematic analysis to identify relevant codes and themes. Initial theme development produced 280 codes which were then revisited and refined until three overarching themes, and related sub-themes, were identified (see Appendix I for examples). To ensure the data were being represented appropriately themes were reviewed with an experienced academic colleague to restructure and / or rename where necessary. Once the themes were finalised they were shared with the participants for member checking, where all participants were satisfied with the final thematic representation.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was gained from the host institution’s Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix J).
Informed consent was gained from participants through participant information sheets (Appendix K), opportunities to ask further questions and signed consent forms (Appendix L). Participants were made aware at several points during the research that they could withdraw at any time without consequence (no participants withdrew). Any identifiable information in this paper has been anonymised to protect the identity of participants and any subsequent people mentioned in relation to the research process. All identifiable information was stored securely and confidentially in line with GDPR regulations and was destroyed accordingly.

Findings

Three overarching themes and several subthemes were developed from the thematic analysis; these are presented in Table 5 below. Themes and sub-themes have been underlined in the main body of text for ease of location and clarity.

The benefits of the MAP’s structure and process

AP staff spoke positively about the MAP’s benefits which appear to be inherent within its structure and its underpinning values. Participants highlighted that the MAP’s structure was flexible and responsive to both pupil and the AP’s needs, e.g. being able to complete the MAP stages with pupils separately reduced the demands placed on the pupil to ‘perform’ in front of an audience whilst also reducing the overall meeting time.

Table 5: Final themes and sub-themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The benefits of the MAP’s structure and process</th>
<th>Barriers &amp; facilitators</th>
<th>Future directions &amp; considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The MAP Structure is clear, flexible &amp; responsive to pupil and setting needs</td>
<td>• Preparation prior to the meeting was the key to success</td>
<td>• Preparation prior to the meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Positive &amp; strengths-based approach o Positive approach o The process is enjoyable &amp; constructive</td>
<td>• The person-centred preparation meant the process really considered the pupil before, during &amp; after the meeting</td>
<td>• Extending &amp; improving MAP use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Roles of Facilitator &amp; GF</td>
<td>• Reviewing after the meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Positive outcomes for the pupil, mainstream school & any future providers

- Working collaboratively, information sharing & co-producing outcomes and action plans
- Helping to alter perspectives & ways of working
- Gives people the space to talk openly & find solutions to difficult situations
- A tangible and transferable document to take away
- Complements other initiatives

The process relies on having the right participants

- Stakeholders’ positive ethos and flexibility of staff
- Staffing & resources
- The structure of the AP and the staff’s ability to build meaningful relationships can benefit the MAP
- COVID 19 & Technology – opening up new possibilities & adapting to new ideas & ways of working
- Outside factors
- Accountability

It was evident that the underlying philosophy of being positive and focusing on strengths meant that participants were encouraged to identify “talents, strengths and values” (participant 2; [P2]), whilst also experiencing the meeting in an enjoyable and constructive way “some of the other consultation meetings we have, it’s lots of, ‘This is a problem, that’s a problem…the structure [of the MAP]…encourages the strengths and the dreaming and the…positive outcomes…I think that’s really beneficial” (EP). Participants also discussed how pupils knew the meeting would be positive because they were consulted about the process and saw pre-populated MAP stages with positive comments that had been made about them. Participant 1 described how these feelings of positivity and involvement provided an alternative way of working that encouraged more pupil participation, “I think once she saw that [pre-populated MAP stages] then she was a bit more willing to…move her chair round…a bit more in front of the camera!”. The AP staff also noted that the positives comments were important to the pupils because they were interested to know who had said what about them.
The underlying person-centred value of working collaboratively encouraged the sharing of valuable information which altered peoples’ perspectives of the pupil, e.g. “what [P1] and [P2] were offering to the MAPs was far and above what school knew of him and…I think the school were quite shocked about how much and how positive they were about him; P3). Further, it fostered a supportive environment that created space for participants to talk openly, led to co-produced action plans and helped to find solutions to difficult situations (even when key participants were absent from the meeting):

she’s a student who’s a little bit stuck really in terms of not going to school. School have tried to engage her, but…she doesn’t want to go back…However…school…agreed they would send work to me and I would give her the work…she’s refused to do it when they’ve sent it directly, so it was sent to me and then I’ve given her the work and actually, she’s done it (P1)

One of the longer-term benefits of the MAP was identified by AP staff as being the production of a tangible and transferable document that could be used by stakeholders, including any future education providers, as a personal transition document and/or a reference point in the future. They discussed how it could be used to highlight the pupil’s journey, where they want to go and how others can support them to get there, as well as reminding the pupil, and their families, of the positive comments. In this sense, the visual MAP that is produced at the end of the process, is an intervention within itself. The visual nature of the MAP was discussed as a benefit in relation to reducing the anxiety felt by pupils who may have literacy issues before, during and after the process (i.e. when referring back to the document). A further finding from the research, that links with the flexibility of the MAP, is that it could complement existing initiatives within a setting/local authority as another way of working and producing outcomes.

**Barriers and facilitators**

Several barriers and facilitators were identified in the research but the main points related to prior preparation and holding the young person central before, during and after the process. AP staff were clear that the successful facilitation of their meetings related to:
• being well informed prior to undertaking the project, which gave a “thorough understanding of what we were doing and why” (P3)

• really thinking about how the MAP framework would best fit with their model of delivery; service users and educational partners prior to starting anything else (“having that information and really reflecting on the practice of MAPS, I think we got it right for the centre, for us”; P3)

• conducting trial runs to assess how much “planning…needed to go in before…the meeting” (P2)

• preparing the young person about the MAP before any meetings took place, e.g. what it entails and giving them choices (“I’d taken the student in before and she’d…said where she wanted the camera to be and where she wanted to sit. I think so she could duck in and out of the camera…she didn’t want to be on camera all the time”; P1)

• “making sure…you get good quality information” (P1) from other stakeholders prior to the meeting to inform the MAP stages

Further, by engaging in prior preparation the staff were able to identify the importance of the facilitator and GF roles in the process, in particular that they are distinct and separately important roles; “I wasn’t always clear whether you could be both facilitators together…it became clear early on that you needed someone to…do the graphic part [too]” (P2) and “it’s not just having any old facilitator, it’s having somebody who you know can do it” (P3). The facilitator role was identified as important in maintaining flow of conversations through the use of appropriate questioning and knowing the pupil, “one of the ones I did, he didn’t like being asked questions, so…I’d…think about how I can get information without asking direct questions” (P2). In relation to the GF role, it was noted that being creative and visual was of benefit, but also they may need breaks inserted into the process to catch up with scribing and to reflect on whether what they had captured was accurate. Further, AP staff noted that having time to work on the MAP after the meeting was a great opportunity for the GF to check, clarify and refine, whilst adding an extra layer of pupil voice and participation.

Closely related to roles was the notion that the process relied on having the right participants taking part, e.g. “I think it works really well when we’ve got that close connection to a school and we’ve got the right member of staff” (P3) and “choosing
the [pupil] we chose….we wanted to choose someone we actually knew something about” (P1). Also of benefit was stakeholders having the right ethos, which encouraged better information sharing and collaboration and seemed to be fostered through relationships, “they are a school that I think have engaged…really well with us at the centre and that information is shared across staff as well at school, so they listen to what we’re suggesting and they put things into place” (P3). Having the right ethos also seemed to inspire more commitment and ‘buy-in’ from the AP staff but they also felt that, even with the right stakeholders, striking a good balance between staff flexibility and resources, including staffing related issues, was key. This was evidenced through discussions around staff being available to cover lessons for those involved in the MAP; more staff being involved in delivering the MAP meetings; having more user friendly information sheets to reduce time demands; staff being responsive to external factors impacting the process; needing to have the correct equipment and staff developing their confidence to meet new demands.

Underpinning most of the findings was the fact AP staff have a unique structure to their setting (i.e. the 12-week placement) which enabled them to work in different ways to mainstream settings and develop meaningful relationships with the pupils. This benefit fed into the MAP process by providing deeper insight and improving school-pupil relationships through better understanding of pupil needs, their backgrounds and strategies to help, “school have now acknowledged more of the attachment issues and working around [them] than actually just…the behaviours” (P1).

The COVID-19 pandemic brought many unexpected barriers and facilitators that impacted the success of the project. AP staff spoke openly about their lack of confidence with technology but also about how they realised there were other potential benefits, “now we’ve had COVID…you could still see a maps running with a combination of people in the centre and people virtual. Where…in February, we’d have thought you can’t possibly do it… it’s opened up that avenue that parents could join virtually” (P3). Correspondingly, participants also discussed how knowing their families and their responsibilities (e.g. childcare, work) meant that technology could alleviate some of the pressure to attend meetings. This also helped the staff to consider families’ personal situations in different ways, e.g. accessing meetings and reducing time demands. Further, new ways of working with pupils and giving them
more choice over their participation and the logistics and structure of the meeting were identified (e.g. pupils with anxiety being able to choose their medium of attendance or being able to leave/return to the meeting without a room of observers).

**Outside factors** were discussed as barriers to the process in terms of people not making the meeting, requested information not being provided, participants’ confidence affecting engagement with the process and potential benefits of the process being lost if facilitators do not know the child. **Accountability** relating to who would have responsibility for following up on outcomes, and the logistics of doing so was discussed (i.e. once pupils return to mainstream the AP staff are no longer involved) but unfortunately could not be investigated fully due to research time frames and stakeholders being unable to explore how that could work; it therefore became a point for future consideration.

**Future directions & considerations**

Participants felt that prior to the meeting, given the amount of time that could be dedicated to gathering information, possibly seeking some admin support to send documents out would be useful and possibly ring-fencing MAP time to make “sure staff have got the time to do all of that pre-planning…and collate all the information…need[ed]” (P3). Further, staff felt they would keep the information gathering process, prior to the MAP meeting, but there was scope to “improve that as well to make it easier for schools [and other stakeholders to understand the MAP process and structure]” (P2). In relation to this, it was also felt that any information and consent letters for children needed to be written in more child-friendly language and clearly explained, with chances to ask more questions prior to the process beginning. Following this, AP staff also felt that due to the use of technology there was scope to gather more pupil opinions, e.g. “it might be that they’d prefer somebody to be online and not in the room with them” (P1). Finally, AP staff felt it may be beneficial to reflect on potential strategies before the meeting which could then be used to facilitate discussion with participants so that there were “some real specific actions that they go away with…in the first four or five days” (P1), e.g. keeping a diary or making positive comments.

Participants felt that there were ways of **extending and improving** on the current MAP process, especially that they “should adopt it as sort of common practice” (P2)
for all pupils, which would be beneficial to all stakeholders because the more MAP meetings that are completed, the better the understanding and familiarity with the purpose and process. Further considerations for extending the process included how to use MAP with primary school pupils, particularly as a transition document and potentially rolling it out to more schools in the local authority. Additionally, participants discussed how to utilise the potential of technology by investing in better equipment, having time to build their confidence with the equipment and the fact that it could make facilitating meetings easier. The EP also identified that using technology to conduct meetings with a mixture of remote and in-person meetings could benefit pupils with anxiety, poor attendance or emotionally based school avoidance. Unfortunately, in the MAPs that were run in the AP, not all were attended by family members and staff felt this “might be a completely different experience…if they could be there to support their child” (P1).

Regarding after the meeting participants reflected that it would have been beneficial to set review dates and that it would be beneficial to see if the MAP document had helped the pupil in school and to ensure the outcomes were followed up at a later date. However, the participants recognised that following-up would be hard for them to do because “whilst we want to maintain the contact and we do track the children once they’ve left, it’s…how long do we track without passing that back to school?” (P3) and whilst mainstream schools might be able to take responsibility, the more likely solution was discussed in terms of existing EPS support and link EPs “even if it was just checking in to see how much [and] to what extent people had met some of the outcomes” (P3).

As mentioned above, AP staff found, by way of adjustments rather than intention, that checking back with the pupil after the meeting provided opportunity to quality assure the MAP document and participants felt that embedding that opportunity would be beneficial to the process overall as participants may want to add something they had not thought of previously.

Discussion

Although a small-scale study, this research has provided some insight into key considerations for utilising MAPs (or more generally PCP) in AP settings. The focus groups produced three key themes (the benefits of the MAP’s structure & process,
barricades & facilitators and future directions & considerations). Overall, these themes highlighted the importance: of prior preparation; taking time to understand the MAP process and how that aligns with a setting’s structure; and, ultimately, the inherent values and ethos of not just the setting but the staff too. The AP staff specifically developed their understanding of PCP and how to utilise a PCP framework through a cycle of action research.

**Practical Implications**

Undertaking action research and using the RADIO model allowed the AP staff to benefit from a structured and self-directed project of self-development and organisational change. Due to the action research design, the researcher became an active participant in the research process, which provided an insight to the AP’s staffs’ personal desires to genuinely ensure the pupils’ time at the AP was productive and beneficial, even after returning to mainstream schooling. This dedication to their pupils transferred to the staffs’ approach towards the research and subsequent choices, which was complemented by the RADIO model stages. For example, AP staff were able to combine the chance to sit and reflect on their setting, ethos and aims with their prior experience of working with pupils to identify that the ‘nightmare’ stage of the MAP would provide space and time to acknowledge the difficulties of being excluded or moving to a different school. Furthermore, when debating when to conduct a MAP, participant’s initially thought it might be better on arrival to the AP but after conducting trial runs they realised that would benefit them more than the pupil; therefore, the MAP was conducted towards the end of the AP placement when they had built better relationships and understanding. Although not directly discussed in the focus group, it is important to note the staffs’ approach, as it was their desire and utilisation of person-centred values that underpin all the implications of the research. These findings correspond with previous research in identifying the right people, with the right ethos and skills, to take part in the process (Cumming & Strndova, 2017; Griffiths, 2015; Tabassum, 2013).

In relation to the importance of having the right people, another key finding, is the notion of prior preparation – which not only ensures the right people participate but also the right approach to achieving the best outcomes is utilised. Previous PCP research has shown that one of the biggest barriers to successful meetings has been the failure to prepare stakeholders in advance about what to expect, the level of
commitment needed and what the purpose of the meetings were (Bristow, 2013; Griffiths, 2015; Wood et al., 2019). In addition, the trial runs and the information dissemination session, allowed AP staff to start the research / MAP process with similar ideas of: what to expect; levels of experience; a common understanding of MAPs; approaches to reflective practice, as well as increasing confidence, identifying ways to engage more staff members and providing a sense of ownership. This is important to note as previous research has indicated that differing ideas, shared visions and levels of experience can be potential barriers to being person centred (Greenwood & Kelly, 2017). In addition to prior preparation, research has shown that post-meeting commitment to reviewing progress and outcomes, as well as sharing the key information with relevant stakeholders, is also paramount to ongoing success (Bristow, 2013; Corrigan, 2014; Griffiths, 2015; Tabassum, 2013). It is unfortunate that in this research COVID-19 restrictions limited the ability to engage in reviews and following up. Despite this, the participants did express a desire to find a way in future meetings to follow-up on actions and recognised the importance of reviews in monitoring and potentially maintaining impact.

From the findings presented here, another important implication is that the AP staff utilised the AP’s structure and their time management to build and extend relationships with the pupils. By way of attending the AP, it could be argued that those pupils have experienced relationship and behavioural difficulties but the way the AP staff utilised the MAP’s flexibility allowed them to advance their relationships with pupils. The combination of holding the pupil at the centre, giving them choices, considering what they want whilst gathering, and providing, information from, and to, key adults assisted with all participants’ perception of the process as being positive and appears to have improved pupil engagement and willingness to participate. In conjunction with this, and an unexpected but significant implication for practice, is the fact that technology provided new and alternative ways of working. Technology could provide further opportunities to build relations by increasing the range of options available to the pupils (e.g. who should attend and in what capacity) and gaining a deeper appreciation of familial responsibilities. Gaining a deeper understanding may add value to any identified outcomes, facilitate a more positive return to mainstream and reduce future inequality in exclusion rates by eliciting further contextual information and related factors (Obsuth et al., 2017).
APs are able to use their structure and flexibility to try new and varied approaches (Timpson, 2019) which means that utilising and shaping the MAP may be easier for them than mainstream settings due to traditional teaching constraints (e.g. larger class sizes, stricter curriculum structure). However, Obsuth et al. (2017) highlight how excluded pupils have limited expectations whilst they are away from school and, once they do return to school, there is very little support to assist with reintegration. On the evidence of this research, the MAP could assist both mainstream and AP settings by: providing a clear process for AP staff to engage the pupil with on arrival at an AP; producing a tangible and transferable document that acts as a reference point for the pupil family and any future educational provider; and by identifying how to support the pupil on returning to school. Furthermore, the participants spoke about the potential for a MAP to provide valuable information as a transition document for Year 6 pupils moving up to Year 7. However, as Timpson (2019) indicated, once pupils enter Key Stage 4, APs tend to focus on preparation for adulthood not reintegration to mainstream schooling; therefore, it could be argued that MAPs can provide equally valuable information for those transitioning to further education or training.

At a systems level, these findings indicate that there are several factors for an AP and/or a mainstream setting to consider. For example, how can senior leaders devise and implement policies and procedures that utilise PCP? From the evidence presented here, one of the key factors could be around participating schools aligning their ethos to incorporate PCP values (e.g. listening to pupils with mutual respect, providing opportunities for children to be involved in decisions that affect them). Aligning any school’s ethos could be achieved through in-house training packages, targeted inset days (which could happen periodically to ensure PCP values do not stagnate) and the development of (shared) PCP resources, all of which could be co-produced with pupils. Taking that one step further, schools could create, and sign-up to, a context specific policy relating to the inclusion of pupils with SEMH needs, designed by pupils to enhance their involvement in the overall process (e.g. speaking with pupils before they attend an AP to set targets for them to achieve and having a robust support package for the return to mainstream school). Furthermore, schools could involve pupils with SEMH in the production of pupil-friendly, and pupil produced, information leaflets and consent forms which may improve the
engagement with, and ownership, of PCP meetings. The use of MAPS could also precede any referral to an AP, or be used on a general scale, as part of an assess, plan, do, review process (DfE & DoH, 2015) to evidence areas of concern, interventions, evaluations, and a pupil’s progress. In this instance, MAPs could form part of annual reviews, individual education plans and transition reviews and support packages. All of the suggested implications above could be constructed and utilised in conjunction with a school’s link EP and could be monitored through site specific evaluation and tracking forms.

The findings presented here suggest that the MAP is a useful framework for professionals to meet the SENDCoP requirements (DfE & DoH, 2015) of increasing participation of CYP and their families in the decisions that affect them. Further, these findings infer that pupils may experience more positive relationships, choice, independence and control, which pupils expressed was important to them in previous research (Ofsted, 2010).

Limitations

Due to COVID-19, the failure to capture the views and opinions of other potential stakeholders is a limitation to the findings of this research, especially in relation to capturing the pupils’ voices in person-centred research. Further, being unable to review any of the identified outcomes reduces the ability to infer any longitudinal benefits of MAPs.

The fact that only three senior AP staff members and the link EP took part in the focus group sessions to evaluate action and they represented the other participants views may have led to a biased representation of staff and their views (e.g. participants may have misconstrued what the absent participants wanted to say and aligned some comments with their own views). This may have reduced the internal reliability and transferability (Robson, 2011) but it was deemed acceptable as the researcher was able to refer to their field notes and experience of meetings to gauge the congruence of comments, views and feelings throughout the research. It is important to note though, that the senior AP staff were experienced educational practitioners prior to joining the AP. As such, they were confident in their own skills and were highly motivated to deliver the MAP meetings, which may have impacted the findings of this research and their ability to engage with research processes.
Further, as the participants took part in an information dissemination session prior to engaging with the MAPs, this may have impacted how they responded in the focus group sessions (i.e. knowing the intended aims of PCP/MAPs and being more positive).

**Implications for future research**

The following were initial areas of focus for this research but due to COVID-19 restrictions they were unable to be investigated therefore they would make for good research questions for future studies:

- What are the pupils’, mainstream staff and parental views of engaging with the MAP process?
- Are there any long-term benefits or consequences to engaging with the MAP process - e.g. can MAPs be effective reintegration tools to help reduce exclusions for the pupil?
- Are there any benefits of MAPs for primary school pupils?

Following this research, it would also be beneficial for future research to look at ways in which a MAP and new technology can be used with pupils who have anxiety, low attendance or have emotionally based school avoidance behaviours. This research has highlighted how technology can be used to facilitate a person centred process so it may be helpful to see how this could be utilised further to support young people who have difficulty attending school and/or engaging with professionals. Also, AP staff felt that after running MAP sessions with two secondary school pupils, there may be a difference in how they approach utilising MAPs with primary school pupils so future research could examine if there are any differences and what they may entail. This research was based in an AP which provides short term provision to support pupils’ SEMH needs and therefore future research could consider how transferable the model is to other settings. For example, can PRUs use MAPs to aid reintegration back to mainstream / vocational work through the identification of key adults that the pupil wants to work with? Or, can it be used to reduce mainstream exclusions in the first place by gathering the pupil’s voice on ambiguous contextual information that identifies more appropriate support?
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Paper 3: The dissemination of evidence to professional practice

Abstract

The concepts of evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence are briefly explored in relation to the nature, and dissemination, of research findings in professional practice. The following paper attempts to examine some of the evidence relating to effective research dissemination and research impact, whilst providing a summary of the implications of the research findings from papers 1 and 2 at three levels (research site, organisational and individual). Finally, a specific strategy for promoting and evaluating the research findings, and any subsequent impact, for papers 1 and 2 in the wider professional context is suggested.

Key Words: dissemination, evidence-based practice, practice-based evidence
Evidence-based Practice

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC; 2015) set out several standards of proficiency for professionals, including educational psychologists (EPs), who are actively practicing and undertaking training in the health and care domains. The HCPC standards of proficiency require that practitioners are aware of, are guided by and can evaluate current research evidence to inform and shape their practice and the best outcomes for their clients. Evidence-based practice (EBP) is defined as “the conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of current best practice evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients” (Sackett et al., 1996, p. 71) that considers “the context of patient characteristics, culture and preferences” (American Psychological Association [APA], 2008, p. 5). As such, EBP has been posited by many as a way of ensuring that the best available and most effective interventions, programmes and strategies are utilised by professionals when considering an appropriate course of action for service users (Biesta, 2007; Lilienfeld et al., 2012; Sackett et al., 1996). It should be noted that EBP originated in the medical profession and, as can be seen by the definitions provided, focuses mainly on the ‘patient’ and not necessarily their environment. However, for EPs, it is not only the service user’s characteristics, culture and preferences that need to be considered, but also their interaction within an educational setting’s context, resources, and ethos. This poses a problem for EPs as research and subsequent evidence has traditionally being ranked according to a research hierarchy (Table 6) with the ‘gold standard’ of research, RCTs (randomised controlled trials), being conducted in controlled, clinical settings.

Table 6. The hierarchy of evidence (as cited in Frederickson, 2002)

| 1. Several systematic reviews of randomised controlled trials |
| 2. Systematic review of randomised controlled trials |
| 3. Randomised controlled trials |
| 4. Quasi-experimental trials |
| 5. Case control and cohort studies |
| 6. Expert consensus opinion |
| 7. Individual opinion |
For EPs though, evidence from RCTs may not easily transfer to real world settings and everyday practice, therefore practitioners are at risk of recommending and potentially implementing research evidence that lacks ecological validity (Dunsmuir et al., 2009; Frederickson, 2002; Kelly et al., 2008). Correspondingly, the APA (2008) highlight that when delivering EBP the EP “must include partnerships with other providers, cultural responsiveness, a developmental approach, and a socioecological framework” (p. 6). This may further hinder the implementation of EBP as most psychological research used by EPs is based on a westernised perspective (therefore lacking cultural responsiveness), whilst clinical trials, by their nature, do not necessarily consider socioecological frameworks. However, Frederickson (2002) draws attention to the fact that EBP does not circumvent professional opinion and stresses the integration of professional expertise with best available evidence “to decide whether external evidence applies…and, if so, how it should be integrated and weighed in decision making” (p.97). Furthermore, EPs work collaboratively with, and across, multidisciplinary teams, often consulting and training other professionals, to address systemic processes that may impact the effectiveness of any interventions and/or practice (APA, 2008) and some researchers have noted that these adaptations are important additions to the evidence base (Dunsmuir et al., 2009). It could therefore be argued, that despite the inherent validity concerns with some EBP, the EP is best placed to combine their skills and knowledge with current research evidence to provide solutions which achieve the best outcomes for service users.

**Practice-based Evidence**

One of the proposed ways of improving ecological validity and incorporating the expertise of professionals, whilst complementing EBP, is the notion of practice-based evidence (PBE). PBE is essentially concerned with evidence based on findings and experience from professionals’ practice within their respective workplaces. This offers an alternative way of perceiving, incorporating and evaluating evidence beyond relying solely on the traditional hierarchical approach to research evidence. O’Hare (2015) describes how ‘evidence’ does not need to be “synonymous with research outputs” (p. 5) and explains that, “A whole range of evidence could underpin practice [such as] practitioner experience and judgement, information from the context which practitioners work in and the perspectives of
those people who might be affected by any decision [made by professionals]” (p. 5). Others have advocated for the use of evaluation(s) as a means of allowing researchers and practitioners to answer “central questions about an intervention… “Does it work?”, “When does it work?”, and “For whom does it work?” (Dunsmuir et al., 2009, p. 56), which may help to bridge the gap between research evidence and everyday practice. When we consider that the EP works collaboratively, and within the contextual factors of any particular setting, the EP’s role could be essential to assisting with ‘bridging the gap’ between theory and practice by making evidence more accessible, relatable and implementable to educational settings and their staff (Durlak, 2016; Huber, 2007; Slavin, 2013).

What is particularly interesting about PBE is that in relation to the work of EPs, this is an area that has responded to socio-political influences and is still developing (Dunsmuir et al., 2009), “What is needed is a raising of the profile of EPs as both users of research and doing research. Is this an impossible dream or might developments in training in educational psychology offer an opportunity to realise this vision?” (Frederickson, 2002, p. 102). Serendipitously, EP training has subsequently become a doctoral level course, requiring the development of research skills and the production of research evidence which has contributed to the development of EBP within the profession (Eodanable & Lauchlan, 2009) but also to PBE by the nature of where research undertaken by trainees is conducted. However, there is evidence to suggest that once qualified EPs are not utilising EBP in their practice, preferring to base recommendations, formulations and advice on situation specific factors, personal experience and preferences and in some cases religious values (Burnham, 2013; Lilienfield et al., 2012; O’Hare, 2015). This not only raises questions about ethical practice, i.e. how practice juxtaposes professional and personal morals and values, but also how personal beliefs and preferences interact with how evidence is disseminated, received and utilised for impact.

**Research Dissemination**

Academics should engage in more effective dissemination

( Oliver & Cairney, 2019, p. 3)
The very simple quote above is borne out across several dissemination papers and has been a recurring theme for many decades, but yet is one that still does not have a definitive conclusion about what is effective (Brownson et al., 2018; Oliver & Cairney, 2019; Wilson et al., 2010). Research dissemination has been defined as:

a planned process that involves consideration of target audiences and the settings in which research findings are to be received and, where appropriate, communicating and interacting with wider policy and health service audiences in ways that will facilitate research uptake in decision making processes and practice. (Wilson et al., 2010, p. 2)

From this definition, there are 3 key components to consider when disseminating research findings; who is your audience, where are they working and how can it influence decision making? These factors are important to consider when thinking about dissemination as some researchers have highlighted an existing gap when translating research into practice due to ambiguous dissemination strategies (Brownson et al., 2018; Fixsen et al., 2009). Further, whilst there is usually an expectation for funded research to be disseminated, there may be a disconnect between funders and researchers about what actually constitutes dissemination (Wilson et al., 2010) and indeed that there is a desire for shared dissemination. For example, whilst undertaking the EP doctoral training course, the author has encountered various opinions and views of trainees from all over the United Kingdom (UK) and covering no less than 6 training courses. When discussing the issue of dissemination, the responses have often been ones of nonchalance and disdain – granted this is not representative of all trainees but these conversations have been held with approximately 15 colleagues. Comments similar to “I’m not bothered about it really, it will sit on a shelf never to be read again”, “who really cares?” and “what impact will it have anyway? I read that a thesis or an article, outside of the recurring ones that we use all of the time, might get read 1.5 times on average. That’s three years of my life to be read 1.5 times, if I’m lucky”. Whilst this is only personal experience, from these comments it seems that the value of disseminating research, for these people at least, is not of real importance due to their personal views on its value and usefulness. Arguably, these personal beliefs may translate to practice too and the value of research may not be prioritised to help inform practice, especially when work-life balance is factored into ever increasing workloads meaning EPs may
not have time to keep abreast of current research and its dissemination (Dunsmuir et al., 2009). Whilst this may seem like speculation, based on limited discussions, research suggests that some practicing EPs may not fully understand how scientific research forms the basis of their practice, preferring to defer to personal experiences, colleague opinions and reference books over peer-reviewed research journals (Bramlett et al., 2002; Burnham, 2013). Further, O’Hare (2015) draws our attention to the fact that some EPs felt that the research component of the doctoral training course was a tick box exercise rather than an ongoing feature of professional development, which may help to explain some of the comments and research findings above. The notion that research is not an integral part of the training course and ongoing professional identity could therefore hinder the dissemination of research findings, its uptake and ultimately the impact it could have with the EP profession.

However, this creates a bit of a quagmire for EPs and their service users because to improve the effectiveness of EPB and PBE, raise professional and other interested parties’ awareness to the existence of research evidence, and its utilisation, dissemination is the key component (Freemantle & Watt, 1994). Similar to the three components identified in the definition above, Harmsworth et al. (2000) identify three distinct levels of dissemination:

- to raise awareness - likened to being about “the word of mouth type dissemination” (p. 3) for audiences who may not need detailed insight of the research but may benefit from knowing it exists and its outcomes
- to improve understanding – is explained as knowing “which groups/audiences that you will need to target directly…because you believe that they can benefit from what your project has to offer…therefore [they should] have a deeper understanding” (p.3) of the research.
- to inform action – “refers to a change of practice resulting from the adoption of products, materials or approaches offered by [the research]” (p.3) and is usually undertaken by the people who can influence change. However, it is important to note that the audience may “need to be equipped with the right skills, knowledge and understanding of your work in order to achieve real change”
Harmsworth et al. (2000) suggest that moving through each stage in turn makes achieving dissemination for action more likely, as raising awareness may lead to a desire to understand which provides the basis to influence action, however this is not a necessity. What stands out from the descriptions of dissemination levels provided by Harmsworth et al. (2000) is the initial need for the researcher to identify and be aware of their audience in order to rouse their interest before potentially supporting them to instigate change, which suggest that effective, concise and intriguing communication is essential to dissemination. This is supported by a recent systematic literature review (Oliver & Cairney, 2019) looking at how academics can impact policy and policy makers, which identified that research needs to be communicated in clearer and more creative ways. Oliver and Cairney (2019, p. 3) state that data should:

- be made public
- provide clear summaries and syntheses of problems and solutions
- use a range of outputs (e.g. social media, blogs) so that questions can be easily asked and followed up
- avoid jargon, without oversimplifying
- make simple, definitive statements

Further, they suggest that “some blogs advise academics to use established story telling techniques to…better communicate scientific ideas” and create emotive responses and narratives that create scenes, characters and equate “the moral solution to the policy problem” (p. 3). Whilst this may seem like an obscure idea, relating to your audience and making emotive connections can influence perceptions, decisions and actions (Macagno, 2014) and may link well with Harmsworth et al’s (2000) notion of raising awareness, improving understanding and informing action within your target audience.

Whilst making research evidence public may seem logical, Brownson et al. (2018) indicate that academic research journals are still the preferred source of dissemination, which are not easily accessed by the public, or individual professionals, partly due to the expense involved (Eodanable & Lauchlan, 2009). To try and make research findings more accessible and to improve dissemination of
findings, in 2012 the UK’s coalition government committed to identifying ways to increase public access to publicly funded research, noting that:

the US National Institute of Health’s policy of open access after one year has accelerated scientific progress and the transition from basic research to commercialisation; generated more follow-on research and more citations; and reduced duplicate or dead-end lines of inquiry...[and] when publishers randomly made certain articles open access on journal websites, readership increased by up to 250%” (Willetts, 2012, para. 12).

Willetts’ (2012) speech also describes a two-tier system to accessing knowledge between those with access to research findings and those without, providing discussion points about how the impact of research on individuals and society can be far greater by improving research access and dissemination rather than keeping data confined to those who can afford it or benefit from being within particular organisations.

**Research Impact**

The University of York (UoY; 2021) define research impact as “when the knowledge generated by our research contributes to, benefits and influences society, culture, our environment and the economy” (para. 1) and list several areas that research impact might benefit, e.g. regional, environmental, economic, social, cultural, health and well-being, policy influence and change and technological. Similarly, the Research Excellence Framework (REF; Research England, 2021) state that impact is “an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia”. Other definitions have similar connotations and highlight that the focus of research impact is related to beneficial change outside of academia. However, the UoY (2021) deepen the understanding of ‘benefit’ by stating that:

giving evidence to a select committee, working with a business or contributing to an exhibition in a museum is not impact. It would become impact if the people or organisation involved somehow do, experience or understand differently as a result of their interaction with the research (para. 4)
This definition highlights that researchers themselves cannot create impact but can facilitate it with impact activities. Whilst the definitions make it clear what impact is and is not, actually measuring impact in a meaningful and consistent way has been an area for development (Brownson et al., 2018). One of the ways that academics in the UK try to prove the impact of their research has been through the REF, which aims to assess the quality of research from higher education institutions and the impact research has had within wider society (Research England, 2021). The REF process invites institutions to submit examples of their research to a panel of experts who then assess the level of impact against broad criteria (impact, outputs and environment). These assessments then provide an impact sub-profile, which combine to give an overall excellence profile. The REF, while a good way of assuring quality, is also susceptible to academic institutions applying undisclosed selection criteria to showcase only the highest level of work as UK funding bodies may make funding decisions based on the excellence ratings. In addition, academics may use a publishing journals’ own measures of impact (e.g. citation metrics and the journal’s impact factor), however, citations and a journal’s impact factor does not necessarily indicate that research has influenced change and may be viewed more as indicators of knowledge exchange.

Implications of the Current Research

The following section will outline specific research implications of Paper 1 and Paper 2 at the following levels: site, organisational and professional.

Paper 1

The research question of the systematic literature review (SLR) was, “What range of outcomes is associated with using specified person-centred planning (PCP) processes with pupils with SEMH in education”. The key findings indicated that PCP meetings helped:

- Pupils to be held central to meetings, have a voice at meetings and be heard
- Improve behaviour, self-esteem, confidence, motivation and various aspects of academic and social engagement.
- Collaborative working, sharing of information and improved relationships amongst stakeholders
but also the meetings,

- created feelings of initial apprehension
- were hindered by lack of participant preparation and post meeting reviews
- relied on the facilitator’s skills for successful meetings
- could be impacted by external factors (e.g. a local authority’s political stance or staff lacking underlying person-centred values) and lack of buy-in from stakeholders

and finally, the SLR findings indicated that,

- PCP meetings were aided by stakeholders with the right ethos
- the findings were underpinned by inherent person-centred values (e.g. honesty and genuineness) which also facilitated successful outcomes
- the research lacked standardised and observable outcome measures and was cross sectional

**Site level.**

The findings hold significance for any educational context working with pupils who have SEMH needs. The fact that research indicates pupils with SEMH felt they were heard and held central in PCP meetings, which was attributed to improving various social and academic markers, should encourage the development of new ways of utilising PCP into everyday activities and processes (e.g. involving the pupil in more decisions, practicing the underlying values of being person-centred). In relation to the wider context and implications of PCP, the findings showed that pupils being considered, through improving staff-pupil relationships and therefore understanding pupils better, led to improved engagement and interactions. At a site level, this could indicate that building an ethos that aligns with person-centred values (e.g. empathy and understanding) may mutually benefit pupils and staff in various ways (e.g. improving sense of belonging, attendance, behaviour, and friendships).

**Organisational level.**

The SLR highlighted numerous areas for organisations to develop their ability to capture the voices and opinions of pupils and their families in decisions that affect them. From the research it suggests that consideration needs to be given to the
organisational context, ethos and buy-in from stakeholders. This indicates that an organisation would need to plan carefully, in advance of setting up any PCP initiatives to assess how best to utilise PCP and to encourage stakeholders to commit to the process. Furthermore, research has shown that buy-in from senior leaders is essential for the success of new projects and initiatives (Farahnak et al., 2020). With the possibility of PCP initiatives improving the SEMH needs of pupils, and in turn their academic achievements and social skills, these findings should be used by senior staff to identify ways to incorporate more PCP into their policies, procedures and overall ethos of their setting. For example, deciding to run lunchtime and after-school clubs that support and encourage person-centred play and development opportunities as part of a new school council policy or upskilling the school’s pastoral support team to utilise person-centred approaches.

**Professional level.**

The fact that researchers have not used many standardised or observable outcome measures and have not engaged in longitudinal follow-ups allows for future research to be conducted which address the long-term impact of PCP and to use measures which would increase the transferability, and potentially generalisability, of findings. In relation to education staff (at all levels), the notion of being person-centred and what that entails, alongside the early research findings and how PCP may benefit pupils and the school environment could be filtered down through professional development opportunities and / or inset days. For example, EPs could deliver training to school staff on PCP and the associated benefits. At a governmental level, the SLR showed that the promotion of PCP within education was based on limited evidence, and mainly from a different discipline (Health and Social care), which considering the recent drive for evidence based practice seems to contradict the research evidence is paramount rhetoric. More research should be commissioned into the use of PCP across various educational contexts and for a range of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

**Paper 2**

The focus of Paper 2 was on exploring staff perceptions of using a person-centred framework in an alternative provision (AP). This research provided
numerous findings that built on the findings from paper 1 and have relevance to PCP and educational professionals at all levels.

**Site level.**

As the research with the AP was undertaken using an action research design there were immediate implications and impact for participants about how to utilise a PCP framework (the MAP). The AP staff decided to seek the research data on PCP from Paper 1 and used the findings to direct their utilisation of a PCP framework. As a result, the AP staff decided to trial run PCP meetings, which allowed them to not only prepare themselves for what they may need to do but also what they needed to inform their participants about (e.g. they chose to send information gathering sheets to mainstream staff and parents prior to the meeting and involve the pupil in all decisions related to their MAP such as: the MAP’s design; who should attend; where and when it should be held; availability of refreshments). This was important as previous research indicated that PCP meetings were affected by participants feeling underprepared for the meeting, especially in terms of the differences in its structure and purpose in comparison to traditional meetings.

This prior preparation allowed AP staff to learn about what would work best for them, their setting, their pupils and how to maximise the impact of the PCP meetings. In addition, the AP staff ensured that the prior preparation also encouraged external stakeholders to align with their ethos by providing guidance on the PCP process and its underlying philosophy of positivity and being solutions focused. These findings indicate that setting up new initiatives requires careful consideration to maximise a setting’s resources, structure and subsequently the outcomes for participants. Furthermore, it was found that this preparation helped to improve relationships, understanding of issues, solutions and next steps amongst stakeholders. At the site level, the AP staff also felt that MAPs could be beneficial for use with all their pupils and identified possible future actions that included making information more child-friendly, using technology to improve access and engagement for pupils, parents/carers and professionals and ensuring that outcomes were monitored and followed-up in the months after the meeting.
Organisational level.

The findings from Paper 2 highlighted that investment in fostering change and encouraging the commitment to PCP, and completion of the research, came from the senior leaders. They helped direct the research through discussions, dissemination sessions, team meetings and by gathering views to inform the evaluation of actions. During the focus group senior leaders identified a desire to implement PCP into policy and procedure and identified training as a key consideration for organisations. The use of dissemination training in Paper 2 allowed interested staff members at all levels to participate in the research but the senior leaders felt the training should be delivered to more staff to help address potential resource issues and increase flexibility in delivery. For all organisations the implications of senior leaders being involved in all aspects of a new initiative are that it not only provided motivation to participate in change but also improved dissemination of valuable information, provided professional (and personal) development opportunities and may influence policy and procedure for the benefit of pupils and other professionals. For example, senior leaders discussed the way they worked with the educational psychology service and how processes could be developed to improve the MAPs’ longevity. Correspondingly, the research also involved an EP, who felt that there was scope to roll out the PCP process into the wider school context and that could be discussed within the local authority’s multi-disciplinary team meetings. One of the identified benefits of the process was the production of a tangible and transferable document which could be used by mainstream schools and APs as a way to support pupils who are at risk of exclusion, or who are already excluded, by identifying appropriate and personalised support.

Professional level.

In terms of taking the research to a wider context, there is a clear role for the professionals who participated in this research to disseminate their experiences, understanding and findings to other potential stakeholders and their services (e.g. raising awareness and understanding, Harmsworth et al., 2000). To extend the impact of the research findings, those professionals may consider training other people who want to implement a PCP approach in their establishments or services (informing action, Harmsworth et al., 2000) and could provide guidance based on
their experiences. Training other professionals would be a role particularly suited to EPs whilst offering training to all schools would raise awareness of PCP and possibly its uptake across settings. Further, participants in Paper 2 also discussed how EPs could support the PCP process and educational settings by initiating and facilitating review meetings with pupils who return to mainstream school.

The Department for Education (DfE) and Department of Health’s (DoH) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice (SENDCoP; 2015) requires professionals to include pupils and their families in the decisions that impact their lives, and the findings from Paper 2 would suggest that PCP is an effective way to meet those requirements. Therefore, professionals who work with young people with SEND could think about ways to incorporate PCP into more than just meetings and reviews (e.g. EP’s could use a recognised PCP framework for their initial consultations with a pupil). Further, whilst the research is UK specific, the notions of feeling valued, heard and considered through genuine, well-planned person-centred interactions may have international significance for a range of educational needs and the approach taken by educational establishments

**Strategy for Promoting and Evaluating Research**  
**Dissemination and its Impact**

The dissemination strategy that follows is based on the three levels of dissemination described by Harmsworth et al., (2000). However, at this stage, it is important to note that due to COVID-19 the research in Paper 1 and Paper 2 was delayed and dissemination and measurement of impact in a wider context had not been possible up to the time of submitting this paper. Therefore, what follows is mainly hypothetical and proposes future actions. Figure 1 summarises the possible dissemination strategy.
Figure 1. Summary of Possible Dissemination Strategy

**Dissemination for Awareness**

The researcher's local authority regularly publishes a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo) newsletter and this could be used as a platform to promote PCP as a way of meeting the person-centred requirement of the SENDCoP (DfE & DoH, 2015). It may be that interest is roused by promoting MAPs as a new way of conducting meetings which may also create positive social and academic outcomes for pupils with SEMH needs.

Within the local authority’s educational psychology service, some EPs already have an interest in PCP, whilst others have expressed an interest in learning more about available PCP frameworks. This provides opportunities to present the research findings in a team or a service development meeting, which may lead to further explanation and could ultimately lead to more EPs using MAPs within their practice.

During discussions with SENDCo’s there has often been a desire to find new ways of working that can provide meaningful and co-produced outcomes whilst involving young people, especially when it comes to annual review / transition meetings. As MAPs potentially offers a way to involve pupils in all aspects of the process, gather information and action plan, there is scope to discuss the research
findings and MAP structure with SENDCo’s as a potentially new way of working and engaging pupils whilst providing new targets and outcomes for review meetings.

**Dissemination for Understanding**

The findings of the research are to be prepared and submitted to an academic journal with a specific readership that the researcher believes would benefit from knowing more about PCP. This would increase potential exposure to the findings from a local level to a national, and possibly an international, audience. There is also the potential to engage with national conferences and/or seminars. In the future, this may become an option and would increase the awareness, understanding and impact of the research beyond the readership of academic journals.

If school staff showed an interest in PCP research from the information provided in the SENDCo newsletter then a presentation could be designed and delivered to encourage staff to deepen their knowledge and understanding of how PCP was utilised in this research. This would allow staff to start considering how it may work for them and what the outcomes could be too. However, there is also the potential for the researcher to discuss their research in consultation meetings with stakeholders as a means of considering alternative ways of working, one-off pieces of work or as ongoing support for schools. As an EP would be delivering one-off pieces of work or on-going support, this would allow schools to learn about the PCP process without necessarily committing other resources until they witness and understand the potential impact and benefits.

**Dissemination for Action**

In terms of action, if school staff find their curiosity is peaked from a presentation then, as the researcher did within Paper 2, there is scope to deliver training to interested staff members and help them to set up PCP meetings for their settings – this could be as a school’s link EP or in conjunction with colleagues at other schools. Following on from this, it is also possible that the researcher could produce a training package, on their own or with colleagues who have a vested interest in PCP, that other EPs could access and deliver to schools themselves. Furthermore, to extend the work with schools, and possibly maximise the benefits, an EP could co-facilitate a MAP meeting with school staff. Co-facilitation could provide modelling
opportunities to ensure research findings are embedded in practice, e.g. demonstrating the required facilitation skills, navigating the essential prior preparation from Paper 2’s findings and making sure a review date is set and followed up.

As paper 2’s methodology utilised action research, there has already been some action as a result of this research. The AP staff undertook training and resultantly took control of the research project to maximise its benefits to their setting, staff and pupils. They learnt about the skills needed and which staff members were best placed to conduct the MAP meetings, they embraced technological challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and identified benefits to using technology going forward. The AP staff also highlighted numerous future directions for themselves and the MAPS process (e.g. changing from the traditional meeting format to having a mixture of in-person and on-line attendees, training other staff members to facilitate meetings and understand the philosophy behind PCP).

**Impact of dissemination**

If the hypothetical strategy happened as outlined, the impact of research dissemination could be measured in a number of ways. There could be a range of in-house evaluation forms developed to measure the impact of presentations, training, case work or co-facilitated work from EPs and/or other stakeholders. Another way of assessing impact could be from monitoring requests for the educational psychology service’s delivery of, or training relating, to PCP. Any work that is delivered could be followed up at a later date to assess whether there had been any long-term impact, change(s) or developments related to PCP and the way outcomes and / or policy and procedures had been influenced. In relation to publishing the research findings, the impact could be monitored through the chosen academic journal’s metrics and through citations of the research paper.
References


https://doi:10.1097/PHH.0000000000000673

Department for Education & Department of Health. (2015). *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years. Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities.*


University of York (2021) *What is research impact?* https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/research/research-impact/impact-definition/


### Appendix A: Databases - systematic literature search terms and results.

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## Appendix B: Google Scholar - systematic literature search terms and results.

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Appendix C: University of Manchester qualitative evaluation framework.

D.Ed.Ch.Psychol. 2017
Review framework for qualitative evaluation/ investigation research

Author(s):

Title:

Journal Reference:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
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<td>categories/ themes and data.</td>
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<td>Negative case analysis, e.g. e.g. contrasts/ contradictions/ outliers within data; categories/ themes as dimensional; diversity of perspectives.</td>
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<td>Evidence of researcher-participant negotiation of meanings, e.g. member checking, empower participants.</td>
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Evidence of attention to ethical issues  
\textit{e.g.} presentation, sensitivity, minimising harm, feedback

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<td>Mean % agree</td>
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References


Appendix D: WoE D Weighting Criteria (adapted from Partington, 2016).

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<th>Judgement</th>
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<td><strong>WoE D: Overall Weight of Evidence</strong></td>
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| High      | ‘High’ in every WoE category  
or  
‘High’ in two WoE categories and ‘Medium’ in the third |
| Medium    | ‘Medium’ in all WoE categories  
or  
‘Medium’ in two categories and ‘High’ or ‘Low’ in the third  
or  
A ‘High’, ‘Medium’, ‘Low’ spread across all three WoE categories  
or  
‘Low’ in two categories and ‘High’ in the third  
or  
‘High’ in two categories and ‘Low’ in the third |
| Low       | ‘Low’ in all categories  
or  
‘Low’ in two categories and ‘Medium’ in the third |
Appendix E: Participants at each meeting & documentation presented

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<th>Initial meeting:</th>
<th>Staff meeting:</th>
<th>Literature dissemination meeting (Stage 7):</th>
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<tr>
<td>Headteacher, Deputy Head, Link EP, Researcher</td>
<td>Headteacher, Deputy head, Senior HLTA. Entire AP Staff team.</td>
<td>Head teacher, Deputy head teacher, Senior HLTA, Link EP, 4 x TAs</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<th>Training Session on MAPs:</th>
<th>Trial run 1:</th>
<th>Trial run 2:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head teacher, Deputy head teacher, Senior HLTA, Link EP, 4 x TAs</td>
<td>Deputy Head, Graphic facilitator (TA 1), pupil</td>
<td>Senior HLTA, Graphic facilitator, (TA 2), pupil</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trial run feedback meeting:</th>
<th>Focus Group 1</th>
<th>Focus Group 2</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Head teacher, Deputy head teacher, Senior HLTA, Link EP, 4 x TAs</td>
<td>Headteacher, Deputy head, Link EP, Researcher</td>
<td>Headteacher, Deputy head, Link EP, Researcher</td>
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PCP Meeting Document for Participants (Initial meeting and Staff meeting)

Person-Centred Practice: A brief overview

What is it?

“to be person-centred is to put the person in the middle of our thinking and get to know the person in fresh and vital ways that set the pattern for everything else we do in partnership with that person...Being person-centred isn't writing plans on paper. It's a complex interaction of investments and commitments that leads to real change in people’s lives”

(Mount, cited in O'Brien and Blessing, 2011, p26)

Person-centred practices originate from the health and social care sectors and are underpinned by person-centred therapy and positive psychology principles (e.g. people want to achieve, having empathy, being congruent and focusing on strengths and solutions). These practices developed to assist people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties in areas such as transition and independent living. Overtime, it was seen that these practices could be developed for use across other sectors.
In education, person-centred planning was integrated into legislation in the early 2000s and has taken the shape of person-centred tools such as one-page profiles, and individual education plans.

In more complex cases, where there may be numerous stakeholders involved, professionals may engage in one of the following four types of person-centred planning:

- Essential Lifestyle Planning (ELP)
- PATH
- MAP (Making Action Plans)
- Personal Futures Planning

**What does this mean for us?**

Despite having some benefits, the research base for each of the planning methods mentioned above is very limited. We would like to begin building on the current evidence base to find out what works and what doesn't work in relation to person-centred planning in different settings. The Engagement Centres would like to look at how MAP can be used with their pupils with, hopefully, some input from the mainstream schools about the work we produce.

**What does the research tell us?**

There are a number of reported benefits of using person-centred practices, including:

- students can improve (amongst other things) confidence, self-esteem, engagement and attendance rates
- the visual representations can be a useful tool for reminding people as well as engaging young people
- increased parental involvement and satisfaction
- meetings are more structured, collaborative and meaningful
- providing a deeper, more holistic view of the young person
- clear plans of action with accountability

However, as with most things, there are also some areas to work on! Research has shown that:

- unless staff and professionals are invested in the process, student participation can be tokenistic
- person-centred planning can become time consuming and needs to be planned for efficiently
- plans can be forgotten about and/or not implemented
- the overall impact of any plan can be limited due to insufficient time to explore and resolve deeper issues
A useful website that has lots of information about person-centred practices, planning and tools is: http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk. I recommend having a look to see the range of activities and work that is being undertaken.

Finally, if you would like to access the academic papers which I used to provide this (very) brief overview, please let me know and I will forward the links to you.

**Literature Dissemination Meeting Documents**

**Data Gathering information sheet:**

Based on our discussions and the nature of our research, I have provided an overview of some of the most frequently used qualitative data collection measures. These are by no means the only methods we could use and if you would like to propose any other method please feel free to do so. A google search using the terms “qualitative data collection” or “qualitative data gathering methods” will provide plenty of information and ideas or please see:


1. Interviews

These are usually carried out individually and are probably the oldest method of collecting qualitative data. We could do these in person, over the phone or via zoom/skype.

Interviews may be best carried out in person to allow for non-verbal clues to also be included in understanding and processing responses. However, we will need to consider social distancing, visitor policies etc. We could use any one of the following types of interview:

- **Structured:** this is where the questions are predetermined and those are the only questions that are answered, essentially a verbal questionnaire so not much flexibility.
- **Semi-structured:** some of the questions are predetermined but more as a framework from which to explore different issues that may arise
- **Unstructured:** there are no set questions but a clear idea of what we hope to achieve, this provides the most flexibility to the questions asked and what areas are, or are not, explored.

**Pros**

- Questions can be clarified – providing more understanding and accuracy
• Allows for in-depth exploration of subject
• Provides participants with the opportunity to give their personal opinion and insight
• First-hand, unique account of the topic being explored

Cons
• Can be time consuming if not managed properly
• Can be difficult to arrange an agreeable time with all participants
• Participants may provide answers they think are ‘wanted’ rather than what they truly think or feel

2. Observational data collection (only if lockdown measures permit)
This is where the researcher would be present during the research process making passive observations either as an observer or as a participant.

Data quality can be affected by researcher biases with this method because of pre-existing ideas, values and/or beliefs.

Pros
• Easy to set up and carry out
• Direct – no need to ask a lot of questions or follow up
• Can be used in various contexts

Cons
• Hard for any researcher to remain subjective and also their presence may impact the environment, interactions etc.
• Participant views can be dismissed
• Key data may be missed if participating in the process

3. Focus groups
Focus groups are exactly as they sound, a group of participants with a shared focus! They are comparable to interviews as questions can be set in a similar fashion. The researcher facilitates the group through use of questions, prompts and/or

Pros
• First-hand information that is rich in subjective experience
• Can be easier to setup than individual interviews
• Can be an effective way to balance out filter any obscure/extreme opinion
• Participants can ‘bounce’ off each other and memories/opinions can be recalled and adapted through mutual exploration

Cons
• Does require a skilled facilitator to ensure the focus of the research is addressed adequately
• Can be limited in terms of time/number of questions asked
• There is potential for people to be influenced by each other
• Some participants may not participate as much in a group as they would individually

4. Collecting and examining (e.g. diary)

This is not actually in the books I looked at, but I used this method in some previous research. I wonder if it could prove a useful way of accounting for personal thoughts, feelings and insights. This would involve keeping a record of your initial thoughts and feelings as you progress through the research and the stages involved.

Pros
  • First-hand, subjective data
  • Recorded immediately so more likely to be a true reflection
  • Can be used to document at each stage, providing more data about the entire process

Cons
  • Could be time consuming for participants
Appendix F: Examples of a completed MAP and its stages.
Appendix G: Extract from an E-mail regarding key outcomes of trial runs.

Following the trial runs, the views of participants were sought about the process. These views are summarised below.

**Thoughts**

- how do we frame positivity for parents/staff who really have a negative outlook/experiences - is the pre-meeting for 'venting' first to get to the positives? Potentially draining for staff though....
- consider the parents routine to try and increase participation and 'buy-in' to the process
- which stage would we like to involve mainstream school link person?
- if the pupil leaves out a key member of staff/professional - is there a way to feedback to them that the pupil will be happy with?
- location would have to be a choice between school settings/rooms unless staff wanted to travel to the home if the pupil chose that!
- is this a whole morning/afternoon event with breaks - considering fatigue, what is sufficient for a break or do we limit the meeting to 2 hours max. with breaks? Do we provide a break out space for people to sit and reflect on their own or do we split the group into 2 and have facilitators explore peoples thoughts to help shape the next stages?

**Agreed Actions/process:**

- Staff to create a checklist of entire process (this removes the need for a set timescale to be followed and increases flexibility for delivery - depending on pupil and parent(s)/carer(s) motivation, engagement etc.)
- Staff to produce a leaflet that helps parent(s)/carer(s) (and maybe a more child friendly version for pupils?) understand the process and purpose.
- Initiate a meeting with parent(s)/carer(s) to set out stages in more depth and detail what is expected of them - i.e. boundaries and positive focus.
- Preparation for thinking about the story (while we know parents/carers will have some personal input to this we need to remind them the focus is still the pupil), nightmare, who is the person, and gifts, strengths and talents stages (prompt sheets for values, metaphors.
- Pre-meeting with young person and graphic facilitator to help them prepare for the meeting by:
  - looking at headings and changing the heading/wording if necessary
  - designing the MAP layout based on pupil feedback
  - pre-filling some of the headings if appropriate
  - clarifying, If available, if the pupil would like refreshments, if so what kind?
  - identifying who the young person wants at the meeting? Where do they want the meeting to take place?
- Second person identified to be a scribe and provide written clarification of the discussion - this is to aid the facilitator and graphics facilitator during the breaks to include anything that may have been missed and to aid flow of the meeting (their presence will need to be explained to all stakeholders as may be more of a silent role during the actual meeting, unless the team feel it is more beneficial to have some feedback from the person before break maybe?)
• Include two breaks during the process for reflection and to make sure pertinent points are captured - we are suggesting at stage 3/4 and possibly after 6 or 7?
• copied and shared with pupil and staff at schools to refer to and update

**Considerations from your feedback**
- knowing the parent and young person before taking part is paramount - however, the level of 'readiness'/'knowing' can be judged by staff and may be more relevant to parental relations because the MAP with the pupil who only had 7 sessions still gave good info, so staff skillset may mitigate some of the timescales but how in-depth could they be with more established relations?
- knowing the pupil and family will guide how much scaffolding is needed based on pupil and parent ability

**Specific roles**
- Facilitator
  • pre-prepared prompts and questions for sessions where it may need some direction? e.g. "tell me the first thing you remember about your life", "is there anything you can think of that might involve other people", "is there anything you wouldn't want for your self as an adult".
  • being aware of impact on young person throughout the meeting and noticing when positives may be overwhelming and the need to divert/reassure/break etc.
  • keeping conversations going when stages have become difficult/inaccessible - e.g. can we avoid having questions for pupils who prefer a natural conversation over direct question (possibly acting as an advocate from pre-meeting work to assist the young person at these points)?

- Graphic facilitator
  • to have some manual notes from pre-meeting maybe?
  • to trial run completing a MAP prior to engaging
  • bullet points most effective way of recording? Need to balance speed with detail that will be easily referred to and remembered

- Second scribe
  • to effectively take minutes and reduce pressure on the other members who may need to remain in the moment
  • feedback at break points anything that may be missed or threads that may tie together/need more exploration (to group as a whole or to facilitators)

**Capturing pupil voice**
- do we want to use a Likert scale before they take part measuring confidence about the process and their aspirations/self-esteem/self-efficacy and then do a post follow-up? This would be in addition to a focus group/semi-structured interview process - for this research pupils will need to be able to partake in data collection so speech and language needs will have to be considered - if they are likely to impact participation and engagement with data collection it may mean they cannot partake

*And, finally* - we should be ready to roll out and begin with two pupils in early Sept' and one in early October 2020 (all being well with restrictions).
Appendix H: Questions and prompts sheet for focus group.

Focus Group Questions

- Can you tell me about how you set the MAP meeting up?
  - What was the thinking prior to starting the MAP? (People, process, materials, medium, i.e. video/ in vivo) Why did you select the particular young person and their situation for PCP?
  - How did things develop?
  - Did your understanding/knowledge change as a result of any pre-MAP work?

- How did the MAP meetings go? Consideration to be given to:
  - Structure
  - Engagement of participants
  - Timings
  - Was there anything particularly beneficial or unbeneﬁcial? If so, what and why?
  - How did you feel at the end? How easy had it been? What lessons for any next time? Would it be different with different participants/ young people?

- Were there any outcomes of the MAP meeting for any participants – either concrete outcomes or those as a by-product of the meeting? For example (maybe give one example of each?)
  - If so, what were they? If not, what do you think prevented any outcomes from occurring?
  - How do you know?
  - Can they be measured? How? Is it desirable to think about measuring outcomes or is teacher/ parent/ student feedback
  - Do you think a MAP can facilitate future change for children in school/ might it help engagement/ re-engagement?

- Was there any impact on the process due to COVID-19? If so, how did it impact the process and to what extent was it possible it overcome/how so? Were there actually some unanticipated benefits of the different circumstances?
  - Positives
  - Negatives
  - Videoing it maybe?

- Are there any plans to use MAPs in the future? If so, what are they and what ongoing support would be helpful?; if not, what are the reasons?
Appendix I: Examples of Thematic Analysis Stages

Stage 1: Generating initial codes

Stage 2: Searching for themes

Stage 3: Reviewing themes (example of a sample)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits of the MAP</th>
<th>The way we did it meant the process really considered the pupil before, during and after the meeting</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAP lets people get their worries out</td>
<td>Pupil choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAP process helping to unstick tricky situations</td>
<td>Reassuring the pupil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible – take MAP away to refer to</td>
<td>Learning what is important to the pupil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferable – MAP use</td>
<td>Pupil voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAP helps move things forward</td>
<td>Child-friendly language</td>
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<tr>
<td>Everyone gets time to speak</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAP as a positive meeting</td>
<td>Future directions and considerations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAP helps to unstick a situation</td>
<td>YP wants and needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A document to take away</td>
<td>Child friendly information sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A helpful tool</td>
<td>Gather pupil views to help set-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAP useful for all schools</td>
<td>Child at the centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing school haven't turned their back</td>
<td>Who does the YP want there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing useful information</td>
<td>Make it personal to the pupil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving professional's perceptions (of pupil)</td>
<td>Going through the action plan with the pupil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positives for family and YP to see</td>
<td>Consult with pupils about the set-up and their needs and wants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who are stuck</td>
<td>Child's preference for structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reframing negatives into positives</td>
<td>Checking with pupil that they're happy with what is recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positives – something to carry on (inc. EPS)</td>
<td>Checking back with the pupil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps shape the guidance from other people to help pupil</td>
<td>Consulting with the pupil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everybody saying something positive about pupil</td>
<td>Pupil choice – not too many people round the table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carers hearing positives</td>
<td>Pupil choice about setting up meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming unstuck</td>
<td>Give pupil options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil can go back to school but behaviours still there (unsticking things)</td>
<td>Key support for pupil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting an action plan together</td>
<td>MAPS identifying key people through pupil choice of who attends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where they want to go (MAP document shows this and how support to be given)</td>
<td>DURING - Info gatherings impact being present - not missing information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil opening up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pupil knowing it was going to be positive [due to pre-preparation]
Let participants know it is a positive meeting beforehand
Previous consultations have been problem focused
Staff positive experience of MAP
Seeing how useful it can be (staff being involved in the process)
Still useful even without some stakeholders (parents/school not attending but still produces a document of use)
Sometimes children can’t do it themselves (guidance from other people to make that difference and that move)
Purpose of the MAP (SOMETHING IN HERE ABOUT STAFF WANTING THE CHILD TO HAVE SOMETHING TO LEAVE WITH THAT EMPOWERS THEM)
Talents, strengths and values (gathering them prior)

Future: looking forward to another MAP
Future: providing clear examples/information would make it easier for schools
Future direction: would make it easier with remote and in-person
Improved by technology
Revisit after to add anything else
Logistics – resources to improve technology
Having family present – would it be a barrier or a facilitator though?
Common practice – adopt it as everybody back in a room - structure of meetings

Stage 4: Defining and naming themes (example)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits of the MAP</th>
<th>Preparation prior to the meeting was the key to success</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The MAP Structure is clear &amp; flexible</strong></td>
<td>Considerations for &amp; benefits of prior preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clear stages make it positive &amp; easier for the order &amp; process</td>
<td>• Prior preparation makes it more engaging for pupil by reducing the overall meeting time needed &amp; giving them insight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Being positive &amp; focused on action plans is helpful to achieving outcomes</td>
<td>• Letting everyone know it’s a positive process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can adjusting the structure to fit pupil &amp; setting needs &amp; preference</td>
<td>• Sending information out to schools &amp; getting quality information back in advance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The visuals may reduce literacy anxiety during the meeting</td>
<td>• Examples from school prior to the meeting were specific, more personal &amp; made an impressive, positive impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Helping to provide alternative views &amp; ways of working</strong></td>
<td>• Knowing the family’s responsibilities before the meeting is beneficial for running the meeting with consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• MAP process can assist with ‘unsticking’ tricky situations &amp; moving things forward</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improving professionals’ perceptions of pupil &amp; helping to ‘change the script’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- **Improving home-school relationships**

A supportive document to take away:

- A helpful framework that produces a tangible & transferable document
- The visual gives pupils something to refer to afterwards
- The MAP document shows the pupil's journey & helps shape how guidance from other people should be given

Gives people the space to talk openly

- Pupil opening up
- MAP lets people get their worries out & gives everyone chance to speak

Working together, information sharing & co-producing outcomes and action plans

- Collaboration – joint information sharing & building the bigger picture can help increase understanding of pupil needs (e.g. SEMH)
- Co-produced solutions & action plan – producing new strategies & outcomes to assist pupil based on information provided

Links with other initiatives

- MAP is flexible & links well to other initiatives & well-being

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAP as a positive meeting</th>
<th>Future directions &amp; considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive approach</td>
<td>Prior to the meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- MAP gives the chance to explore negatives but frames them positively</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- MAP is not about moaning at children or being problem focused; it focuses on talents, strengths &amp; values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- MAP providing a way to work with schools in a positive way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A chance to reaffirm positive comments and/or extending on them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- YP, family/carers hearing &amp; seeing positives from lots of different people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provide enough time, &amp; flexibility in the information gathering methods, for family/carers to provide their opinions &amp; views prior to the meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Getting to explore &amp; discuss the MAP process &amp; underpinnings prior to starting with pupils</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provided clarity for staff to understand requirements, identify resources, roles, think about approaches, when the right time to engage in the process would be etc. based on their setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail Runs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Preparing prompts, questions &amp; suggestions in advance to gather information/populate MAP stages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Helped to think about the structure &amp; what would work &amp; be beneficial for AP staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reduced the pressure for the actual meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Assisted staff with familiarisation of the process &amp; stages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Researching PCP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Getting to explore &amp; discuss the MAP process &amp; underpinnings prior to starting with pupils</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future directions &amp; considerations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior to the meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Staff need time for planning preparation - admin support to help?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Maintain the pre-meeting information gathering process, even if we go back to meeting in person but improve the clarity of pre-information sent out to mainstream schools &amp; family/carers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pointers – maybe prepare some small actions to go away with before meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The process is enjoyable &amp; useful</td>
<td>• Gather more pupil views to help with set-up (e.g. should some people attend virtually?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enjoyable, useful &amp; positive process for all staff – looking forward to doing more</td>
<td>• Extend &amp; improving MAP use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Still useful even without some stakeholders being present at the meeting</td>
<td>• Should be adopted as common practice &amp; could be completed with all pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Something to carry on (inc. EPS)</td>
<td>• How to use a MAP with primary school pupils in the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive for the pupil, mainstream school &amp; any future providers</td>
<td>• Improve technological equipment &amp; more preparation with it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupil having previous exclusion meetings &amp; realising MAP process is more positive which encouraged more engagement</td>
<td>• A combination of ‘remote’ &amp; ‘in-person’ attendance may make it easier to facilitate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The MAP means pupils can move to different schools with positives &amp; strengths highlighted</td>
<td>• Having family members present to support pupil would make it a different experience (positive or negative?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mainstreams engaging, being proactive &amp; sending positive comments showed the pupil &amp; their family that they haven’t turned their back</td>
<td>• The more AP staff do it the more familiar mainstreams become too</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the meeting</td>
<td>• Rolling it out to wider schools within the authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It would be beneficial to be able to follow it up &amp; see how the MAP was used &amp; if it helped at school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Embed the opportunity for pupil, &amp; maybe other people, to revisit it after to add anything they remembered after</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix J: Ethical clearance.

This approval is effective for a period of five years and is subject to the authority of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) however please note that it is only valid for the specifications of the research project as outlined in the approved documentation set. If the project continues beyond the 5 year period or if you wish to propose any changes to the methodology or any other specifics within the project an application to seek an amendment must be submitted for review. Failure to do so could invalidate the insurance and constitute research misconduct.

You are reminded that in accordance with University policy, any data carrying personal identifiers must be encrypted when not held on a secure university computer or kept secretly in a location which is accessible only to those involved with the research.

For those undertaking research requiring a DBS Certificate. As you have now completed your ethical application if required a colleague at the University of Manchester will be in touch for you to undertake a DBS check. Please note that you do not have DBS approval until you have received a DBS Certificate completed by the University of Manchester, or you are an MA Teach First student who holds a DBS certificate for your current teaching role.

Reporting Requirements:

You are required to report the following:

1. Amendments: Guidance on what constitutes an amendment
2. Amendments: How to submit an amendment in the EORS system
3. Ethics reviews and advice events
4. Data breaches

We wish you every success with the research.
Appendix K: Participant information sheet.

Pupil and Parent Information Sheet (PPIS)

Hello, my name is Anthony and I am an Educational Psychologist in Training at The University of Manchester. The staff at the **** have agreed to help me do some research as part of my course and they think you might enjoy taking part in the research. The research is about something called ‘person-centred planning’, which basically means that the adults around you and your child will listen to what you want and to what you think is best for the future and then try to make a plan that could help those goals become more achievable.

Before you decide whether to take part in this research, it is important for you to understand why the research is happening and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully before deciding whether to take part and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

About the research

➢ Who will conduct the research?

Anthony Gray (Educational Psychologist in Training) from The University of Manchester’s Institute of Education.

➢ What is the purpose of the research?

To see if person-centred practices can be developed to support pupil engagement.

➢ Will the outcomes of the research be published?

The research is being undertaken as part of my training as an educational psychologist and will be written up with the aim to publish the findings. This means the findings may be read by other people who are interested in person-centred planning. You will be told about the research findings, and any publication, if you want to be kept updated. Your name will not be used in the final report unless you want it to be. If you want your name to be mentioned in any publications please let me know.

➢ Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check

I have been subject to an enhanced level DBS check. If further details are needed please let me know and these can be provided.

Who is funding the research project?

The Department for Education
What would my involvement be?

➢ What would I be asked to do if I took part?

The **** staff have decided that they would like to use a MAP, which is a person-centred planning tool, to help identify areas in your life that you can talk about and they can learn more about to support you. You can read more about MAP on the information sheet that the teachers will give you.

During your time at the **** you and your teachers will begin to think about how a MAP can be used to make sure the adults around you are doing the right things to help. You will then be required to take part in a meeting with key adults, which could last anywhere between 1 to 3 hours depending on what you all feel comfortable with. However, due to the current lockdown you may be invited to take part in a video call instead of a meeting. We will know closer to the time of carrying out the research which method we will use and you will be prepared for the process well in advance.

As part of my research I must gather evidence of how successful the person-centred planning has been and what we found out. That means I would also need you to take part in an interview after the MAP has been completed. These interviews would be audio-recorded and I may also ask your permission to use copies of any other materials produced during the research (e.g. a copy of the MAP). Your information would be anonymised during the write up and when the audio-recordings are typed up. You will be allowed to look at the research findings to make sure what I have said is accurate and fair.

If you would like, there can be a follow up video call/meeting that outlines findings of the research – this can be decided later. If you have any questions outside of the agreed meeting/video calling times, I can be contacted via email and phone calls can be arranged to provide extra support and/or guidance.

➢ What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you do not want to take part then please ignore this sheet and you do not need to do anything else.

If you decide to take part you are free to stop at any time without giving a reason and without any consequences. However, it will not be possible to remove your data from the project once it has been anonymised as we will not be able to identify your specific data. This does not affect your data protection rights.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

➢ What information will you collect about me?

If you participate in this research project we will need to collect information that could identify you, called “personal identifiable information”. Specifically, we will need to collect:

➢ Your name and signature on the consent forms – the paper copies will be scanned and digitally stored until September 2021, after which time they will be destroyed. The paper copies, once scanned, will be destroyed in line with The University of Manchester’s confidential information process.
➢ Your voice during the data gathering process

➢ Under what legal basis are you collecting this information?

We are collecting and storing this personal identifiable information in accordance with data protection law which protect your rights. These state that we must have a legal basis (specific reason) for collecting your data. For this study, the specific reason is that it is “a public interest task” and “a process necessary for research purposes”.

➢ What are my rights in relation to the information you will collect about me?

You have a number of rights under data protection law regarding your personal information. For example you can request a copy of the information we hold about you.

If you would like to know more about your different rights or the way we use your personal information to ensure we follow the law, please consult our Privacy Notice for Research. If you are not using this information sheet electronically, a copy of the Privacy Notice can be found at: http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=37095

➢ Will my participation in the study be confidential and my personal identifiable information be protected?

In accordance with data protection law, The University of Manchester is the Data Controller for this project. This means that we are responsible for making sure your personal information is kept secure, confidential and used only in the way you have been told it will be used. All researchers are trained with this in mind, and your data will be looked after in the following way:

- all data will be fully anonymised

- audio recordings will be typed up by a university-approved transcriber. Data will be sent to the transcriber in password protected files using the university’s secure network. The password to open the files will be sent in a separate email. The transcriber will send the files back, password protected, where they will then be stored onto the university’s secure network until September 2021

- the research findings may be published and/or referenced in future research but data will be non-identifiable

- consent forms will be scanned onto The University of Manchester’s secure network until September 2021 in a password protected file, after which time it will be destroyed. The hard copies will be destroyed by The University of Manchester in line with their policies and procedures

- the researcher has committed to destroy your consent forms in September 2021 as this is when their course will end

Potential disclosures:
If, during the study, you disclose information about misconduct/poor practice, I have an obligation to report this and will therefore need to let the relevant people know.

If, during the study, you disclose information about any current or future illegal activities, I have an obligation to report this and will need to inform the relevant authorities.

Please also note that individuals from The University of Manchester or regulatory authorities may need to look at the data collected for this study to make sure the project is being carried out as planned. This may involve looking at identifiable data. All individuals involved in auditing and monitoring the study will have a strict duty of confidentiality to you as a research participant.

**What if I have a complaint?**

If you have a complaint that you wish to direct to members of the research team, please contact:

Kevin Woods
Kevin***@********** or 0161 ********

If you wish to make a formal complaint to someone independent of the research team or if you are not satisfied with the response you have gained from the researchers in the first instance then please contact

******** by emailing: research****@********** or by telephoning 0161 **********.

If you wish to contact us about your data protection rights, please email data****@********** or write to ********** at the University and we will guide you through the process of exercising your rights.

You also have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner’s Office about complaints relating to your personal identifiable information (https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/) or telephone: 0303 123 1113

**Contact Details**

If you have any queries about the study or if you are interested in taking part then please contact the researcher(s):

ANTHONY GRAY
anthony.gray@**********

or

Please leave a message with the faculty admin team: 0161 **********
Appendix L: Consent form.

Person-Centred Planning Within an Alternative Provision

Participant Consent Form
If you are happy to participate please complete and sign the consent form below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Initials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet (version 3, 26\textsuperscript{th} March 2020) for the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to myself. I understand that it will not be possible to remove my data from the project once it has been anonymised and forms part of the data set.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I agree to take part on this basis.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I agree to being audio recorded (if necessary).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books, reports or journals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I understand that data collected during the study may be looked at by individuals from The University of Manchester or regulatory authorities, where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my data.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I agree that the researchers may retain my contact details in order to provide me with a summary of the findings for this study.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I understand that there may be instances where, during the course of the research, information is revealed which means that the researcher will be obliged to break confidentiality and this has been explained in more detail in the information sheet.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I agree to take part in this study.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Protection
The personal information we collect and use to conduct this research will be processed in accordance with data protection law as explained in the Participant Information Sheet and the Privacy Notice for Research Participants. If you cannot access the hyperlink, a copy of the Privacy Notice can be found at - http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=37095

________________________            ________________________
Name of Participant                Signature                        Date

________________________            ________________________
Name of the person taking consent   Signature                        Date

[1 copy for the participant and 1 copy for the research team]