An Exploration of Educational Psychology Support for Children at Risk of School Exclusion

A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree of Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology (DEdChPsychol) in the Faculty of Humanities

2013

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Abstract

The University of Manchester
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Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology
An Exploration of Educational Psychology Support for Children at Risk of School Exclusion
2013

Children or young people with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) are at an increased risk of school exclusion (Hayden, 1997). The support provided through educational psychologists’ engagement in preventative and reactive approaches at the individual, group and systems level for children or young people with SEBDs at risk of school exclusion, is presented in existing research (Clarke & Jenner, 2006; Hardman, 2001; O’Brien & Miller, 2005; Thorne & Ivens, 1999). The studies are, however, limited in providing transferable knowledge into educational psychologists’ practice and accounting for individual level support for crisis management situations for children or young people, at immediate risk of school exclusion. The studies are limited in exploring effective strategies and methods employed by a Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD)\(^1\) and the distinctive contribution of Specialist Educational Psychologists’ (SEBD) support.

In the present study, a Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD) from an Independent Educational Psychology Service was identified to take part in the study. The Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist\(^1\) identified two casework examples of positive practice, whereby her input led to positive outcomes for the children with SEBD, at risk of permanent school exclusion. An in-depth single case study design was utilised to explore the strategies and methods employed by the Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist and her unique contribution from the Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist’s perspective and from the perspectives of the school professionals and parents involved in the two caseworks. Semi-structured interviews were used as a data gathering method and were analysed using Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phased model of thematic analysis. An Integrated Thematic Map was produced made up of Seven Organising Themes. A content analysis was completed on documentary evidence of the Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist’s action plans and was triangulated with aspects of the findings from the thematic analysis.

The effective strategies and methods applied by the Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist and the distinctive contribution of her support are described. The study provides ‘new’ and ‘confirmed’ insights into effective practice that aims to contribute to the skill set and knowledge of practitioner educational psychologists and through which, strengthen the support provided to schools for children or young people with SEBD, at risk of permanent school exclusion. The findings also provide insight to the distinctive role of the educational psychologist in effective specialist support and the specialist role within the profession. The insight is considered important in light of the current changes occurring within the profession and the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Review (DfE, 2011a; DfE, 2012a).

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\(^{1}\)Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD) denotes Specialist Educational Psychologist in Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.

Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist denotes the Specialist Educational Psychologist in Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties in the present study.
Declaration

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Abbreviations for the Specialist Educational Psychologist(s)

The following abbreviations are used when referring to the Specialist Educational Psychologist in the present study and ‘other’ Specialist Educational Psychologists.

- The abbreviation ‘Specialist EP’ is used to refer to an Educational Psychologist who may have a specialist role. The abbreviation is used in Chapter 1: Introduction, Chapter 2: Literature Review and Chapter 5: Discussion.

- The abbreviation ‘Specialist EP (SEBD)’ is used to refer to an Educational Psychologist who is a specialist in SEBD. The abbreviation is used in Chapter 1: Introduction, Chapter 2: Literature Review, Chapter 3: Methodology, Chapter 4: Findings and Chapter 5: Discussion.

- The abbreviation ‘Participant Specialist EP’ is used to refer to the Educational Psychologist who is a specialist in SEBD in the present study. The abbreviation is used in Chapter 1: Introduction, Chapter 3: Methodology, Chapter 4: Findings and Chapter 5: Discussion.

- The abbreviation ‘SEP’ (Specialist Educational Psychologist) is used in Chapter 4: Findings in the text, in the figures and in the tables to refer to the Participant Specialist EP. This alternative, more simplified version has been used to make the section easier in reading.
Acknowledgement

Firstly, I would like to thank the participants of the present study for your time and detailed accounts of your experiences and opinions as, without these, this study would not exist. I am particularly grateful for your extended reflections and explanations as these have proven to be more insightful than I dared hoped for when I first proposed the research questions. Thank you.

I would like to thank Professor Kevin Woods for your guidance, support and time. In particular, I would like to thank you for the thought provoking conversations we have had during our supervision meetings. These conversations have supported me not only in the production of this thesis, but beyond and into my professional practice. Thank you.

I would like to thank my mum and dad, Elaine and Gerry and my sister, Shell, for all knowing in your own way how to support me. For mum, I thank you for your love and words of support, your streams of printing and countless hours of proof reading. For dad, I also thank you for your love and words of support as well as your ‘contact calls’ to see how I am doing. For Shell, I thank you for your love and support and for giving me something else to think and talk about, which has supported me more than you realise.

Finally, to my husband, Mike, I would like to thank you for your unconditional love and support that has made this journey so much easier. I will always be so grateful for having you and thank you for everything you do for me. In particular, thank you for creating me a garden that has been my haven through the hardest days of writing this thesis and has also never failed to give me the most relaxing occasional days off!

Thank you all, Jen.
Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Context of the Research
The findings presented in this thesis form part of the author’s professional training as an Educational Psychologist (EP) and the completion of a Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology (DEdChPsychol) at The University of Manchester. The present study took place within an Independent Educational Psychology Service (IEPS) where the author was working as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP).

The IEPS was set up in 2010 by the Participant Specialist EP who took part in the current study. Over the three years of practice and at the time of writing, the IEPS had expanded its portfolio to include 70 educational settings, of which, 63 were mainstream primary schools and seven were mainstream secondary schools. The work that the schools commissioned from the IEPS was the same as that commissioned from other Educational Psychology Services (EPS), inside or outside of Local Authority (LA) control. At the time of the research, the Participant Specialist EP had been practising as an EP for 17 years and had worked for a LA for 14 years before setting up the IEPS. The Participant Specialist EP had developed her specialism in Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) over the course of her professional career. The Participant Specialist EP had developed a successful way of supporting Children or Young People (CYP) with SEBD at risk of school exclusion, as described in the current study, during her time working for a LA.

The present study aims to establish what strategies and methods are effectively employed by a Specialist EP (SEBD) and the distinctive contribution of a Specialist EP’s (SEBD) support. The findings aim to contribute to the skill set and knowledge of practitioner EP colleagues and, through which, strengthen the support provided to schools for CYP with SEBD and to help prevent school exclusions. The present study aims to benefit the EP profession itself by
evaluating the distinctive contribution of EPs and the specialist SEBD role within the profession. The evaluation is considered important in light of the current changes occurring within the profession and the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Review (DfE, 2011a; DfE, 2012a). The study also has specific relevance to the IEPS within which the research was conducted, as a large proportion of commissioned work is in supporting schools with CYP with challenging behaviour. In response to the high number of referrals, the IEPS is set to extend and strengthen the support provided to schools. The benefits of this research to the IEPS are to develop the EPs’ skills who work in the IEPS, to strengthen the support provided to schools in crisis management situations and, as a result, increase the positive outcomes for the CYP who receive support from the IEPS. As a result of the findings, considerations will be made in relation to the induction process for EPs into the IEPS and the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of the current EPs.

1.2 Rationale and Research Gaps
It has been consistently reported that CYP with SEBD are at an increased risk of school exclusion (Hayden, 1997) and that school exclusions can have a further damaging effect on the individual and society as a whole (Brown, 2007; Theriot, Craun & Dupper, 2010). The emphasis on schools’ needs to engage in preventative measures and positive alternatives to exclusion can be seen in the extensive Government legislative, guidance documents and national strategies that have been produced to tackle behaviour and discipline in schools (DCFS, 2008a; DCSF, 2008b; DCSF, 2009; DfES, 2005a; DfES, 2005b). In addition, there are a number of specialist support services offered to schools by the LA and other services that aim to develop schools’ capacities for inclusion of CYP with SEBD. The support services are delivered to schools through the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice’s (SENCoP) graduated process (at the Action Plus stage); through multi-agency teams such as the Behaviour and Education Support Team (BEST); through projects such as the Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TaMHS) programme; or
through out of school services such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) (DCSF, 2008b; Hartnell, 2010). The EPS is one professional service that is called upon to offer support to schools and parents/guardians for CYP with SEBD at risk of school exclusion (Hardman, 2001).

Within the field of educational psychology, it is considered that EPs apply psychological skills, knowledge and understanding through consultation, assessment, intervention, research and training to promote the development of CYP aged 0 to 24 (Cameron, 2006; DfE, 2011a). Although some EPs have specialisms, little is known about the Specialist EP’s role generally (Dennis, 2003). However, it is considered important to understand how Specialist EPs (SEBD) work to support positive outcomes for CYP at risk of school exclusion. To support CYP with SEBD at risk of school exclusion, research has explored EPs’ engagement in preventative and reactive approaches at the individual, group and system level (Clarke & Jenner, 2006; Hardman, 2001; O’Brien & Miller, 2005; Thorne & Ivens, 1999).

At the individual level, EPs have been found to use assessment, consultation and intervention, and work as part of multi-agency teams. Educational Psychologists’ (EP) assessments of SEBDs have been criticised for lacking objectivity (Rees, Farell & Rees, 2003), leading to least favourable outcomes occurring for CYP (Farrell, Harraghy & Petrie, 1996). Although the research is limited, EPs have been found to use consultation during their work with CYP with SEBDs and, through which, have been seen to contain teachers’ feelings and raise their awareness of pupils’ needs (Gross & McChrystal, 2001; Hartnell, 2010; O’Brien & Miller, 2005). Positive outcomes have been reported through EPs’ application of psychological theory through interventions to support individual CYP with SEBD (Hardman, 2001; Smith & Cooke, 2000; Thorne & Ivens, 1999). The use of Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) has been found to have a positive impact on a pupil’s self-awareness (Hardman, 2001). Successful outcomes have been found following EPs’ use of Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) (Thorne & Ivens, 1999) and following the
implementation of the ‘Circle of Friends’ approach (Smith and Cooke, 2000). The studies are limited in providing transferable knowledge into EP practice. They are limited in providing detailed accounts of the EPs’ direct contribution to the successful outcomes. Current available research lacks clarity on how EPs’ support may differ depending upon the severity of a Child or Young Person’s (CYP) situation and level of associated risk of exclusion. Since EPs are called upon in crisis situations, there will always be complex casework for CYP at risk of exclusion. At the individual level it is considered to be beneficial to provide a more comprehensive exploration of how Specialist EPs (SEBD) support positive outcomes for CYP with SEBD.

At the group level, interventions used by EPs with groups of CYP have proven successful at increasing pupils’ social skills, decreasing their acting out behaviour and risk of exclusion, (Burton, 2006; Clarke & Jenner, 2006). At the group level intervention with teachers, EPs’ support has been found to positively impact classroom practice and pupils’ behaviour (Hayes, Hindle & Withington, 2007). The studies are, however, limited in their use of subjective post intervention measures and in explaining what role the EP had in the intervention.

At the system level, positive outcomes have been reported from EPs’ involvement in supporting schools’ inclusive practice for CYP with SEBD from an ecological perspective and early intervention level (Clarke & Jenner, 2006). The research is, however, limited in describing the strategies applied by the EPs and how they are evaluated.

In comparison to the individual level, EP involvement at the group and system level for CYP with SEBD at risk of exclusion, are considered to be more supportive of early intervention and preventative approaches, rather crisis management support and reactive approaches. Current research, therefore, indicates that EPs’ work within the area of SEBD supports positive outcomes for CYP at risk of exclusion, but there are a number of limitations in current research and research gaps in exploring effective strategies and methods employed by Specialist EPs.
(SEBD) for individual CYP at immediate risk of school exclusion and what is considered to be the Specialist EP’s (SEBD) distinctive contribution. The current study aims to address these research gaps by asking the following research questions:

**RQ1:** What strategies and methods did a Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD) use in effective specialist work to support Children or Young People with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, at risk of school exclusion?

**RQ2:** What was considered to be the distinctive contribution of the Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD) in effective specialist work to support Children or Young People with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, at risk of school exclusion?

### 1.3 Overview of the Thesis

The thesis comprises four main chapters; Literature Review, Methodology, Findings and Discussion, followed by the references and appendices. The global structure of each section is described below (see Sections 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.3 and 1.3.4 below for more information).

#### 1.3.1 Literature review.

The literature review chapter begins with a discussion on the definition, causes and assessment of SEBDs, followed by a discussion on the Government legislation, guidance documents and national strategies to support school based interventions for behaviour. Literature on school exclusion and the impacts and causes of school exclusion is then discussed. The role and support provided by EPS in the UK is then described, followed by a discussion on the role of the EP within behaviour support. Literature on the specialist role and distinctive role of the EP within behaviour is presented. The section goes on to critically evaluate the research on the successful outcomes of EPs’ support for CYP with SEBD at the individual, group and system level. The
chapter concludes with a summary of the literature review, the knowledge gaps, the aims and research questions of the current study.

1.3.2 Methodology.
The methodology chapter begins by describing the rationale of the study and research questions. The chapter then describes the philosophical position of the research and describes the single in-depth case study design, the data access (including a background to the case study and caseworks), data collection and data analysis. The rationale and outcome of the use of inter-coder validation is described, followed by a description of the trustworthiness and transferability of the study’s data collection and data analysis. The chapter concludes with a description of the operational risk analysis and ethics.

1.3.3 Findings.
The findings chapter provides a detailed description of the findings from the thematic analysis and content analysis. The findings from the thematic analysis determine the main content of the findings. The thematic analysis is presented as an integrated whole within an Integrated Thematic Map, made up of seven Organising Themes and returning to each research question in the discussion chapter. The Integrated Thematic Map is firstly explained, followed by an individual exploration of each Organising Theme. Illustrations are presented from quotations in the data in a tabled format. The content analysis is described within Organising Theme 1. A summary of the findings concludes the chapter.

1.3.4 Discussion.
The discussion chapter examines the findings from the thematic analysis and content analysis and is separated into four sections. The first section provides an overview of the gaps in current literature, followed by a summary of the findings in relation to each research question. The second section looks at the implications for further research and the limitations of the present
study. The third section describes the theoretical implications of the findings and discusses how the findings have contributed to knowledge on the management of SEBDs and the role of the EP in effective support for CYP with SEBD, at risk of school exclusion. The fourth and final section describes the implications of the findings for practice. The section discusses the importance of providing flexible support for inclusion of CYP with SEBD and how the research findings inform the field on the role of the specialist in educational psychology practice.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Outline structure of the literature review.
The literature review comprises five main sections. The first section looks at the definition, causes and assessment of Social Emotional Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD). The section explores the definition provided within literature, in relation to the current Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (SENCoP) (DfES, 2001a) and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (DfES, 2005c). The section discusses the ambiguity and contradictions amongst the definitions and explores how SEBD is constructed within society and educational policy. The causes of SEBD are discussed in relation to home, school and individual factors, whilst the identification and assessment is discussed in relation to the current SENCoP (DfES, 2001a) and within literature.

The second section looks at Government legislation to ensure good behaviour and discipline in school, guidance documents and national strategies to support school based interventions for behaviour. The third section looks at school exclusion and discusses a school’s legal right to exclude and the impacts and causes of school exclusion. This section concludes by exploring the debates and contradictions on exclusion and the need for specialist teams to support schools to prevent school exclusions.

The fourth section explores the support provided by Educational Psychology Services (EPS) in the UK. The origin and current role of the Educational Psychologist (EP) is discussed, followed by a discussion on the role of the EP within behaviour support. A discussion on the specialist role and distinctive role of the EP within behaviour is then presented. The section goes on to critically evaluate the research on the successful outcomes of EPs’ support for Children or Young People (CYP) with SEBD at the individual, group and system level. The section covers
EPs’ use of assessment, consultation and intervention, at the individual level, to prevent school exclusions. Considering the research, an argument for the importance of individual casework and individual level interventions for CYP, at high risk of permanent exclusion, is then provided. Concluding the section, a discussion on EPs’ use of interventions at the group and system level is presented. The fifth and final section provides a summary of the literature review and discusses the knowledge gaps, the aims and research questions of the current study.

2.1.2 Review strategy.
The research papers within the literature review were sourced between October 2011 and December 2013 during several searches across a number of databases, including Psychology: A Sage Full-Text Collection, Web of Science, Science Direct, British Educational Index; Education: A Sage Full-Text Collection; PsycINFO: Ovid online and Education Resources Information Centre. Search terminology included ‘Social Emotional Behaviour Difficulty,’ ‘Emotional, Behavioural Difficulty,’ ‘Conduct Disorder,’ ‘Special Educational Needs,’ ‘Primary School,’ ‘Secondary School,’ ‘Inclusion,’ ‘School Exclusion,’ ‘Educational Psychologist,’ ‘Assessment’ and ‘Intervention.’ The Department for Education website was used to source independent reports and reviews, educational policies, Education Acts and practice guidance on behaviour and attendance, school exclusion, emotional health and wellbeing, and Special Educational Needs (SEN).

2.2 Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

2.2.1 Defining social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
Although the term SEBD has been present in Government legislation and policy documents since the 1990s (Cooper, 1993; Jones, 2003), there is no one agreed definition of SEBD. Instead, working definitions are provided by the continuum framework (Cooper, 1993; Miller, 2003), the current SENCoP (DfES, 2001a), the newly drafted SENCoP (DFE, 2013a) and under the DDA (DfES, 2005c). A number of abbreviations are used in the literature to describe a Child or Young
Person’s (CYP) difficulties in their social, emotional and behavioural development. Abbreviations are inclusive of Emotional, Behavioural Difficulty (EBD); Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulty (BESD); and Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulty (SEBD). For the purpose of this paper the term ‘SEBD’ will account for all other abbreviations to refer to difficulties associated with social, emotional and behavioural development.

The definition of SEBD provided by the continuum framework describes a continuum of severity that spans three ‘types’ of difficulty (Cooper, 1993; Miller, 2003). The first type is at one end of the spectrum and encompasses CYP who are experiencing some emotional distress, within the normal bounds expected in response to their age and a recent stressful event (Cooper, 1993). The disturbance is expected to be short in duration so long as emotional support is provided. The second type is in the middle of the spectrum and defines those who are experiencing SEBD. It includes CYP defined as having severe and persistent difficulties in demonstrating socially acceptable behaviour, which may constitute a learning difficulty (Miller, 2003) and require appropriate assessment and intervention within an educational context. The third type is at the far end of the spectrum and encompasses CYP with severe mental health difficulties of a psychiatric nature, which may require support beyond that provided within school (Miller, 2003).

The current SENCoP (DfES, 2001a) provides a definition of SEBD and explains how SEBD is classified as a SEN. The current SENCoP states that CYP who demonstrate features of SEBD “are withdrawn or isolated, disruptive and disturbing, hyperactive and lack concentration” (DfES, 2001a, p.87). Difficulties that constitute SEN are dependent on their nature, severity, persistence and abnormality of the difficulties and their cumulative effect on pupils’ behaviour and/or emotional wellbeing (DCSF, 2008a). Difficulties are also dependent on the barriers they cause to learning despite the implementation of school strategies, interventions and a behaviour policy. A CYP’s behavioural, social or emotional difficulties may be the causal factor creating a barrier to their
learning or CYP may have an underlining learning difficulty and unmet SEN that leads to emotional and behavioural difficulties in the classroom (DCSF, 2008a; DfES, 2001a). The term SEBD may cover a range of ability and SEN. Children or Young People (CYP) may have hyperkinetic disorders, conduct disorders and/or emotional disorders although no clinical diagnosis is required to be identified as having SEBD (DfES, 2001a). Under the ‘newly’ drafted SENCoP (DFE, 2013a), CYP with SEBD could be classified under the ‘social, mental and emotional health’ broad area of SEN. The draft SENCoP (DFE, 2013a) continues to recognise that consistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviours could be indicative of an unmet SEN. There is also a renewed emphasis on the wide range of mental health problems that may manifest into SEBD, such as conduct disorders, substance abuse, eating disorders, attachment disorders, anxiety disorders, autism or pervasive developmental disorder and schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. It is considered that CYP with social, mental and emotional difficulties may require special educational provision provided through pastoral support in school and/or through specialist external services (DEF, 2013).

The numbers of pupils identified as having SEBD as a SEN have increased by 23 per cent between 2005 and 2011 (DfE, 2011a). Most recent statistics show that 40 per cent of the population of CYP with SEBD are identified as having SEN, of which 14 per cent have a statement of SEN, whereby SEBD is their primary need (DfE, 2011a). There are higher rates of SEBD in socially deprived areas amongst boys, Black Caribbean pupils, Mixed White/Black Caribbean pupils and travellers of Irish Heritage and Gypsy/Roma background (Clegg, Stackhouse, Finch, Murphy & Nicholls, 2009; Cooper, 1993).

Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) may be defined under the DDA (DfES, 2005c). Children or Young People (CYP) with SEBD may, therefore, be considered to have a disability and be protected against discrimination within the educational setting. The DDA provides a broad definition of disability as either “a physical or mental impairment which has a
substantial and long term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities” (DfES, 2005c, p.3). Impairments are inclusive of sensory, physical, learning, developmental or mental health. Mental impairments are defined as emotional disorders, conduct disorders, hyperkinetic disorders, attachment disorders, eating habit disorders, post-traumatic stress syndromes, somatic disorders and psychotic disorders. For CYP with SEBD, they may fit into the categories of learning difficulties and/or mental health conditions unless their difficulties are comorbid. The percentage of CYP with SEBD as a disability is not documented (DfES, 2005c).

There is an overlap between disabled CYP and those with SEN. It is considered that three quarters of disabled CYP have SEN (DfE, 2011a) and even though the SENCoP and DDA have different purposes, they merge to provide duties for schools to protect disabled pupils and prevent discrimination against them in school (DfES, 2005c).

2.2.1.1 The difficulties in defining social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Even though working definitions for SEBD have been provided by the continuum framework (Cooper, 1993; Miller, 2003), the current SENCoP (DFES, 2001a), the newly drafted SENCoP (DFE, 2013a) and under the DDA (DFES, 2005c), since the introduction of the term in the 1990s and movement away from the notion of maladaptive behaviour, the definition of SEBD continues to be debated within literature.

The difficulties in defining social and emotional skills impacts upon the ability to describe their associated difficulties (Wigelsworth, Humphrey, Kalambouka & Lendrum, 2010). Wigelsworth et al. (2010) highlight the controversies and inconsistencies in defining social and emotional skills. One difficulty was described in relation to the variety of terms provided and the inconsistencies in their ability to describe the same phenomenon.

While the continuum of severity in emotion disturbance provides a framework for defining SEBD, the definition remains ambiguous and left up to the interpretation of the individual. At
one end of the continuum, where CYP’s emotional disturbance would be classified as normal, it is unclear in practice precisely what is meant by ‘some emotional distress,’ that is ‘short in duration’ and as long as CYP have access to ‘emotional support.’ At what point does ‘some’ emotional distress and length of duration become ‘enough’ to cause a greater concern and what constitutes emotional support? In the middle of the continuum, the ambiguity encompasses defining what is meant by severity, persistence and frequency. The definition also defines CYP’s difficulties in demonstrating ‘socially acceptable behaviour’, but it is unclear if this accounts for both externalising and internalising behaviours, while the concept of ‘acceptable behaviour’ itself is ambiguous as it is a social construct.

At the far end of the spectrum, where CYP with severe mental health difficulties are not defined as having SEBD, but instead classified under mental health, is contradictory to the definition of SEBD under the current SENCoP (DFES, 2001a), the newly drafted SENCoP (DFE, 2013a) and the DDA (DFES, 2005c). According to the current SENCoP and DDA, SEBD encompasses a number of mental health difficulties that are judged on their severity and persistence including hyperkinetic disorders, attachment disorders and eating disorders. The definition of severity is unclear and at what point the mental health difficulty is severe enough to be classified under the current SENCoP and DDA as an SEBD, in that SEN provision is required or is too severe not to be classified as an SEBD, but rather is solely considered within mental health. Under the ‘newly’ drafted SENCoP (DFE, 2013a), the renewed emphasis on mental health problems (as a broad area of SEN linked to social and emotional difficulties) and the joining up of education, health and social care services through a single assessment process, adds further confusion to the continuum framework. Children or Young People (CYP) with severe mental health difficulties may no longer be defined as too severe to be defined as having a SEBD, but instead, may continue to be classified under the SENCoP and receive specialist joined up provision through the education and mental health service.
One of the reasons why it is difficult to create a definitive definition of SEBD is that the notions of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour are social constructs (Cooper, 1993; Jones, 2003) and context dependent (Jones, 2003). There is no objective and measurable reality of SEBD (Cooper, 1993). It is difficult to discern the main cause or causal factors as to why CYP display SEBD (Farrell, 1995; Hartnell, 2010; Sutoris, 2000) and SEBD covers such a wide spectrum of difficulties that there are no clear descriptions of behavioural symptoms. The perception on what is classified as acceptable and normal behaviour varies between individuals and cultures (Cooper, 1993; Jones, 2003) and is influenced by subjective inferences and attitudes formed from personal experiences as children, parents/guardians, professionals and members of society (Jones, 2003). In addition, the lack of legislative need for a clinical diagnosis to label a CYP as having an SEBD, further increases the likelihood of subjective interpretation amongst professions. Definitions of acceptable behaviour, therefore, vary amongst individual schools and professionals. A child may be labelled as having SEBD in one environment or by one person, but not in a different environment or by a different person (Farrell, 1995).

2.2.1.1 The social construction of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within the educational context.

Another reason for the difficulty in defining SEBD is that the terms SEBD and SEN have been constructed to be understood within the educational context and for educational purposes. The terms SEBD and SEN describe the range of difficulties that CYP may experience and how schools can work towards meeting CYP’s needs (DfES, 2001b). The terms are not intended to be used within the wider social context to identify CYP’s difficulties. The definition of SEBD and SEN can, therefore, be understood through the history of educational policy from the notion of disruptive behaviour being understood within a medical model as ‘maladjustment’, to the notion of disruptive behaviour being understood within an ecological perspective and inclusion policy (Jones, 2003).
It could be considered too difficult to create a clear definition when educational policy is continually evolving and when current educational policy remains unclear. For example, there is continued confusion in how SEBDs are defined within SEN policy and the DDA. The definition within SEN policy states that pupils defined as having SEBD must have learning difficulties that require additional educational provision (Miller, 2003), although SEBD is defined as covering a range of abilities and what constitutes a learning difficulty is unclear (Farrell, 1995).

It is not clear if it is defined as experiencing an academic learning difficulty as a result of, or because of, SEBD (Jones, 2003) or experiencing difficulties in learning to adjust to the social context within school (Farrell, 1995). In addition, the concept of SEBD as defined as a learning difficulty itself creates the misconception that the problem is ‘within’ the CYP, rather than an ecological phenomenon which contradicts the evolving ‘ecological’ notion of the term. The confusion continues within the ‘newly’ drafted SENCoP (DFE, 2013a) whereby causal factors of behavioural difficulties are considered to be related to an unmet SEN (such as a learning or communication difficulty), rather than a difficulty with social or emotional adjustment itself. However, mental health issues are also considered to be associated with an unmet SEN which contradicts the notion of social and emotional difficulties not being the causal factor of the SEN.

### 2.2.2 The development and management of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

From an ecological perspective, there are a number of interrelated home, school and individual factors that impact upon CYP’s social and emotional development (Farrell, 1995; Hartnell, 2010; Sutoris, 2000). Cooper (1993) highlighted the importance of home and school factors in shaping emotional and social skills and the important interaction between the contextual factors and an individual’s personal tendencies.

Home environmental factors are inclusive of community and family factors (Farrell, 1995). Within the community, research has shown that CYP coming from lower socio-economic status...
and poor housing are more at risk of developing SEBD. Within the home, CYP that have experienced trauma or loss from inconsistent parental discipline, lack of parental affection and/or parental cruelty are more likely to develop SEBD (Cooper 1993; Herbert, 1993; Pearce, 2009).

The environment created by the school, individual classrooms and individual teachers plays a role in the development of CYP’s social and emotional skills and the management of their behaviour (Hartnell, 2010; Jones, 2003; Swinson, Woof, & Melling, 2003).

School factors that impact upon CYP’s development are inclusive of a positive school ethos based on a sense of community, shared values and caring relationships. Whereas the management of CYP’s behaviour is associated with the use of an effective behaviour policy and behaviour curriculum, a wide range of rewards used consistently throughout the school and a fair use of sanctions (Miller, 2003).

Classroom factors that impact upon CYP’s development are inclusive of classroom culture, goals and organisation (Hartnell, 2010). Research has found that classroom culture and organisation impacts upon CYP’s self-worth, attributions, motivation and behaviour (Flook, Repetti & Ullman, 2005). The management of behaviour and the ability to engage with CYP with challenging behaviour has been found to be positively impacted by well organised classrooms with clear expectations (Swinson et al., 2003).

Teacher factors that impact upon the management of behaviour are associated with their access to training, their use of positive feedback, their sense of efficacy and their attribution of CYP’s difficulties (Harrop & Swinson, 2000; Swinson et al., 2003). Swinson et al. (2003) highlighted the role of the teacher in managing CYP’s behaviour as they found that SEBD pupils were well behaved in ‘good’ lessons and poorly behaved in ‘poor’ lessons. Teachers’ attitudes have been found to impact upon classroom interactions (Jones, 2003), since teachers who ascribe the
origins of a CYP’s behaviour to within-child or home factors have higher external locus of control and demonstrate less skills that bring about behaviour changes (Swinson et al., 2003).

In some cases, CYP have within-child factors that impact upon the development of a SEBD (Farrell, 1995). Individual factors are inclusive of specific learning difficulties, language and communication difficulties and mental health difficulties (Clegg et al., 2009). In such cases, it is difficult to separate the corresponding environmental factors that impact upon the within-child factors. However, in a minority of cases, CYP who display SEBD come from well supported homes and schools, although the majority of CYP have more severe emotional disturbance, typically associated with mental health difficulties (Farrell, 1995).

2.2.2.1 Risk factors, protective factors and resilience.
Home, school and individual factors can be considered within the context of both risk and protective factors (Hayden, 1997). There is a complex interrelationship between the range of risk factors in CYP’s lives and the interplay between those risk factors and the CYP’s protective factors. Risk factors also have a cumulative effect. The greater the number and severity of the risk factors, the greater the probability of SEBD developing. Resilience is an important concept to consider as it builds CYP’s ability to cope and overcome adversity. Increasing protective factors has been found to build resilience and counterbalance risk factors. Resilience can be built through developing CYP’s self-esteem, self-efficacy, social problem solving skills and their ability to deal with change (Hayden, 1997).

2.2.3 Identification and assessment of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
The procedures described in the current SENCoP (DfES, 2001a) are followed by educational settings to identify and assess CYP with SEBD as a SEN. The identification of CYP with SEBD follows the same procedure as with other types of SEN. The identification is through a graduated approach that recognises the continuum of SEN and the need to provide increasing
expertise and specific support. The current SENCoP recommends that the identification of children with SEN in early educational settings is through monitoring the child’s progress against the six early learning goals. It is recommended that the identification of CYP in the primary and secondary phase is through gathering a triangulation of information from the CYP’s learning profiles against the National Curriculum level descriptions in order to gathering information on the learning environment and teaching style. Intervention is implemented through Early Years Action or Early Years Action Plus; School Action or School Action Plus. At Early Years Action Plus or School Action Plus, advice or support is provided from outside specialists and alternative interventions are put into place. If the CYP continues to make little progress, the school may request a statutory assessment of the CYP’s needs. As a result of a statutory assessment, a Local Authority (LA) may issue the CYP with a Statement of SEN, highlighting the provision required to meet their needs (DfES, 2001a).

In relation to how SEBDs should be assessed, despite the amount of literature published debating the causes and definition of an SEBD, little has been written on how SEBDs should be assessed (Farrell, 1995). The difficulty in defining SEBD creates a barrier in discussing how and what may be measured (Farrell, 1995). The wide spectrum of associated difficulties also makes it challenging to create one objective measure. Wigelsworth et al. (2010) argues that despite the numerous assessment tools available, social and emotional skills cannot be accurately measured so, therefore, nor can the associated difficulties. Identification and assessment is left to the application of the graduated approach to SEN through chosen assessments by professionals and their interpretation of the behaviour within the context of environmental factors and personal perceptions.

The statutory assessment process is, however, critiqued in its ability to identify and support all CYP with SEBD (Farrell, 1995). Concerns have been raised since the majority of CYP with SEBD referred for a statutory assessment are boys, displaying acting out behaviours. Farrell
(1995) argued that CYP with acting out behaviours may be more likely to be referred for a statutory assessment over those who are excessively shy or anxious, as they cause the most difficulties for schools. This is of great concern for the identification, assessment and support provided to CYP with SEBD, as the system is providing support for schools in managing difficult behaviour rather than the CYP themselves (Farrell, 1995).

The process for identification and assessment of SEN is set to change in September 2014 in accordance with the Government’s new approach (DfE, 2011a; DfE, 2012a) and the ‘newly’ drafted SENCoP (DfE, 2013a). The new proposals set to create a single early years and school assessment process and ‘Education, Health and Care Plan’ to replace the statutory assessment and statement process. A new school-based SEN category will replace levels of Early Years Action/Action Plus and School Action/Action Plus. The aim is to reduce the practice of over identification; introduce a single assessment process for education, health and care for CYP aged 0 to 25 years; increase teachers’ skills at overcoming barriers and managing challenging behaviour and increase the power provided to CYP, parents/guardians to be a part of the decision making process (DfE, 2011a; DfE, 2012a; DFE, 2013a). In order to improve the educational provision of CYP with SEN, a number of new reforms have been proposed to support the implementation of the new legislation (DFE, 2011a). The new reforms aim to improve the ways teachers receive their initial training through the introduction of the ‘School Direct’ programme to allow schools to recruit and train their own staff; through the introduction of initial literacy and numeracy assessments for trainee teachers, prior to their training; and through the introduction of trainee bursaries to top graduates to encourage them into the teaching profession (DfE, 2013b). The new reforms also aim to increase the skill level and expertise of support staff working with CYP with SEN by providing extra funding for SEN support staff and through funding a degree-level training scheme (DfE, 2013b). The reforms also aim to help young
people with SEN into the workplace through the introduction of supported internships (DFE, 2013b).

2.3 Government Legislation and Guidance on Behaviour
Tackling behaviour and discipline in schools is a major priority for the Government and the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). Government legislation, guidance documents and national strategies have been produced to support schools (DCSF, 2008b; DCSF, 2009; DfES, 2005a; DfES, 2005b) and families (DfCLG, 2006; DfCLG, 2010; DfCLG, 2012a) in managing and developing CYP’s behaviour. In relation to Government legislation, within the Education and Inspections Act (DCSF, 2006), the statutory obligations on schools with regard to behaviour are highlighted. Teachers have a statutory authority to discipline pupils who display unacceptable behaviour. It is specified that all head teachers must devise a behaviour policy that takes account of their governing bodies’ statement of behaviour principles and that aims to support all school staff in managing behaviour (DfE, 2012b; DCSF, 2008b). The behaviour policy must acknowledge the school’s legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to safeguarding and pupils with SEN (DfE, 2012b). If CYP’s behaviour is in serious or consistent breach of the behaviour policy, head teachers have the legal power to exclude CYP for a fixed period or permanently.

Government guidance documents for schools have included the Steer reports (DCSF, 2009; DfES, 2005d; DfES, 2006) and, more recently, advice from the Government’s expert advisor on behaviour, Charlie Taylor (DfE, 2011b; DFE, 2011c; DfE, 2012c; DfE, 2012d; DfE, 2012e). National strategies have included the Social, Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials (DfES, 2005a), the National Healthy Schools Programme (NHSP) (DfES, 2005b), the Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TaMHS) programme (DCSF, 2010) and the Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) (DfE, 2010).
Recent national strategies for families have included Family Intervention Projects (FIP) (DfCLG, 2006; DfCLG, 2010) and the ‘Troubled Families’ programme (DfCLG, 2012a). The FIP were introduced within the Respect Action Plan in 2006 to support the most challenging families with multifaceted problems that manifest into criminal and antisocial behaviour, school dropout and unemployment (DfCLG, 2012b). A number of the families involved in the FIP had CYP with SEBD and school attendance difficulties. The FIP approach saw a dedicated ‘keyworker’ work with the family to address the underlying causes to problem behaviours while, at the same time, apply a sanction approach to shape the behaviour of the parents and CYP (DfCLG, 2006).

Following the riots in England in 2011, the Government provided a greater emphasis on the FIP through the introduction of the ‘Troubled Families’ programme. The ‘Troubled Families’ programme aims to turn around the lives of 120,000 troubled families in England by 2015 (DfCLG, 2012a; DfCLG, 2013a). Troubled families are characterised by the lack of employed adults in the family, children not being in school, either through truancy or school exclusion, and family members being involved in criminal and anti-social behaviour. The Government made £448 million available to LAs on a payment-by-results basis (DfCLG, 2012c) with the aim of reducing youth crime, getting CYP back into education, getting parents back into work and reducing the amount spent on public services (DfCLG, 2012a). Although there are a number of claims that FIPs are effective in turning the lives of troubled families around (DfCLG, 2006; DfCLG, 2012a; DfCLG, 2013a) and that the Government’s ‘Troubled Families’ programme is currently on track to meet the 2015 target (DfCLG, 2013b); the evidence on the effectiveness of intensive family intervention is argued to be weak (Fletcher, Gardner & Bonell, 2012) and based on studies that have no control group, are misrepresentative of the population of troubled families due to sampling bias and based on individuals’ subjective accounts, rather than objective measures (DfCLG, 2012b; Gregg, 2010). To support the engagement of CYP with SEBD in education, evidence based school interventions are argued to show stronger evidence of successful outcomes (Fletcher et al., 2012).
2.4 School Exclusion
Even though the behaviour in school by the majority of CYP is reported to be good (DCSF, 2009) and the Government legislation, guidance documents and national strategies are provided to support schools in managing behaviour, some CYP’s behaviour remains a major concern, leading to them becoming excluded from school (DCSF, 2006; DfE, 2012b).

The Government provides legislation that governs the exclusion of pupils from: Maintained Schools; Academy Schools/Free Schools; Alternative Provision Academies/Free Schools; and Pupil Referral Units (PRU). If a CYP’s behaviour is in serious or consistent breach of the school’s behaviour policy, a head teacher can exclude the CYP for a fixed period of up to 45 school days or permanently. The Government supports head teachers in their use of exclusion as a sanction, but states that the decision must be lawful. The decision should not breach a school’s statutory duty towards the DDA and the current SENCoP (DfES, 2001a; DfES, 2005c). Government legislation advises schools to consider the reasons behind a pupil’s behaviour and whether the CYP have any unmet needs that require further assessment (DCSF, 2008b; DfE, 2012f).

Although the figures have decreased over the last five years, in the academic year of 2011/2012, the annual school exclusion statistics highlighted that an estimated 5,170 CYP were excluded from mainstream primary, secondary and special schools (DfE, 2013c). The majority of these CYP demonstrated difficulties within their social, emotional and behavioural development and, in particular, they demonstrated ‘acting out’ behaviours (Hayden, 1997). The predominant vulnerable groups included secondary aged pupils, boys, ‘looked after’ CYP, CYP with SEN and CYP from ethnic minority groups (Cooper, Drummond, Lovey & McLaughlin, 2000). Interestingly, CYP with SEN have been found to be seven times more likely to be excluded compared to their peers and account for 72 per cent of all permanently excluded pupils (Hayden & Dunne, 2001). A high number of those excluded have been found to have been experiencing
complex personal, family or school difficulties (Hayden, 1997). Individuals excluded from school, therefore, become further at risk of problems associated with social adjustment, including juvenile and adult criminality (Zigler, Taussig & Black, 1992), drug abuse (Farrington, 1991), poverty (Parsons, 1999a) and later physical and mental health problems (Cooper et al., 2000).

Persistent disruptive behaviour has been found to account for nearly a third of all cases of exclusion (Hartnell, 2010; Hayden, 1997). The underlying reasons are complex and mirror the number of interrelated home, school and individual factors that impact upon the risk of CYP developing SEBD (Charlton, Panting & Willis, 2004; Farrell, 1995; Hartnell, 2010; Sutoris, 2000). In addition, research has highlighted a number of other school and home related factors. Factors include school staff, parents/guardians and CYP’s commitment to working together to support pupils at risk of exclusion, schools implementation of a flexible and differentiated school curriculum and teachers being receptive to support and training (Hallam & Castle, 1999). Home factors include family flexibility, the ability to positively reframe difficult events and family access to emotional support (Rendall & Stuart 2005).

The increase in exclusions has been attributed to the change in Government reform. Since the 1988 Education Reform Act, schools have been under increasing pressure for academic results which has been argued to reduce teachers’ tolerance of problem behaviour in schools and has led to the increase in exclusions (Charlton et al., 2004; Daniels & Williams, 2000; Hartnell, 2010; Hayden, 1997; Parsons, 1999b).

The standards and behaviour agenda has created a challenge towards the inclusion of CYP with SEBD (Vincent, Harris, Thompson & Toalster, 2007). Since the introduction of the standards agenda, there has been the introduction of the inclusion agenda that has increased the numbers of CYP with SEBD in mainstream schools (Bracher, Hitchcock & Moss, 1998). Amongst
Government guidance documents and legislation, there are contradictions between the inclusion framework (DfES, 2001a; DfES, 2001c) that focuses on identifying and supporting CYP with SEBD, to the standards agenda that puts pressure on schools to achieve high academic results and demonstrate high levels of behaviour and discipline in school. The behaviour agenda reduces the tolerance of problem behaviour in schools, enables head teachers to exclude pupils and has introduced home-school contracts that appear to contradict the SEN agenda, which articulates parents/guardians as partners rather than problems (Hartnell, 2010).

There also appears to be a segregation between those CYP at risk of school exclusion with SEBD as a SEN and those with SEBD, but not considered to have SEN. It could be argued that any pupil at risk of school exclusion has significant difficulties in accessing their learning than the vast majority of CYP, so by being at risk of exclusion, have a SEN and should be protected by the SENCoP (Hayden, 1997). Having said that, even when CYP with SEBD have had their needs identified through the SENCoP and have been issued a statement of SEN and a Teaching Assistant (TA) to support them in school, the positive impact on the CYP can been minimal. The statement has been found to merely support the hypothesis that the pupil’s problems are within-child, whereas the TA has been found to manage CYP’s behaviour rather than develop their skills (Gross & McChrystal, 2001).

School exclusion is argued to be an artificially produced cultural problem, largely experienced within ‘English’ schools (Parsons, 1999b). School exclusion is argued to be a form of social exclusion that jeopardises CYP’s rights to a full time education. The right of the disaffected pupil who disrupts their own and other pupils’ education against the right of their classmates to learn in an uninterrupted environment, is used as a justification for the exclusion (Vincent et al., 2007). In this sense, education is viewed as a commodity rather than a right and is taken away as punishment for misbehaviour (Parsons, 1999a).
Research has suggested that exclusions work in punishing students, but are not a deterrent for misbehaviour (Brown, 2007; Theriot, Craun & Dupper, 2010). When it is taken into account that school environmental factors can have a significant impact on the inclusion of a CYP with SEBD and the likelihood of negative outcomes from exclusion, exclusions do not appear the best option. Instead, exclusion has a higher probability of being more damaging for the individual and the society as a whole. It is, therefore, important to engage in preventative measures and positive alternatives to excluding CYP with SEBD. In order to do this, schools often seek out support from specialist services.

2.5 Specialist Support and the Role of the Educational Psychologist
Specialist support provided by the LA and other services is delivered for CYP with complex SEBD at risk of school exclusion. The support can be delivered to schools through the SENCoP’s graduated process (at the Action Plus stage); through multi-agency teams such as the Behaviour and Education Support Team (BEST); through projects such as TAMHS; or through out of school services such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) (DCSF, 2008b; Hartnell, 2010). The EPS is one professional service that is called upon to offer support to schools and parents/guardians for CYP with SEBD at risk of school exclusion (Hardman, 2001).

The origin of the role of the EP within the UK education service dates back to early twentieth century, whereby EPs assisted with school placement decision making (Fallon, Woods & Rooney, 2010; Squires & Farrell, 2007). The 1981 and 1993 Education Acts saw the number of EPs expanded to provide support for the inclusion agenda of CYP with SEN through assessment and intervention. Under the 1996 Education Act and the current SENCoP, EPs have had a statutory duty for the identification and assessment of SENs (DfES, 2001a; Fallon et al., 2010).
The current role of the EP continues under the statutory duty, but is also far wider and inclusive of universal early intervention and preventative support (DfE, 2011a; DfE, 2012a). Educational Psychologists (EPs) are scientific practitioners who apply psychological skills, knowledge and understanding through consultation, assessment, intervention, research and training. They work at the individual, organisational and systems level to promote learning, attainment and development of behavioural, emotional and mental health needs of CYP aged 0 to 24 (Cameron, 2006; Curran, Gersh and Wolfendale, 2003; DfE, 2011a; Fallon et al., 2010). They work with CYP, their families, their teachers and sometimes as part of multi-agency teams (Fallon et al., 2010). Educational Psychologists (EPs) have been argued to make a significant contribution to supporting families and empowering parents/guardians to make valued contributions to the SEN process (Squires, Farrell, Woods, Lewis, Rooney & O’Connor, 2007).

Although the current role of the EP appears clear in writing, in practice, it is heavily debated and varied between individual EPs and LAs. Current EP practice has also been shaped by periods of reconstruction. Between the 1970s and 1980s, EP practice changed from the traditional to a consultative approach. The consultative approach aimed to move away from individual assessment and the medical model perception of the EP as ‘expert’ to a more collective problem solving approach based on creating change at the level of the individual, group or organisation, through shared responsibility of difficulties. Research has found that teachers were not always aware that the psychologist’s role had changed (O’Hagen & Swanson, 1983), resulting in a mismatch between what EPs thought they should be doing and what users expected (Farrell, Jimerson, Kalambouka & Benoit, 2005). Even in 2006, Ashton and Roberts (2006) found that the work, skills and attitudes of EPs expected by Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCo) continued to be more associated with the traditional role of advice giving, statutory assessment work and individual assessments, while EPs reflected a more consultative perspective.
The discrepancies over the role of the EP, influences the current variation in practice and delivery of EP services amongst EP and between LAs. Amongst the variation, EPs continue to make a significant contribution to the statutory assessment procedure which is critiqued in limiting the view of what EPs have to offer more widely to LAs, schools and to early intervention work (Fallon et al., 2010). Moving forward, in light of national changes to LA services and the new legislative proposals to the identification and assessment of SEN (DfE, 2011a; DfE, 2012a), the role and training of EPs is under review and the way the profession is employed is changing. It is considered that EPs will be delivering commissioned services within LAs or practicing outside of LA control within an independent practice or a social enterprise (DfE, 2011a). The review to EP training is driven by the need to make the most of the specialist expertise and skills to meet the requirements of the new SEN proposals (DfE, 2011a; DfE, 2012a). Training must also account for newly qualified EPs’ levels of expertise to match the requirements of EP services within the commissioned market place.

2.5.1 The specialist educational psychologist's role within social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
Understanding how Specialist EPs (SEBD) work to support positive outcomes for CYP with SEBD at risk of exclusion, would be beneficial to general EP practice. However, the notion of a specialist role within EP practice is not specified within the career structure or training of EPs and so what is meant by a specialist and Specialist EP will be explored in more detail below.

A specialist is defined as a person who specialises in a particular branch of a profession and may function as a consultant to other professionals (Cleary, 1998). Within the field of educational psychology, specialisms are not clearly structured. Instead, diverse and specialist roles are developed flexibly within authorities (Fallon et al., 2010). Somewhat challenging the scope of the specialist role, is the need for an EP to acquire a common body of knowledge, to be a generalist in both the fields of education and psychology (Noll, Horrocks & Anderson, 1983). Although
discussed in light of the Division of Educational Psychology in America, Noll et al. (1983) argue for a systemic policy to encourage newly qualified EPs to find their speciality and for specialism to be presented as part of the structured field within EP leadership.

The development of specialisms is argued to be one of the critical factors likely to influence the effectiveness of EP services in the future (Dennis, 2003) and would develop the scope for EPs to liaise closer with other educational, social or health professionals. Educational Psychologists (EP) themselves have been found to want to offer a range of specialisms (DfEE, 2000) and have argued for specialist roles in particular areas, such as the early years (Dennis, 2003). They have argued for more focused training to enable them to research and develop their skills, but without the direct training, EPs have been found to lack the confidence and skills to undertake specialist work (DfEE, 2000).

Within current research, little is known about Specialist EP’s roles generally and on how specialisms develop within the field. Little is also written on specialisms within particular fields of psychology and, in particular, on the effective strategies and methods employed by Specialist EPs (SEBD). Interestingly, Dennis (2003) was the only British research study to be found that focused on a specialist role and argued for specialist early years psychologists. No one research study was found to have looked at the specialist SEBD role within EP practice.

Investigating the Specialist EP’s role is essential to continually strengthen the skills and knowledge within EPs’ practice. It would help inform the discussion on the distinctive contribution (particularly in effective SEBD work) of EPs provided by psychology services in light of the Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) review (DfE, 2011a; DfE, 2012a). It would also support the overall field of educational psychology if the profession intended to create uniform specialisms.
Investigating the Specialist EP (SEBD) is particularly important within SEBD work to increase EPs’ objectivity so they do not use subjective assessments and solve the problem for the schools by removing disruptive pupils (Farrell, Harraghy & Petrie, 1996). Instead, EPs’ knowledge and skills would be better informed by current specialists that promote the best outcomes for pupils through their strategies and methods. Given the complexity of SEBD work, an investigation within a case study methodology would help provide a detailed account of a specialist’s skills used to support positive outcomes for CYP.

2.5.2 The distinctive and unique role of the educational psychologist within social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The distinctive and unique contribution of the EP’s or Specialist EP’s (SEBD) role in supporting CYP with SEBD has not been investigated directly in current literature. The general application of psychology in a distinctive and valuable function has, however, been investigated (Ashton & Roberts, 2006; Cameron, 2006; Farrell, Woods, Lewis, Rooney, Squires & O'Connor, 2006; Squires et al., 2007). The EP’s distinctive contribution found by Cameron (2006) included, i) adopting a psychological perspective; ii) uncovering mediating variables that link to particular outcomes; iii) employing psychological knowledge to explain complex problems; iv) using evidence based strategies; and v) sharing and promoting big ideas of psychology. Farrell et al. (2006) found that the distinctive contribution of EPs is in their academic background and training in psychology, but found that the majority of respondents from schools and half of the EPs considered that alternative providers could carry out the same or similar work. Understanding the unique contribution of EP practices within SEBDs would support the profession as a whole and would benefit from further investigation. It would be helpful to fully understand what it is that EPs can offer to SEBD work to develop the quality of the services provided to CYP and schools.
2.5.3 The role of the educational psychologist in assessment and intervention for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Educational Psychologists (EP) support schools, families and individual pupils to help prevent CYP from being excluded from school (Hardman, 2001; Smith & Cooke, 2000). Research supports the role of the EP in behaviour and demonstrates positive outcomes as a result of their support (Hardman, 2001; Smith & Cooke, 2000; Thorne & Ivens, 1999). In particular, Grant and Brooks (1998) argue that EPs are uniquely placed to offer specialist advice for individual teachers, schools and LAs. They argue that CYP who are at risk of exclusion should be immediately brought to the attention of an EP to prevent the CYP from being excluded. They argue that EPs should adopt a position statement on exclusion encouraging a zero tolerance attitude.

Educational Psychologists’ (EP) work within social, emotional and behavioural development involves the use of assessment, consultation, intervention, advice and training at the individual level (for individual teachers or CYP); at the group level (for groups of CYP or teaching staff); and at the systems level (for whole school policy developments and inclusive practice) (Clarke & Jenner, 2006; Hardman, 2001; O’Brien & Miller, 2005; Thorne & Ivens, 1999). Educational Psychologists (EP) also offer support for behaviour within multi-agency teams (Jenner & Gravenstede, 2007; Robinson, 1998).

The type of support required from an EP and at what level, is dependent upon the needs of the CYP or school. Depending upon the situation, support can range from preventative to reactive approaches. Approaches yield different support mechanisms and vary depending upon the severity of the situation. This may mean that some mechanisms or interventions are more or less suitable at the time. For example, a school needing crisis management support, when a CYP is at immediate risk of permanent exclusion, may not benefit from a 12 week group level intervention programme that develops CYP’s self-awareness (Burton, 2006). Rather, they may benefit from an individual level consultation and assessment based on a functional analysis of
CYP’s behaviour (Hartnell, 2010). The type of support may also have some degree of flexibility, given the complexity of social and emotional difficulties in comparison to difficulties associated with acquiring literacy or numeric skills. The support may also vary depending upon the knowledge, experience and prevalent paradigms applied by the individual EP and the restrictions on EPs’ available time and access to resources (Rees, Farell & Rees, 2003). It is, therefore, important to consider the varying needs of CYP and schools; the varying applications of psychology used by EPs; and the reality of EPs’ working patterns, when considering how the research, discussed in the following sections, can be generalised. It may be applicable to argue that no one approach will fulfil the needs of all situations for all CYP, schools and EPs. Rather, when choosing the appropriate intervention, the EP may need to assess and adapt to the individual situation while having an awareness of their strengths and restrictions in knowledge or available time.

Educational psychology support for SEBD will be presented and discussed at the individual, group and system level. For the purpose of this paper, individual level support will account for assessment, consultation and intervention with individual pupils. Group level support will account for interventions with groups of pupils or groups of teachers. Systems level support will describe an intervention that aimed to develop a whole school approach to behaviour management. Both preventative and reactive interventions will be considered.

2.5.3.1 Individual level support: assessment.
Educational Psychologists (EP) play a significant role in assessing the needs of pupils with SEBD and their detailed assessments are important to enable successful outcomes for individual CYP (Hartnell, 2010). Due to the subjectivity in defining and recognising SEBD, there are no guidelines concerning how EPs conduct their assessments. Educational Psychologists (EP) make their own judgments and use varied psychological theories to infer which methods to apply (Rees et al., 2003).
Farrell (1995) listed a number of methods, including gaining reports from CYP, parents and teachers, conducting a direct observation, interviews, clinical assessments, completing tests and rating scales and monitoring interventions over time. The huge variation across and within EP services leads to the assessment methods being used to a more or less extent with no consistent approach.

Rees et al’s. (2003) study highlighted this variation and lack of consistency by using a questionnaire to evaluate how 107 EPs assessed pupils with SEBD. The data found a wide variation in EP assessment practice which tended to depend upon the age of the pupils. Cognitive tests were used on 41% of the cases, personality and self-esteem instruments were used in 24% of cases, reading tests were used in 51% of cases and EPs conducted an observation in 73% of cases. Interventions were offered in 56% of cases, but there was no consistency in the types of interventions applied. Woods and Farrell (2006) also evaluated the frequency of assessment methods used for pupils with SEBD. Questionnaires were completed by 142 EPs. The results indicated that EPs most commonly used interview and observation methods, standardised attainment tests, problem solving facilitation methods and a joint review of CYP’s progress. A number of assessment methods were used during interviews with CYP, including therapeutic conversations and drawings.

Rees et al’s. (2003) study highlights the lack of objectivity in EPs’ SEBD assessments. Assessment methods adopted are more associated with individual EP preferences rather than the specific needs of CYP or the situation. Farrell et al. (1996) argued that this lack of objectivity can lead to least favourable outcomes for CYP as EPs can instead be drawn to solving the problem for the schools by removing disruptive pupils, rather than supporting CYP. To increase objectivity, Farrell (1995) has provided a structured framework to guide assessments. The framework aims to involve all parties, consider all aspects of CYP’s behavioural/social context and to use a range of assessment measures. Farrell (1995) discussed the need to consider the
parameters of the problem, including looking into the history of the problem, the settings in which the problem occurs, the relationships amongst key individuals, CYP’s self-image and view of the problem. A variety of assessment methods (including gathering reports by the child, parents/guardians and teachers, conducting collaborative interviews, direct observations, clinical assessments and using tests/rating scales) were suggested to focus on a number of parameters. The completion of the assessment was suggested to be conducted through an intervention on a plan-do-review cycle to develop further information (Farrell, 1995).

Rees et al. (2003) argues for an identified consensus approach to SEBD assessment grounded in psychological theory that focuses on recommending specialist interventions that support CYP through applied psychology. This may, however, be an unrealistic expectation on a phenomenon that is subjective by nature and often presented by complex environmental factors. Having a generic assessment approach does not also necessarily mean successful outcomes will occur for individual CYP. It does not also account for the variant professional skills and knowledge gained from study and practice in psychology that provides EPs with the expertise to justify their role in assessing CYP’s needs (Farrell et al., 1996). There is no one approach to psychology, but rather the use of unique methods, applied through a psychological assessment, that are reported by EPs to be their distinctive contribution to the assessment of pupils with SEBD (Woods & Farrell, 2006). Having a generic assessment tool or method may, therefore, not be the answer to objective measures of SEBD to support the best outcomes for CYP. Rather, it may be more important to further investigate how EPs, particularly Specialist EPs (SEBD), assess SEBD, what methods and strategies they use to support such positive outcomes and how they help schools become more sensitive to pupils’ needs (McCall & Farrell, 1993). It may also be helpful to investigate through interviews, what Specialist EP’s (SEBD) actually do when carrying out their work rather than using questionnaires which provide only a generic overview.
2.5.3.2 Individual level support: consultation.

One method applied by EPs during their assessments and interventions of individual CYP with SEBD, is the use of consultation with school professionals and parents/guardians. Thorne and Ivens’s (1999) used Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) in their discussions with teachers to develop their understanding of pupils’ needs (see Section 2.5.3.4 below for more information). A positive outcome in Smith and Cooke’s (2000) study was associated with having frank discussions between the EP and teacher that led to the intervention (see Section 2.5.3.5 below for more information). Liaison and mediation with professionals managed the intensive emotional responses in Robinson’s (1998) study (see Section 2.5.3.6 below for more information) and in Hartnell’s (2010) study, through consultation, teachers’ feelings were contained by support workers in order to create a sense of mutual trust and respect (see below in the current section, for more information). The meaning and importance of consultation to support interventions for individual CYP with SEBD is discussed in more detail below.

Consultation is a model of service delivery that aims to create change through collective problem solving and shared responsibility for CYP’s difficulties, between an EP and school professional (Larney, 2003; Wagner, 2000; Wagner, 2008). The EP’s role is to bring their expertise from a psychological perspective to aid the co-creation of language so that change can occur. The psychologist engages in a process of enquiry through careful questioning that encourages the consultee to externalise the issue so that they are able to access their own problem solving skills. Through this process, the person is able to take a ‘helicopter’ view of the problem and make a paradigm shift from within-child factors (Wagner, 2000; Wagner, 2008). The aim is, therefore, for the psychologist to improve the functioning of the consultee so that they can respond more effectively to the problem (Gutkin & Curtis, 1999). Within behaviour consultations, EPs have a key role to raise a school’s awareness of the needs of pupils with SEBD and their difficulties from an ecological perspective. Teachers can be supported to become more inclusive by eliciting
the view that they can make positive contributions to deal with SEBD and prevent school exclusion (Gross & McChrystal, 2001; Swinson et al., 2003).

In order to support change, Cooper (2011) highlighted the importance of developing teachers’ skills. He argued that SEBD is a product of an interaction between the individual and the environment and that the personal qualities of teachers can either alleviate or provoke pupils’ difficulties. Displays of warmth and empathy are considered powerful skills in dealing with pupil conflict and enable positive engagement, but are challenged by the strong relationship between teachers’ stress and SEBD. To make positive changes and develop teachers’ skills, the mental health and wellbeing of teachers need considering. The difficulty for EPs is how they demonstrate empathy towards teachers’ stressful situations, whilst supporting shifts in their understandings, attitudes and skills during an emotionally charged consultation (Cooper, 2011). This was, unfortunately, not answered in Cooper’s (2011) study.

In Hartnell’s study (2010), successful outcomes for CYP were associated with the mutual trust and respect presented by the support worker to the teaching staff during their conversations. Although these conversations were described as interviews rather than consultations, the responsiveness was orientated to the concept of containment, whereby the support worker held and communicated anxieties in a bearable and meaningful way. This enabled teaching staff to understand and manage complex emotions, even when few interventions or strategies were being suggested. Examples of how the support workers contained teachers’ emotions were not discussed in the study. If containment is important to support consultations on behaviour, it may be important to explore not just what approaches the EP used, but also how they put them into practice in an emotionally driven situation.

The challenge of conducting a consultation on behaviour is presented by O’Brien and Miller (2005). O’Brien and Miller (2005) conducted a discourse analysis on the strategies used by a
teacher and learning mentor when describing a pupil’s behaviour during a consultation with an EP. The results indicated that the teacher and learning mentor used ‘extreme case formulations,’ ‘consensus and corroborations,’ ‘vivid descriptions’ and ‘active voicing’ to explain within-child constructions for challenging behaviour. The EP was challenged with the task to construct an alternative narrative of the child and used solution-focused approaches to support the co-construction of the version of events. However, within-child factors were maintained by the teacher and learning mentor by the end of the consultation. Although the study was taken from only one consultation and little information was provided on the skill set of the EP and the background of the teacher and the learning mentor, the study emphasises the challenges faced by EPs in their use of discourse to manage teachers’ emotions enough to support active change in behaviour consultations. Extending the study further, it would have been helpful to have interviewed the EP following the consultation and explored their personal methods applied during the consultation, to further ascertain their skills.

The process of consultation and the role it plays in supporting teachers and the success of interventions for individual CYP with SEBD, is an important concept to consider within EPs’ role in SEBDs and merits further investigation. It may be important to further understand what and how the methods or strategies are applied by EPs during consultations. It may also be important to see how strategies applied by EPs create environmental change by shaping teachers’ ecological perspectives, whilst accounting for their emotional health and wellbeing. It may also be important to consider whether successful or unsuccessful applications of interventions for CYP with SEBD begin with teachers’ emotional health rather than pupils’ and if so, what role consultation plays in successful outcomes and the impact that has upon EPs’ assessments and interventions for CYP.
2.5.3.3 **Individual level support: personal construct psychology.**

At the individual level, a number of interventions that apply different aspects of psychology have proven successful for CYP at risk of school exclusion (Hardman, 2001; Smith & Cooke, 2000; Thorne & Ivens, 1999). Hardman (2001) used Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) as an intervention with a Year 10 pupil, Daniel, who was at risk of permanent exclusion. The school staff felt that none of their strategies had worked and permanent exclusion was the only available option. A referral to the psychology service was made to help with Daniel's behaviour. The aim of the intervention was to elicit change in Daniel through developing his understanding of how he constructed his own behaviour. The clearer understanding aimed to increase Daniel's own self-awareness and inform the problem solving process for his teachers. The EP worked with Daniel for 40 minutes each week, for 8 weeks. A range of activities, as well as PCP, were used including the ‘Tree People’ and solution-focused discussions. Conversations explored Daniel’s ideal self, a characterisation of himself and his anger in relation to his thoughts, feeling and behaviours. Throughout the intervention, Daniel was encouraged to experiment with his ideal self and explore the possibility of change. His teachers completed and received feedback on a questionnaire explaining Daniel’s behaviour across the curriculum and direct feedback was given to the SENCo each week to increase her understanding of Daniel’s behaviour. The results indicated that PCP develops clear insights into how an individual constructs their own world. In the case for Daniel, he was able to understand his current constructs and test out new or opposing constructs. Four months following the intervention, Daniel remained in the school and had not been permanently excluded.

Hardman’s (2001) study provides an insight into how the application of psychology through an intervention process can have a positive impact on CYP at risk of exclusion by increasing a pupil’s self-awareness and creating an alternative self-image to support change. The intervention also demonstrated how EPs can advocate for pupils, so their opinions are included and act as a duel assessment tool that provides a deeper understanding of a pupil’s behaviour for school staff.
A deeper understanding may then create a more positive mind-set of CYP’s needs and help develop further interventions. The actual measurable success of the intervention and whether staff did develop a clearer, more positive understanding of Daniel’s behaviour was, however, not clear in the results. The study did not account for environmental factors that have been found to have a reinforcing influence over pupil behaviour (Hartnell, 2010; Jones, 2003; Swinson et al., 2003); nor did the study explore change at the classroom or teacher level. The study did not measure how or whether staff developed a more positive understanding of Daniel’s behaviour (such as through the weekly discussions with the SENCo), or if further interventions were informed by the EPs work. No information was provided as to why PCP was chosen as the appropriate approach or what assessments were initially conducted to inform this decision. Little information was also provided on the extent to which Daniel was at risk of permanent exclusion in the first instance, given that it was unclear if the intervention or another factor led to his continued attendance at the school and that, in another circumstance, an 8 week intervention would be considered too long when CYP are at immediate risk of permanent exclusion. The study was also limited in explaining the EP’s background, their experience of SEBD and whether they specialised in this field. Such information would inform the reader of the personal skills needed by an EP to successfully implement the intervention with other pupils.

2.5.3.4 Individual level support: solution focused brief therapy.
In a similar light to Hardman (2001), Thorne and Ivens’ (1999) also considered building pupils’ strengths as an intervention strategy. In their study, Thorne and Ivens’s (1999) evaluated the use of SFBT by EPs, during 40 minute, one-to-one interviews with secondary aged pupils, teachers and parents. The intervention was conducted over four to five weeks. The behaviour of the pupils was a cause for concern, although they were not at immediate risk of exclusion. The SFBT aimed to develop the pupils’ oracy skills (their thinking, listening, talking and reflecting skills). Evaluations were made through matched-pairs, repeated measures (pre and post questionnaires)
design. The results indicated successful outcomes of working preventatively with pupils, teachers and parents. The results also indicated a change in school staff’s perceptions of pupils. This was considered to decrease the likelihood of school exclusion, although this measure was never taken, nor were measures of the pupils’ increase in oracy (Thorne & Ivens, 1999). The results are, therefore, limited in explaining how the intervention increased the oracy skills of pupils or what elements of the EP’s application of SFBT through interviews with parents, pupils or staff helped. It is also important to note that the findings may not be transferable to those pupils at immediate risk of exclusion, since the study evaluated the intervention as a preventative measure. The study was also limited in providing information about the circumstances that surrounded the target pupils or other factors (ethos and inclusiveness of the school) which may have contributed to the successful outcomes. It is, therefore, unclear what circumstances may increase or decrease the likelihood of the intervention being successful if replicated and whether the EP demonstrated any personal qualities that supported the positive outcome.

2.5.3.5 Individual level support: the ‘circle of friends’ approach.

Another individual level intervention was conducted by Smith and Cooke (2000) who used the ‘Circle of Friends’ approach for a child, Mark aged 5 years, who was at risk of exclusion. Through observation and consultation with school staff and Mark’s parent, the EP established that Mark had difficulties interacting and playing with peers and engaged in incidents of off-task behaviour and anti-social language. The EP outlined the ‘Circle of Friends’ approach to school staff and it was decided to apply the strategy through a whole classroom friendship topic. In addition, Mark was supported to engage in co-operative play and turn-taking games. He received a star chart to positively reinforce the approach, whilst time-out was agreed as a reactive strategy. Although some difficulties remained, post intervention measures found an overall decline in Mark’s acting out behaviour and an increase in his social skills.
Contributory factors to the positive outcomes were reported to include the designing of a personalised psychologically based intervention, the commitment of parents and staff to make environmental changes and the frank discussions that led to the intervention. These factors are vital when considering how the research can be generalised. It is key to understand how the EP may have contributed to gaining the commitment of parents and school staff and what consultation skills the EP may have used during the frank conversations, but these were not reported in the research. It is, therefore, unclear what direct skills the EP employed to elicit successful change and whether these skills are unique or specialised in anyway. It is also, therefore, difficult to evaluate the success of the study and whether it was the ‘Circle of Friends’ intervention alone that led to the positive outcomes or whether other factors, relating to the personal skills of the EP, contributed. On a positive note, the paper made key reflections on EP practice overall. The paper highlighted the importance of working at the individual casework level to personalise interventions for CYP at risk of exclusion. The paper also emphasised how individual casework can generate opportunities to promote systemic change and support early intervention work, as the friendship topic was continued for the incoming reception class. The paper encouraged more reflections to be made on routine casework to promote social inclusion.

**2.5.3.6 Individual level support: multi-agency intervention.**

On a multi-agency level, Robinson (1998) evaluated the Bristol Primary Exclusion Project that offered intensive short-term support to stabilise crisis situations when a child was at immediate risk of permanent exclusion. The project offered support for children entering a new school following exclusion and also helped schools develop new strategies and systems to impact long-term changes to pupils’ school experiences. The multi-agency team included five specialist SEBD support assistants, two specialist SEBD teachers, a social worker and an EP who had experience working with CYP with social and emotional difficulties. The EP had a number of responsibilities including coordinating the referrals, acting as the key person for individual
children, supporting head teachers on the verge of excluding a child through immediate telephone response and advising on interim management plans to support the crisis situation as a referral was made. They also liaised and mediated with parents/guardians, schools or other professionals where there was failure to agree on an Individual Education Plan (IEP); they managed the intensive emotional responses from parents and pupils; and liaised with other professionals within the LA. The results indicated that the project successfully supported the primary schools in maintaining 90 per cent of the referred pupils that had not previously experienced a permanent exclusion. Amongst other things, the schools valued the professional input and the rapid response to crisis situations. Teachers perceived the children to be more settled and felt more confident in their classroom management strategies.

Limiting the study was the lack in explanation of the strategies and methods used by the EP in the crisis management conversations with head teachers and during the emotionally charged mediating meeting. It is not clear whether the EP used specific interpersonal skills, a consultation method or applied a particular paradigm. It is not clear what experience, training or knowledge the EP had to successfully complete this role. This knowledge is essential to understanding the EP’s contribution to the success of the project and the role of the EP (particularly their unique role) in the wider context of SEBD work and prevention of school exclusion. Although the principles of the study can be replicated, the limited information narrows the contributions of the study to EP practice overall. A more detailed description of the skills, strategies and methods applied by the EP, with successful experience in supporting CYP with SEBD and their schools, is needed to strengthen EP support services to prevent school exclusion.

Another multi-agency approach, provided by a multi-disciplinary Behaviour Support Team (BST), was evaluated by Hartnell (2010). The BSTs aimed to improve positive behaviour management and decrease exclusions. Four BSTs took part in the study. Each BST included two EPs, two specialist SEBD teachers, a family support worker and mental health worker. The team
offered assessment, consultation and advice on behaviour management strategies for schools, parents/guardians and CYP. The team also offered short term counselling for pupils, group work for pupils or support for schools through training and advice to develop their behaviour policies. Referrals were discussed at in-take meetings and in response, an assessment, using various techniques, was completed followed by the implementation of the strategies.

Exclusion data found that permanent exclusions were prevented for the majority of students at risk of permanent exclusion who had input from the BST. Interviews with clients highlighted the factors contributing to the successful outcomes including a detailed and thorough assessment, the development of successful interventions based on realistic strategies, the teaching of new skills and evaluation of outcomes and the ability of the BST to be responsive to the needs of the school and teachers. The meaning of responsiveness was associated with clients feeling a sense of mutual trust and respect between themselves and the support worker. This was also translated into the ability of the support worker to be practically available (easy to contact and arrange meetings) at times of crisis as well as being emotionally available in relation to the quality of their interactions to hold onto and contain the excessive stress and anxiety of the client. The ability to contain anxieties helped the clients (teachers, parents or CYP) understand and manage their emotions and feelings. No one intervention was devised for managing behaviour. Instead, it was through assessment and dialogue that helped clients understand and analyse the problem that supported the development of agreed outcomes and an individualised, carefully monitored intervention to reduce exclusions.

Whereas Robinson’s (1998) study failed to explore the strategies and methods employed by the EP, the indication of the importance of a responsive dialogue for joint problem solving that emphasises the containment of emotions in Hartnell’s (2010) study is an interesting concept to consider. However, Hartnell’s (2010) study did not describe the specific contribution of the EP to this process, what consultative approaches were applied or what skills or experience the EPs
contributed. Also, the study did not describe the assessments that took place or whether the assessments, interventions or consultative techniques were unique to the EP role.

2.5.3.7 Overview of individual level interventions.
The four studies discussed highlight positive outcomes for CYP with SEBD from applications of psychology at the individual level. They demonstrate the benefits of strengths work with pupils to develop their skills; the benefit of developing teachers’ awareness of pupils' needs; together with the importance of responsiveness between EPs and school staff. However, the current research provides very little transferable knowledge into EP practice generally, when accounting for the realities regarding available EP time and when working with schools in crisis situations. The current research on interventions lacks any direct measure of the unique contribution of the EPs through their applications of psychology. The studies also lack clarity in accounting for what is meant by a ‘crisis situation’ when considering the success of the interventions and how EPs’ support may differ or need to be specialist, depending upon the severity of the situation.

2.5.3.8 Importance of individual casework and individual level interventions for children or young people at high risk of permanent exclusion.
Although EPs provide support for CYP with SEBD at the individual, group and system level, the success of the interventions are associated with the specific needs of the school and pupil. Not all research studies can be applied to all situations, particularly for those schools in a crisis management situations working with CYP at immediate risk of permanent exclusion. In such situations, a reactive approach may be more appropriate that focuses at the individual level. The CYP may be too vulnerable to access group work, there may be limited time to engage in lengthy systems work and/or relationships between the pupil and staff may be so estranged that new interventions would not be positively welcomed. Instead, the focus may be on increasing the emotional health and wellbeing of the staff to see the CYP’s needs in a different way. Since EPs
are called upon in such crisis situations, there will always be individual casework and a need for individual level assessment, interventions and consultations for these most vulnerable pupils.

There is, however, an argument against individual casework. Some argue that individual casework has a limiting effect on the pupil and school as a whole, whereas working at the organisational level and policy level can be most effective at eliciting change at the individual level (Boyle & Lauchlan, 2009; Imich, 1999). A counter argument, discussed by Boyle and Lauchlan (2009), highlights the importance of individual casework for EPs as applied psychologists. They argue for the benefits of individual casework, such as evaluating whether or not the system is working for the CYP, which can evolve to the wider systemic approach, or can be a catalyst for direct psychological interventions for CYP. They also highlight the high esteem held for EPs’ work within complex individual casework. The authors, however, argue for a movement away from the association of individual casework with psychometric testing, in order to promote alternative assessment approaches.

In relation to SEBD work, in an ideal situation, all EPs would have the resources and all schools would value the importance of early intervention and preventive work, but this is not always the situation. Instead, EPs are called upon in crisis situations to help support positive outcomes for CYP. In these circumstances, in support of Boyle and Lauchlan (2009) argument, EPs’ work is focused at the individual complex casework level to bring about positive outcomes. To support EP practice, it would be beneficial for individual level interventions to provide clear examples of how EPs support positive outcomes in such situations.

Considering the current research within individual level interventions, there are a number of limitations. The studies are not clearly separated into either preventative or reactive approaches. The studies are limited in clearly defining the extent to which the CYP in the studies were at risk of exclusion, what assessments were taken and very few studies actually account for
interventions delivered by EPs in crisis management situations. There is also a lack of information to make the studies easily replicated by other EPs. They have gaps in their explanations of what skills, knowledge and strategies are required by the EP to ensure the positive outcomes (Robinson, 1998). Understanding the background, methods and strategies used by the EP is important to support other EPs’ application of the research into their practice. There is a need for a research study to look more closely at an individual case and an individual EP, particularly a specialist EP in SEBD, to explore in detail how EPs enable positive outcomes to occur for pupils at most risk of permanent exclusion.

2.5.3.9 Group level support: group work with pupils.
A number of group level interventions by EPs have proven successful at preventing school exclusion and/or increasing behaviour management strategies in classrooms (Burton, 2006; Brown, Powell & Clark, 2012; Clarke & Jenner, 2006).

Burton’s (2006) study evaluated EPs’ involvement in six sessions of group work with five secondary aged pupils at risk of exclusion. The group work focused on the ‘Over to You’ programme that aimed to develop individual responsibilities for behaviour and certain qualities including self-reflection, personal motivation and empowerment. The course content included a focus on strengths and difficulties, setting and working towards personal targets, feelings and behaviours, discussing communication skills and conflict resolution. Pre and post intervention rating scales completed by the class teacher and the pupils themselves, indicated an increase in the pupils’ social skills. One term following the intervention, the five pupils were reported by the assistant head teacher to have developed in their listening skills and were responding more positively to staff. None of the pupils had experienced any school exclusions although, prior to the intervention, the pupils were at risk of exclusion.
Although the measures taken were subjective, Burton’s (2006) study goes some way to demonstrate how EPs can help prevent school exclusion through direct work with groups of pupils. The success was, however, reported to be related to the ethos of the school and commitment of the school staff. This limits how the study can be generalised into EP practice, since typical barriers in SEBD work can be within the school itself and, instead of supporting the intervention, the focus of intervention may need to be at the teacher or classroom level. The study could also be critiqued for focusing on within-child changes rather than looking ecologically at other contributions to the pupils’ behaviour. It was also unclear whether direct therapeutic work would be appropriate for the pupils, given that no direct assessments were taken to support the researchers’ understanding of the nature and source of pupils’ difficulties. The notion of ‘at risk of exclusion’ is also unclear in the study. Pupils’ specific situations were not explained, but it was reported that group work for those at immediate risk of permanent exclusion should be avoided, which suggests that none of the pupils were in a crisis situation. This directly impacts upon the reality of conducting group work with CYP at risk of exclusion and raises questions about the necessity to focus at times at case level. It could be suggested that individual level assessments, consultation or interventions (see Sections 2.5.3.1, 2.5.3.2, 2.5.3.3, 2.5.3.4, 2.5.3.5, 2.5.3.6 and 2.5.3.6 above for more information) would be more appropriate in crisis situations.

Brown et al. (2012) evaluated the Working on What Works (WOWW) approach based on SFBT within a year one/two primary school classroom. The aim of the programme was to improve the behaviour and relationships between the children in the classroom through collaborative goal setting and team work. The WOWW approach had three stages. Stage one involved WOWW coaches (the school EP and an assistant EP) conducting a classroom observation to look for positive factors to feedback. Step two involved the coaches facilitating discussions with pupils and the teacher to set classroom goals. These included creating a team ethos in the class, pupils
showing respect to adults, improving positive relations between peers and improving pupils’ listening skills. Step three involved the pupils scaling the classroom’s success towards their goal. Observations and feedback were also conducted once a week. Following 10 weeks of intervention, the coaches met with the head teacher and class teacher to evaluate the project. The class teacher also engaged in a semi-structured interview, whilst pupils’ views were gathered through a non-verbal (thumb up, across or down) technique they were accustomed to. The results on a rating scale found that improvements were reported for all of the classroom goals. The teacher reported that negative behaviour in the classroom and playground had decreased while the pupils felt that they had increased in their ability to be polite and helpful.

The study strengthens the evidence base for the use of SFBT approaches for group interventions to support positive behaviour change. It highlights the positive impact of collaborative work between EPs and teachers and is an effective use of EPs’ time and resources to support early intervention work. Limiting the transferability of the findings, there is a combination of factors needed to ensure positive outcomes, including the commitment of the school and class teacher and the availability of EP time, that are not always easily accomplished. There are a number of other limitations to the study, including the subjective nature of the data collected and the difficulties encountered by the pupils’ use of the rating scales which limits the studies reliability.

2.5.3.10 Group level support: group work with teachers.
Hayes, Hindle and Withington (2007) evaluated a secondary school project aimed to develop behaviour management strategies by challenging teachers to modify their behaviour through increasing the number of their specific positive statements. The change in classroom practice was supported through group work with teachers using the Staff Sharing Scheme (SSS), whereby they could consider their behaviour management strategies in a safe, supportive environment. The data was evaluated by EPs through classroom observations, questionnaires completed by teachers who took part in group work, interviews and a focus group. The results indicated that
both attitude and behaviour change had taken place. Teachers valued the SSS and found that the process clarified problem situations, generated interventions and was an opportunity to share knowledge and build confidence.

Although Hayes et al.’s (2007) study found that group work supported teachers to shape their understanding that they can support positive behaviour change and do so through the use of positive language, the study was limited in explaining how and what change occurred. It is not clear what role, if any, the EP had in the group work or how the groups were set up in the first instance. For preventative measures, the outcomes present a positive approach, however, the reality of EP time limits how the study could be replicated into practice.

### 2.5.3.11 Overview of group level support.
The three studies discussed highlight positive outcomes from EP support through group level intervention for preventing school exclusion and/or increasing behaviour management strategies in classrooms. The studies have highlighted the importance of strengths building for pupils, creating a shared ownership in classrooms and a supportive network for teachers.

In comparison to some individual level interventions, group level interventions require a heightened amount of human resources from EP services which, in most authorities, is unrealistic to enable the interventions to become part of general practice. Group level interventions are also more supportive of early intervention than reactive approaches meaning that they cannot be accounted for in crisis situations, whereby relationships between a pupil and a school may have disintegrated and/or a pupil is at immediate risk of permanent exclusion. It remains important, therefore, to account for the positive approaches at the group level, but be mindful of the importance of needing more intensive individual level intervention in some circumstances.
2.5.3.12 System level support.
Positive outcomes have been reported from EPs’ involvement at systems level interventions to support schools’ inclusive practice for CYP with SEBD and their behaviour management policies and strategies (Clarke & Jenner, 2006; Jenner, & Gravenstede, 2007). Clarke and Jenner (2006), for instance, used Self-Organised Learning (SOL), underpinned by PCP, as a model of consultation over three sessions with school professionals to promote whole school change in the way behaviour was managed. The SOL process supported the movement away from within-child factors and supported the general development of strategies around behaviour. The process used a Purpose, Strategy, Outcome, Review (PSOR) cycle. The purpose was defined as exploring individuals’ attitudes and constructs to increase their personal awareness to support their ability to change. The strategy described actions to be carried out which may have resulted in a change in teacher behaviour. The outcome described the expectations of the strategy and the review appraised the whole process. The method involved two EPSs adopting the SOL model within their practice. The study found that within one primary school, the use of SOL led to the development of purposeful strategies for positive behaviour management and a structure to review these strategies. The study reported that SOL consultation helped establish how the schools could best meet the pupils’ needs from an ecological perspective and helped EPs work at the early intervention level. The nature of the strategies applied and how they were evaluated were not, however, discussed in the research nor was the impact of the intervention measured against inclusion figures, such as numbers of behaviour incidents reported or exclusions issued. It is, therefore, difficult to measure the impact from individual CYP’s perspective.

2.6 Summary of the Literature Review
A definition of a SEBD is provided by the continuum framework (Cooper, 1993; Miller, 2003), the SENCoP (DfES, 2001a) and under the DDA (DfES, 2005c), but is debated in research literature. The development and management of SEBDs are impacted by interrelated home, school and individual factors (Farrell, 1995). In education, the SENCoP (DfES, 2001a) is used to
identify and assess SEBDs, although the identification and assessment is mainly left to the interpretation of professionals and is criticised in not supporting all CYP (Farrell, 1995). Government legislation, guidance documents and national strategies have been produced to support schools in tackling behaviour and discipline (DCSF, 2008b; DCSF, 2009; DfES, 2005a; DfES, 2005b). Head teachers have the legal power to issue school exclusions and an estimated 5,170 CYP were excluded during the 2009/2010 academic year (DfE, 2013c). Most of the CYP excluded demonstrate SEBDs (Hayden, 1997) and the exclusions are further damaging to the individual and the society as a whole (Brown, 2007; Theriot et al., 2010). Therefore, schools need to engage in preventative measures and positive alternatives to exclusion.

Educational Psychologists (EP) apply psychological skills, knowledge and understanding through consultation, assessment, intervention, research and training to promote the development of CYP aged 0 to 24 (Cameron, 2006; DfE, 2011a). Although only some EPs have specialisms, little is known about specialist EP roles (Dennis, 2003). Understanding how Specialist EPs (SEBD) work to support positive outcomes for CYP at risk of exclusion, would further support positive outcomes for CYP. To support CYP with SEBD at risk of school exclusion, research has explored EPs engagement in preventative and reactive approaches at the individual, group and system level (Clarke & Jenner, 2006; Hardman, 2001; O'Brien & Miller, 2005; Thorne & Ivens, 1999).

At the individual level, EPs have been found to use assessment, consultation and intervention, and work as part of multi-agency teams. Educational Psychologists’ (EP) assessments of SEBDs have been criticised for lacking objectivity (Rees et al., 2003), leading to least favourable outcomes occurring for CYP (Farrell et al., 1996). Investigating how Specialist EPs (SEBD) assess SEBD, what methods and strategies they use would support more positive outcomes for CYP (McCall & Farrell, 1993). Although the research is limited, EPs have been found to use consultation during their work on SEBDs and through which have been seen to contain
teachers’ feelings and raise their awareness of pupil’s needs (Gross & McChrystal, 2001; Hartnell, 2010; O’Brien and Miller, 2005). Positive outcomes have been reported through EPs application of psychological theory through interventions to support individual CYP with SEBD (Hardman, 2001; Smith & Cooke, 2000; Thorne & Ivens, 1999). The use of PCP has been found to have a positive impact on a pupil’s self-awareness (Hardman, 2001). Successful outcomes were found following EPs use of SFBT (Thorne & Ivens, 1999) and following the implementation of the ‘Circle of Friends’ approach (Smith & Cooke, 2000). The studies are limited in providing transferable knowledge into EP practice. They are limited in providing detailed accounts of the EPs direct contribution to the successful outcomes. The current research lacks clarity on how EPs’ support may differ depending upon the severity of CYP’s situation and level of associated risk of exclusion. Since EPs are called upon in crisis situations there will always be complex casework for CYP at risk of exclusion. At the individual level it would be beneficial to provide a more comprehensive exploration of how Specialist EPs (SEBD) support positive outcomes for CYP with SEBD.

At the group level, interventions used by EPs with groups of CYP have proven successful at increasing pupils’ social skills, decreasing their acting out behaviour and risk of exclusion (Burton, 2006; Clarke & Jenner, 2006). A group level intervention with teachers has been found to support classroom practice and pupils’ behaviour (Hayes et al., 2007). The studies are, however, limited in their use of subjective post intervention measures and in explaining what role the EP had in the intervention.

At the system level, positive outcomes have been reported from EPs’ involvement in supporting schools inclusive practice for CYP with SEBD from an ecological perspective and early intervention level (Clarke & Jenner, 2006). The research was, however, limited in describing the strategies applied and how they were evaluated. In comparison to the individual level, EP involvement at the group and system level for CYP with SEBD at risk of exclusion, is more
supportive of early intervention and preventative approaches rather crisis management support and reactive approaches. Current research, therefore, indicates that EPs’ work within the area of SEBD supports positive outcomes for CYP at risk of exclusion, but there are a number of limitations in the current research and research gaps that explore effective strategies and methods employed by Specialist EPs (SEBD) for individual CYP at immediate risk of permanent exclusion. The research gaps include:

- What are the effective strategies and methods employed by Specialist EPs (SEBD) to support schools, parents/guardians to prevent school exclusions?

- What are the distinctive contributions of the strategies and methods employed by Specialist EPs (SEBD) in effective work with CYP with SEBD, from the perspectives of teachers, parents/guardians and Specialist EPs (SEBD)?

- How are SEBDs assessed by Specialist EPs (SEBD) and how do these assessments support positive outcomes for CYP?

The current research study aims to address these research gaps by asking:

**RQ1**: What strategies and methods did a Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD) use in effective specialist work to support Children or Young People with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, at risk of school exclusion?

**RQ2**: What was considered to be the distinctive contribution of the Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD) in effective specialist work to support Children or Young People with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, at risk of school exclusion?
The current research study aims to strengthen the support provided to schools for CYP with SEBD, to help prevent school exclusion by contributing to the knowledge of EP practice through finding out what strategies and methods are effectively employed by Specialist EPs (SEBD). It is considered that through investigating effective practices, the skill set and knowledge of practitioner EPs will be strengthened which, in turn, will positively impact upon schools, parents/guardians and CYP.

The research study aims to benefit the EP profession itself by evaluating the distinctive contribution of EPs and the specialist SEBD role within the profession. Understanding the distinctive contribution is important to support the profession in demonstrating psychologists’ strengths in light of the current changes occurring within the profession and the SEN review (DfE, 2011a; DfE, 2012a). Investigating the role of the EP as ‘specialist’ is essential to continually strengthen the skills and knowledge of EP practices, whilst also making considerations for further expansion of specialisms within the overall field of educational psychology.

At a local level, of the 14 districts and 697 schools (including mainstream nursery, primary, secondary and short stay schools) within the geographical area covered by the Independent Educational Psychology Service (IEPS) involved in the current study, the number of fixed period exclusion in the 2011 to 2012 academic year was comparatively higher than other districts at 816 and the number of permanent exclusions was 24 (DfE, 2013c). The statistics suggest that schools within the geographical area of the IEPS find it more difficult than other areas to maintain CYP with SEBD and meet their needs within mainstream education. The research study, therefore, has a local need to develop the skills of the EPs, working in LAs and independent practices, to support schools in providing the best outcomes for pupils by reducing the numbers of permanent exclusions.
The study also has specific relevance to the researcher’s place of work within the IEPS. The IEPS established in March 2010 by a senior EP, now Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP) of the IEPS. The PEP’s area of specialism is within SEBD and consequently a large proportion of the commissioned work is in supporting schools with CYP with challenging behaviour. Although referral rates are not formally documented, in the 2012 to 2013 academic year, the number of referrals to the IEPS for CYP with SEBD, at risk of exclusion, exceeded 30.

In a similar light to Grant and Brooks (1998) vision that CYP who are at risk of exclusion should be immediately brought to the attention of an EP to prevent school exclusion and Robinson’s (1998) crisis management way of working, the IEPS is set to extend and strengthen the support provided to schools by offering a telephone helpline and 48 hour response for a face-to-face consultation for crisis situations. The research, therefore, aims to develop the EPs’ skills who work in the IEPS, to strengthen the support provided to schools in crisis management situations and, as a result, increase the positive outcomes for CYP. It is aimed that as a result of the research, considerations will be made in how the help line and 48 hour response will be coordinated between the IEPS’s EPs. Considerations will also be made in relation to the induction process for EPs into the IEPS and the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of the current EPs within the IEPS.
Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Rationale

The research study aims to strengthen the support provided to schools for Children or Young People (CYP) with Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) to help prevent school exclusion by contributing to the knowledge of Educational Psychologists’ (EP) practice. The study aims to benefit the EP profession itself by evaluating the distinctive contribution of EPs in SEBD work and the Specialist EP (SEBD) role within the profession. The research study asks:

**RQ1:** What strategies and methods did a Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD) use in effective specialist work to support Children or Young People with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, at risk of school exclusion?

**RQ2:** What was considered to be the distinctive contribution of the Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD) in effective specialist work to support Children or Young People with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, at risk of school exclusion?

3.2 Epistemological and Ontological Position

The epistemological and ontological position of the research is from a critical realist stance. The research aims to take on board the subjective experiences of the participants and at the same time, attempt to establish an objective reality (Robson, 2002). This will be achieved through purely qualitative methods by enabling the participants to explore and discuss their social constructs during the interviews, but at the same time, the researcher will introduce a positivist approach by raising the researcher’s view of ascertainable facts to the discussion. This will enable the researcher to build up a socially constructed picture presented by each participant, which will be individually explored and checked against the researcher’s objective facts and then triangulated between participants and the researcher’s reality. This will enable the research to be
analysed at a deeper level by cross referencing and questioning the participants’ subjective realities that formulate their opinions and thoughts against reasonable realities.

### 3.3 Design of the Study

The methodology used an exploratory single in-depth case study design (see Figure 3.1 below for an illustration) (Yin, 2009). The single in-depth case study looked at how a Specialist EP (SEBD), offered effective support for CYP with SEBD, at risk of permanent school exclusion, and the distinctive contribution of the effective specialist work. The case study involved and explored the work of one Specialist EP (SEBD) involved in two caseworks.

Given the conclusions drawn from the literature review (see Section 2.6 above for more details), a more detailed description of the skills, strategies and methods applied by EPs, with successful experience in supporting CYP with SEBD, is needed to strengthen EP support services to prevent school exclusion. There is a need for a research study to look more closely at an individual case and an individual EP, particularly a Specialist EP (SEBD). The current study aimed to address the research gaps by answering the research questions proposed in the study (see Section 3.1 above for more details).

Yin (2003) provides a detailed account of case study methodology. In accordance to Yin (2003), a ‘case study’ is a descriptive, exploratory or explanatory analysis of a person, group or event; a ‘unit of analysis’ is a definition of what the case is – the primary unit of analysis (an individual, group, organizations or country); and a ‘proposition’ is a description of what the case study is interested in answering and, through which, directs the study to look for relevant evidence within the case to answer the research question(s). In the present study, the ‘case’ was the work of one Specialist EP (SEBD) with successful outcomes of supporting two CYP with SEBD at risk of school exclusion. The units of analysis were the exploration of the strategies and methods applied by the Specialist EP (SEBD) and their distinctive contribution to the successful
outcomes. The propositions related directly to questions as to ‘how’ and ‘why’ the Specialist EP (SEBD) achieved the successful outcomes. The case study and context; the units of analysis; and propositions for the case study are presented in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 below.

A case study design was chosen because it benefits investigations of human systems through enabling an in-depth evaluation, which reports upon the complex dynamic and unfolding interactions of events and human relationships (Nisbet & Watt, 1984). The recognition of the environmental context within a case study design helps establish cause and effect relationships and how ideas and principles fit together (Nisbet & Watt, 1984). A case study design, therefore, benefits the current investigation by providing an in-depth exploration of the specific skills employed by the Participant Specialist EP and how those specific skills interrelated within the context and relationships with others, to enable positive outcomes to occur.

Conducting a case study series was a possibility within the current study and would have concluded in a number of benefits. A case study series would have benefited the findings by providing information to present a cross case analysis of similarities and/or differences in two or more Specialist EP’s (SEBD) practices. The identification of similarities and differences in Specialist EP’s (SEBD) practices would have extended the knowledge on what strategies and methods are effectively applied by Specialist EPs (SEBD), in different contexts, and whether similar or different factors are considered distinctive in different Specialist EP’s (SEBD) effective specialist work. The evaluation of a single case study design, in the current study, was conducted because sufficient substance was generated from one case study which merited an in-depth evaluation of the findings.
Case Study – Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist

Context – School A

Casework 1

Units of Analysis (UoA)

UoA1: Strategies and methods used in effective Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD) support for Children or Young People with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, at risk of exclusion.

UoA2: The distinctive contribution of Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD) work to support Children or Young People with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, at risk of school exclusion.

Context – School B

Casework 2

Units of Analysis (UoA)

UoA1: Strategies and methods used in effective Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD) support for Children or Young People with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, at risk of exclusion.

UoA2: The distinctive contribution of Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD) work to support Children or Young People with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, at risk of school exclusion.

Figure 3.1: The Case Study Design
**UoA1: Strategies and methods used in effective Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD) support for Children or Young People with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, at risk of exclusion.**

P1: The Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD) uses assessment and consultation to formulate a hypothesis on a Child or Young Person’s Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.

P2: The Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD) supports others to take a holistic and child-centred view of the Child or Young Person’s difficulties.

P3: The Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD) supports the professionals through reciprocity and containment of anxieties and through the use of discourse that supports the change process.

**UoA2: The distinctive contribution of Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD) work to support Children or Young People with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, at risk of school exclusion.**

P4: The Specialist Educational Psychologist’s (SEBD) assessments and consultation processes are unique to her training and her effective involvement with Children or Young People with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.

P5: The Specialist Educational Psychologist’s (SEBD) ability to apply psychological theories and practices are unique to her effective involvement with Children or Young People with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.

P6: The Specialist Educational Psychologist’s (SEBD) ability to take on a holistic and child-centred view of the Child or Young Person’s difficulties is unique to her contribution of specialist Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties work.

**Figure 3.2: The Units of Analysis (UoA) and Propositions (P) for the Case Study Design**
3.4 Sampling and Participant Recruitment
The research study involved a single case study. The case study was of one Specialist EP (SEBD) involved in two caseworks (see Figure 3.1 above). The selection criteria for the caseworks was inclusive of:

- a positive example of a Specialist EP’s (SEBD) involvement in either a mainstream primary or mainstream secondary school, whereby the school requested the Specialist EP’s (SEBD) support for a Child or Young Person (CYP) with SEBD and, at the time of request, the CYP was at risk of permanent school exclusion. As a result of the Specialist EP’s (SEBD) involvement, positive outcomes for the CYP were achieved. The Specialist EP’s (SEBD) involvement with the CYP had been completed at the time of participant recruitment and had occurred within the last twelve months.

The study addressed the difficulties in defining SEBDs (see Sections 2.2.1.1 and 2.2.1.1.1 above) by asking the Participant Specialist EP to explain, in her professional opinion, why she considered the CYP to have a SEBD. For this study, the chosen caseworks were on the effective support provided for two pupils under the age of 11. The plurals, ‘children’ or ‘pupils’ and the singular, ‘child’ or ‘pupil,’ will, hereafter, be used to refer to children within the caseworks.

The caseworks included the Participant Specialist EP, the key school professionals involved with the individual children, and the children’s parents/guardians. The children were not directly involved in the study as the study focused on how a Specialist EP (SEBD) supported school professionals and parents/guardians. The criteria for involving school staff in the study, was based on their direct involvement with the individual children and the Participant Specialist EP. A total of eight participants were involved in the study. In casework 1 the participants included the Participant Specialist EP, the head teacher, the child’s class teacher and one of the child’s parents. In casework 2 the participants included the Participant Specialist EP, the head teacher, the child’s class teacher and both of the child’s parents.
Recruitment of the Participant Specialist EP was taken through self-selection. The Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP) in the researcher’s place of work was approached in person and by formal letter, via email (see Appendix A below), asking for her participation in the study. The PEP was also sent the Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix B below) and Consent Form (see Appendix C below), for her information. The PEP was identified as a Specialist EP (SEBD) in accordance with the selection criteria, described below in the current section, and was approached because she was able to easily identify caseworks fitting the selection criteria described above in the current section.

For the purposes of this study, a Specialist EP (SEBD) was defined as a Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) registered EP who, within their establishment (either Local Authority (LA) or Independent Educational Psychology Service (IEPS)), had developed an understanding and experience within the area of SEBD to be defined as a specialist. Definitions were inclusive of job title, self-identification and identification amongst practitioner colleagues. The PEP was a HCPC registered EP in an IEPS. The PEP had varied experiences of supporting CYP with SEBD and was defined as a Specialist EP (SEBD), through self-identification and identification amongst peers (see Figure 3.3 below for more information).

The involvement of the researcher’s place of work in the study resulted in the study being conducted by an insider researcher, which could have affected the validity of the study. To increase the methodological validity, the researcher ensured that participants were not overly probed in the interviews whilst, in the data analysis, although the researcher had to make some inferences between contradictory accounts made by the same participant (see Section 3.7.2 below for more information), the researcher was drawn to aspects that were positively distinctive and clearly identifiable. The contradictory comments were, therefore, still clearly identifiable. The involvement of the researcher’s place of work in the research was also not expected to have impacted negatively on the professional relationship between the researcher and the Participant
Specialist EP. This was considering that psychologists are scientific practitioners and have an interest in learning and development in their professional practice (BPS, 1999; HPC, 2009). Any potential negative findings would have been treated sensitively within the professional boundaries of the researcher’s and Specialist EP’s (SEBD) reflective practice and not taken personally.

Once the Participant Specialist EP agreed to take part in the study, she was asked to identify two caseworks. The Participant Specialist EP only selected appropriate caseworks whereby parents/guardians were able to provide informed consent to the overall study involving the professionals discussing their child and their individual participation. The head teachers, school professionals and parents/guardians were approached through the Participant Specialist EP and the researcher. The head teachers, school professionals and parents/guardians were presented with the Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms (see Appendices D, E, F, G, H, I and J below), for their consideration and were offered an informal meeting with the researcher to discuss the study. Four participants met with the researcher for an informal meeting, whereby the information on the Participant Information Sheet was discussed. Regardless of their direct involvement in the study, informed consent was gained from the head teachers of the schools, to enable the study to involve their school and staff. All participants were given a two week period to consider their participation. Throughout the recruitment process, the researcher’s details were provided to the prospective participants in case they had any additional questions regarding the research. Following the return of the signed consent forms, the researcher contacted the participants to arrange the interviews.
3.5 Data Gathering Methods
The data was gathered through one-to-one semi-structured interviews with the Participant Specialist EP, the parents/guardians and the school professionals. For casework 1, individual interviews were conducted with the Participant Specialist EP, the head teacher of the school, the child’s class teacher and with one of the child’s parents. For casework 2, individual interviews were conducted with the Participant Specialist EP, the head teacher of the school and the child’s class teacher. A joint interview was conducted with both of the child’s parents in casework 2. The one-to-one semi-structured interviews addressed all the research questions. The Participant Specialist EP was interviewed twice; once for casework 1 and once for casework 2. All the other participants were interviewed once. In accordance with Manchester University’s ethical guidance, each interview took no longer than 1 hour to complete. The interviews took place at the end of the Participant Specialist EP’s involvement with the CYP so that the researcher’s involvement could not directly impact upon the process and the outcomes for the CYP. The interviews were audio recorded, stored on two encrypted data sticks and transcribed by the researcher. During the data gathering and analysis stage of the research, the data sticks were kept securely at the researcher’s home in a lockable draw. The researcher’s university tutor is the custodian of the data. The data will be kept securely for five years after the end of the study.

3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews.
Interviews are described by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2008) as a flexible tool that uses a two-person conversation, initiated by the researcher, to obtain relevant information for a research study. Interviews were chosen as the principle data gathering method since, through an interview, variables and relationships between variables are identified as interviewees discuss their interpretations of the world and express their points of view (Cohen et al., 2008). An interview, therefore, provided an elaborate and in-depth evaluation of the skills and methods employed by the Participant Specialist EP and the uniqueness of her role, from the perspectives of different respondents. The information was then cross evaluated between different
respondents to explore the data in more detail, which increased the trustworthiness of the generated data overall. In addition, interviews were chosen because they increased the credibility of the findings, since the clarity of the responses were increased through the interviewer being able to respond to each individual interviewee’s answers by either asking another question or clarifying misunderstandings (Cohen et al., 2008).

The use of a semi-structured interview schedule was chosen as it enabled a more exploratory investigation and did not place too much emphasis on pre-empting the respondents’ answers to the questions (Cohen et al., 2008). The specific questions were able to be modified, as were the sequence of the questions and the wording of the questions (Cohen et al., 2008). Interview schedules were written for the Participant Specialist EP, the school professionals and the parents/guardians (see Appendices K, L and M below) and made reference to Kvale’s (1996) recommendations on writing interview schedules.

Kvale’s (1996) recommendations were used to generate the interview schedules instead of the case study propositions, since Kvale’s (1996) recommendations provided a more structured approach to the development of the interview questions. The development of the propositions were beneficial in exploring what the case study was interested in answering and what evidence within the case study should be explored. However, a more structured approach was considered to be beneficial to ensuring the interview questions closely matched the research questions and aims of the study, especially given that the propositions were derived from both existing research and researcher fieldwork experience.

Kvale (1996) recommends that when writing an interview schedule, considerations should be made on how the researcher’s objectives are translated into the interview questions so that the questions directly reflect the aim of the study. Considerations should, therefore, be taken when generating the interview questions, to account for what each research question is trying to
measure. Kvale (1996) argued that the research questions should be written by externalising the key variables of each research question. In the current study, the key variables of each research question were initially externalised (see Table 3.1 and 3.2 below for illustrations) to identify the key areas the interview questions needed to explore, in order to answer the research questions. The key variables of the research questions were then used to formulate the interview questions for the interview schedules. The rationale behind each interview question asked to the participants and the key variable each interview question addressed are represented below (see Tables 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 below for illustrations). The aim of following Kvale's (1996) guidelines was to increase the credibility of the interview questions. The interview questions were more likely to closely match the research questions than if the researcher had attempted to generate the interview questions without externalising the key variables of each research question.
### Table 3.1: The Key Variables Identified in Research Question 1

**RQ1:** What strategies and methods did a Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD) use in effective specialist work to support Children or Young people with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, at risk of school exclusion?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Variable 1</th>
<th>The process of the Participant Specialist EP’s involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Variable 2</td>
<td>The way the Participant Specialist EP helped and her applied approaches with the school staff, parents/guardians and the child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Variable 3</td>
<td>The Participant Specialist EP’s application of any assessment techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Variable 4</td>
<td>The effectiveness of the approaches applied by the Participant Specialist EP to enable the positive outcomes to have occurred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Variable 5</td>
<td>The typical nature of the strategies and methods applied by the Participant Specialist EP in comparison to the support provided by the Participant Specialist EP for other CYP with SEBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3.2: The Key Variables Identified in Research Question 2

**RQ2:** What was considered to be the distinctive contribution of the Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD) in effective specialist work to support Children or Young people with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, at risk of school exclusion?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Variable 6</th>
<th>The way in which the approaches led to the positive outcomes for the CYP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Variable 7</td>
<td>The identified approaches that were most effective in bringing about the positive outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Variable 8</td>
<td>The way the Participant Specialist EP’s support may have differed from other non-psychologist support services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Variable 9</td>
<td>The way the Participant Specialist EP’s support may have differed from the support provided by the Specialist EP (SEBD) for other CYP and from other EPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Variable 10</td>
<td>The distinctive contribution of a Specialist EP (SEBD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.3: The Rationale and Link to the Key Variables of the Interview Questions for the Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist’s Interview Schedule</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview Question</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rationale for the Interview Question</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Can you firstly explore the context/background to the school and the individual casework?</td>
<td>To place the strategies and methods applied by the Participant Specialist EP within the context of the casework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Can you recap from when you first became aware of the individual child or referral, your involvement with the child and the other professionals – what happened?</td>
<td>To highlight the process of the Participant Specialist EP’s involvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Was your involvement typical in relation to other similar cases? What were the challenges (if any) of this casework? Was there anything specific about this particular case or context that may have impacted upon your practice?</td>
<td>To highlight of the strategies and methods were typical for the Participant Specialist EP’s involvement with a child with SEBD and also to highlight if the Participant Specialist EP’s involvement was different to other EPs involvement in similar cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What strategies and methods did you use to support the school staff/parents? Or… How did you set about helping the school staff/parents… what did you do? Do you always apply the same strategies?</td>
<td>To identify the key methods and strategies applied by the Participant Specialist EP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What would you describe as the facilitators to the success of the child’s outcomes? What approach was most successful? What/how did you contribute?</td>
<td>To identify the successful outcomes that occurred as a result of the strategies and methods applied by the Participant Specialist EP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Are there any other professionals that could provide the same strategies and methods that you offered and achieve the same outcomes?</td>
<td>To identify if any other professional could have provided the same strategies and methods as those applied by the Participant Specialist EP. To identify the distinctive contribution of the Participant Specialist EP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What was distinctive about your contribution to the successful outcomes for the child? Are they unique to the EP role?</td>
<td>To identify the distinctive contribution of the Participant Specialist EP’s of the strategies and methods applied by the Participant Specialist EP to the positive outcomes for</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Is there a distinction between your contributions to effective SEBD work offered to this particular school and that which could have been provided by other non-specialists EPs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Question</td>
<td>Rationale for the Interview Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Can you firstly explore the context/background to the school and the individual child becoming at risk of permanent exclusion?</td>
<td>To place the strategies and methods applied by the Participant Specialist EP within the Key Variable 10 context of the casework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Can you recap from the beginning, the Participant Specialist EP’s involvement with the child, yourself and the other professionals – what happened?</td>
<td>To highlight the process of the Participant Specialist EP’s involvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What did the Participant Specialist EP do? How did the Participant Specialist EP help you? What strategies/methods did they use?</td>
<td>To identify the key methods and strategies applied by the Participant Specialist EP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What would you describe as the facilitators to the success of the child’s outcomes? What were the main reasons why successful outcome was achieved for the individual child? How did the Participant Specialist EP contribute to that success? Could anyone else have done the same thing?</td>
<td>To identify the successful outcomes that occurred as a result of the strategies and methods applied by the Participant Specialist EP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are there any other professionals that could provide the same strategies and methods (or support) that the Participant Specialist EP offered and achieve the same outcomes? Could another EP have done the same?</td>
<td>To identify if any other professional could have provided the same strategies and methods as those applied by the Participant Specialist EP. To identify the distinctive contribution of the Participant Specialist EP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What was distinctive about the Participant Specialist EP’s contribution to the successful outcomes for the child? Are they unique to the EP role?</td>
<td>To identify the distinctive contribution of the Participant Specialist EP’s of the strategies and methods applied by the Participant Specialist EP to the positive outcomes for the child.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.5: The Rationale and Link to the Key Variables of the Interview Questions for the Parents/Guardians’ Interview Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Rationale for the Interview Question</th>
<th>Corresponding Key Variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Can you firstly explore the context/background to your child’s school and the background to your child becoming at risk of permanent exclusion?</td>
<td>To place the strategies and methods applied by the Participant Specialist EP within the context of the casework.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Can you recap from the beginning, the Participant Specialist EP’s involvement with your child, yourself and the other professionals – what happened?</td>
<td>To highlight the process of the Participant Specialist EP’s involvement.</td>
<td>Key Variable 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What did the Participant Specialist EP do? How did the Participant Specialist EP help you? What strategies/methods did they use?</td>
<td>To identify the key methods and strategies applied by the Participant Specialist EP.</td>
<td>Key Variable 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Key Variable 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What would you describe as the facilitators to the success of your child’s outcomes? What were the main reasons why successful outcome was achieved for your child? How did the Participant Specialist EP contribute to that success? Could anyone else have done the same thing?</td>
<td>To identify the successful outcomes that occurred as a result of the strategies and methods applied by the Participant Specialist EP.</td>
<td>Key Variable 4</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Key Variable 6</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Key Variable 7</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Key Variable 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are there any other professionals that could provide the same strategies and methods (or support) that the Participant Specialist EP offered and achieve the same outcomes? Could another EP have done the same?</td>
<td>To identify if any other professional could have provided the same strategies and methods as those applied by the Participant Specialist EP. To identify the distinctive contribution of the Participant Specialist EP.</td>
<td>Key Variable 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Key Variable 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What was distinctive about the Participant Specialist EP’s contribution to the successful outcomes for your child? Are they unique to the EP role?</td>
<td>To identify the distinctive contribution of the Participant Specialist EP’s of the strategies and methods applied by the Participant Specialist EP to the positive outcomes for the child.</td>
<td>Key Variable 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Key Variable 9</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Key Variable 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A number of considerations were also taken when deciding upon the style of the interview questions. Cohen et al. (2008) recommended that when formulating interview questions, considerations should be made over the objectives of the interview; the depth of information sought; and the respondent’s level of education. Considerations should also be made over the types of questions used, including open and/or closed questions (Cohen et al., 2008). In the current study, the interviews used open-ended questions to put a frame of reference to the participants’ answers, whilst the questions ensured that the participants did not feel constrained in expressing their thoughts freely (see Tables 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 above and Appendices K, L and M below for illustrations). Open-ended questions were also chosen because they were flexible in allowing the researcher to establish the participants’ opinions and establish their knowledge to make a true evaluation of what the participants’ thought and believed (Cohen et al., 2008). Considerations were made over the use of questions that invite factual information and those that invite opinions (Cohen et al., 2008). A mixture of both styles of questions was used. Factual information was sought when the interview questions explored the sequence of the events that occurred during the Participant Specialist EP’s involvement and the methods and strategies applied by the Participant Specialist EP. Participants’ opinions were sought when the interview questions asked participants how the Participant Specialist EP helped them and whether they thought her contributions were distinctive (see Figures 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 above and see Appendices K, L and M below for illustrations).

The structure of the interview schedules began by using an investigative strategy that invited the participants to recap on what had happened (see interview question 1 in Figures 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 above for illustrations). The interview schedules then had a series of the open-ended questions (discussed above in the current section) that related directly to the research questions and aimed to further explore the participants’ experiences and opinions. Each research question had two or three interview questions. Interview questions varied slightly between participants depending
upon their role and involvement with the Participant Specialist EP, but all the interview questions directly related to the research questions (see Figures 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 above and Appendices K, L and M below for illustrations). During the interviews with the Participant Specialist EP, the contexts of the caseworks were explored in order to evaluate how typical her involvement and approaches were in relation to her other caseworks of CYP with SEBD. This also enabled an investigation into how the Participant Specialist EP’s practices may have been influenced by the particular context and what the facilitators and challenges were of each of the caseworks.

During the interviews, in order to increase the trustworthiness of the participants’ responses and decrease the tendency of the interviewees providing socially desirable responses, the researcher explained to the participants, at the beginning of each interview, that there were no right or wrong answers in response to the interview questions, but instead the interview was an opportunity to share their opinions and experiences. The researcher also aimed to build a rapport with the interviewees and create a natural feel to the interview and interview room to help encourage the participants to provide open and honest answers.

3.5.2 Background information to the case study and caseworks.
For the researcher to ensure the appropriateness of the caseworks and to understand the background to the case study and caseworks and to contextualise the research and inform the interview process, background information was gathered through a discussion with the Participant Specialist EP prior to the interview and through access to documents and information sources, such as Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) reports, school prospectuses, the IEPS’s website and LA statistics. The background information did not, therefore, form part of the research design.
Background information was gathered on the Participant Specialist EP, the IEPS and the demographic area covered (see Figures 3.3 and 3.4 below for more information). Background information was gathered on the school context of the caseworks including the Participant Specialist EP’s previous involvement with the school, the CYP’s personal circumstances that led to them being at risk of school exclusion and the Participant Specialist EP’s involvement with the casework (see Figures 3.5 and 3.6 below for more information). When collecting the background information, considerations were also made for the IEPS’s stance on exclusion and the role of the EP.
Background Information on the Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist

At the time of the research, the Participant Specialist EP had been practising as an EP for 17 years. Prior to training as an EP, the Participant Specialist EP had experience as a residential children’s home worker, a primary school class teacher and a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo). The Participant Specialist EP completed the one year Masters in Child and Educational Psychology (MSc Ch. Psych.) to train as an EP. The Participant Specialist EP worked for a LA for 14 years. Within that time, the Participant Specialist EP worked as a generic EP, an EP for the Pupil Referral Units (PRU) and a Senior EP. The Participant Specialist EP’s role as a Senior EP saw her manage a traded Educational Psychology Service (EPS) service for the LA. In 2010, the Participant Specialist EP left the LA to set up her own IEPS which had been established for three years at the time of writing.

During her time working for the LA, the Participant Specialist EP established the successful way of working to support CYP with SEBD at risk of school exclusion, as reported in the current study. The Participant Specialist EP had, however, developed her specialism in SEBD over the course of her professional career. The SEP had experience intervening with CYP with SEBD whilst working as a care worker in social care service and whilst working as a primary school teacher. Following her professional training in educational psychology, the Participant Specialist EP continued to develop her expertise in SEBD and intervened with CYP with SEBD at a number of levels. The Participant Specialist EP took the lead on a number of interventions including setting up nurture classes. The Participant Specialist EP became a keynote speaker on attachment theory and helped run the Social Emotional Aspects of Learning-Plus (SEAL-Plus®) initiative. In her current position, as PEP of a IEPS, the Participant Specialist EP supports CYP with SEBD through providing emergency response support for schools and parents with CYP at risk of school exclusion. The Participant Specialist EP delivers therapeutic interventions with CYP; delivers training on SEBD; and offers support at an organisational level to develop schools provision and inclusion of CYP with SEBD. The Participant Specialist EP continues to develop her expertise through her own Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

Figure 3.3: Background Information on the Specialist Educational Psychologist
Note 2 Social Emotional Aspects of Learning-Plus (SEAL-Plus) was an intervention launched by the LA within which the Participant Specialist EP was working. The SEAL-Plus intervention aimed to decrease the number of school exclusions issued in the LA to children in Key Stage 2. The intervention aimed to develop the skills of head teachers; to develop their inclusion of CYP with SEBDs; and capacity to implement the Social, Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) national strategy (DfES, 2005a). The SEAL-Plus initiative involved a 12 day training course on the development and management of SEBDs. The initiative then offered follow up coaching support to put the training into practice. The Participant Specialist EP took a lead on SEAL-Plus initiative and was a key note speaker and coach.
Background Information on the Independent Educational Psychology Service

The IEPS was set up in 2010 by the PEP/Participant Specialist EP who took part in the current study. Over the three years of practice and at the time of writing, the IEPS had expanded its portfolio to include 70 educational settings, of which, 63 were mainstream primary schools, seven were mainstream secondary schools. The IEPS also accepted referrals direct from parents and provided one off support (including training, advice and casework) for educational settings. Parental referrals and one off support only accounted for less than 5% of the overall commissioned work, with the remaining being within mainstream schools. The portfolio did not include any independent schools. The employment context of the schools was, therefore, typical of that found by any other EPS including those non-commissioned and those commissioned inside or outside the LA.

The geographical area covered by the IEPS included 14 districts within 3076 square kilometres of city, coast and countryside and a population total of 1.4 million people; of which 330,000 were aged between 0-19 years old (LA, 2012). The demographic area had a varied deprivation index, ranging from some areas being within the “top 50” most deprived areas in England, whilst other areas were judge to be in the “top 50” least deprived areas in England (LA, 2012).

At the time of the research, the EPs and other professionals that worked in the IEPS included the PEP/Participant Specialist EP, two Trainee EPs (TEP), 3 associate Senior EPs and an Early Years and Play Specialist. The team offered support for CYP aged between 0 and 24 years old. The role of the PEP/Participant Specialist EP in the IEPS was typical to that found by any other EPs working within mainstream settings, as she aimed to offer support to families and schools at the organisational, group and individual level through assessment, intervention, advice and training on various areas of child development.

The number of referrals to the IEPS for CYP with SEBD, at risk of exclusion in the 2012 to 2013 academic year, exceeded 30. The IEPS’s stance on exclusion was that CYP suffer as a result of being excluded from school and that EPs have a powerful and influential role to support schools and families to prevent school exclusion.

Figure 3.4: Background information on the Independent Educational Psychology Service
Background Information on Casework 1: The School Context and the Casework Context

The school context
The school involved within casework 1 was a smaller than average primary school with 119 children on roll in 2012. The economic social grading for the catchment area was low. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was well above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) was also above average. Most of the pupils were from White British backgrounds (Ofsted, 2012). The overall effectiveness of the school was rated as “Good” by Ofsted in 2012. The SEP defined the school as a high excluding school with broad experience of children with challenging behaviour.

The Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist’s previous involvement with the school
The Participant Specialist EP had known the head teacher of the school for 5 years. The Participant Specialist EP had previously supported the head teacher on the SEAL-Plus initiative to decrease the number of school exclusions issued by the school. The Participant Specialist EP has also delivered learning mentor training for some of the school staff. The Participant Specialist EP had not worked directly with any other members of staff, until her involvement within casework 1.

The casework context and Participant Special Educational Psychologist’s involvement
The individual child was in Year 4 when the Participant Specialist EP became involved. The child had experienced a number of temporary exclusions prior to the Participant Specialist EP’s involvement. The Participant Specialist EP was contacted by telephone and asked if she would offer support to the school and family, as the child was at risk of permanent exclusion. The family had previously received support from various agencies including social services. The Participant Specialist EP identified the child as having SEBD. The child was displaying behavioural difficulties on the playground and in the classroom. The Participant Specialist EP offered support over a number of school visits. On the first school visit the Participant Specialist EP conducted an observation and consultation with school staff and one of the child’s parents. On a second visit the Participant Specialist EP had a discussion with the child. On a third visit the Participant Specialist EP attended a Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting and had a consultation with one of the child’s parents. On a fourth visit the Participant Specialist EP conducted a second observation and had a consultation with school staff.
On a fifth visit (6 months later), the SEP completed a formal assessment with the child. As a result of the Participant Specialist EP’s involvement, the child’s behaviour and capacity to learn increased. The child was not permanently excluded from school.

Following on from the fifth visit made by the Participant Specialist EP, a managed transfer was used as a positive strategy for the child. The Participant Specialist EP followed the child’s progress into his new school and found that he was responding very positively and was actively engaged in his learning.

Figure 3.5: Background Information on Casework 1
Background Information on Casework 2: The School Context and the Casework Context

The school context
The school involved within casework 2 was an averaged sized infant school with 210 children on roll in 2009. Pupils who attended the school came from a variety of social backgrounds. Most of the pupils were from a White British heritage background. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was well below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of SEN was below average (Ofsted, 2009). The overall effectiveness of the school was rated as “Outstanding” by Ofsted in 2009. The SEP defined the school as a very low excluding school with minimal experience of children with challenging behaviour.

The Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist’s previous involvement with the school
The Participant Specialist EP had not previously known the head teacher or worked in the school prior to her involvement in the casework. The head teacher had heard about the service provided by the Participant Specialist EP and her expertise in SEBD through word of mouth with other head teacher colleagues.

The casework context and Participant Special Educational Psychologist's involvement
The individual child was in Year 2 when the Participant Specialist EP became involved. The child had experienced one temporary exclusion prior to the SEP’s involvement. The Participant Specialist EP was contacted by telephone and asked if she would offer support to the school and family, as the child was at risk of permanent exclusion. The family had previously received support from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). At the time of the SEP's involvement, the child was receiving an Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) assessment. The Participant Specialist EP identified the child as having SEBD. The child was displaying behavioural difficulties on the playground. The Participant Specialist EP offered support over a number of school visits. On the first school visit the Participant Specialist EP conducted an observation; had a discussion with the child; and had a joint consultation with school staff and one of the child’s parents. On a second visit, the SEP held a multi-agency TAC meeting with the child’s parents, the school staff and professionals from a local Children’s Centre. As a result of the Participant Specialist EP's involvement, the child’s positive behaviour on the playground increased.

Figure 3.6: Background Information on Casework 2
The professionals from the children’s centre were not invited to take part in the study because their involvement with the Participant Specialist EP was minimal in comparison to the other participants. The additional information would, therefore, have been insufficient and uncomplimentary to the information generated from the remaining participants. In addition, it was felt that there was sufficient information provided by the remaining participants for the researcher to conduct an in-depth analysis.
3.5.3 Documentation relating to the participant specialist educational psychologist’s involvement with caseworks.

Yin (2003) described the importance of using multiple sources of evidence to increase the quality of the data gathered by being able to triangulate the findings of the case study. In the present study, the data was gathered through semi-structured interviews (see Section 3.5.1 above for more information) and from documented action plans, written for the individual caseworks. The use of multiple sources of evidence was considered to have increased the credibility of the piece of case study research as elements of the findings from the interviews were able to be cross referenced with the documented accounts of the Participant Specialist EP’s involvement (see below in the current section for more information).

A simple content analysis was conducted on the documented action plans devised by the Participant Specialist EP for casework 1 and casework 2, in consultation with the school professionals. As defined by Cohen et al. (2008), a content analysis defines the process of rigorously analysing, summarising and reporting the contents of written data. The text that makes up written data is defined as any written communication materials which are intended to be read and understood by people, other than the analysts, for the purposes of the research (Cohen et al., 2008). In the present study, the content analysis aimed to support the findings presented for Research Question 1 (see Section 3.1 above for an illustration) by triangulating the information provided from the semi-structured interviews on the strategies and methods applied by the Participant Specialist EP, with the action plans devised for the caseworks. It was anticipated that a content analysis would increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the research study by triangulating some of the findings. The content analysis is detailed below (see Section 3.6.2 below for more information).
3.6 Data Analysis

3.6.1 Thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the transcripts generated from the semi-structured interviews. The present study, therefore, combined a case study methodology with a thematic data analysis process. Yin (2003) highlighted the role of theory in designing and doing case studies and explained that within exploratory case studies (whether single or multiple) the aim is to define the questions or hypothesis of the study. On the other hand, thematic analysis is argued to be supportive of the generation of ‘new’ theory. Although the two approaches appear contrasting in their aims, the present study combined a case study methodology with a thematic analysis since neither is overly prescriptive in either a ‘deductive’ or ‘inductive’ approach and both were ideally placed to explore and answer the research questions. Yin (2003), for example, explained how an exploratory case study’s goal may justifiably be to discover theory, while Braun and Clarke (2006) highlighted how thematic analysis can be approached either deductively or inductively so, therefore, can either explore, explain or describe existing theory or generate ‘new’ theory. The present study took advantage of this flexibility and derived the propositions from existing research and the researcher’s fieldwork experience, whilst the analysis took an inductive/deductive approach. The propositions were decided not to be revised in light of the findings since the case study approach applied was not overly prescribed towards using the case study to explore or describe current theory, but rather a stronger emphasis was applied to the inductive/deductive exploration of the findings through the thematic analysis.

Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phase model was used as a guide as it was expected that the credibility of the analysis would be supported through the use of the phased model, since the approach provided the researcher with a clear structure within which to analyse the transcripts. The themes were identified in a balanced inductive/deductive analysis process, driven by and strongly linked to the research questions. The themes were devised at an interpretive level (see below in the current section, for more information). There was no intention to determine or
delimit the number of thematic maps, however, the interpretation generated sought to represent the meaning of the data parsimoniously.

The thematic analysis aimed to generate the same themes per casework with the consideration of combining the codes from the individual caseworks together into the whole data set. A sequential approach was adopted to the process of transcription. It was considered that by transcribing the Participant Specialist EP’s interviews first, followed by the head teacher’s interview, the class teacher’s interview and then the parent’s interview, for casework 1 and then repeated for casework 2, the researcher’s capacity to reflect on the data and the emerging themes would be supported. This approach was considered to be successful in enabling the researcher to reflect upon the whole of the data gathered from the Participant Specialist EP during the process of transcribing the rest of the data generated from casework 1. The researcher was then able to reflect upon the Participant Specialist EP’s transcriptions and those generated for casework 1 when transcribing the participants’ interviews in casework 2. Each time a transcript was completed, the researcher was able to continually build up and reflect upon a mental representation of the data. To continue to familiarise herself with the data, following the transcriptions, the researcher actively read and then re-read the transcripts to search for clearly identifiable meanings, patterns or codes. The researcher made a number of written notes, at this stage, on the emerging patterns and potential codes.

The transcripts were then analysed sequentially, to generate the initial codes for each research question, beginning with casework 1 and then casework 2. The transcripts from the caseworks were coded twice, once for each research question. This was undertaken to ensure that the entire data set had been exhausted systematically and all interesting aspects of data items had been identified to detail an in-depth analysis of the findings. Each analysis of the transcripts from the caseworks was coded in a particular order. For casework 1, the Participant Specialist EP’s interview was coded first followed by the class teacher’s interview, the head teacher’s interview
and lastly the parent’s interview. For casework 2, the Participant Specialist EP’s interview was coded first, followed by the head teacher’s interview, the class teacher’s interview and lastly the parents’ interview.

The order of the analysis was decided as a result of the transcription and familiarisation process, whereby the richness of the data items was assessed. The Participant Specialist EP’s interviews, in particular the interview associated with casework 1, provided the most marked responses to evidence the research questions and provided the most complementary responses to those given by the other participants. For example, in the Participant Specialist EP’s interview for casework 1, she reflected not only upon the individual child, but also on wider implications of EP practice that impacts upon SEBD work. This included the perceived benefit from EPs staying in the process with schools until a child was no longer at risk of exclusion. Other participants, in their interviews, inferred a similar argument and in one example, a participant described how by knowing that the Participant Specialist EP was coming back into school they felt reassured and supported. The Participant Specialist EP, in her interview for casework 1, therefore, described in detail the concepts that other participants inferred within their interviews and from which the Participant Specialist EP’s transcript was considered to be the most marked to evidence the research questions. Following on from the Participant Specialist EP, in casework 1, the next richest data was provided by the class teacher, then the head teacher and lastly the parent. In casework 2, following on from the Participant Specialist EP, the next richest data was provided by the head teacher, then the class teacher and lastly the parents. The transcripts were, therefore, analysed in the order presented above.

The initial codes generated from the Participant Specialist EP’s interview in casework 1 were carried into the analysis of the class teacher’s interview and so forth, up and until, the parent’s interview. The initial codes, therefore, had a cumulative effect, as each transcript in casework 1 was analysed. Previously analysed transcripts were continually cross referenced with the more
recently analysed transcripts, as new emerging codes were identified. The initial codes generated from the analysis of casework 1 were not formally carried into the analysis of casework 2, but instead, held in the researcher’s mind. The coding system, therefore, began again for casework 2 and followed the same format as described above for casework 1. Starting the coding system again, aimed to provide more opportunity for new or different initial codes to be identified in the caseworks. The coding system also started again with the analysis of each research question for the individual caseworks.

An inductive/deductive approach was taken to the process of data analysis. Some codes and later themes were generated in a data driven, bottom up approach, to identify new emerging themes or elements, additional to or complementary to those already considered in the units of analysis and propositions. In this sense, all elements within the data set and individual data items were considered of interest in the research questions and coded to create a thematic description of the whole data set. Although the transcripts from the caseworks were analysed for each research question, the emphasis was also taken to look for new and novel information. Other themes were generated in a theoretical approach, whereby codes were identified in aspects of the data set that closely matched the research questions and the researcher’s theoretical understanding of the current literature. The thematic analysis was approached at an interpretive level which identified latent themes. The researcher was drawn to aspects within the individual data items that were positively distinctive and clearly identifiable to ensure the validity of the insider researcher approach (see Section 3.4 above for more information). However, when the data extracts were identified, they were examined to establish the underlining ideas, assumptions and ideologies of the participants in relation to the research questions. An in-depth analysis of the transcripts was, therefore, conducted to establish the organising themes, superordinate themes, main themes, organising sub-themes, superordinate sub-themes and sub-themes, described in the findings (see Chapter 4 below for more information).
Once the initial codes were generated from each transcript, for the caseworks and research questions, they were transferred onto colour coordinated sticky notes, so that each participant’s initial codes could be easily identifiable (see Appendix N below for a ‘key’ and pictorial illustrations). The page number from the transcript was also noted alongside the initial code on the sticky notes, so that the code could be easily located in the individual participant’s transcript.

The next step in the analysis was taken to search for themes. The initial codes for research question 1 were firstly sorted into potential themes. The codes generated for research question 1, from casework 1 and casework 2, were combined into the same thematic map because they produced very similar or, in most instances, identical themes. The Participant Specialist EP’s initial codes from casework 1 were grouped onto flip chart paper first, followed by the Participant Specialist EP’s initial codes from casework 2 (see Appendix O below for pictorial illustrations). The Participant Specialist EP’s initial codes were grouped together first because of the similarities between the codes and the relative importance of the codes, in comparison to the initial codes generated by the other participants. The remaining participants’ codes for research question 1, for casework 1, were added to the emerging themes in the following order; class teacher, head teacher and parent. The initial codes for research question 1 from the remaining participants in casework 2, were then added to the emerging themes in the following order; class teacher, head teacher and parents. Once all the initial codes for research question 1 were grouped together into emerging themes, the codes generated by each participant for research question 2 were added to the emerging themes, in the same order as described above for research question 1 (see Appendix P below for pictorial illustrations). The decision to combine the codes was taken because even though the transcripts from the caseworks were coded twice, once for each research question (to ensure that the entire data set had been exhausted systematically and all interesting aspects of data items had been identified to detail an in-depth analysis of the findings), the codes generated for research question 1 mirrored those generated for research...
question 2. A number of the strategies and methods (research question 1) applied by the Participant Specialist EP were distinctive (research question 2) to the positive outcomes achieved for the child (see Chapter 4 below for more information). The initial codes generated for research question 1 and research question 2 were, therefore, combined into a single Integrated Thematic Map (see Chapter 4 below for more information). In order to generate the finalised Integrated Thematic Map, during the process of combining the initial codes from both caseworks and research questions, the emergent themes were continually reviewed, redefined and refined. The end result, from the process of the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews, was a generated single Integrated Thematic Map made up of seven Organising Themes (see Chapter 4 below for more information).

3.6.2 Content analysis.
A simple content analysis was completed after the thematic analysis with the aim of complementing and triangulating some of the findings highlighted in the Integrated Thematic Map. The content analysis was used to analyse the Participant Specialist EP’s action plans from casework 1 and casework 2 (see Appendices Q and R below for more information). The aim of the analysis was to support the findings presented for research question 1 (see Section 3.1 above for an illustration) on the strategies and methods applied by the Participant Specialist EP. In particular, the focus of the content analysis was on the documented strategies, recorded in the Participant Specialist EP’s action plans and aimed to triangulate with the participants’ opinions. The content analysis cross referenced the findings presented in specific themes of the analysis (see Sections 4.3.1.2.2.2 and 4.3.1.2.2.2.1 below for more information).

The documents were analysed with a simple coding framework instead of a detailed rating framework, because a detailed framework would have been contradictory to the way the action plans were devised and written. For example, in order to evidence that the strategies were specific (in relation to what the adults had to do to manage the child’s behaviour), a detailed
coding framework may have rated factors such as whether the action plans detailed the context of the strategies (when, where and who would complete the strategies) or the materials and equipment needed. The rating scale would have contradicted the Participant Specialist EP’s approach, which was one of providing verbal clarification on any details and only recording minimal information required to act as a reminder for school staff. In one casework, the head teacher themselves noted down the action plan during the consultation and so the amount of detail recorded was associated with their own interpretation of how detailed they wanted the action plan to be. The action plans could not, therefore, have been coded in detail to triangulate the strategies and methods applied by the Participant Specialist EP. Instead, the action plans were analysed using three simple categories and were rated on a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ basis depending upon the presence of the categories within the action plans (see Appendix S below for more information).

3.6.3 Inter-coder validation of the thematic analysis.
Inter-coder validation was used to evidence the trustworthiness of the generated codes from the thematic analysis and the researcher’s coding framework. The process aimed to increase the credibility of the themes generated by the researcher through the analysis. Inter-coder validation was chosen because it supports the measure of the consistency between two judgments and can, therefore, evidence and enhance the trustworthiness of a researcher’s coding responses (Goodwin, 2001).

The researcher of this study approached a colleague who was a trainee practitioner EP with experience in conducting qualitative research and asked for her assistance in coding four A4 pages of transcript from one of the Participant Specialist EP’s interviews. Following the coding of the transcript, in collaboration with the researcher’s colleague, the coded segments from the researcher’s and colleague’s analyses of the transcript were grouped separately to identify two lists, one for the researcher and one for the colleague, of individual codes (See Appendix T
below for a list of the generated codes and examples of coded segments of the transcript). The researcher discussed each individual code with her colleague to clarify the rationale and meaning of the codes and to ensure that all the coded segments were categorised and interpreted consistently. This supported the researcher in accurately comparing the codes.

The colleague’s coded transcript was compared to the researcher’s coded transcript and the number of agreed codes were noted. The researcher identified 10 codes in the segment of transcript. The colleague also identified 10 codes in the segment of transcript. Out of a total of 20 codes, there was agreement on 18 of the codes. The first discrepancy occurred as a result of the researcher identifying the code ‘action plan’ as a separate entity, whereas her colleague incorporated ‘action planning’ within the process by which the action plan was formed; for example, within ‘joint working’ and ‘consultation.’ The second discrepancy occurred as a result of the researcher’s colleague identifying the code ‘applied psychology’ to account for an interpretation of the implied psychological approaches used by the Participant Specialist EP. The researcher, however, coded the same psychological approaches, but associated them within the Participant Specialist EP’s ‘use of language’ rather than generally applied (See Appendix T below for illustration).

The percentage of absolute agreement between the coded extracts was firstly calculated by dividing the number of times the researcher and colleague agreed on the codes by the total number of codes presented in the extract (see Appendix U below for illustrations of the calculations). The percentage of absolute agreement was high at 90%. A calculation that accounted for the agreement expected by chance was then taken to support the measure of absolute agreement. Cohen’s Kappa (Goodwin, 2001; Graham, Milanowski & Miller, 2012) was calculated by subtracting the estimated level of chance agreement between the codes from the observed level of agreement. The number was then divided by the maximum number of no-chance agreement. The percentage of absolute agreement with account for the agreement
expected by chance was high at 80%. High agreement was considered to be $\geq 80\%$ and in accordance to Graham et al.’s (2012) benchmark for sufficient agreement.

3.7 Critique of Methods
Although qualitative research methods were necessary due to the exploratory nature of the research study, the design of the study, the type of data gathering method chosen and the process of the analysis have a number of strengths and weaknesses that should be considered in relation to the aim of the research.

3.7.1 Critique of case studies.
In relation to the strengths, case studies are focused on reality and can report unique features that might hold the key to understanding a situation that a larger data gathering method might miss (Cohen et al., 2008). The thorough investigation of a case study can also recognise the complexity of social interactions and through which highlight the similarites and conflicts between viewpoints of different participants (Cohen et al., 2008). This could be enlightening when exploring social situations and interactions.

Positive school outcomes for CYP with SEBD can be very dependent on the context within a school or classroom (Hartnell, 2010; Jones, 2003; Swinson, Woof, & Melling, 2003). It is, therefore, important to evaluate the research questions within the context of a case study. Through the use of case studies, it was hoped that an in-depth evaluation of the specific strategies and methods employed by the Participant Specialist EP, from the perspectives of different participants, would be provided and discussed in relation to how these methods and strategies interrelated within the school and/or classroom context and the individuals, to enable positive outcomes to occur. It was hoped that through using a case study methodology, the complexity of the system surrounding the CYP could be unfolded to highlight the contributions and possibly the unique contributions of the Participant Specialist EP to the process.
In relation to the weaknesses, due to the uniqueness of the situation, it can be difficult to demonstrate reliability and validity of case studies (Shaughnessy, Zechmeister, & Zechmeister, 2003). Case studies are also not easily open to cross-checking and so can be selective, biased and subjective. Researcher bias is a particular concern. The process of selection may be biased as the researcher is the one who formulates the selection criteria and chooses the cases. Researcher bias may also be impacted by the researcher’s role in data collection and analysis. Case studies may be subject to respondent bias, especially if the case studies rely too heavily on the respondents’ memory (Shaughnessy et al., 2003).

In order to reduce the possibility of researcher bias and increase the trustworthiness and transferability of the study, considerations were taken on how the caseworks were identified. The selection criteria was written by the researcher in consultation with the researcher’s academic supervisor. The Participant Specialist EP, not the researcher, then allocated the caseworks in relation to the selection criteria. To officially agree the caseworks, the researcher discussed the suggested caseworks with the Participant Specialist EP before informed consent was gained. Although the research design was exploratory, to increase the trustworthiness of the data collection and analysis, the propositions were developed specifically as a result of the researcher’s access to academic literature and personal fieldwork experience and were used to present rival opinions during the data gathering and analysis procedures.

3.7.2 Critique of interviews.
In relation to the strengths, interviews provide in-depth and extended answers that cannot otherwise be provided through other means, such as questionnaires (Cohen et al., 2008). They can also increase the validity of the research through handling open questions well, clarifying respondents’ answers and their misunderstandings, as questions may be interpreted differently by different people. Interviews also have a higher response rate than other methods, such as
questionnaires, because respondents are more involved in the research and with the researcher (Cohen et al., 2008).

In relation to the weaknesses, interviews are prone to subjectivity and bias on the part of the interviewer as they are in control of the process of the interview and the interview questions (Cohen et al., 2008). The structure of the questions are particularly important to the quality of the data generated. It is recommended by Cohen et al. (2008) that researchers carefully consider the structure and wording of the interview questions in order to increase the ability to compare the responses and reduce interviewer effects and bias. In particular, it is considered important for the researcher to be aware of the tendency of interviewees to provide socially desirable responses. It is considered that through building a rapport with the interviewee and by asking questions in a responsive manner, interviewees will be encouraged to be open and honest.

Another limitation of the use of interviews, is in the limited number of respondents that may be able to take part in the study because of the time commitments in conducting and analysing interview data. In this sense, the anonymity of interviewees may, therefore, be more difficult to establish in the write up (See Section 3.5.1, above for a description of how the current research study addressed the weaknesses associated with using interviews).

To increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the interview questions of the current study, the interview schedules were written in reference to Kvale’s (1996) recommendations on how to translate research objectives into interview questions, so that the questions directly reflected the aim of the study. Through following Kvale’s (1996) process, the interview questions in the current study were more likely match the research questions and reduced bias, than if the researcher attempted to generate the interview questions without externalising the key variables of the research questions. The researcher aimed to build a rapport with the interviewees and create a natural feel to the interview and interview room to encourage open and honest answers.
One difficulty experienced in the current study in using interviews, was the interpretive challenge of identifying and clarifying the meaning behind participants’ contradictory accounts during the data gathering and data analysis process. For example, there were contradictions within participants’ responses that were only evident after the interviews were complete. One contradiction was associated with the Participant Specialist EP’s ‘anti-hypothesis bias’ stance, that viewed the development of hypothesis as confirmatory and system led. In contradiction, the Participant Specialist EP also considered that an observation was sufficient for her to interpret the appropriate action for intervention (see Sections 4.4.2.1 and 4.4.2.2 and Table 4.24 below for more information). The meaning behind participants’ opinions was, therefore, not always explicit in their accounts and the researcher was not able to clarify these contradictions as they were not apparent in the interview. There was, therefore, a limit to what information could be derived from the interviews which made the data analysis more challenging. To support the analysis, the researcher pulled together different elements of information and made a comparison between the participants’ contradictions and their collective accounts, to then infer the meaning.

Another difficulty experienced in using interviews was in the interpretive challenge of identifying and clarifying the meaning between participants’ thoughts and opinions. For example, the Participant Specialist EP reported that knowledge in areas of psychology is not as important to the successful outcomes as knowing ‘how’ to support school staff and parents. In contrast, other participants considered that the Participant Specialist EP’s knowledge and understanding of child development ensured the positive outcomes and was distinct in comparison to other professional. In another example, there were occasions when participants had differing opinions on their experiences. On one occasion, the Participant Specialist EP said that she remained ‘open minded,’ whilst other participants praised her ability to explain a child’s behaviour. The differences in opinions and experiences were not made apparent during the data gathering process. The interviews were, therefore, limited in being able to clarify these differences. To
support the analysis, the researcher presented a true account of the participants’ opinions but, at the same time, pulled together different elements of information from different participants to then infer the meaning.

3.7.3 Critique of data analysis.
The data analysis used Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phase model of thematic analysis, to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the results by providing the researcher with a clear structure when analysing the transcripts. Inter-coder validation (Goodwin, 2001; Graham et al., 2012) was used to evidence the trustworthiness of the researcher’s interpretation of the data.

In addition to the challenge of identifying and clarifying the meaning within and between participants’ accounts during the data gathering and data analysis process (explained above, see Section 3.7.2 for more information), a weakness within the process of the data analysis was related to the use of inter-coder validation. Although inter-coder validation supports the measure of the consistency between two judgments and can, therefore, evidence and enhance the trustworthiness of a researcher’s coding responses (Goodwin, 2001), there are a number of weaknesses that affect the inter-coder agreement. The weaknesses can be associated with the level of training an ‘observer’ has received on the area that is being rated and on the evaluation process. The weaknesses can also be associated with the experience and knowledge a person has in the general field, their personal beliefs and the relationship they have with their practitioner colleagues (as this can create a potential unintentional bias) (Goodwin, 2001). Goodwin (2001) considered that it may, therefore, be important to ensure the peers are of a similar standard in relation to their training, experience and knowledge and that the ‘observer’ against whom the trustworthiness is measured, should be someone who has no more incentive in being involved than establishing their own rater accuracy.
To decrease the potential weaknesses that affect the inter-coder agreement, the researcher of the current study enrolled a colleague to support the inter-coder validation process, who had a similar level of training, experience and knowledge within the field of educational psychology. The researcher tried to decrease any unintentional bias created from the colleague’s possible intention to be supportive to the researcher by providing desirable codes. For example, the researcher did not discuss her codes or findings with her colleague prior to her analysis of the transcript. The researcher provided a brief overview of the research area and research questions, but did not provide any written materials or text that may have impacted upon the trustworthiness of her colleague’s generated codes.

To support the clarification of the colleague’s codes, after the colleague had coded the transcript and the codes had been collated, the researcher and colleague had a discussion on what, how and why particular codes were generated. The codes were then discussed in comparison to the researcher’s codes (see Section 3.6.3 above for more information). During this process there was the potential that the researcher could have disagreed significantly with the colleague’s interpretation of the transcript and the number or types of codes generated in their analysis. This could have created a difficult situation in how the researcher dealt with the inconsistency and to what extent she accepted the trustworthiness of the inter-coder and, therefore, accepted the potential negative impact on the trustworthiness of the overall study. As the researcher had the editorial right to the study, she took any judgment of inconsistency with her own interpretation of the data and considered the degree of difference and reason for the inconsistency. If the colleague’s feedback had been considered substantially inconsistent to the researcher’s own evaluation, a second colleague’s opinion would have been sought. However, the final decision to accept the trustworthiness of the inter-coder and the inter-coder validation of the study, remained the researcher’s responsibility. If there was disagreement between the researcher’s and the colleague’s interpretation of the transcripts, it was not considered to impact upon their
professional relationship as the responses would not been taken personally, but instead would have been discussed professionally and respectfully. Despite these potential limitations, the benefits of applying inter-coder validation in order to evidence the trustworthiness of the researcher's interpretation of the data, was considered to outweigh the potential difficulties.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Level of Risk</th>
<th>Contingency Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in recruiting an EP to take part in the research</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>First send a letter explaining the research to Principal EPs asking them to pass the information on to known EPs to volunteer to take part via email and set a date to reply by. If no one replies, contact a number of EPs directly to arrange an informal chat about the research and try and recruit through the meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties in recruiting the schools to take part in the research</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Recruit via the EP as they have a relationship with the school and send some additional information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/guardians may not give consent to the research</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>The need to gain parental consent will be mentioned in the initial letter to schools. Plan to gain parental consent as soon as possible by sending an information sheet to parents/guardians with a consent form to sign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School or school staff may withdraw from the research</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Ask school staff to contact the researcher if they have any queries, worries or difficulties which arise during the research and try and address these as they occur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The case becomes live again during the data collection</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Consult directly with placement and university supervisor and have alternative cases in mind until all the data is collected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectation from participants for researcher to act outside their role as researcher and become a practitioner psychologist and facilitator/advisor on a school issue</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Visit schools prior to gaining informed consent to evaluate the appropriateness of the case study for the research. Liaise with placement supervisor if a problem arises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School staff falling ill prior to the interview or not having the available time for the interview on the day of the interview or being able to have classroom cover during the school day</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Be realistic about the difficulty for school staff to have the time to engage in the research. Arrange the interview times as soon as possible with school staff and at the most appropriate time of day. Liaise with placement and university supervisor if problems arise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.9 Ethics
The ethical guidelines from the School of Education University of Manchester, the British Psychological Society (BPS, 1999) and HCPC (HPC, 2009) were followed throughout the study. On completion of the Research Risk and Ethical Assessment form (see Appendix V below for more information) the research was classified as ‘Medium’ risk and, therefore, the approval to proceed with the research was completed by a member of the School of Education Research Integrity Committee (see Appendix W below for more information). The date of receipt of the research proposal was the 20th February 2012 and was approved on the 23rd March 2012 (see Appendix X below for more information).

There were a number of specific ethical considerations that were made during the data gathering and data analysis for the study. Ethical considerations were made in relation to the locality of the caseworks and whether the researcher may have previously provided educational psychology support within the schools. If the researcher was familiar with the schools then there was a possibility that the participants may have expected the researcher to act outside of her role and become a practitioner psychologist. This may have led to ethical implications including the lack of informed consent for practitioner involvement. To minimise the possibility that participants may expect the researcher to act as a practitioner psychologist, the background of the caseworks were explored prior to gaining informed consent in order to evaluate the appropriateness of the caseworks and every effort was made to avoid familiar schools to the researcher.

During the participant recruitment process, the researcher was sensitive to parental anxieties and sensitivities which impacted upon their consent to participate in the study. In one instance, a school arranged for the researcher to meet with a parent/guardian to discuss the study as the parent voiced worries to the school regarding taking part in the study. On the first occasion the parent reported to the class teacher that they had forgotten about the appointment. On the second arranged meeting the parent/guardian did not turn up and their behaviour was
considered unusual by the school staff. Through discussion with the researcher’s academic tutor and the school staff, the researcher considered it unethical to pursue the parental involvement, but needed to ensure the parent/guardian did not remain concerned. The researcher consulted with the school and passed a message onto the parent that clarified their choice not to participate and thanked them for their time considering whether or not to take part. The researcher considered that the situation was handled sensitively and ethically.

During the interview process, the research became instrumental in reviewing the cases from the perspectives of school professionals and parents/guardians. In some discussions, the focus became more about the CYP than the Participant Specialist EP. This raised an ethical concern regarding the impact of the reflections on the participants’ perceptions of the case and the outcomes for the CYP. To minimise the impact of the case reviews on the CYP’s outcomes, the Participant Specialist EP’s involvement with the CYP was completed at the time of the participant recruitment. However, as a result of one interview, questions were raised by the parents/guardians regarding the lack of a psychological report that was reportedly agreed to be produced by the Participant Specialist EP at the time of their involvement. In this instance, the researcher requested that the parents follow up their concern to the head teacher, who later agreed to follow up the request personally. It was considered that the situation had been handled appropriately as by speaking to the person who initiated the Participant Specialist EP’s involvement in the first place, the researcher was able to ensure that the research was not engaging in EP practice work, but at the same time, the researcher supported the school to empower the parents within the system to have their questions answered. If the situation had not been dealt with in an appropriate manner, then the researcher would have offered support.

Due to the small sample size, the ability of the study to establish full participant anonymity within the write up was another ethical concern. In order to minimise the impact of identification in the research of EPSs, LAs, schools or participants, all names have been
anonymised in the write up and every effort was made to ensure that identities remained hidden. Participants were, however, made aware that even though full anonymity could not be guaranteed within the study, every effort would be made to present the results sensitively.
Chapter 4

Findings

4.1 Introduction
The chapter provides a description of the findings. A number of options were available when considering how to present the findings. The findings could have been presented by individual sources, caseworks or by the individual research question. The process of the data analysis concluded in the most meaningful way to present the data and as a result, produced a single Integrated Thematic Map (see Figure 4.1 below for an illustration). The Integrated Thematic Map combined the findings from the sources, the caseworks and the research questions. The findings are, therefore, presented as an integrated whole, returning to each research question in the discussion chapter. Seven organising themes were identified from the data and are listed below in the order they are presented in the findings. The seven themes are integrated together directly or indirectly through Organising Theme 7: The System within which the Educational Psychologist Works. An overview of The Integrated Thematic Map will be initially presented (see Section 4.2 below for more information and Figure 4.1 below for an illustration), followed by an individual exploration of each organising theme. The findings from the content analysis of the Participant Specialist EP action plans for the caseworks, will be described within Organising Theme 1: Consultation. The content analysis of the action plans looked specifically at the strategies devised for the individual children and will, therefore, be described within the specific strategies section, as identified by the thematic analysis (see Section 4.3.1.2.2.2 below for more information). Following a description of each organising theme, The Integrated Thematic Map will be revisited during the discussion of Organising Theme 7: The System within which the Educational Psychologist Works, to further explore the interconnections between all the organising themes. A summary of the findings will conclude the chapter.
The Seven Organising Themes include:

- Organising Theme 1: Consultation
- Organising Theme 2: Assessment
- Organising Theme 3: Training
- Organising Theme 4: The Specialist Educational Psychologist’s skills
- Organising Theme 5: Connect Socially
- Organising Theme 6: Staying in the process
- Organising Theme 7: The System within which the Educational Psychologist works
Note 4 There is a hierarchy of six themes that are used within the Organising Themes of The Integrated Thematic Map and they are arranged in the order presented below. The abbreviations of the six themes are also presented below and thereafter are used within the current chapter. A theme of any hierarchical stance is an element from the data set that explains the findings and answers the research questions. The highest element in the hierarchy of the thematic analysis is an Organising Theme and the lowest element is a Sub-theme. In detail, an Organising Theme accounts for an overarching element in the Integrated Thematic Map that all other subordinate themes in the hierarchy connect to. A Superordinate Theme is an element of importance connected to the Organising Theme. A Main Theme is an element of importance connected to the Superordinate Theme. An Organising Sub-theme is an element of importance connected to the Main Theme. A Superordinate Sub-theme is an element of importance connected to the Organising Sub-theme. Lastly, a Sub-theme is an element of importance connected to the Superordinate Sub-Theme.

Note 5 Data from all the sources was combined into all the Organising Themes, Superordinate Themes, Main Themes, Organising Sub-themes, Superordinate Sub-themes and Sub-themes in the data sets (see Appendix P for a pictorial illustration).

Note 6 All names have been removed from quotations and replaced with a pseudonym to protect the identity of the participants. Sarah is the name provided for the SEP. John is the name provided for the child in casework 1. George is the name provided for the child in casework 2. A coding system has been devised to direct the reader to the source of a quotation whilst protecting the identity of the participant. Participants from casework 1 are coded in numerical order and are presented as CW1:CT (class teacher), CW1:HT (head teacher), CW1:P (parent), in the quotations. Participants from casework 2 are coded in numerical order and are presented as CW2:CT (class teacher), CW2:HT (head teacher), CW2:P (parent), in the quotations. The SEP is presented in the quotations as CW1:SEP for casework 1 and CW2:SEP for casework 2. In the quotations that provide a dialogue between the researcher and the participant, the letter R is used to represent the Researcher’s response and the letter P is used to represent the Participant’s response.
Note 7 The acronym SEP (Specialist Educational Psychologist) will be used hereafter, in the current chapter, to refer to the Participant Specialist EP.
4.2 The Integrated Thematic Map

The Integrated Thematic Map (Figure 4.1) is presented below.

**Figure 4.1: The Integrated Thematic Map for the Seven Organising Themes**

The seven Organising Themes are integrated together directly or indirectly through Organising Theme 7: The System within which the Educational Psychologist Works. The system within which the SEP worked enabled the SEP to apply her developed skills from working in both a Local Authority (LA) and Independent Educational Psychology Service (IEPS) to ensure the positive outcomes that occurred for the children with Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) at risk of school exclusion. Participants identified the difference between a Restrictive System (OT7 – ST1) surrounding Educational Psychologists’ (EP) practice and the SEP’s ability to Shape the Educational Psychology System (OT7 - ST2) to work as an Applied Psychologist (OT7 - MT1). Working as an Applied Psychologist (OT7 - MT1) enabled the SEP to apply her Specialist Educational Psychologist’s Skills (OT4) to support the positive outcomes
for the children; to Connect Socially (OT5) with parents and school staff; and to Stay in Process (OT6) until the children were no longer at risk of school exclusion. The SEP used Training (OT3) as a method that ensured the positive outcomes for the children. Consultation (OT1) and Training (OT3) were methods through which the SEP Connected Socially (OT5) with the school staff, whilst the outcomes of the Consultation (OT1) and Training (OT3) were supported by the SEP’s ability to Connect Socially (OT5) (See Figure 4.1 above for the link between OT3 and OT5). Training (OT3) was used as a method to Develop People’s Skills (OT3 - ST1) through the use of group presentation and through Consultation (OT1) (See Figure 4.1 above for the link between OT3 - ST1 and OT1). Shaping the Educational Psychology System (OT7 - ST2) to work as an Applied Psychologist (OT7 - MT1) enabled the SEP to Make a Positive Difference (OT7 – OSt1); Meet the Needs of Schools (OT7 – OSt2); Meet the Needs of Applied Psychologists (OT7 – OSt3); and apply Systems Psychology (OT7 – OSt4). The SEP applied Systems Psychology (OT7 – OSt4) through her use of Consultation (OT1) and Assessment (OT2). Consultation (OT1) was also used by the SEP as one form of Assessment (OT2) and, therefore, Organising Themes 1 and 2 link together (See Figure 4.1 above for the link between OT1 and OT2). The Organising Themes and their corresponding Subordinate Themes, Main Themes, Organising Sub-themes, Superordinate Sub-themes and Sub-themes are discussed below (see Sections 4.3 to 4.9 below) in the order they are listed in Section 4.1 above and are discussed collectively, in more detail, in Section 4.9 below.
4.3 Organising Theme 1: Consultation
The thematic map representing Organising Theme 1: Consultation (Figure 4.2) is presented below.

**Figure 4.2:** A Thematic Map Representing Organising Theme 1: Consultation and the Corresponding Superordinate Theme, Main Themes, Organising Sub-themes, Superordinate Sub-themes and Sub-themes
Consultation (OT1) with parents and school staff was identified as an organising theme to describe one of the SEP’s methods of supporting the children with SEBD, at risk of school exclusion. Throughout the SEP’s involvement within the caseworks, the SEP held a number of one-to-one and group consultations with parents and school staff. The length of time talking with the SEP and the SEP’s consultation skills, were attributed by all the participants to be distinctive in comparison to other support services, in ensuring the positive outcomes that occurred for the children. Two participants commented on how having a joint consultation with parents was distinctive to their experiences of other EPs (see Table 4.1 below for illustration).

### Table 4.1: Quotes Evidencing Organising Theme 1: Consultation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Sarah spends a lot more time (than other professionals) talking to the people who are working with the kids.” <em>(CW1:CT)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>R:</em> What was distinctive about the EP’s contribution to the successful outcomes?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P:</em> “That dialogue between EP and teacher.” <em>(CW1:CT)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She spent time with mum and dad, talking to them.” <em>(CW2:CT)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think it was the fact we had the meeting with the parents as well because often what’s happened, the psychologist comes in and observes the child, then has a little meeting with us and then has half an hour with mum and dad. But it was the length you know this took…(Sarah) spent an awful lot of time talking and going over things and it was the length of time that it took for her to listen to mum and dad as well, to get their confidence.” <em>(CW2:HT)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of the consultation was identified by all the participants as a tool to aid the problem solving process in order to form an action plan for an individual child. The SEP identified how she used Consultation (OT1) to move a conversation from Problem Oriented to Solution Oriented (ST1), through a two stepped approach. Step 1: Listen (MT1) and Step 2: Form the Action Plan (MT2). During Step 1, the SEP listened to school staff and parents’ Pain (OST1); Narratives (OST2) of Stress (SSt1) and of Motivation (SSt2); and their Needs (OST3). Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) *(George, Iveson & Ratner, 2010; Stobie, Boyle & Woolfson,*
2005) and the Solihull Approach (Douglas, 2010) were used to support the SEP’s ability to listen to people’s Pain (OSt1) and Stress (St1). Once the SEP had engaged in the Step 1: Listen (MT1), she moved the conversation in the consultation to Step 2: Form the Action Plan (MT2). During Step 2, the SEP engaged simultaneously in Shaping the Narratives to Empower (OSt4) parents and school staff to move the child forward and Devising Strategies (OSt5). The SEP Shaped Narratives to Empower (OSt4) parents and school staff through her Language (St3). The SEP used her Language (St3) to Explain the Child’s Behaviour (St1); Clear Communication (St2); and be Judgment Free (St3). The SEP Devised Strategies (OSt5) that were Instant and Immediate (St4) to problems discussed during the consultation and Specific (St5) to the individual child. The Superordinate Theme, Main Themes, Organising Sub-themes, Superordinate Sub-themes and Sub-themes are discussed in more detail below.

4.3.1 Superordinate theme 1: problem to solution.
The SEP identified how she used consultation to attempt to move a conversation with parents and school staff from the problem of the child’s behaviour to a solution or strategy (see Table 4.2 below for illustration). The process aimed to ultimately lead to a collaborative problem solving conversation whereby a joint action plan was devised, understood and accepted by all the people involved with the child. Throughout the process of moving from the problem to the solution, the SEP aimed to shape people’s willingness and capacity to apply the suggested strategies and, in effect, change their responses to the children (see Table 4.2 below for illustration). The SEP highlighted the importance of supporting people from the problem to the solution, so that they wanted to change themselves rather than the SEP attempting to change them. The SEP highlighted the importance of the two stepped approach in shaping the conversation. Step 1 involved Listening (MT1) to individual’s explanations of the child’s behaviour and their experiences. Step 2 involved the process of Forming the Action Plan (MT2) (see Figure 4.2 above for an illustration).
Three participants recognised the process used by the SEP of listening first before making recommendations (see Table 4.2 below for illustration). Two other participants were aware of the listening stage, but interpreted the step as being important for the SEP to understand the child’s background to support her recommendations, rather than a specific step to move the discussion from the problem to a solution. This could have been informed by the SEP's approach at the listening stage of asking parents and school staff to explain everything they think she needed to know, while not being explicit of the purpose of the listening process.

The use of consultation and the movement from the problem to a solution, through the two stepped approach, was distinctive in how the strategies were presented by the SEP in comparison to other professionals and other EPs. Other professionals and EPs were described to have either jumped straight to suggesting the solutions to the problems or to have written up the recommendations in a report, rather than discussed them collaboratively with the school staff and parents (see Table 4.2 below for illustration).

| Quotes | 
|---|---|
| **“How do I turn it from problem based to solution based whilst holding and containing people’s emotions and like I say you can never do it straight away. Hear the problem, acknowledge the problem and then move to the solution.”** (CW1:SEP) |  
| **“No (shaping) the willingness, no the willingness to apply those strategies and in that point what they have done, they have changed their response to that child.”** (CW1:SEP) |  
| **“I don’t say anything for ages...I think for the first half an hour of any conversation...I will go to parents - tell me about your little chappy in school, tell me about his strengths and weaknesses, tell me about that, help me understand and then I will go this is what I’ve seen. So everybody’s heard, been heard and everybody’s been listened to and then go this is what I’ve seen. And then go alright...what do we need to do, in order to create a plan for this child.”** (CW1:SEP) |  
| **“I think Sarah will listen. Sarah listens and then makes a judgment...Sarah kind of gets all the information from all the various people, she says, this is what we need to do.”** (CW1:HT) |  
| **“She will listen. She is a very good listener. She is not going to come in with her recipe for success. She looks at the picture and then she makes her diagnosis or suggestion.”** (CW1:HT) |
“Not coming in saying you need to do this and this.” (CW2:HT)

“She listened to everything that everybody had said and said this is what I want you to do and I wrote them all down.” (CW2:CT)

“When you are with other EPs it is a case of observe, take the child away, do assessments or whatever and then it was talk to class teacher or SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) for however long, then talk to parents…Sarah spends a lot more time talking to the people who are working with the kids because I think she knows….Like I say the, the EP, it used to be a case of you get the recommendations and we do that, we’ve tried that but that doesn’t work. But because they have not sat with you, sort of discussed it with you, gone through it point by point…So you just get a report back. At least with Sarah you could sit there and say that’s not going to work.” (CW1:CT)

4.3.1.1 Main theme 1: step 1, listen.
The first step in the problem to solution process was the SEP’s approach of listening to school staff and parents. At this point the SEP emphasised the importance of an EP’s willingness to listen to ensure school staff and parents feel like they have been heard and understood (see Table 4.3 below for illustration). In support of the SEP’s description of the listening process, two participants highlighted the SEP’s skills in listening and her willingness to listen rather than tell (see Table 4.3 below for illustration). Two other participants reported that the SEP took on board what the professionals and parents had to say and listened to their experiences with the child (see Table 4.3 below for illustration).

The SEP and two other participants reported that the SEP started the listening process by asking parents to explore the child’s history, what they thought and what were their worries (see Table 4.3 below for illustration). The SEP asked school staff to explain the child's behaviour and their concerns. The SEP highlighted that in order to move people from the problem to the solution, the aim of Listening (MT1) to people’s descriptions of the problem was not only to gain a holistic view of the child, but was to listen to school staff and parent’s Pain (OST1), their Narratives (OST2) of Stress (SS1) and of Motivation (SS2), and to identify school staff and parents’ Needs (OST3) from the SEP’s involvement (see Figure 4.2 above for an illustration and
Sections 4.3.1.1, 4.3.1.2 and 4.3.1.3 below for more information). Through listening to people’s pain, narratives of stress and of motivation and their needs, the SEP made a judgment of where a person was at emotionally, what they could take on and what the SEP needed to do to support Step 2: Form the Action Plan (MT2).

Table 4.3: Quotes Evidencing Main Theme 1, Step 1: Listen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I listened to her (mum) and I said I understand.” (CW2:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She was listening to me rather than just telling me.” (CW1:CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She listens to what the child is like…so she takes on board what the professionals say and also what the parents say and everybody.” (CW2:P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Sarah was listening to you and listening to our experience of how we found George.” (CW2:HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I get them (parents) to tell me about the history, what worries you, what do you think?” (CW2:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She sort of said to mum right tell me everything, literally everything from the beginning, from birth, pregnancy, right up to where we are today.” (CW2:CT)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.1.1 Organising sub-theme 1: pain.
Listening to school staff and parents’ pain was described by the SEP as an important part of the listening process in consultation. Listening to everybody’s pain was described as a step in recognising the starting point at which a person was at, to support them move forward towards discussing solutions. The SEP highlighted that wherever the pain lies, an EP has to hear it and never negate it in the hope to solve the problem quickly because otherwise, the pain and, therefore, the problem will remain (see Table 4.4 below for illustration). Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) (George et al., 2010; Stobie et al., 2005) and the Solihull Approach (Douglas, 2010) were identified by the SEP as specific methods, applied simultaneously, during the process of hearing people’s Pain (OSt1) and identifying people’s narratives of Stress (SSt1) (Section
4.3.1.1.2 below for more information on SS1). The SEP stated that EPs should use SFBT (George et al., 2010; Stobie et al., 2005) when having a consultation and that the Solihull Approach (Douglas, 2010) can work for adults. The SEP reported that an EP’s ability to demonstrate a level of attunement, reciprocity and containment of other’s emotions in a conversation, establishes trust between the EP and the recipients. Establishing trust in the conversation was considered, by the SEP, to be important in order to confirm that she was listening to people and that she understood their pain, their stress and the situation (see Table 4.4 below for illustration). The SEP was, however, unsure if practitioner EP colleagues shared her opinion of the importance of applying the Solihull Approach (Douglas, 2010) in consultation with adults.

Although no other participant, apart from the SEP, talked directly about hearing the pain, five participants mentioned the SEP’s process and skill of listening while, three participants used the term ‘trust’ to describe their feelings towards the SEP. One participant, through their description of their conversation with the SEP, demonstrated how the SEP contained their feelings (see Table 4.4 below for illustration). On a separate occasion, the same participant provided an example of the SEP communicating attunement to the parent’s feelings and the positive impact this had, on the parent’s feelings towards the SEP (see Table 4.4 below for illustration).

Table 4.4: Quotes Evidencing Organising Sub-theme 1: Pain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“When you are having a conversation it is always about hear the pain. So wherever the pain lies you must always hear the pain and never negate the pain in the hope that you will just solve the problem quicker. If you do not hear the pain, the problem will always be there.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You (EP) are the holder of people’s pain and that is what your problem solving is to do, is to actually hold the pain, contain it enough for them. It’s a bit like Solihull isn’t it, containment and reciprocity. I do so believe in that.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Being that person who contains so that you can hear everybody’s feelings.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“It’s about hearing that pain…Parents need to feel safe and that I have heard the pain and that I understand.” (CW2:SEP)

“If you have got a level of attunement with someone and…reciprocity and containment, that process of attachment in any relationship, is the form of the basis of trust…They trust you…They trust that you have heard them. They trust that you understand.” (CW1:SEP)

“I think I was sort of coming in and sort of focusing on the negatives and Sarah made me feel better in the fact that…I am seeing his academic progress and…I am worried about the fact that…he has got quite a high prediction…She said you know forget about literacy, forget about his reading, forget about his writing at the moment…we have got to move in small steps. So I sort of focused on that myself and thought well fair enough. She sort of made me think, it didn’t matter. Not that it didn’t matter but I am doing all I can with him.” (CW2:CT)

“I also noticed with mum and why I think mum sort of felt better around Sarah was, she was saying, now I know you are feeling, I know this is very hard and you are having a difficult time but we are here to help.” (CW2:CT)
The background information on the caseworks and the interview data identified what was the source of school staff and parents’ pain. In casework 1, the teacher’s pain was associated with her anxiety over maintaining classroom control and the individual child’s learning. The head teacher’s pain was associated with difficulties maintaining the child within mainstream school and supporting the family. The parent’s pain was associated with knowing how to manage their child’s behaviour and coping with the stress the family was under. In casework 2, the teacher’s pain was associated with maintaining classroom control, the child’s lack of acknowledgment that the teacher was in charge and the other children’s safety. The head teacher’s pain was associated with the wellbeing of the staff, the other children’s safety and their capacity to support the individual child. The parents’ pain was associated with achieving the best outcomes for their child and the acknowledgment from the school and wider support services of their child’s difficulties and understanding of their needs.

Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) was developed by Steve de Shazer and colleagues in 1986 (Stobie et al., 2005). Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) is an approach to problem solving that focuses on solutions not problems. In a SFBT discussion, a practitioner will not try and fix the problem but instead will explore a client’s preferred future and will identify a client’s strengths in attaining that future (George et al., 2010). The context within which EPs use SFBT is in meetings or therapeutic sessions with individual pupils and in consultations with school staff and parents (Stobie et al., 2005). For a more comprehensive discussion on EPs use of SFBT see George et al. (2010) or Stobie et al. (2005).

The Solihull Approach is based in the original work of Hazel Douglas and colleagues who developed the Solihull Approach (Douglas, 2010). The Solihull Approach is a theoretical model that incorporates the field’s psychoanalysis, behaviourism and child development research to explain the effect of relationships on the development of children’s emotional health and wellbeing (Douglas, 2010). The theoretical underpinnings of the model include that of containment, reciprocity, behaviour management and an understanding of the development of the brain. The theoretical underpinnings can also be applied to the interactions between adults to develop secure and trusting relationships. For more information on the theory and practice of the Solihull Approach see Douglas (2010).
4.3.1.2 Organising sub-theme 2: narratives.

Another element of the listening process, as described by the SEP, was to gain an understanding of the school staff and parents’ narratives of the situation and where they were emotionally. By listening to people’s beginning narratives in a conversation, the SEP was reportedly informed about individual’s mindsets, what they could take on and what the SEP may have needed to do to support the parents and school staff during Step 2: Form the Action Plan (MT2) (see Figure 4.2 above for illustration and Section 4.3.1.2 below for more information). The SEP spoke specifically about how people create problems or solutions by the narratives they provide (see Table 4.5 below for illustration). The purpose at this stage was, therefore, for the SEP to understand people’s narratives in order to support her ability to Shape the Narratives (OST4) whilst Forming the Action Plan (MT2) in Step 2 (see Figure 4.2 above for an illustration and Section 4.3.1.2.1 below for more information).

Specifically, the SEP described how she was looking for narratives of Stress (SSt1) and narratives of Motivation (SSt2) (see Figure 4.2 above and Table 4.5 below for illustrations). The narratives of stress aimed to identify a person’s current level of stress and what strategies they could cope with. The SEP used a modified version of the Parenting Stress Index (Abidin, 1995), during the consultation, as an assessment tool to identify the parents’ stress level and how much they could tolerate what the SEP needed to say (see Table 4.6 below for illustration). The SEP was also looking at how parents saw their child and what they remembered under stress (see Table 4.6 below for illustration). The SEP described how she used SFBT (George et al., 2010; Stobie et al., 2005) and the Solihull Approach (Douglas, 2010) whilst listening to people’s stress and pain (also see Section 4.3.1.1.1 above). The overall aim of identifying the stress and pain of the individuals was, therefore, to enable the SEP to focus down on the emotional health and wellbeing of the school staff and parents to gauge what she may need to do to support them to move the child forward.
Table 4.5: Quotes Evidencing Organising Sub-theme 2: Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I am a great believer that you create narratives. You can create a problem or you can create a solution by the narrative you give.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“So you (EP) are listening all the time to the narratives of stress and what her motivation is.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6: Quotes Evidencing Superordinate Sub-theme 1: Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“With parents I do a modified version of the Parent Stress Index to see about their stresses…in my head, that’s what I am going through. Parent Stress Index…To see how much they can tolerate what I’ve got to say.” (CW2:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It’s about how they see their child and the things that they remember under the stress.” (CW2:SEP)</td>
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</table>

The purpose of identifying people’s narratives of Motivation (SSt2) was described by the SEP to identify what a person was motivated to achieve for the child and how motivated a person may have been towards implementing some of the suggested strategies. The SEP described looking for a way to hook the teachers into thinking that there was a possibility that they could make it work for a child (see Table 4.7 below for illustration).

The key to looking at both narratives of Stress (SSt1) and narratives of Motivation (SSt2) was to provide the SEP with the ability to judge and balance the amount of stress a person held, against their motivation to shape change for a child. Once the SEP made the judgment, in Step 2: Form the Action Plan (MT2) the SEP aimed to create a narrative around saving the child whilst containing people’s levels of stress and pain (see Table 4.7 below for illustration and Sections 4.3.1.2.1, 4.3.1.2.1.1 and 4.3.1.2.1.2 below for more information).
### Table 4.7: Quotes Evidencing Superordinate Sub-theme 2: Motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
<th>(CW1:SEP)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Whenever I begin a conversation with anybody I'm working out is...what is their motivation.”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“Ok by looking at their motivation I am looking at...what is the motivation for them to implement some of the things that might get discussed...I am always looking to pick that out. So I'll look to see, are they motivated to actually wanting to save a child? Are they motivated in making it better for other children? Are they motivated in building skills? What are they motivated in being that will hook me into a conversation.”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“I suppose what you do then is always try and look for the motivation. What is the hook? How can I hook this teacher in? How can I hook this school in to make them think that there's a possibility that they could make it work rather than dance down the path of let's get rid of this child. How can I hook them in and how do I create a narrative around that. How do I do that while preserving their self-esteem? Quite often they feel like they are failing and you (EP) have got to preserve the self-esteem of the people around you because children can be tricky for lots of reasons.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Because we look at where people are on the motivational cycle. We look at the stresses in their lives, including the teachers and we balance what they can cope with. We don't just give everything all the time. Sometimes you just hope for one tiny change and at other times you can give them full belt and braces.”</td>
<td>(CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

#### 4.3.1.1.3 Organising sub-theme 3: needs.

The SEP aimed to identify the needs of school staff and parents in the consultation by asking the direct question, “*How can I help you?*” (CW1:SEP) and through identifying the questions they wanted answering (see Table 4.8 below for illustration). During consultation with parents, the SEP aimed to get them to talk about their needs rather than the needs of their child, in order to attune to them emotionally and offer them support (see Table 4.8 below for illustration). Once the needs were established, the SEP aimed to meet people’s needs either through the consultation process or thereafter by conducting an observation of the child, having a discussion or completing assessments with the child, completing a full report, conducting further consultations and/or involving other professionals. The questions asked of the SEP informed the SEP’s involvement and, in particular, the assessment process, to ensure she was continually meeting people’s needs and answering their questions. In one example, described by the SEP
and one participant, the parents wanted practical support for implementing strategies at home. The SEP was unable to fulfil this role within the time frame available, but in order to answer the parent’s questions, the SEP involved the Children’s Centre. Answering questions and meeting needs, from the SEP’s perspective, sometimes meant understanding her role in a given situation and acknowledging what was within her remit to deliver. Therefore, when necessary the SEP would signpost schools or parents to other relevant services to ensure their needs were met.

Two other participants described how the SEP met the school’s needs, the needs of the child and answered their questions (see Table 4.8 below for illustration). Some of the key elements identified in meeting the school and child’s needs was the SEP’s ability to listen, have an agenda-free approach and be flexible in the way she worked. The SEP’s approach was adapted if something was not working or if a new approach needed to be tried. Her ability to identify and meet schools’ needs was considered distinctive to the positive outcomes for the children and distinctive in comparison to the participant’s experiences of other EPs (see Table 4.8 below for illustration). Two of the participants described clearly what they wanted from the SEP’s support. One participant wanted support for the family and the school in order to address the child’s needs in the classroom and to make a positive difference for the child (see Table 4.8 below for illustration). The second participant wanted direct advice and clear guidance of what strategies to continue using and what new strategies to try. The participant had specific questions that needed answering including, “am I right to be worried about him,” and “am I doing the right thing?” (CW1:CT).

Table 4.8: Quotes Evidencing Organising Sub-theme 3: Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>“I'm working out…what is it that they need?” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I say sometimes, like, if I have been a very good psychologist, in this situation, how would I have helped you?” (CW2:SEP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“So it was a case of having a conversation (with the class teacher) to say let's have a look at what we can do for you.”  
(CW1:SEP)

“What I want to do is get to the point where they (parents) start talking about their needs rather than the needs of their child and with George’s mum it came quite quickly, how stressed she was.”  
(CW2:SEP)

“You just need someone like that (Sarah) who is going to address the needs of the children.”  
(CW2:HT)

“They all should be like that, that way (Sarah’s way). I mean some (EPs) come in with their agenda, I always work like this and I do this and this and you (the school) have to adapt your needs to the situation.”  
(CW1:HT)

“We were looking at agencies to come in and work with the family and give us the support…so for that person to come in and make a difference for them (the children).”  
(CW1:HT)

4.3.1.1.4 The participant specialist educational psychologist’s ability to move from step 1: listen, to step 2: form the action plan.

At this point in the process of consultation, the SEP had spent time listening to people’s Pain (OSt1), Narratives (OSt2) of Stress (SSt1) and of Motivation (SSt2) and their Needs (OSt3) (see Figure 4.2 above for an illustration). People felt that the SEP had listened, that their voices had been heard and understood. The SEP had listened to people’s pain and narratives of stress to gauge where they were emotionally. The SEP had applied SFBT (George et al., 2010; Stobie et al., 2005) and the Solihull Approach (Douglas, 2010) to attune to and contain people’s emotions to build a trusting relationship between herself and the people she was helping. The SEP had listened to people’s narratives of motivation and narratives of stress to gain an understanding of how to support a person to move a child forward. The SEP had identified the person’s needs and questions and, therefore, had a clearer idea of what they wanted from the SEP’s involvement and what the SEP needed to do to meet their needs (see Sections 4.3.1.1.1, 4.3.1.1.2 and 4.3.1.1.3 above for more information).

Although a quantifiable measure of the actual impact of Step 1 was not taken in the current study, apart from the known positive outcome of the SEP’s involvement and the participant’s
verbal accounts from the description of the process of listening to people’s pain, narratives and needs through the use of SFBT (George et al., 2010; Stobie et al., 2005) and the Solihull Approach (Douglas, 2010), it could be suggested that at the end of this stage, the SEP had contained the emotions of individuals so much so, that the individuals trusted the SEP to have temporary ownership of their problem. The resigning of ownership of the problem onto the SEP would have supported the SEP in moving people onto accepting the problem solving phase, (Step 2: Form the Action Plan) (MT2) (See Figure 4.2 above for an illustration), by instilling the confidence that she held the problem and was going to meet their needs and support them in moving the child forward. The individuals may, therefore, have accepted moving onto Step 2: Form the Action Plan (MT2) whereby the SEP used her knowledge, gained through listening to the individuals, to shape people’s narratives (OST4) and devise the strategies (OST5) to form the action plan for the child (see Figure 4.2 above for an illustration and Section 4.3.1.2 below for more information).

4.3.1.2 Main theme 2: step 2, form the action plan.
Step 2 in the Problem to Solution (ST1) process was to Form an Action Plan (MT2) for the individual child (see Figure 4.2 above for an illustration). After listening to people, the SEP moved the conversation onto the action plan, firstly by closing the listening conversation by saying something like, “thank you for telling me about that, it’s really useful, thank you, thank you…do you think there is anything else I need to know?” (CW2:SEP). The SEP stated that, only after having listened to everybody would she explain what she had observed. To help frame the direction of the discussion onto the action plan, the SEP said that she would also say something like, “oh gosh, what are we going to do for this child…what are we going to do then? We need a plan.” (CW1:SEP). The second step, therefore, involved the SEP engaging more collaboratively with people and talking more openly rather than just listening.
To help move people onto devising the action plan, the SEP engaged in two processes simultaneously; Shaping the Narratives to Empower (OST4) parents and school staff, and Devising Strategies (OST5) (see Figure 4.2 above for an illustration). The narratives of parents and school staff were shaped, Through the Specialist Educational Psychologist’s Language (SST3). The SEP used language to Explain the Child’s Behaviour (St1), but was conscious to ensure that she used Clear Communication (St2) and was Judgment Free (St3) (See Figure 4.2 above for an illustration and Sections 4.3.1.2.1, 4.3.1.2.1.1, 4.3.1.2.1.2, 4.3.1.2.1.3, 4.3.1.2.1.3.1, 4.3.1.2.1.3.2 and 4.3.1.2.1.3.3 below for more information.) Strategies were devised (OST5: Devise Strategies) instantly to problems discussed and left on the day, ready to be implemented straight away (SST4: Instant and Immediate Strategies). The strategies devised were specific to the individual child and situation (SST5: Specific Strategies) (See Figure 4.2 above for an illustration and Sections 4.3.1.2.2, 4.3.1.2.2.1, 4.3.1.2.2.2, 4.3.1.2.2.2.1 below for more information.)

The action plan was described by the SEP as a working document, a common agreement that supports change by being closely connected to the situation and jointly devised between the SEP, the school staff and parents (see Table 4.9 below for illustration). The action plan was described by three other participants as a collaborative process, led by the SEP (see Table 4.9 below for illustration). The SEP described how there were suggestions made by them and then discussed, looked at, disregarded, amended, added to and supported by the school staff and parents, during the process of writing the plan. Three participants described how they were given the opportunity to problem solve with the SEP, which was distinctive in comparison to their experience of other EPs, whereby they would receive a report with recommendations weeks later. The SEP and five other participants commented on the distinctive process of joint action planning and the usefulness of the action plan being written on the same day. One participant made a direct comparison between the production of an EP report and an action plan. They considered that a full report would not have had the same positive impact because it would not
have been written up on the same day and the strategies would not have been as clear to understand (see Table 4.9 below for illustration). The SEP explained, in her opinion, the purpose of writing an action plan verses the role of a full report, in relation to the reasons why an EP was writing a report and the questions that had been asked. The SEP argued that the purpose of a full report is less about action planning and more about describing a Child or Young Person’s (CYP) difficulties and so is, therefore, more likely to be written in a deficit model. Whereas, an action plan is more likely to be written in a developmental model, as it is a working document devised with school staff and parents to explain what a child needs. When the SEP first went in to offer support, she considered that a full report was not appropriate, whereas an action plan met the school and parents’ needs. One participant noted that the SEP did later write a report to evidence the action plan as the school needed it for the statutory assessment process. The action plan was, therefore, considered successful because it met the needs of the schools and the parents to move the children forward.

Table 4.9: Quotes Evidencing Main Theme 2: Step 2, Form the Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“That action plan is a working document, it’s a common agreement, it isn’t me as an authoritative person saying I have found all this out and I’m going to go away and I am going to write it all up and it is going to be presented to you, in a document that somehow, second or third steps away from the current situation….This (the action plan) is a working document that we work together on. Yes I have gone, do you think that will work…because they will go, oh no we can’t possibly do that, right ok, so how can we get this to work because I think this child needs this…So actually people are involved in drawing up the plan rather than it being a prescription…Having been a SENCo…I would look to the back to the recommendations and sometimes there were so many I thought, how am I possibly going to do all that. It was so unreal to my context…When I became an EP, I vowed never to do it because an action plan will only work if everyone is involved, invested in it. What’s the point in writing ten pages when actually you will not evoke change because we (EPs) are agents of change that is our job.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A plan should never just come from the EP. A plan should be collaborative but we (EPs) lead it because we know all the strategies. We (EPs) know what works. But it is about what works in a given setting…So it is all constantly problem solving so that at the end we had eight or nine points and I said ok…there you go.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We did the (action plan) together, verbally and she (Sarah) wrote.” (CW1:CT)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.1.2.1 Organising sub-theme 4: shape narratives to empower.

After listening to people’s Pain (OST1), their Narratives (OST2) of Stress (SSt1) and of Motivation (SSt2) and their Needs (OST3) (see Figure 4.2 above for an illustration), the SEP aimed to Shape Narratives to Empower (OST4) school staff and parents to believe that they could save or have a positive impact on the child. The shaping of narratives played a key role in forming the action plan (MT2: Form the Action Plan), as it enabled people to accept the suggested strategies and have the confidence to implement them. In particular, the SEP described how the process of writing the plan shaped people’s willingness and capacity to apply the strategies, as an individual’s approach to a strategy was associated with their mindset. In order to do this, the SEP said that she aimed to get people to want to change themselves and, therefore, their willingness to apply the strategies and change their approach to the child (see Table 4.10 below for illustration). The SEP also described how she tried to create narratives that could sit with people’s narratives to help them understand a given situation (see Table 4.10 below for illustration).

Three participants recognised that the SEP got people to think about children differently during the action planning conversation and empowered people to achieve for children (see Table 4.10 below for illustration). One parent described how the SEP managed to change the label associated with their child from “naughty to complex,” which had a positive impact on how school staff perceived the child (see Table 4.10 below for illustration). While another participant explained how she, herself, changed the way she saw the child following a conversation with the SEP (see Table 4.10 below for illustration).
Table 4.10: Quotes Evidencing Organising Sub-theme 4: Shape Narratives to Empower

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“If you look at the plan there is no rocket science in that plan. If you read any behaviour books it is in there. It is about the mindset of these (strategies)...What do you say, you can’t change anybody you have got to get them to want to change themselves but we provide the ways in which that can happen...It's the (shaping of the) willingness to apply those strategies and in that point they have changed their response to the child.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think, how can I create narratives that can sit with people to help them understand the given situation.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I would say that you can see the difference in the way that Sarah gets you to think about the children...when you are trying to work out what your recommendations, strategies are.” (CW1:CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“They (school staff and parents) go away thinking, right, I understand that now...She (Sarah) gives people food for thought to go away and she doesn't disempower people. She (Sarah) is not that type of person. She (Sarah) empowers people to go away and try and achieve for children.” (CW1:HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The naughty child tag...and I would say, it is only since Sarah got involved that he’s not a naughty boy, he is complex. I think she used the word complex child.” (CW2:P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I liked the way that she (Sarah) described him because it did actually make me think. I do think there are times where it is easy for us (school staff) to say he knows what he is doing, he knows what he is doing wrong and he should listen.” (CW2:CT)</td>
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4.3.1.2.1.1 Shaping narratives to empower parents.
The SEP aimed to shape narratives to empower parents and school staff for particular reasons.

The SEP aimed to empower parents to understand their child’s behaviour, see the positives in their child, have a role to play in the process and have their voice heard (See Figure 4.2 above for an illustration). The SEP helped parents understand their child’s behaviour by explaining the behaviour (St1: Explain the Child’s Behaviour) in a way that was clearly communicated and made sense to them (St2: Clear Communication) (see Sections 4.3.1.2.1.3.1 and 4.3.1.2.1.3.2 below for more information). The SEP supported parents to look for positives in their child by not starting the action planning stage with problem talk, but instead started with positive talk (see Table 4.11 below for illustration). In particular, the SEP started by saying three positive things about their...
child before describing what the child was finding difficult. The SEP argued that parents get used to hearing negative things said about their child and quite often professionals have been negative (see Table 4.11 below for illustration). Instead, the SEP’s approach was to be a positive thinker and, therefore, see the positives in the children and communicate these to their parents. The SEP was described by one participant, as the person who gave parents a voice in the system. The participant explained how the SEP made it clear that she was there for the parents and not just there for the school (see Table 4.11 below for illustration). She made the parent feel listened to and that their opinions were valued. The SEP also saw everyone as having a role to play, including the parents, and encouraged them to join the problem solving process. The SEP tried to empower parents to see how they could help and encouraged them to ask questions (see Table 4.11 below for illustration). The SEP and one parent commented on how the SEP encouraged the school and parents to work together (see Table 4.11 below for illustration). The parent also commented on how the SEP encouraged her to be in control of her child’s behaviour.

### Table 4.11: Quotes Evidencing the Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist’s Ability to Shape Narratives to Empower Parents

<table>
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<th>Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“So…you start with not having problem talk. You start having positive talk. So you start to talk about what a nice lad he is. How charming he is. How much I liked him. I then talk about well, he is finding some of these behaviours tricky.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“When I say, this is what I have seen, I always say three positive things. Well I just think he’s marvellous and he will sit and he will listen on the carpet.” (CW2:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It’s about noticing the strengths in their child. So if I remember…I talked around him being a little charmer. I think I said something like oh he is a little charmer, isn’t he. Oh my word he has got a lovely smile and a twinkle in his eyes. But, he is finding it a bit tricky isn’t he in some things and this is what he is doing. So how are we going to help him?” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“People (other professionals) haven’t supported them (parents) in the past to look for the positives in their child.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She wasn’t just for the school. She made it perfectly clear that she was there for us (parents) as well….She said I am there for you as well as the school. I’m not a one sided”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
person, even though they (the school) have rung me. She said I’m there to support you as well.” (CW2: P)

R: “Did she support your voice in the system then?”

P: “Massively…She said what these people (parents) are saying is actually right.” (CW2: P)

“You (the EP) encourage parents to be part of the process that they can help rather than it being something that they have to tell their child off for.” (CW1: SEP)

“She (Sarah) said that we (parent and class teacher) had to team up, in and out of school and stick to the boundaries so that we did work together and you know…it went a lot better.” (CW1: P)

“I used the people in the school (to encourage the parents to be involved). Now they’ll (the school) help you. You (parent) need to come to them (class teacher) because they (the school) will help you (the parent). If you (parent) have got a worry about this or that, come and talk to this person (class teacher) here.” (CW1: SEP)

4.3.1.2.1.2 Shaping narratives to empower school staff.

The SEP aimed to shape narratives to empower school staff to understand the child’s behaviour and manage the behaviour (See Figure 4.2 above for an illustration) so that they could move the child forward. The SEP and two further participants commented on how the SEP empowered staff and instilled confidence in their own ability. In order to empower staff to understand the child’s behaviour, the SEP explained the child’s behaviour (St1: Explain the Child’s Behaviour) in straightforward language (St2: Clear Communication) and explained the reasons behind the behaviour (see Section 4.3.1.2.1.3.1 and 4.3.1.2.1.3.2 below for more information). The SEP also helped school staff to understand the child’s behaviour through shaping a different narrative around the child, so that they had a more sympathetic understanding of the child’s needs (see Section 4.3.1.2.1.3.1 below for more information). One participant noted how the SEP was distinctive in the way she got people to think about the child and encouraged staff to reflect on the child’s needs (see Table 4.12 below for illustration). The SEP empowered school staff to manage the child’s behaviour by shaping a narrative around the school staff’s ability to be in control (see Table 4.12 below for illustration). A number of the behaviour management
strategies provided on the action plans, as evidenced through the content analysis, also further supported the SEP’s empowerment of school staff as the strategies put into practice ‘how’ to be in or take control (see Section 4.3.1.2.2.2.1 below for more information). One participant commented on how the SEP’s advice supported her to feel empowered and have the confidence to take control of situations involving the child (see Table 4.12 below for illustration). The SEP’s ability to shape narratives was evidenced when one participant commented that, following the consultation with the SEP, the participant often considered how the SEP would deal with a given situation and wondered what she would do (see Table 4.12 below for illustration).

Table 4.12: Quotes Evidencing the Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist’s Ability to Shape Narratives to Empower School Staff

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Sometimes she would get me to think about it. Right this is what he is doing in class...so what do you think you might need to do differently.” (CW1:CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“What I had to do was empower her (class teacher) to make her realise that she was in charge.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She gives the confidence to staff.” (CW2:HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It was just her (Sarah’s) advice, you know, the fact that just keep reinforcing the rules. Make sure that basically George knows that you are in charge. You are the adult. He needs to listen to you. Stay calm in those situations...I felt that I was empowered then (to manage the child's behaviour) because I think the problems that we were having...was a case of a lot of the adults feeling the fact that George was ruling the roost in a sense.” (CW2:CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Obviously you come across situations daily and you think oh how do I deal with, how would Sarah deal with it, what would she say?” (CW2:CT)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.1.2.1.3 Superordinate sub-theme 3: through the participant specialist educational psychologist’s language.
In addition to the points made above in Sections 4.3.1.2.1.1 and 4.3.1.2.1.2, the SEP Shaped Narratives to Empower (OST4) parents (to understand their child’s behaviour, see the positives in their child, have their voice heard and have a role) and school staff (to understand the child’s behaviour and manage the child’s behaviour) through her language (SSt3: The Specialist
Educational Psychologist’s Language). The SEP used language to Explain the Child’s Behaviour (St1), Communicate Clearly (St2) and be Judgment Free (St3) in her interactions with school staff and parents, (See Figure 4.2 above for an illustration and Sections 4.3.1.2.1.3.1, 4.3.1.2.1.3.2 and 4.3.1.2.1.3.3 below for more information).

4.3.1.2.1.3.1 Sub-theme 1: explain the child’s behaviour.
The SEP and four other participants commented on how the SEP empowered parents and school staff to understand the child by using language (St3: The Specialist Educational Psychologist’s Language) to Explain the Child’s Behaviour (St1) (see Figure 4.2 above for an illustration). One participant commented on how well the SEP understood the child’s behaviour (see Table 4.13 below for illustration). One participant explained how the SEP provided clear examples of their child’s behaviour and described the impact of their own behaviour on their child (see Table 4.13 below for illustration). The SEP provided an honest message to the parent, but delivered it in a sensitive and non-judgmental way. The parent was not, therefore, left feeling disempowered. The parent described how they had been involved with other professionals, but no other professional had described the child’s behaviour in the same way. The parent explained that the SEP got the message through more clearly and as a result they understood their child’s behaviour better (see Table 4.13 below for illustration). Three participants commented on how the SEP description of the child dispelled the label ‘naughty’ and instead helped people understand the child’s needs (see Table 4.13 below for illustration).

Table 4.13: Quotes Evidencing Sub-theme 1: Explain the Child’s Behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“She (Sarah) understands...why that behaviour is happening.” (CW1:CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“He used to have a thing, used to go on and on and on so I went just have it. You know, just do it and she (Sarah) said no that's why he is doing it...She helped us by saying to us, this is the problem. He has been the baby of the family but I've not been consistent with him and like if we say no, it means no...So she said, he's doing it because he knows he can do it. He can get away with doing it and he's just pushing our buttons. We have to stay strong at home.” (CW1:P)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“I don’t know really I think it was a bit of home truth really that I was letting him get away with too much.”

R: “Did you know you were?”

“I did but not to the extent until she (Sarah) basically saw me. She wasn’t nasty or anything you know. She was like, when you do this, you know, basically told us what was going on...I think she got it through to me more (than other professional) what I was doing.” (CW1:P)

“I liked the way she sort of described George as a very special little boy because I wouldn’t have thought that...I think that as a school and maybe the staff in the school wouldn’t describe him as special but she (Sarah) had seen passed that with George and she sort of was seeing that he does need help and I liked the way she (Sarah) described George to me. Sarah sort of said he is a very complex little boy but I liked the way she (Sarah) described him as special because it did actually make me go home and think he does need our help.” (CW2:CT)

4.3.1.2.1.3.2 Sub-theme 2: clear communication.
The SEP used Clear Communication (St2) (see Figure 4.2 above for an illustration) with parents and school staff to ensure that they were having conversations that everyone understood. This enabled parents and school staff to feel empowered to be part of the process of problem solving with the SEP and feel like they had a role in the process. For parents, the SEP described how she matched the parents in their conversation in order to try and step into their world to communicate what she understood about their child in a way that made sense to them. The SEP explained how she tried to create equality in the conversation by not hiding behind professionalism including the use of long words and having complex conversations that would disempower parents (see Table 4.14 below for illustration). Instead, the SEP tried to empower parents to be part of the conversation. The SEP spoke about how she did not want to frighten parents and so she was aware of making the conversation light hearted and using a non-threatening tone of voice. One parent spoke specifically about how the SEP encouraged themselves to speak out if they didn’t understand something and the SEP spent the time to go over any aspect that was hard to understand (see Table 4.14 below for illustration).
For school staff, the SEP explained how she would not hide behind psychology speak when describing the child's behaviour. The SEP explained that in her experience, as EPs access complex contextual information, it is important in practice for them not to over complicate their language so that people understand what they need to do for the child (see Table 4.14 below for illustration). In support of the SEP's description of her practice, three participants explained how the SEP was easy to understand and was a good communicator (see Table 4.14 below for illustration).

Table 4.14: Quotes Evidencing Sub-theme 2: Clear Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“So it’s about matching the parent in their conversation and that’s not dumbing down. I’m not meaning to dumb down. What I’m meaning to do is, I am going to try and step into your world to communicate what I understand about your child in a way that makes sense to you. So, therefore, it’s equality. I am not going to sit behind a suit and long words and tricky conversations and structures and all the rest that disempowers you. So it is all about empowerment so that they feel as though they can ask a question.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She would sit with us if we didn’t understand something. She said look if you don’t understand it tell me and then she would try it in a different way. You know, so that was…very good because I struggle with some of these things…so she encouraged us to do that.” (CW2:P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Then I talked about what the child was communicating to which then obviously I am speaking about the child in their language. I am not hiding behind psychology speak. I am not hiding behind providing this child what they need.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“People have got to understand it (the language). (It is important not to) hide behind big words so actually people (school staff) don’t understand what they have got to do.” (CW2:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She is very good to understand is Sarah. Her advice isn’t hazy in that sense. She sort of talks to you, it is very clear. In a way she sort of, I don’t want to sound rude but she sort of talks to you in the sense of you’re the child, in a way. So it’s the advice is very very clear. So you really can’t go wrong with the advice she is giving you. So I found that helpful.” (CW2:CT)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
4.3.1.2.1.3.3 Sub-theme 3: judgment free.
The SEP aimed to be non-judgmental (St3: Judgment Free) in the way she communicated with parents and school staff. The SEP also spoke about the importance of practicing non-value judgments to be an ethical psychologist and the importance of psychology being that of moving people forward without blame (see Table 4.15 below for illustration). Being non-judgmental meant different things, from the SEP’s perspective, for parents than it did for school staff. However, what was similar was the SEP’s description that having a value free conversation, in practice, meant not letting a formulated hypothesis influence the questioning process, but instead holding the hypothesis somewhere in her mind and being open-minded when she first met with school staff and parents (See Table 4.15 below for illustration).

Table 4.15: Quotes Evidencing Sub-theme 3: Judgment Free

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“No matter what, you cannot be a psychologist and have a value judgment about anybody because actually as soon as your values come into the situation, into a given situation, I think it becomes an ethical situation, concern. So you have always got to be respectful.” (CW2:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“No matter what hypothesis you (the EP) think you have, you have to discount it because that meeting (with the parents or school staff) is the beginning. So you should never come to a meeting ever, with anybody with a formulated hypothesis. No matter what you have seen in the observation…you start again. I always start again because over time that can influence you because you didn’t ask the right questions. If you have got a formulated hypothesis in your head you skew it to what you think it might be…Not until I have had a meeting with parents and school staff. I might hold this hypothesis in a little part of my head but I never let it influence the questioning process because that tells you so much…because you have questioned without judgment.” (CW2:SEP)</td>
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</table>

For parents, the SEP explained that being non-judgmental meant having an approach through conversation that was based on respect. This meant starting a conversation with parents believing that all parents love their children and respecting that the conversation is about their child so, therefore, enabling parents to always talk first in a meeting and being sensitive in the way a message was delivered (see Table 4.16 below for illustration). The SEP spoke about how she wanted to get into the parents’ world and make them feel safe in the conversation so that she had listened to their pain, understood and been respectful. Supporting the SEP’s description of
being kind in the delivery of her message to parents, one parent explained how the SEP was honest in her message and got her point across, but delivered it in a non-threatening way. The parent described how the SEP was not nasty or blameful, but with her tone of voice and the way she provided examples, got her point across without being abrupt (see Table 4.16 below for illustration). The parent also commented on how she had a laugh with the SEP, suggesting that they had developed a relationship. Three other participants described their experience of the SEP’s non-judgmental approach in a conversation with parents. One participant in particular, commented on how the SEP tried to stop parents feeling guilty by making it clear that she was not questioning their parenting skills (see Table 4.16 below for illustration).

Table 4.16: Quotes Evidencing Sub-theme 3: Judgment Free Approach with Parents

<table>
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<th>Quotes</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I think conversations with parents are so very important because you must be mindful that this is their baby…Put yourself in their shoes. How would you want them to talk to you about your baby…and, therefore, you have to open at that starting point because if you don’t then they will just switch off and they just think you are just telling them off. So I suppose, non-judgmental is, I understand that this is your baby and maybe you are in a complicated and complex set up but I’m going to be kind in the way I deliver my message about what things I need you to do.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I never ever have a meeting whereby I let anybody else (than parents) go first (talk first in a meeting), that is my practice. Always because that is their child and that’s the respect you give them.” (CW2:SEP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She wasn’t nasty or funny…I think it was her tone (of voice)…It was like she was doing examples but she wasn’t saying this is what’s going on and it’s your fault, but she was like right, you tell me when I do this, what do you think…She got her point across but she wasn’t abrupt…She didn’t make you feel threatened or under pressure…but she got her point across.” (CW1:P)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“Sarah was very keen to say, we are not questioning your parenting skills. You have just got a child who is difficult to parent. So mum and dad didn’t feel guilty about it…so she (Sarah) was keen to not make them (parents) feel like it was their fault and obviously tell them to stay on board.” (CW2:HT)</td>
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</table>

For school staff, the SEP explained that being non-judgmental meant acknowledging that the teachers were trying their best. Therefore, in conversation with school staff, the SEP aimed to
acknowledge the effort they were putting in and provided affirmation (see Table 4.17 below for illustration). The SEP argued that EPs should not judge teachers as not making an effort and should consider that most teachers are trying their best. The SEP commented that teachers might not have all the strategies, but they are trying their best and their effort should be acknowledged (see Table 4.17 below for illustration). The SEP argued that EPs should build people’s trust and be supportive by being value free in their judgments. The SEP spoke about the importance of stopping people from blaming themselves and protecting their self-esteem (see Table 4.17 below for illustration). This was considered important to be able to move people onto creating a new narrative that the child can be saved and that they can manage the child’s behaviour and implement the action plan. The listening stage of hearing people’s pain and stress was supportive of the SEP’s ability to judge how fragile a person’s self-esteem was and what she needed to do, the level of affirmation she needed to provide to help move people to implement the strategies with confidence. The SEP described how acknowledging where everyone was emotionally and through providing affirmation was distinctive in supporting the SEP’s ability to hook into the person so that they become a listener, in that the school staff become more open to being shaped to move forward for the child (see Table 4.17 below for illustration). Even if the SEP disagreed with the way a person was describing a child, the SEP said that they did not make a judgment, but instead used body language to get people to relax and know that she was not going to criticise them. Instead, the SEP showed that she was listening, understanding and being supportive (see Table 4.17 below for illustration).

In support of the SEP’s description of being non-judgmental in her communication with school staff, four other participants commented on how the SEP made them feel valued by being non-judgmental or critical and by praising their efforts (see Table 4.17 below for illustration). One participant commented on how the SEP didn’t talk down to staff, but instead listened to the school’s experience of the child and was not critical of how they were managing the child.
Another participant explained how the SEP gave her lots of specific praise in front of the parents and was really reassuring which made her feel positive that she was doing a good job (see Table 4.17 below for illustration).

Table 4.17: Quotes Evidencing Sub-theme 3: Judgment Free Approach with School Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
<th>(CW1:SEP)</th>
<th>(CW2:SEP)</th>
<th>(CW2:HT)</th>
<th>(CW1:CT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I think we (EPs should not judge) that teachers are not making the effort, but most teachers are trying their best and they may not have all the strategies to hand, but they are trying their best and, as a consequence, we should acknowledge the effort they are putting in and say actually you are trying really hard here…to preserve their self-esteem because they are human beings and what I think psychology is, is moving people forward without blame.”</td>
<td>**CW1:**SEP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I stopped her from blaming herself and said you can’t blame yourself in this given situation.”</td>
<td>**CW1:**SEP</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I was mindful of the mindset of (the class teacher) and how she was feeling and she was actually using a number of strategies that were working. So I acknowledged that the teacher was using a lot of good strategies…People need affirmation. They are driven on the whole to get it. Some people need lots of affirmation and some people need less.”</td>
<td>**CW1:**SEP</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“It was about acknowledging her success, I really liked this, I really liked that…it was recognising her strengths.”</td>
<td>**CW2:**SEP</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“I was making little comments (during the observation). I said you have done that really well….The first thing I said to (a colleague) was, she (the class teacher) is doing a really good job you know, with this and at that point she (the class teacher) was a listener.”</td>
<td>**CW1:**SEP</td>
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<tr>
<td>“What I do is I make the hypothesis that everybody is trying to do their best whether or not I agree with some of the things that they are doing. I have come to that hypothesis and if they are all ranting and raving about a child, even if I disagree with that, I can’t make a judgment on it. I can’t because I have to take them at the point that they are at and hear their pain.”</td>
<td>**CW2:**SEP</td>
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<tr>
<td>“It’s the whole body language and people will relax and go great, she (the EP) is not going to come in and…tell me I don’t know what I am doing...She is going to listen and support me and understand.”</td>
<td>**CW1:**SEP</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“You really felt like Sarah was listening to you and listening to our experience of how we found George and what we had tried and she wasn’t sort of thinking, oh you know, been critical of us and the way we handled it.”</td>
<td>**CW2:**HT</td>
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<tr>
<td>“She seemed to want to listen to what I was doing rather than just giving me her opinion on what I should be doing. So I never felt like I was being judged as a teacher on what I wasn’t doing, which has happened in the past.”</td>
<td>**CW1:**CT</td>
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</table>
4.3.1.2.2 Organising sub-theme 5: devise strategies.

Along with the Shaping Narratives to Empower (OSt4), the second process the SEP engaged in, whilst forming the action plan (MT2: Form the Action Plan), was the devising of strategies (OSt5: Devise Strategies) (see Figure 4.2 above for an illustration). Devising the strategies occurred simultaneously with the shaping of narratives during the second step of the consultation process. Two elements were identified to describe how the SEP supported parents and the schools to devise strategies for the action plan. Firstly, the strategies were devised instantly to problems and left on the day to be implemented straightaway (SSt4: Instant and Immediate Strategies). Secondly, the strategies devised were not general, but specific to the individual child, the situation and what the parent or school staff had to do and say to manage the child’s behaviour (SSt5: Specific Strategies) (See Figure 4.2 above for an illustration and Sections 4.3.1.2.2.1 and 4.3.1.2.2.2, below for more information).

Three participants and the SEP described how the strategies were devised and problem solved collaboratively with the SEP, the school staff and the parents. The SEP would suggest strategies for discussion and, at the same time, encourage others to think themselves about what strategies would work (see Table 4.18 below for illustration). The SEP and one other participant described how there was a level of trust and understanding between the SEP and school staff; that the SEP understood what the child needed; and that the strategies suggested would work (see Table 4.18 below for illustration). Talking through the strategies with the SEP was described by one
participant as distinctive to the successful outcome of the SEP’s involvement and distinctive in comparison to their experience of other EPs (see Table 4.18 below for illustration). The collaborative discussion enabled the participant to feel like they had ownership over the strategies and that they could be open and honest with the SEP about what strategies would not work in their classroom. Described by two participants as distinctive, was that the SEP’s ability to work continuously with the school, to change the strategies or provide a new list of recommendations, if the strategies were not working or if the situation had changed (see Table 4.18 below for illustration and Section 4.8 below for more information).

Table 4.18: Quotes Evidencing the Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist’s Ability to Problem Solve Collaboratively with Parents and School Staff to Devise the Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
<th>(CW1:CT)</th>
<th>(CW1:SEP)</th>
<th>(CW1:HT)</th>
<th>(CW2:HT)</th>
<th>(CW1:CT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“So she (Sarah)...sort of (said) have you tried this or what do you think of this, have you thought about this. If I would have said no that wouldn’t work because (Teaching Assistant) isn’t there to do that, then between us we would have come up with something else.”</td>
<td>(CW1:CT)</td>
<td>(CW1:SEP)</td>
<td>“Sarah knows what the children need and what you want is strategies that are going to work with the children and if they don’t work you can say to Sarah, well this is not quite working right and Sarah will come back...So you are evaluating and reflecting on it.”</td>
<td>(CW1:HT)</td>
<td>(CW1:CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“They trust that you are not going to come left field with a load of strategies that don’t work. You have worked through the strategies with them.”</td>
<td>(CW1:CT)</td>
<td>(CW1:SEP)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“Sarah knows what the children need and what you want is strategies that are going to work with the children and if they don’t work you can say to Sarah, well this is not quite working right and Sarah will come back...So you are evaluating and reflecting on it.”</td>
<td>(CW1:CT)</td>
<td>(CW1:SEP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“You trust her (Sarah’s) judgment because you know it works. She (Sarah) won’t just always do things one way and she will reflect on the approach that has not worked and try something different.”</td>
<td>(CW1:CT)</td>
<td>(CW1:SEP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Like I say, the EP, it used to be a case of you get the recommendations and yes we do that, we’ve tried that but that doesn’t work. But because they have not sat with you, sort of discussed it with you, gone through it point by point...So you just get a report back...At least with Sarah you could sit there and say that’s not going to work...What else can we do? So she (Sarah) was there literally until you have a list of recommendations that are going to work for that child.”</td>
<td>(CW1:CT)</td>
<td>(CW1:SEP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I know that for another child, they (the recommendations) worked for a week and then we lost him again and everything that I was following wasn’t working so she (Sarah) came back in again and did a new list of recommendations.”</td>
<td>(CW1:CT)</td>
<td>(CW1:SEP)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
“I felt comfortable with her in that I could be open and honest, I’m doing this, it’s not working. I have never done that. I am not even going to bother trying that because I know what the other kids in the class will do. Don’t tell me to do that because I am not going to do it.” (CW1:CT)

A number of participants, including the SEP, commented on how the strategies suggested were not ‘rocket science’ and were things that were typically found in behaviour books or on training courses for schools or parents. The strategies were not necessarily something that the teachers or parents had not already come across before or that other professional had not already described (see Table 4.19 below for illustration and Section 4.3.1.2.2.1 below for triangulated information from the content analysis). What was distinctive in the SEP’s practice was the ability of the SEP to build a person’s willingness and capacity to apply the strategies (see Section 4.3.1.2.1 above for more information), as well as the SEP’s ability to apply the strategies into practice for an individual child and context (see Section 4.3.1.2.2 below for more information). Other professionals were described to have jumped straight into providing solutions to the child’s difficulties rather than starting at the point of the person and listening to them. On a number of occasions participants made comparisons to other professionals’ recommendations and how they were not taken up by the school (see Table 4.19 below for illustration). The reasons given were because the recommendations were not practical to the school or classroom environment (suggesting that the professionals had not discussed the recommendations with the individuals) and the recommendations were what the school had already tried (suggesting that the professionals had not listened to the school’s needs and questions). On one occasion, a parent was confused as to why the SEP was successful with the school as they felt that other professionals had offered the same or similar strategies (see Table 4.19 below for illustration). On a separate occasion, another parent was unsure how and why the SEP managed to get a message through to them more clearly than other professionals (see Table 4.19 below for illustration). The impact of the listening phase, whereby people were able to express their Pain
(OSt1), Stress (SSt1), Motivation (SSt2) and Needs (OSt3) and the way the SEP then used this information to shape people’s Narrative (OSt4), contributed to the successful outcome of the action plan and in the SEP ability to move people forward (more so than other professionals) to create change for children (see Figure 4.2 above for an illustration and Sections 4.3.1.1.1, 4.3.1.1.2, 4.3.1.1.3 and 4.3.1.2.1 above for more information). The SEP specifically stated that no other professional could have done what she did because other professionals were not applied psychologists working at the system level with individuals within their context. Instead, other professionals prescribe their hypothesis and strategies onto others. The SEP described that it is not about the hypothesis of the person and what they felt was appropriate for the child, but instead about the individuals and their ecosystems. The SEP had an ‘anti-hypothesis bias’ stance in that hypotheses were confirmatory led and, therefore, formulated through a triangulation of information from within the ecosystem. The SEP argued that only a psychologist has the skills to enter into the ecosystem, to apply psychology, to support change (see Sections 4.9.2.1, 4.9.2.1.7 and 4.9.2.1.7.1 below for more information).

Table 4.19: Quotes Evidencing the Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist’s Distinct Ability to Shape School Staff and Parent’s Willingness to Apply the Strategies into Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I would say that a lot of the things that are there in the recommendations are things that you might hear when you go on courses…training…or by other trained professionals.” (CW1:CT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I think you can have a specialist teacher who will go in and be quite good but they just offer advice. They don’t tailor what needs to be done in the context.” (CW1:CT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Other professional tried but it didn’t work…In a roundabout way I think CAMHS suggested most things that she (Sarah) suggested, they just never got taken into account.” (CW2:P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t know why…I think she got it through to me more what I was doing.” (CW1:P)</td>
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</table>
4.3.1.2.1 Superordinate sub-theme 4: instant and immediate strategies.
The SEP supported parents and school staff by providing strategies in the form of an action plan, on the day of the SEP’s visit, for people to implement immediately and by providing instant strategies to problems as they were being discussed. The SEP emphasised the importance of always leaving a plan for a behaviour concern (see Table 4.20 below for illustration); never going away and writing up recommendations at a distance from the context and the people involved. The production of an immediate action plan was described by three participants, as distinctive to the successful outcome for the children (see Table 4.20 below for illustration). In particular, it emphasised the urgency of the situation and need to act immediately. One participant described how receiving recommendations later does not support the school in decreasing the risk of exclusion as depending on the types of strategies suggested and when the report arrives, the situation for a child may have already deteriorated.

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<th>Table 4.20: Quotes Evidencing the Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist’s Ability to Provide an Immediate Action Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quotes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I always leave a plan. Even if it is on a scrappy bit of paper. I always leave a plan.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She (Sarah) is right you need to do this, this and this and she rips it off a sheet of A4 and hands it to the teacher and they have got strategies there to use. And that is what you want.” (CW1:HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She gave me a list of recommendations to put in place the next day.” (CW2:HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“And those (strategies) we were able to implement literally as he walked through the door the next morning.” (CW1:CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: “What was distinctive about Sarah’s contribution to the successful outcomes for John?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P: “I would say the immediate recommendations that we got and the dialogue between EP and teacher.” (CS1:CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I literally walked away with a list of bullet points to do straight away, rather than waiting for it to get worse and then getting the recommendations later when actually they are not going to work now because it has spiralled out of control.” (CW1:CT)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The SEP was described by two participants to have provided instant strategies for problems as they were being discussed in the consultation. One participant described how they would give the SEP a problem and instantly she would write down a solution (see Table 4.21 below for illustration). This was considered to be very helpful and supportive, more so than not receiving a straight answer to a child’s behaviour, but instead receiving a general recommendation three or four weeks later.

### Table 4.21: Quotes Evidencing the Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist’s Ability to Provide Instant Strategies to Problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“She (Sarah) said right for that bullet point (problem) there’s a recommendation…and she wrote it out for me, there and then…So as I was giving her a problem, she was writing down a solution…to see if it worked.” (CW1: CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She (Sarah) always had an answer. So if I said but what if this, what if that…it was sort of her advice. It was sort of the practical advice that she has given me and I have put that into place and it has worked.” (CW2: CT)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

#### 4.3.1.2.2.2 Superordinate sub-theme 5: specific strategies.

The second way that the SEP supported parents and school staff was by providing specific rather than general strategies (SSt5 – Specific Strategies) (see Figure 4.2 above for an illustration and Section 4.3.1.2.2.2.1 below for triangulated information from the content analysis). The strategies were specific in relation to the individual child, the individual context and specific in relation to what the parent or the school staff had to do and say to the child, to manage their behaviour.

Four participants commented on how the SEP gave very specific strategies rather than general strategies for the individual child and context. The SEP provided specific strategies in relation to what to say and how to respond to a child (see Table 4.22 below for illustration). One participant commented on how the extremely specific behaviour management strategies helped because there was no ambiguity in how people were being asked to respond to the child (see Table 4.22
below for illustration). The same participant also commented on how no other EP, in their experience, had provided school staff with the specific language to manage a child’s behaviour (see Table 4.22 below for illustration). Instead, the school had received general recommendations such as, use positive language. General recommendations were also associated, by two participants, with the advice provided by other professionals, such as a specialist teacher. The SEP’s strategies were specific in that they were tailored to the needs of the individual context and child.

The distinctive contribution of the SEP was also described in her ability to understand the context of the whole class and the individual child to make the specific recommendations. In particular, two participants described how the SEP was not a person who came in with one set answers, but tailored the recommendations. One participant made a comparison between the SEP and other professionals who have offered advice to help manage children’s behaviour. They described how the SEP had a greater understanding of the context of the classroom and the child within the class, including the child’s background and was, therefore, more able to tailor the strategies specifically. Other professionals were described to have not taken into account the environment and instead just offered general strategies and advice. The participant felt that although other professionals would be able to provide advice, they were not as able to provide specific advice as a psychologist, who has a better understanding of the reasons behind a child’s behaviour (see Table 4.22 below for illustration).

The SEP highlighted the importance of making the recommendations specific to the individual context by working with the parent or school staff to devise the strategies. Through discussing the strategies with parents and school staff, the SEP described how it provided people with the opportunity to check out if the strategies would work in practice by asking people and by observing what people can actually cope with (see Table 4.22 below for illustration). It gave the school and parents more ownership over the strategies and they had the ability to check back
with the SEP if anything was unclear. One participant spoke specifically about how unhelpful it was receiving unmanageable recommendations that have not considered their context and, therefore, suggesting that not all psychologists provide specific recommendations (see Table 4.22 below for illustration). The SEP expressed the importance of being a psychologist in the moment and, therefore, working with people rather than working outside of the context and providing a long list of recommendations (see Sections 4.9.2.1.7 and 4.9.2.1.7.1 below for more information). From the participants’ description of other professionals who provide general recommendations in comparison to the SEP, it could be argued that a psychologist who works outside of the context and who also provides general recommendations, may be providing similar advice to other non-psychologist professionals. The distinctive contribution of a psychologist and a specialist psychologist may, therefore, be in their ability to devise specific context driven strategies with parents and school staff.

Table 4.22: Quotes Evidencing Superordinate Sub-theme 5: Specific Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“It was the language (that was most helpful). She told me what to say.” (CW1:CT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“It was the advice, the language, the, no you say to George this and this.” (CW2:CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Sarah was extremely specific about the behaviour management that we should be putting into place and because she was so specific that really helped us because there was no ambiguity about the way we should be reacting.” (CW2:HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think it was the fact that she gave us concrete strategies to use, but very practical…I didn’t think an EP in the past has talked so much about how to respond to a child vocally...She was extremely specific about what we were to say to him rather than it being general, it was extremely specific.” (CW2:HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“They (other professionals) provide almost the general rather than giving you specific ideas and exploring the class as a whole and the child as an individual within that class...They have got the strategies that they know. Oh these strategies should work, but actually your strategies don’t work because this child is different...So those general strategies aren’t going to work...instead she (Sarah) understands why that strategy will work and that one won’t.” (CW1:CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You know sometimes you see these reports and there is like 20 recommendations and the teacher goes, what am I supposed to do with this? Well it won’t work will it because you have not been a psychologist in the moment that judges what people can cope with.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
That is what I’m doing, all the time, is working out how far you can stretch and push it, that will allow this child to move on.” (CW1:SEP)

“What’s happened in the past with other EPs, I really struggle because the recommendations that were coming back to me were recommendations that were not manageable in school. So it was almost as though they were recommendations in general and the EP was just putting it down and not thinking that we have got 33 in class, only one TA, actually we can’t do that all the time.” (CW1:CT)

“I felt like they (other EPs’ recommendations) were just general recommendations that could have been on any EP report for any child, I felt.” (CW1:CT)

4.3.1.2.2.2.1 The content analysis.
A simple content analysis was conducted on the SEP’s action plans, for casework 1 and casework 2, in order to triangulate the participants’ opinions that the SEP provided specific strategies in relation to what the adults had to do and say to manage the child’s behaviour; that the strategies emphasised the adults maintaining control; and that the strategies were not ‘rocket science’ (for information on the strategies presented in the action plans see Appendices Q and R below).

In relation to whether the strategies were specific to what adults had to do and say to manage the child’s behaviour; the strategies documented on the action plans were considered to be clear in describing the actions of the adults, they were clearly presented and non-ambiguous. There were many examples of the specific language or sentences provided by the SEP for the adults to use with the children to manage their behaviour. For example, one strategy read: each lesson, George to be given 5 ‘talk cards.’ He uses one each time he talks to the teacher whether he is picked or he interrupts. Reiterate “the rule is…” In a second example, the strategy read: visual timetable of his day. Walk him through it, “we do this…then we do that,” (see Appendices Q and R below for more illustrations). On occasion, the additional phrases for the adults to say helped put the strategies into practice. For example, one recommendation requested adults to use concrete language and in order to put this into practice, the following phrase was provided, “Put that away...thank you.” The strategies
evidenced on the action plans were, therefore, considered to support the participants’ opinion that the strategies clearly described the actions of adults to manage the children’s behaviour.

In relation to whether the strategies emphasised the adults maintaining control; a number of the behaviour management strategies appeared to encourage school staff to take control of the child’s behaviour. The strategies were presented with the aim of achieving or maintaining adult control as an outcome of implementing the strategy. For example, the broken record technique was a recommendation that saw the adults repeating a request to a child continuously, until they followed the adults’ instructions. There was an emphasis on the enforcement of rules, the enforcement of requests and the aiding of a child’s understanding of the expectations through providing clear language and instructions (see Appendices Q and R below for more illustrations). It was considered that through implementation, these behaviour management strategies would result in the adults taking control off a child and/or remaining in control themselves.

The strategies, therefore, evidenced on the action plans were considered to support the participants’ opinion that the SEP encouraged confidence and empowerment of the adults to be in control (see Section 4.3.1.2.1.2 above for more information) by putting into practice ‘how’ to be in or take control.

In relation to whether the strategies presented were not ‘rocket science’; the strategies were considered to be familiar to other educational professionals, they were provided in short clear sentences and were not technically complex (see Appendices Q and R below for more illustrations). Where ambiguity may have existed, examples were provided. For example, on one of the action plans, it was stated that teaching support should give non-verbal prompts and gave the examples of ‘thumbs up’ for on task behaviour and ‘pointing’ to the teacher to encourage listening. The strategies perceived as typical, uncomplicated and non-technical, therefore, supported participants’ opinion that the strategies provided by the SEP were not ‘rocket science.’
4.4 Organising Theme 2: Assessment

Assessment (OT2) was identified as an organising theme to describe one of the SEP’s strategies of supporting the children with SEBD at risk of school exclusion (see Figures 4.1 above and 4.3 below for illustrations). The choice of assessments to conduct was described by the SEP as dependent upon the needs and questions of the parents and school staff as identified in the listening stage of the consultation process (see Section 4.3.1.1.3 above for more information). Two participants highlighted how the flexibility of the assessment methods applied by the SEP, ensured they received what they needed from the SEP’s support and was distinctive in ensuring the positive outcomes for the children. The participants discussed the difference between the SEP’s approach towards the assessment of a child with SEBD and their experiences of other EPs’ approaches (see Table 4.23 below for illustration). They argued that the SEP’s approach was distinctive in the way the SEP did not apply her agenda to the assessment process. Instead, the SEP was described to have followed the agenda of the school by looking at managing the behaviour of the child before investigating the child’s cognitive functioning and attainment skills (see Table 4.23 below for illustration).

Depending upon the needs and questions asked, additional assessments to those discussed below may have also been conducted in other examples of the SEP’s specialist SEBD work, as well as the production of a full report (see Table 4.23 below for illustration). On the occasion of the two caseworks evaluated, the outcome of the SEP’s involved was the production an action plan for the individual children. To support the SEP in formulating her understanding of the situation surrounding the child from an ecological perspective to then inform the action plan, she used Consultation (OT1), Observation (ST1) and a Discussion with the Child (ST2) as assessment methods (See Figure 4.3 below for an illustration). The SEP’s use of consultation as an assessment technique directly links Organising Theme 2 (Assessment) to Organising Theme 1 (Consultation) (see Figures 4.1 above and 4.3 below for illustrations and Section 4.4.1 below for more information). The SEP used a systems level approach to the assessment process that aimed
to triangulate the information generated from the different assessment methods (see Sections 4.9.2.1.7 and 4.9.2.1.7.2 below for more information and Figure 4.1 above for an illustration of the link between OT7: The System within which the Educational Psychologist Works, OST4: Systems Psychology with OT1: Consultation and OT2: Assessment). The SEP used the consultation, observation and a discussion with the child, to develop her understanding of the ecological impact upon the child’s behaviour and the ecological impact acting upon the school staff and parent’s ability to move the child forward.

Figure 4.3: A Thematic Map Representing Organising Theme 2: Assessment and the Corresponding Superordinate Themes, Main Themes and the Link to Organising Theme 1: Consultation

Table 4.23: Quotes Evidencing Organising Theme 2: Assessment

<table>
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<th>Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I have had people (EPs) in who said, oh I have got to do a cognitive assessment or we are not going to look into the social aspect...and really you have got to understand where the child is coming from, the background. And then you might have a child who may do some kind of academic, cognitive assessment with the EP and then they say, oh well we need to look at the social aspect. That is the big thing, some (EPs) say, that isn’t the way I work. The way I work is, I will do the cognitive assessment and then look at social aspect later. Well I think Sarah will listen...she has a very flexible way of working and I think that is important.” (CW1:HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She didn’t take absolutely ages doing the assessments...In the past we have had...severe BESD children and we’ve said (to other EPs) we are not bothered about the attainment, please will you just observe and give us some strategies to work in class and then (the EP) spent two hours doing assessments.” (CW1:CT)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
“I sort of felt that this behaviour was going on. I didn’t understand his behaviour…This is how it is impacting upon their learning but then what I would get back (from other EPs) was almost right, this is how you are going to try and fix their learning, but not sort of give me the reason for the behaviour or not try and understand the reasons for the behaviour. Whereas Sarah, I almost feel like Sarah comes in at a different angle, let’s sort out the behaviour. Why has this child got this block on and can’t learn rather than try this with the learning and it should sort out the behaviour.” (CW1:CT)

R: “Do you use formal assessments?”

P: “Sometimes I do. It depends on what the question is asked as it is always about answering the question. It’s about answering the question. What is it that they have asked you to look at? There is no point doing things that don’t answer the question.” (CW2: SEP)

4.4.1 Link between organising theme 2: assessment and organising theme 1: consultation.

A link between Assessment (OT2) and Consultation (OT1) was identified (see Figure 4.1 and 4.3 above for illustrations) because the SEP made a number of assessments during the listening stage of the consultations with parents and school staff. The assessments taken during the consultations informed the SEP of what approach to apply with the parents and school staff during the action planning stage of the consultation and thereafter in relation to her further involvement and later assessments. In particular, the assessment through consultation aimed to provide the SEP with a holistic view of the child by speaking to both parents and school staff. The consultation aimed to develop the SEP’s understanding from an ecological perspective of each individual’s stress, motivation and needs (see Sections 4.3.1.1, 4.3.1.1.1, 4.3.1.1.2, 4.3.1.1.3, 4.3.1.1.4 above for more information). To identify parents’ stress, the SEP used a modified version of the Parenting Stress Index (Abidin, 1995) in her conversation with a parent. The SEP used the information generated through listening to the stress, motivation and needs of each individual to support her ability to shape the narratives of school staff and parents, during the consultation whilst devising the strategies to form the action plan (see Sections 4.3.1.2 and 4.3.1.2.1 above for more information).
4.4.2 Superordinate theme 1: observation.
Observation was identified as a superordinate theme to Organising Theme 1: Assessment (see Figure 4.3 above for an illustration). Five participants identified the SEP’s use of Observations (ST1) as an assessment tool of the children with SEBD. The SEP spoke more widely and described how she always does an observation of a child in their context, regardless of the area of concern. The purpose of the observations for the caseworks was to assess the child in different environments, including the Classroom and on the Playground (MT1) and to Understand the Child’s Behaviour (MT2) (see Figure 4.3 above for an illustration and Sections 4.4.2.1 and 4.4.2.2 below for more information).

4.4.2.1 Main theme 1: observation in the classroom and on the playground.
Four participants identified that the SEP observed the children in the Classroom and on the Playground (MT1). The length of an observation was described by the SEP to be depended upon the information the observation was providing. In the caseworks, the observations took place during two afternoons. The SEP described how she always observed the children where they found it difficult to cope. The SEP always observed on the playground and in the classroom in order to assess whether the difficulties in the child’s behaviour were associated with a learning difficulty or a social difficulty (see Table 2.24 below for illustration).

On the playground, the SEP observed how the child coped when they were free from the constraints of the classroom. What the child did when they were free from behaviour management approaches. The SEP was looking for how the child coped and what they chose to do including, how they interacted and played with their peers (see Table 2.24 below for illustration).

Within the classroom, the SEP reported using an observation to assess the environmental context of the classroom and the people inside the classroom including, the interrelationships between the child, the class teacher, the Teaching Assistant (TA) and the other children. The
SEP described how the observations provided her with information on whether the barriers to a child’s development were associated with the adults in the classroom or the child’s difficulties and perspectives. The observations enabled the SEP to evaluate the barriers through observing the teaching and learning in the classroom, the teacher’s ability to support the emotional development of the children and the child’s behaviour (see Table 4.24 below for illustration). During one of the observations, the SEP observed the dynamics of control displayed between the child, the class teacher and the TA (see Table 4.24 below for illustration). The SEP then used the observation to test out whether the class teacher or TA could regain control of the child by providing them with verbal prompts to say to the child. In particular, the class teacher’s ability to regain control, helped to inform the SEP of what interventions may be appropriate to recommend during the action planning step of the consultation.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I went in class and observed him…I came at lunch time because that is what she (head teacher) said, please will you come at lunch time because that is when he finds it most tricky. So I came at lunchtime and watched him on the playground. I then watched him through different lessons.” (CW2:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I have never worked with a child without doing an observation. Child in context without them knowing. I always do it and if it is social, emotional, behavioural always on the playground. Never just in class…because you have got to see is it a learning difficulty or is it a social difficulty. How do the children get on when they are…much freer than under the constraints (of the classroom). Oh my word, you can see so much about a child. How they interact with the other children, how they play with the other children. Where they seek fun and joy. It is so fascinating.” (CW2:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You can see it (in the classroom). You can see whether the teachers are scaffolding it (learning) right. You can see whether they are teaching children correctly. You can see their manner, how they converse with the children. You can see whether they are attuned to a child. So you can see whether or not the barriers are the adult in the situation (or) the child’s perspective and then you can see them free (in the playground) and you can see whether or not they have got that social connectiveness outside.” (CW2:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I was only going to observe for half an hour but it was so interesting to watch the interplay between the TA, this child and the other kids, and the teacher. That in itself was an assessment enough for me to know what needed to done for the intervention.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
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</table>
4.4.2.2 Main theme 2: understand the child’s behaviour.
Four participants highlighted the SEP’s skill in understanding a child’s behaviour and identifying their needs from observing the child in context (see Table 4.25 below for illustration). One participant explained how the SEP was able to identify problems in the classroom in relation to children’s development easily from conducting an observation. The same participant commented on the speed in which the SEP can pick upon a child’s needs. The participant felt that the SEP knew the child as well as she did following a thirty minute observation and that no other professional, in their experience, had been able to do the same (see Table 4.25 below for illustration).

The SEP discussed the importance of trying to observe the behaviour of the child with the aim to understand the root cause behind their behaviour (see Table 4.25 below for illustration). The SEP discussed the importance of asking the questions, “What is the behaviour communicating?” and “What is the behaviour supporting?” (CW1:SEP). The SEP discussed that, by looking for the root cause is distinctive in her ability to make a positive impact for the child. The SEP argued that other professionals including behaviour specialists do not look at situations from an ecological perspective, instead they try and treat the symptoms of the behaviour. They treat the symptoms by often applying a method or approach onto a child rather than unpicking with the child, the family and the school, the root cause of the behaviour from an ecological perspective and, thereafter, applying appropriate strategies. The SEP’s approach to the assessment process, from the ecological perspective, was supported by her application of Systems Psychology (OT7 – OStr4). Systems psychology was the SEP’s chosen approach to the assessments and consultations which supported the positive outcomes for the children. The Organising Theme 2: Assessment, therefore, directly links to the Organising Theme 7 – Organising Sub-theme 4: Systems Psychology (see Figure 4.1 above for an illustration and Sections 4.9.2.1.7 and 4.9.2.1.7.2 below for more information).
Table 4.25: Quotes Evidencing Main Theme 2: Understand the Child’s Behaviour

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“She can just pick up from going in the classroom. She can pick up straight away whatever it is they (children) need.” (CW1:HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I have never had someone (like Sarah) to be able to come into class and know the children, almost from a thirty minute observation, know the children almost as well as I know them, just by watching what they do in class.” (CW1:CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I will use that question (in observation) what is this child communicating? What is this trying to tell you? What is the behaviour supporting? Well that’s when you start asking questions about the root cause. I think that is what makes a difference in behaviour because lots of people try and treat the symptoms and never look at the cause and when they are treating the symptoms that bit doesn’t change so those bits (strategies) will fail and they will work for the short term, but actually unless you get to the root cause of it, be it the child relationship, be it the child developmental needs, be it you know, be it the school, how the school system is set up, be it how much support the parents need, be it anything like that.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
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4.4.3 Superordinate theme 2: discussion with the child.

A discussion with the child was identified as the second superordinate theme to Organising Theme 2: Assessment (see Figure 4.3 above for an illustration). The SEP and two other participants recalled that the SEP spoke on a one to one with the individual child. One participant highlighted how the SEP managed to build a relationship with the child and made him feel special (see Table 4.26 below for illustration). The SEP described how she always talks to the child regardless of the child’s difficulties, but will apply different strategies. For children who are perceived to have SEBD and, in the case of the two caseworks, the SEP used Personal Construct Psychology (Kelly, 2003) implemented through drawings. Personal Construct Psychology (Kelly, 2003) provided the SEP with information on how the child viewed themselves and their level of self-awareness (see Table 4.26 below for illustration). The conversation supported the assessment process by providing information on the child’s perception of themselves in the environment which, was compared to the observations made of the child in context and the consultations with school staff and parents.
Table 4.26: Quotes Evidencing Superordinate Theme 2: Discussion with the Child

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<tr>
<td>“She then wanted to speak with George and it was, oh will George actually go out because actually it was playtime…and I thought is George going to kick off…She was very good with him. It was sort of straight away, she sort of said George you have been chosen to speak with me…I just think it was her relationship and how she dealt with him in that situation was really good…she made him feel special.” (CW2:CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I worked with him and did Personal Construct Psychology…It’s just really powerful in terms of seeing a level of self-awareness…What was on his mind…You can get that through social construct drawing because we did it on drawing not conversation…I do it with all behaviour difficulties.” (CW2:SEP)</td>
</tr>
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4.5 Organising Theme 3: Training
Training (OT3) for school staff was identified as an organising theme to describe one of the SEP’s methods of supporting the children with SEBD at risk of school exclusion (see Figure 4.4 below for an illustration). Training was used to help meet the needs of only one of the caseworks. Training was not identified by the SEP as an approach that is always applied in her specialist work. The theme was identified because of the impact the training was perceived to have had on supporting the school implement the action plan and, therefore, ensuring the positive outcomes for the child. The theme was also included as one participant spoke more generally about the SEP’s ability to train school staff on SEBD. The participant discussed the positive impact the SEP’s training had on staff development and shaping classroom practice for children with SEBD. The ability of the SEP to Develop People’s Skills (ST1) through training, was identified as a superordinate theme. In addition to the conventional method of training people through a presentation, consultation was identified as a method through which the SEP trained people and developed their skills. Superordinate Theme 1: Develop People’s Skills, therefore, directly links with Organising Theme 1: Consultation in The Integrated Thematic Map (see Section 4.5.1.1 below for more information and Figures 4.1 above and 4.4 below for illustrations). The positive outcomes from the training was supported by the SEP’s ability to Connect Socially (OT5), with school staff during the delivery of the training, while the training itself was used by the SEP as a method to connected socially with the school staff. Organising Theme 3: Training and Organising Theme 5: Connect Socially, therefore, directly link together in The Integrative Thematic Map (see Section 4.5.2 below for more information and Figures 4.1 above and 4.4 below for illustrations).
4.5.1 Superordinate theme 1: develop people's skills.
Developing People's Skills (ST1) was identified as a superordinate theme to Organising Theme 3: Training. One participant described how the SEP delivered positive behaviour training in a way that made sense to the audience (see Table 4.27 below for illustration). Another participant explained how the SEP was able to explain, through training, the practical applications of theories in psychology, in a way that enabled people to apply the new strategies back in the classroom. The same participant explained how the SEP's training was interesting, informative and practical so people were left understanding what they had to do (see Table 4.27 below for illustration). The SEP explained how the training was an opportunity to answer people’s questions, which also developed their understanding and skills.

Table 4.27: Quotes Evidencing Superordinate Theme 1: Develop People’s Skills

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Sarah explained it in a way to them (welfare staff) that made them see how they weren’t just being airy fairy and we have got to be lovely and we have not to say anything negative to children and all this lot. She explained it in a way to them (welfare staff) that really made sense to them.” (CW2:HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She (Sarah) trains people up as well… and everyone went away as a TA just buzzing about what they learnt and how worthwhile it was and that they would take that back to school and they can try that out and that’s the empowerment. That’s what you get from working with someone like Sarah. It’s not, right she has gone now, what do we do? There is something left behind for staff to use in a different context… It’s the way she does it (the training). It’s interesting, it’s informative and its very very practical… you can try it out. She makes it sound like it is not rocket science.” (CW1:HT)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5.1.1 Link between superordinate theme 1: develop people’s skills and organising theme 1: consultation.

The way the SEP developed people’s skills and trained people on a one-to-one basis, was described by one participant. Although this would not be considered as training in the conventional sense, the point was of value in describing how the SEP supported staff development. The SEP was described to have had the skills in guiding adults in their own learning. The participant described how the SEP was able to gauge where a person was at, what they could cope with, what the next steps were in their development and the pace at which she had to pitch her teaching and the individual’s learning (see Table 4.28 below for illustration). The description was provided separately to those describing the SEP’s consultation skills (see Sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.1.1.4 above), but it could be suggested that the SEP’s approach to shaping people’s narratives and willingness to apply new strategies (see Sections 4.3.1.2.1, 4.3.1.2.1.2 and 4.3.1.2.1.3.1 above for more information) in the process of consultation, was also a method of training and skills development. The SEP, therefore, used training as method for staff development through the conventional method of group presentation and also through consultation with school staff. Organising Theme 3-Superordinate Theme 1: Develop People’s Skills, therefore, directly linked with Organising Theme 1: Consultation in The Integrated Thematic Map (see Figures 4.1 and 4.4 above for illustrations).

Table 4.28: Quotes Evidencing the Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist's Ability to Train People and Develop their Skills through Consultation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Sarah works as fast as she can, holding that hand (of the other person) but pushing so that they’re learning. That outside your comfort zone, but not too much so that the person is going to become really stressed but training them along.” (CW1:HT)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5.2 Link between organising theme 3: training and organising theme 5: connect socially.

One participant described how the SEP was able to break down barriers with resistant staff and Connect Socially (OT5) with them through the delivery of the Training (OT3) (see Table 4.29 below for illustration). The SEP’s ability to connect socially supported the training to have a positive impact for the child, whilst the training itself was used by the SEP as a method to connect socially with the school staff, to further aid the positive outcomes for the child. Organising Theme 3: Training and Organising Theme 5: Connect Socially, therefore, directly link together in The Integrated Thematic Map (see Section 4.7 below for more information and Figures 4.1 and 4.4 above and 4.6 below for illustrations).

Table 4.29: Quotes Evidencing the Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist’s Ability to Connect Socially with School Staff during Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“They (the welfare staff) were all very defensive…that I had sorted out this training…and within five minutes she (Sarah) had them eating out of her hand…it’s her approach, she (Sarah) is so friendly and so down to earth.” (CW2:HT)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.6 Organising Theme 4: The Specialist Educational Psychologist’s Skills

The Specialist Educational Psychologist’s Skills (OT4) was identified as an organising theme to describe her ability to apply distinctive strategies and methods that ensured the positive outcomes for the children with SEBD, at risk of school exclusion (See Figures 4.1 above and 4.5 below for illustrations). Three superordinate themes were highlighted; the SEP’s Knowledge and Understanding of Child Development (ST1), the SEP’s Training in Systems Psychology (ST2) and the SEP’s Experience (ST3) with Children or Young People (CYP) with SEBD. The SEP’s ability to apply her specialist skills was supported by the system within which the SEP worked (OT7: The System within which the Educational Psychologist Works). The flexibility of the system created by the SEP enabled her to Shape the Educational Psychology System (OT7 - ST2) to work as an Applied Psychologist (OT7 - MT1). Through working as an applied psychologist, the SEP was able to apply her specialist knowledge and skills in a way that had a positive impact for the children (see Sections 4.9.2, 4.9.2.1 and 4.9.2.1.4 below and Figures 4.1 above and 4.5 below for illustrations).

![Thematic Map](image-url)

**Figure 4.5:** A Thematic Map Representing Organising Theme 4: The Specialist Educational Psychologist’s Skills with the Corresponding Superordinate Themes and Link to Organising Theme 1, Main Theme: Applied Psychology
4.6.1 Superordinate theme 1: knowledge and understanding of child development. The SEP and five other participants identified that the SEP had particular knowledge in the field of child development that enabled her to understand the children’s needs and what the school needed to do to move the children forward. The SEP’s knowledge was described by the SEP and four of the participants as distinctive in relation to the successful outcomes that occurred for the children and distinct in comparison to other professionals that were not trained in psychology. The SEP had developed knowledge across a range of psychological paradigms and was well practiced in understanding children, but emphasised the importance of understanding theories of child development and how the brain develops to her distinctive contribution to SEBD work (see Table 4.30 below for illustration).

Two participants explained how the SEP understood how the child’s mind functioned and why the behaviour was occurring. One participant provided an example of the SEP’s ability to predict how a child’s behaviour would change when the environment changed. On this occasion, the SEP was correct in predicting that when one child, who was domineering in their behaviour, left the school, a second child who displayed less severe, but similar behaviour to the first child, would become more domineering and take the first child’s place (see Table 4.30 below for illustration). Having real examples of the SEP’s ability to predict how a child would respond in a given situation and the way the SEP was able to describe the child’s behaviour (see Section 4.3.1.213.1 above), supported the participants in their belief that the SEP was able to understand the children at a different level to other professionals. The participants applied narratives explaining why the SEP appeared to understand children more than other professionals. Three participants believed the SEP’s knowledge was associated with her role and training as a psychologist. In particular, the participants considered that the SEP’s role and training had enabled her to understand theories of psychology and how they are applied in the classroom. One of the participants also believed that the SEP must have built up her expertise over the years of practicing as a psychologist (see Table 4.30 below for illustration).
The SEP argued that she had worked hard to understand children to effect positive change in the classroom. The SEP highlighted the importance of her Continuous Professional Development (CPD) through reading around theories, strategies and interventions on all elements of child development when situations arose, within her practice (see Table 4.30 below for illustration). The SEP emphasised the importance of CPD to continually grow as a psychologist and provide a quality service that impacts positively on children. The SEP emphasised that EPs should continually move forward through their skills development, to see how they can make a situation better for a child (see Table 4.30 below for illustration).

Table 4.30: Quotes Evidencing Superordinate Theme 1: Knowledge and Understanding of Child Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>R:</strong> “Do you think another professional (non-psychologist) could have done what you did?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P:</strong> “No…because they do not have the depth of understanding of psychology. How the brain grows, how the child develops, social psychology, cognitive psychology, attachment psychology.” <em>(CW1:SEP)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She is very hugely qualified and very highly skilled. (Other professionals) couldn’t have done it to the extent….Would they have that depth of knowledge, that child, that psychology in the back of their minds, well maybe they have got some. Is it the extent of Sarah’s, probably not.” <em>(CW1:HT)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I find that specialist teachers can sort of…provide ways…if we (the school staff) understand the child they…give you the tools to work with that child. But if you don’t understand the child those tools aren’t going to work. Whereas what I found with Sarah is if I don’t understand the child, he’s doing this shouting, Sarah would say, this is the reason why.” <em>(CW1:CT)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Sarah said if he (another child) goes, John will fill his place. So we were sort of quite naïve, no they will be alright because you know, they will be alright and (John) filled (the other child's) place.” <em>(CW1:CT)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The theory behind it (the action plan). Sarah knows exactly where it is coming from at that level…I think it is the depth of knowledge and understanding that Sarah has got and that’s the difference (between other professionals).” <em>(CW1:HT)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“All her (Sarah’s) experience and expertise and knowledge that she had…I am sure it is because she has built up her knowledge over the years.” <em>(CW2:CT)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“I think I have worked hard to understand other people...I think I have worked hard to get a lot of success.” (CW1:SEP)

“(EPs should never) stop learning...because psychologists should always be looking forward. Always looking towards what works. Always looking to make a situation better and I suppose that is what I look to do. I always look to how can I make this situation better for this child?” (CW2:SEP)

4.6.2 Superordinate theme 2: training in systems psychology.
The SEP highlighted the importance of her professional training in systems psychology that developed her skills as an applied psychologist to effect change for CYP with SEBD. The SEP argued that it is important for an EP to have knowledge on child development, but only through understanding systems psychology did she feel like she was able to apply the theories of psychology into practice. The SEP argued that all psychologists should be trained in systems psychology rather than gaining knowledge in psychological theories to apply in case psychology (see Table 4.31 below for illustration). The SEP argued that gaining knowledge on psychology is important, but can be generated through experience and is not as important as understanding how to apply that knowledge, to make a difference. The SEP argued that EPs can be highly trained, but not necessarily helpful in practice to schools and parents. The SEP considered that the ability to apply systems psychology was distinctive to the successful outcomes that occurred for the individual children and also distinctive in comparison to other professionals. Other professionals were described as being able to apply a strategy, but not understand how that strategy fits into the system of a school or classroom (see Sections 4.3.1.2.2 and 4.3.1.2.2.2 above for more information and Table 4.31 above for illustration).
Table 4.31: Quotes Evidencing Superordinate Theme 2: Training in Systems Psychology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I would argue that everyone (all EPs) should be trained in that way (systems psychology). If you do an awful lot of activity…that you will never use again…that’s very Victorian because you can gather knowledge as you go, but how do you apply that knowledge to make a difference. How do you get people to go that person is really useful. You can be trained in everything, but you can be a chocolate teapot.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“They (specialist teachers) take a strategy, but they do not understand how it fits within the whole system and I think what I benefited from…(training) was always from the system. It was systemic psychology right from the very beginning and I think sometimes when you get into case psychology you miss that, how that operates within the whole system, which includes the family, the child and the system of the school and the emotional health of the people around. What people can take on. What their ideologies and visions…because you have to listen to all that as well to impact.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The SEP’s ability to apply systems psychology was supported by the system within which the SEP worked (OT7: The System within which the Educational Psychologist’s Works). The flexibility of the system created by the SEP enabled her to Shape the Educational Psychology System (OT7 - ST2) to work as an Applied Psychologist (OT7 - MT1) (see Figure 4.1 above for an illustration). Amongst other things, the SEP’s defined working as an Applied Psychologist (OT7 - MT1) as the application of Systems Psychology (OT7 – OSt4) through Consultation (OT1) and Assessment (OT2) (see Sections 4.3.1.2.2, 4.4 and 4.4.2.2 above for more information and Figure 4.1 above for an illustration). The SEP, therefore, shaped her working system to apply her skills in systems psychology that she had developed in her professional training, within the process of consultation and assessment (see Sections 4.9.2, 4.9.2.1, 4.9.2.1.7.1 and 4.9.2.1.7.2 below for more information).

An example of how the SEP applied other theories of psychology through a systems approach was evidenced in the SEP’s consultation skills (see Sections 4.3.1.2.2 and 4.3.1.2.2.2 above for more information). The two stepped approach to the consultation (Step 1: Listen and Step 2: Form the Action Plan) aimed to support the SEP’s assessment of the child’s difficulties from an ecological perspective and the SEP’s ability to enter the ecosystem to support school staff and
parents to change their approaches towards the child. The SEP discussed how EPs have to enter the ecosystem to have a positive impact and be useful, instead of prescribing to a school what they think the school should do and subsequently getting frustrated when their advice is not taken up. As suggested by the SEP, if the distinctive contribution to the positive outcomes achieved for the children with SEBD is the application of systems psychology, it could be argued that an EP who does not apply systems psychology in their work with children with SEBD, is practicing in a similar way to other professions and, therefore, not distinctive in comparison or as likely to have a positive impact (see Sections 4.3.1.2.2 and 4.3.1.2.2.2 above and Sections 4.9.2, 4.9.2.1, 4.9.2.1.7.1 and 4.9.2.1.7.2 below for more information).

### 4.6.3 Superordinate theme 3: experience.

Two participants suspected that the SEP had acquired experience of supporting children with SEBD, which had helped to develop her skills over the years. The SEP spoke specifically about her experiences and how they had impacted upon her practice as a specialist in behaviour. The SEP described that she has had a lot of experience and practice of supporting children with SEBD prior to training as an EP, which started developing her skills. The SEP described that in order to form a relationship with the children she had to understand them and found that she was naturally skilled at working with children with SEBD (see Table 4.32 below for illustration). The SEP also explained how her earlier experiences gave her compassion for children and a non-judgmental approach to their difficulties. The experiences made the SEP believe that children do not plan negative behaviour to make somebody’s life difficult, but rather the SEP has been driven to develop her skills to understand the reasons behind the behaviour. Whilst training to become an EP, the SEP described how she was supervised on placement by an experienced EP who encouraged her to have a varied experience that shaped her mindset about being an applied psychologist (see Section 4.9.2.1 below for more information). Whilst practicing as an EP, the SEP was determined not to lose the skills she had developed in her professional training and
work as an applied psychologist (see Table 4.32 below for illustration). The SEP described being unchallenged in her role until she worked for the Pupil Referral Units (PRU). At that point the SEP described how she started learning again and intervening with some very complex children. The SEP’s experiences prior and post becoming an EP, as well as her professional training, had helped develop her skills as an SEP in behaviour. The SEP’s personal determination to have varied experiences, continually learn and work as an applied psychologist collectively impacted upon her ability to apply the strategies and methods that ensured the positive outcomes for the individual children.

Table 4.32: Quotes Evidencing Superordinate Theme 3: Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I think I have become good with behaviour because I worked with lots of children with tricky behaviour that I had to work to move forward with.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I had to understand difficult children, complex and complicated children in order to form a relationship with them, in order to help them manage and regulate themselves. So I suppose it came from that (initial skills). It came from the fact that I worked with a number of very difficult children as a teacher and I was very good at it and people commented, oh you should go into the specialist field of SEBD because you are very good at working with children who are tricky and complicated.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It (working as an EP) was (unchallenging, so)...after a while I thought I am determined not to (lose my skills) and that was why I applied to be the psychologist to the PRUs and I started to learn again and be an applied psychologist and started to do training and started to intervene with some very complex children and offer an opinion about how things should be done and put nurture classes into place.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.7 Organising Theme 5: Connect Socially
The SEP’s ability to Connect Socially (OT5) with parents and school staff was identified as an
organising theme to describe one of the strategies applied by the SEP to help ensure the positive
outcomes occurred for the children with SEBD, who were at risk of school exclusion. The SEP’s
ability to connect socially was identified by the SEP herself and five other participants. The SEP
connected with people during Consultations (OT1) and during the delivery of a Training (OT2)
session (see Section 4.5.2 above and Figures 4.1 above and 4.6 below for illustrations). The
SEP’s ability to connect to people was described as distinctive in ensuring the positive outcomes
by supporting the consultation process that led to school staff and parents accepting an action
plan (see Section 4.3.1 above for more information) and by increasing people’s understanding of
how to manage children’s behaviour, in the training session. The SEP’s ability to connect socially
was also described as distinctive to the positive outcomes (see Section 4.7.1 below for more
information). Connecting socially contributed to the success of other methods applied by the
SEP rather than being singularly a factor that led to the successful outcomes for the children
with SEBD. One participant described how another professional may also be as friendly and
approachable as the SEP, but would not necessarily be able to have produced the action plan
(see Section 4.7.1 below for more information). Therefore, being friendly alone, did not ensure
the positive outcomes for the children, but instead contributed to the SEP’s application of other
methods such as consultation and training (see Sections 4.3 and 4.5 above for more
information). Two superordinate themes were identified and describe how the SEP’s Personal
Qualities (ST1) helped to connected socially with parents and school staff, and how the SEP
Built Relationships and Trust (ST2) with parents and school staff, as a result of connecting
socially (see Figure 4.6 below for an illustration).
4.7.1 Superordinate theme 1: personal qualities.
The SEP was described by four participants to have had personal qualities that enabled her to engage with people and make them feel comfortable. The SEP’s manner was described by one participant to be very down to earth and approachable which put people, especially parents, at ease (see Table 4.33 below for illustration). In the context of other service provision the SEP was described to be particularly friendly and informal which was supportive of vulnerable parents and made school staff feel valued in their efforts to manage the difficult situations involving the child. The SEP spoke specifically about how she engaged with parents and school staff through her communication skills (see Section 4.3.1.2.1.3.2 above for more information) and was non-judgmental in her communication style (see Section 4.3.1.2.1.3.3 above for more information). Another professional described how the SEP made people feel relaxed and reassured through her non-verbal skills including her facial expressions and her tone of voice (see Table 4.33 below for illustration).
Table 4.33: Quotes Evidencing Superordinate Theme 1: Personal Qualities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“It’s her approach. She is so friendly and down to earth…but it’s her manner and it was her manner with (parent). Again if it had been (another professional) who didn’t have Sarah’s manner and approachability, she may have said all the same things, but not in the same way.” (CW2:HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Parents don’t respond to that (formal approach). Parents respond to you being friendly and oh, having a little joke with them as Sarah did…Sarah knows how to get the best out of people.” (CW2:HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She makes the meeting a very friendly, open, informal meeting rather than very formal you know she wasn’t writing lots down and taking lots of notes…which again is a barrier. So she manages to break down as many barriers as possible.” (CW2:HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think she is a lovely character and I know (parent) has really taken to Sarah in sort of saying when are we next meeting Sarah...because I think (parent) has felt really positive from the meetings that we’ve had and I think Sarah is quite an approachable character because to be honest I was quite nervous in meeting Sarah because I have never dealt with an EP before. I didn’t know what she would want from me but she made me feel really comfortable.” (CW2:HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think for me it was her character in a sense that sort of made me feel a lot more comfortable about talking…I felt comfortable with her in that I could be open and honest.” (CW1:CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She is a very happy character...I think it was like her tone of voice that she uses. It’s her facial expressions...you know very happy sort of facial expressions with very sort of welcoming and she just sort of puts you at ease. She makes you feel relaxed...as you are talking to her she is very positive and you know it is not sort of glum face and writing things down and she gives you feedback in sort of the way she nods.” (CW2:CT)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.7.2 Superordinate theme 2: build relationships and trust.
The SEP highlighted the importance of connecting socially with others and how EPs can help to ensure positive outcomes for children by building trusting relationships with school staff and parents. The SEP spoke about the importance of the ‘law of liking’ and building an equal relationship with someone rather than being superior (see Table 4.34 below for illustration). The SEP described how she was able to monitor the use of her language to match parents in their conversation to create an equal relationship. The SEP explained that she would not hide behind professionalism that would disempower parents (see Section 4.3.1.2.1.3.2 above for more
information). One participant described how the SEP was able to break down barriers and support parents’ involvement by being down to earth and having a joke with them. For school staff, the SEP described how she was aware of the level of social communication she had to engage in to connect with people in order to become part of the organisation. When the SEP was part of the organisation and had a trusting relationship with school staff, she could then effect positive change for children. Two participants supported the SEP’s point by describing the trusting relationship the SEP built with the school staff and parents when they met her (see Table 4.34 below for illustration).

The SEP spoke about how practicing as an applied psychologist is about understanding the importance of social relationships and making social connections in order to work with someone (see Table 4.34 below for illustration). One participant supported the SEP’s opinion and said it is a psychologist’s job to know how to respond to people (see Sections 4.9.2.1 and 4.9.2.1.3 below and Table 4.34 below for illustration). The SEP described how connecting with someone and having a level of attunement builds trusting relationship (see Section 4.3.1.1.1 above for more information). One participant’s described how the SEP was able to get the measure of a situation and a person and know how to respond. Another participant evidenced the SEP’s level of attunement when they were asked, R: “How did the SEP help?” and said P: “It might sound stupid, but she gave me a cuddle.” (CW2:CT). The SEP may, therefore, have tuned into the person’s need for reassurance and so connected with the person by giving them a hug.
Table 4.34: Quotes Evidencing Superordinate Theme 2: Build Relationships and Trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The law of liking fits massively (in relation to a distinctive contribution). I'm with you. I'm joining with you. I'm not being this superior person who is going to tell you what to do and walk away.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“There is nobody I would trust as much as Sarah…It’s that unknown isn’t it because she inspires confidence and she inspires confidence in the parent and in the staff and in you know, me because you just know from when you meet her that she is going to deliver what she says she is going to deliver…I think it is the down to earthiness and the relationship. I could argue it’s her job, she’s a psychologist. That’s what she does, she knows how to respond to people. She gets the measure very quickly and she knows how to respond.” (CW2:HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Well psychology is about understanding human beings and we are all social animals and as social animals we want to make connections…So how can you actually work with someone who hasn’t made a social connection with you? Well you can tell them off. You can tell them that they are wrong, but they will not want you to come back again. But if you have got a level of attunement with someone and it is about attunement, reciprocity and containment, that process of attachment is in any relationship because that is form of the basis of trust.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I know in some schools there are certain things I must do…with specific head teachers if I don't use the, (mild expletive), every so often they are not comfy…You know, that level of social communication. You are always looking to be a part of that organisation…You want to get them to the point, in order to effect change for that child, when they think that they cannot do without you.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.8 Organising Theme 6: Stay in the Process
The SEP’s approach to Staying in the Process (OT6) with school staff and parents until a child was no longer at risk of exclusion, instead of completing a one off report or advice, was identified as an organising theme that ensured the positive outcomes for the children with SEBD, at risk of school exclusion. The SEP and five other participants described how the SEP continued to offer support after the initial school visit and was available if the school needed her. Two superordinate themes were highlighted; the SEP’s ability to offer additional Follow up Support (ST1) and the SEP’s Availability (ST2) to school staff and parents (See Sections 4.8.1 and 4.8.2 below for more information and Figure 4.7 below for an illustration).

One participant described how the SEP was like “a dog with a bone,” (CW1:CT) in her determination not to leave the school until the child was no longer at risk of exclusion. The SEP would keep changing the strategies until they found ones that worked (see Table 4.35 below for illustration). The SEP described that she stayed with the school because of her desire to work as an applied psychologist. The SEP argued that an applied psychologist is one who is interactive in the process, who watches their recommendations being implemented to see a child grow and progress (see Table 4.35 below for illustration). The SEP described her intention to practice as an applied psychologist, especially for children with behaviour concerns and, therefore, avoid one off casework (OT6: Stay in the Process, therefore, directly links with OT7 – MT1: Applied Psychologist in The Integrated Thematic Map) (see Sections 4.9.2.1 and 4.9.2.1.6 below for more information and Figures 4.1 above and 4.6 below for illustrations). One participant recognised the SEP’s engagement in the process and stated how the SEP was continually evaluating and reflecting upon the process and the child’s progress and made changes to strategies as problems occur.
### Table 4.35: Quotes Evidencing Organising Theme 6: Stay in the Process

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Sarah came in sort of, almost like a dog with a bone and I’m not leaving it until this child is ok in school and he is not at risk of exclusion….She (Sarah) kept changing it until they were out of that exclusion risk…Even if Sarah was coming in (to school) for another child, she was always, you know, is John ok…So until that child was settled and happy and ok in school, I don’t think she would have let it go.” (CW1:CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I try and avoid the one off casework… I want to see a child progress because you want to see it work for a child…and if you go in and offer these recommendations (in a report), I don’t think it is applied psychology. (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 4.7: A Thematic Map Representing Organising Theme 6: Stay in the Process, with the Corresponding Superordinate Themes and Link to Organising Theme 7, Main Theme 1: Applied Psychology](image)

**4.8.1 Superordinate theme 1: follow up support.**

The SEP explained that when she was involved in a behaviour concern, very rarely did she do a one off visit. Instead, she would always follow up on a child and the school staff to see how they were getting on and offered further guidance by telephone, a text, an email or a second school visit (see Table 4.36 below for illustration). In both caseworks, the SEP went back into the schools and completed a second consultation and observation. One participant described how the SEP also phoned the school, a couple of weeks after the first visit, to see how they were getting on (see Table 4.36 below for illustration). One participant explained that the SEP checked if the school needed her to come back in and if the strategies were not working she would have provided new ones, there and then. In one of the caseworks, a feedback meeting...
provided school staff and parents with the opportunity to discuss the progress of the original recommendations and gain further guidance (see Table 4.36 below for illustration). One participant described how the SEP would not leave them struggling with a failing plan, but would make more suggestions (see Table 4.36 below for illustration). Another participant described how the SEP used the feedback meeting to ensure everyone was still following the action plan and described how the meeting was an opportunity for the school staff to have a recap over the strategies (see Table 4.36 below for illustration). One participant described that the SEP set a timeframe, of six weeks to when she went back into school to see how they were getting on. The short timeframe instilled confidence in the staff and a sense that they were being well supported (see Table 4.36 below for illustration). The SEP’s approach supported school staff to make a positive difference for the children.

Table 4.36: Quotes Evidencing Superordinate Theme 1: Follow up Support

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Always if I have put a behaviour plan in…I'll get (office administrator) to email…or phone or I will email or text…and see how they are going on. How’s it working?” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She always sort of would ring to say is everything ok, do you need me back to, you know, almost a couple of weeks later or whatever to check that things were ok.” (CW1:CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think the second meeting was helpful because I could say this didn’t work, this didn’t work.” (CW2:CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If it was not working at that meeting, Sarah would suggest something else so not left high and dry struggling with a plan that is not working.” (CW2:HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“When she came back…it was a case of making sure that everyone is still doing this (the action plan)...and we actually worked out, no we need a recap. It was almost a recap and Sarah said you need to make sure everyone is singing from the same hymn sheet.” (CW1:CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We knew that if it was not working, we knew we were getting together in 6 weeks and we knew that it would change then.” (CW2:HT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“It's the timeframes as well. Sarah saying well let's try for 6 weeks and then we will come back because it would have been, you have got the report, you tried it and maybe three months later...no its not working...it was the timeframe again that instilled confidence in everybody.” (CW2:HT)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
4.8.2 Superordinate theme 2: availability.
Six participants described how the SEP’s availability to school staff and parents, on the telephone, by email or text, following the initial school visit, was distinctive to the successful outcomes that occurred for the children. Three participants stated that the SEP’s availability made them feel supported and not left dangling in a crisis situation (see Table 4.37 below for illustration). Instead, the participants knew that if problems arose, the SEP would be there to offer instant support and further guidance. Three participants explained how they called or emailed the SEP regarding the individual children and asked for further guidance (see Table 4.37 below for illustration). One participant spoke specifically about the importance of the instant support provided by the SEP and more generally in crisis situations to prevent an exclusion occurring. One participant spoke about feeling reassured by having a person available and by having spoken to the SEP. The same participant discussed how having increasing EPs’ availability increases positive outcomes for children and does not leave schools wondering when the EP is next going to be able to help.

Table 4.37: Quotes Evidencing Superordinate Theme 2: Availability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Oh, very important. You always need to have somebody who you can have contact with and so you are not left dangling...so it is just great to be able to pick up the phone and just say right Sarah this has happened or could you make a suggestion about this.” (CW1:HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She (Sarah) did say it may go worse, you have got to give it time, however, if you really think after a month it’s not working get back to me. So we could have moved it forward if we had needed to, so you have got that safety net there as well.” (CW2:HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Just knowing that that support was there and we could go back to Sarah, we could refer back to her if we ever needed her.” (CW1:CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Sarah is also accessible by phone. So you could pick up the phone and the SENCo could speak to her, oh I have tried this and this is not working.” (CW1:HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You knew that she was at the end of the phone or the email as well to say oh this is really not working Sarah. I know you said to be tough but...and that was really confidence instilling as well.” (CW2:CT)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Sort of saying keep going, you know where I am if you need me…she said that we could contact her at any point and we have done so…I had an awful morning…and I said I just don’t know where to go from here and she (head teacher) emailed Sarah…and Sarah had emailed back and also (head teacher) had been on the phone to Sarah a couple of times when we had incidents in the playground.” (CW2:CT)
4.9 Organising Theme 7: The System within which the Educational Psychologist Works

The System within which the Educational Psychologist Works (OT7) was identified as an organising theme that ensured the positive outcomes for the children with SEBD at risk of school exclusion. The system was also described as distinctive in ensuring the positive outcomes. The organising theme is presented above and below in The Integrated Thematic Map (see Section 4.3 above and Figures 4.1 above and 4.8 below) as the theme has individual relevance to the research questions and an overarching significance to the whole data set. The organising theme has an overarching significance because the system within which the SEP worked impacted upon the SEP’s ability to work as an Applied Psychologist (MT1) (as defined by the SEP) (see Section 4.9.2.1 below) and apply strategies and methods through Consultation (OT1) (see Section 4.3 above), Assessment (OT2) (see Section 4.4 above) and Training (OT3) (see Section 4.5 above). The system within which the SEP worked enabled the SEP to apply her Specialist Educational Psychologist’s Skills (OT4) (see Section 4.6 above), Connect Socially (OT5) (see Section 4.7 above) to parents and school staff and Stay in the Process (OT6) (see Section 4.8 above).

Two Superordinate Themes were identified in Organising Theme 7 and included, Restrictive Systems (ST1) and Shape the Educational Psychology System (ST2) (see Figure 4.8 below for an illustration). One Main Theme: Applied Psychologist, was identified in the Superordinate Theme 2. The Main Theme: Applied Psychologist, connected directly to Organising Themes 4, 5 and 6 since, working as an Applied Psychologist, enabled the SEP to apply her Specialist Educational Psychologist’s Skills (OT4) to support the positive outcomes for the children; to Connect Socially (OT5) with parents and school staff; and to Stay in Process (OT6) until the children were no longer at risk of school exclusion.

The Main Theme: Applied Psychologist also connected to 4 corresponding Organising Sub-themes since, Shaping the Educational Psychology System (ST2) to work as an Applied
Psychologist (MT1) enabled the SEP to Make a Positive Difference (OSt1), Meet the Needs of School’s (OSt2), Meet the Needs of Applied Psychologists (OSt3) and apply Systems Psychology (OSt4) (see Figure 4.8 below for an illustration). Sub-theme 4: Systems Psychology connected to the remaining organising themes since the SEP applied systems psychology through her use of Consultation (OT1) and Assessment (OT2) (See Sections 4.9.2.1.7 and 4.9.2.1.7.2 below for more information and Figure 4.8 below for an illustration). A discussion of Superordinate Theme 1: Restrictive Systems and Superordinate Theme 2: Shape the Educational Psychology System, together with the corresponding connections to the Main Theme, Organising Sub-Themes and other Organising Themes is provided below.
4.9.1 Superordinate theme 1: restrictive systems.
The SEP and five other participants described their experiences of restrictive EP systems in meeting CYP, parents and schools’ needs. Restrictive systems that are reactive to CYP’s needs and bureaucratic, rather than preventative and proactive, were argued to be limiting in their ability to be effective for CYP with SEBD, at risk of exclusion (see Table 3.38 below for illustration).

The SEP argued that there is an systematic problem. The SEP described how restrictive EP systems can be frustrating because they restrict EPs from applying psychology in a way that makes a positive difference for CYP. The SEP argued that ridged systems can restrict EPs in
offering better services, as it was perceived that some EPs are ruled by the system and do not deviate from the rules; whilst other EPs hide behind the system in an attempt for an easier life (see Table 4.38 below for illustration). The SEP argued that for some EPs, it is easier in a restrictive system to not fight the system, take a risk and provide additional services (see Table 4.38 below for illustration). For other EPs, a restrictive system offers EPs safety, security and predictability in their role and by not offering more services, EPs are protected from taking risks. However, the SEP considered that the less risks an EP takes in expanding their skills and experiences, the more habitual their work becomes, the less they are able to offer professionally.

At various points throughout the findings discussed in this study, the SEP’s flexible approach was considered to be particularly supportive and distinctive to the positive outcomes that occurred for the children and in meeting the needs of school staff. Positive comments were inclusive of the SEP’s ability to spend time listening and talking to school staff and parents. The SEP was perceived to have communicated particularly clearly and was perceived to have been non-judgmental. She was perceived to have provided specific rather than general strategies and she left an action plan rather than wrote up a report (see Sections 4.3, 4.3.1, 4.3.1.2, 4.3.1.2.1.3.2 and 4.3.1.2.1.3.3 above for more information). Comparisons were made between the SEP and participants’ experiences of other EPs. The EPs described in comparison to the SEP were working within a more restrictive system than the SEP. It is not clear from the findings if the participants considered the system restricted the EPs in working in a similar way to the SEP or the whether it was the EPs themselves, but one factor that clearly divided the EPs described in the findings to the SEP, was the system within which they worked. Having said that, the SEP had worked in both a restrictive and less restrictive system and had reportedly provided similar services in each system. The SEP’s approach to the system enabled her to challenge the restrictions she experienced in the more restrictive system and, therefore, offer more services to schools.
Table 4.38: Quotes Evidencing Superordinate Theme 1: Restrictive Systems

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“You can’t even request a report...without the panel saying we have got enough evidence to show that they need a report so it’s working the wrong way.” (CW2:HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“When we began to have very serious concerns with regards to George’s behaviour, especially on the playground...we knew that if we needed an EP assessment we would probably have to wait months for it. So...I phoned Sarah and spoke to her and she said she would come in and do an assessment.” (CW2:HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I found some of the system extremely frustrating...If you have got a quite a ridged system and you have to fit within the system, it is whether you are going to let the system rule you and I never did. I would always shape things...some psychologists who would go, no my employer is...I have to do this many visits and I have got to record it this way and I have got to do this and I never would...but I think some people, hide behind the system. Some people try not to hide behind the system, but they are very well behaved.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“They (EPs) don’t take a risk because the system says I have to do it this way. This is what has been agreed. That’s the system...So because of the system they stop taking a risk and then it becomes a habit doesn’t it. I can remember after my first year going, this would be so much easier if I did exactly what they do there. If I just went in and ok I’ll assess that child and write a report. That would be so much easier. Why am I trained to offer solution focused therapy? Why am I trained to offer? Why am I trying to do all this stuff? Why am I trying to do that?” (CW1:SEP)</td>
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4.9.2 Subordinate theme 2: shape the educational psychology system.
The SEP described how she shaped the educational psychology system in both a restrictive and less restrictive system to provide services to schools and families. The SEP described feeling ineffective after two years practicing as an EP and was determined not to lose the skills she had gained in her professional training, so she applied to be an EP for the PRUs (see Table 4.39 below for illustration). The SEP described how, at that point, she started taking risks in shaping the service she was providing.

The SEP described herself as being seen as a “maverick” when she worked in a more restrictive system as she would not fit into the system or let it rule her, but instead she would shape the system and offer services to schools, so that she was able to practice as an applied psychologist.
The SEP argued that she was not going to let schools and CYP down by a system that, in her opinion, didn’t meet their needs (see Table 4.39 below for illustration). The SEP’s approach and determination to shape the system was driven on a highly ethical stance to ensure positive outcomes for CYP. Her approach further supported her ethical practice as an EP.

Whilst working in a LA, the SEP shaped the managerial control over her work that influenced a school’s agreed access and expectation of EP involvement, as set out in a service level agreement. The SEP shaped the managerial control over the expectations of her time; for example, the expected length of time for a school visit and the number of school visits allowed, the tasks she engaged in (such as, assessment, consultation, therapeutic intervention, training, completing reports or action plans) and the administrative expectations on her role (such as the number of reports she was expected to complete and the completion of time sheets for business management purposes). Now working for her own independent practice, the SEP described how she had shaped a system with minimal procedures to encourage the EPs that work in the system to have the flexibility to be intuitive in their approach, so they take risks to offer services to schools and practice, as she defines, as an applied psychologist (see Section 4.9.2.1 below and see Table 4.38 below for illustration). To ensure maximum flexibility, the SEP had shaped the system’s employment and management structures to meet the needs of service users and the EPs. For example in the IEPS, service level agreements were not generalised documents that manage the organisation of EP involvement with schools and the role of the EP. Instead, SLAs were not formally agreed in writing, but verbally agreed between the school and EP in relation to the individual needs of the school and staff.

When asked why she felt not all psychologists worked in a similar way to herself, the SEP made a number of considerations. The SEP considered that some EPs may not be clear in their role in a given situation, so may not ask a school what questions they want answering or how they can be helpful. The SEP also considered that some EPs may be worried about getting the answer and
considered it to be easier to go into a school, assess a CYP, go away and write a report, than have to deal with the additional pressure of asking the question and having to provide a response (see Table 4.39 below for illustration).

Table 4.39: Quotes Evidencing Subordinate Theme 2: Shape the Educational Psychology System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I felt (ineffective) doing it (providing the service) the other way. I think I can remember two years in thinking…I could write the same report for every child…It was the same and same and same…You know, if you speak to (practitioner colleague) she said…she feels every day she has lost her skills that…she had in her training and after a while I thought, I am determined not to and that was why I applied to be the psychologist to the PRUs and I started to learn again and be an applied psychologist and started to do training and started to intervene with some very complex children…and offer opinions about how things should be done and put nurture classes into place” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think that it's interesting. I would have been miserable but I would have been safe if I had had just done what had been asked of me. I just wasn’t prepared to do it (work within the system) because I couldn’t let the teachers down and I couldn’t let the kids down.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It is always a risk (offering different services to schools), but here risk is accepted. I never say…where’s your visit sheet…why haven’t you filled this in…why haven’t you followed the procedures because…the more procedures you have the less flexible you can be and less intuitive you can be.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think possibly they are not clear in their role in a given situation so they have not said, what is the question that you want me to answer? How do you want me to be helpful? They are frightened of getting the answer I suppose…because it is easier to go in and assess, write a report and go away. It's easy to sit within that because they have got lots of other pressures on them…pressure of work. I don’t know…it is a really interesting question because when I worked in (LA) I was seen as the maverick. I was very popular with the schools but I wasn’t very popular with other psychologists…because I never fitted within the system.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
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4.9.2.1 Main theme 1: applied psychologist.

The SEP argued that EPs have to shape the system within which they work, to be able to practice as applied psychologists. Practicing as an applied psychologist was defined by the SEP as being able to apply psychology to Make a Positive Difference (OSt1) (see Section 4.9.2.1.1 below); Meet the Needs of Schools (OSt2) (see Section 4.9.2.1.2 below); Meet the Needs of
Applied Psychologists (OSr3) (see Section 4.9.2.1.3 below); apply Systems Psychology (OSr4) (see Section 4.9.2.1.7 below); apply Specialist Educational Psychologist Skills (OT4) (see Section 4.9.2.1.4 below); Connect Socially (OT5) (see Section 4.9.2.1.5 below) with parents and school staff; and to Stay in Process (OT6) (see Section 4.9.2.1.6 below) until the children were no longer at risk of school exclusion (see Figure 4.8 above for an illustration).

The SEP argued that an applied psychologist is defined in the process of an EP’s application of psychology. In order to be an active change agent, an applied psychologist was considered to go beyond that of conducting assessments, observations and writing reports. The SEP argued that an applied psychologist is an EP who is interactive in the process and applies different aspects of psychology in the moment, with people and then watches the recommendations being implemented to see a CYP grow and progress (see Table 4.40 below for illustration). The SEP argued that an applied psychologist is an EP who applies a systematic approach to their work and becomes part of the ecosystem of a school to create change rather than distant and removed from the school and the situation or problem. The SEP argued that EPs have in their vicinity the knowledge and, therefore, through their application of that knowledge, EPs can either empower others by working as an applied psychologist who interacts within a schools ecosystem or disempower others by working at a distance from a schools ecosystem, conducting assessments and observations, walking away and writing a report. The SEP argued that schools want EPs to work as applied psychologists (as defined by the SEP) and be there with them, helping them manage the CYP with SEBD (see Table 4.40 below for illustration). The SEP described her intention to practice as an applied psychologist, especially for children with behaviour concerns and, therefore, avoid one off casework.
Table 4.40: Quotes Evidencing Main Theme 1: Applied Psychologist

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<th>Quotes</th>
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<tr>
<td>“Applied psychology is watching those recommendations being implemented and grow and watching it work over time and being interactive in the process... Watching children grow and blossom is the best because you can see that change... It should always be about growth.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Schools I find with children with behaviour difficulties will not want you to assess, go away and write a report. They want you to be there and then. They want you to be texting. I often text my schools to see how kids are getting on or they text me and say this has happened can you help me.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
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</table>

4.9.2.1.1 Organising sub-theme 1: make a positive difference.
The SEP described the importance of applying psychology to make a positive difference to move children forward. The SEP felt that in the individual caseworks, her application of psychology brought about the positive outcomes. The SEP argued that EPs should always be looking towards quality intervention and what works to make things better for CYP. The SEP argued that she never did the same thing for different CYP, but instead developed as a professional through continually learning and understanding CYP’s needs at a deeper level. The SEP emphasised the importance of CPD to continually grow as a psychologist (see Table 4.41 below for illustration). The SEP emphasised how EPs should continually move forward through their skills development to see how they can make a situation better for CYP. The SEP emphasised the importance of the fluidity and trial and error aspect of applied psychology and, therefore, argued for EPs to accept that there is no one set answers to CYP’s difficulties and accept that their advice to schools is not always going to work (see Table 4.41 below for illustration).

Six participants supported the SEP’s opinion and described how her approach was extremely effective in maintaining children, at risk of exclusion, within mainstream school (see Table 4.41 below for illustration). The participants went further to describe the particular impact the SEP’s approach was perceived to have had for the individual children (see Table 4.41 below for illustration). One participant explained that they chose the SEP because she was passionate
about children, making a difference and moving children on. They particular valued and actively chose the service the SEP provided. One participant explained in their opinion, no other EP has been as good as the SEP and she has developed an extremely effective way of working for schools (see Table 4.41 below for illustration). Another participant explained that the SEP’s approach has more potential at maintaining children at risk of exclusion within mainstream school, more than any other service (see Table 4.41 below for illustration).

Table 4.41: Quotes Evidencing Organising Sub-theme 1: Make a Positive Difference

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<tr>
<td>“What did I do, I also read, and read…Constantly…So every time I got something that I didn’t know about, I read about it…I’ve done all this stuff on intensive interaction; I read two books before I wrote the report. So I understood exactly what I was trying to do. (EPs) should never approach anything ever the same because it is always different because the people in it are different and what works one place might not work in another place.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“One size does not fit all. So you go, oh that didn’t work did it, let’s try something else then.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“It was almost overnight, he started to show actually I can be part of this class…He was more willing to write …within a couple of weeks he started writing…I was so surprised, you know we all were so surprised that crikey can that really work that quick. You know don’t get me wrong, odd days he didn’t want to do...It was very quick.” (CW1:CT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“The things that have been put in place, in my opinion, have worked…it’s just made it easier and he’s a lot more calmer when he comes out of school.” (CW2:P)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“And all this (the strategies) started to have an immediate effect.” (CW2:CT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I would say especially with regards to children at risk of exclusion it works (Sarah’s approach). It has the potential to keep them (children) in school, to keep them in mainstream school more than any other service.” (CW1:CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“But the EPs that I have been involved with, those children (children with SEBD) have not been a patch on Sarah and I wouldn’t hesitate to use Sarah again, if we had you know, issues with a child….Sarah has managed to work in a way that is extremely effective for schools.” (CW2:HT)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
4.9.2.1.2 Organising sub-theme 2: meet schools’ and parents’ needs.

The SEP stated that she applied psychology to fulfil the needs of others through being helpful and useful (see Table 4.42 below for illustration). Five other participants commented on how the SEP supported and helped the school and parents, which directly contributed to the successful outcomes for the children and was distinctive to other EP services. The SEP argued that the job of an EP is to apply psychology to meet other people’s needs. In a given situation, the SEP argued that it is never about the EP’s needs, but the school, parents and child’s needs (see Table 4.42 below for illustration). The SEP believed that EPs can be helpful and useful, and should be willing to apply their psychology to help meet the needs of others to move children forward. The SEP described how she identified people’s needs and their questions during the listening step of the consultation process and then meet people’s needs during the second step of the consultation and thereafter by completing a second consultation and observation (see Section 4.3.1.1.3 above for more information). The SEP emphasised the importance of checking back with school staff and parents that her support had been helpful and useful. One participant described how the SEP met their needs by having a system that provided a quick response when they were in a crisis situation (see Table 4.42 below for illustration for more information). The school did not have to wait long for the SEP to come into school or complete bureaucratic tasks to gain the SEP’s involvement. Other examples of the SEP ability to meet people’s needs have been discussed throughout the findings. These include, the SEPs ability to attune to people’s emotional needs (see Sections 4.3.1.1.1 and 4.3.1.1.2 above for more information), to explain the child’s behaviour (see Section 4.3.1.2.1.3.1 above for more information), communicate clearly (see Section 4.3.1.2.3.2 above for more information), be non-judgmental (see Section 4.3.1.2.1.3.3 above for more information) and to provide immediate and specific strategies to form of an action plan to implement the next day (see Sections 4.3.1.2.2.1 and 4.3.1.2.2.2 above for more information) (see Table 4.41 below for illustration). The SEP’s approach to the assessment of the children in the caseworks also aimed to meet people’s needs as she did not
follow her own agenda, but instead followed the agenda of the school by looking at managing the behaviour of the child before investigating the child’s cognitive functioning and attainment skills (see Section 4.4 above for more information). The SEP met people’s needs by staying with school staff and parents and offering continued support until a child was no longer at risk of exclusion (see Section 4.8 above). In essence, the SEP met people’s needs by working as an applied psychologist, as defined by the SEP herself and, therefore, by not going into school, assessing the child and producing a report with recommendations weeks later. Instead, the SEP’s approach built a sense of security around the school staff and parents she worked with and a sense of trust in her ability to be supportive in meeting their needs and helping them in a difficult situation.

Table 4.42: Quotes Evidencing Organising Sub-theme 2: Meet the School’s Needs

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I think it's all about being helpful....it should always be about being helpful and useful.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>(CW1:SEP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“It's never about me. It's never about what I think or what I want you know...it is always about them. It is always about their needs. As soon as your needs come into it, you have lost it.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>(CW1:SEP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“She understands it's almost an instant thing (the support) we need...I need you to come in and do it now so that child is not excluded.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>(CW2:CT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I think it was a case of I knew it was almost instant. What I got back from EP was instant. So the recommendations...the case of can you come in and have a look. I have identified John, I'm worried about him...I need to be able to get him back on track and she (was like), I'll come in. Literally like the next week...which I know is really difficult because she is so busy...She didn’t take John out of the class. She stayed in the class and observed him.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>(CW1:CT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“It was straight away. We made the appointment, she came in, saw the child, we talked after the lesson...she didn’t go until we'd sort of almost teased out all the main difficulties, if not all the difficulties and until I felt comfortable been able to come back the next day and try and implement them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(CW1:CT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I think the belief that I could be helpful, so I believe the school had a certain trust that I could be helpful. I think that is it as a psychologist, is its trusting that, your support and advice and you can either break that trust or encourage that trust for people to feel as though they are supported or not supported.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(CW1:SEP)</td>
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4.9.2.1.3 Organising sub-theme 3: meet the needs of applied psychologists.

In order for EPs to work as applied psychologists and take risks to expand their skills and offer services to schools and parents; the SEP identified a number of ways the EP system should be shaped to support and meet the needs of applied psychologists. The SEP argued that in order to practice as applied psychologists, the system needs to support EPs by reducing the number of managerial restrictions on their work to enable the psychologists to be less restricted and set free to have more flexibility in their work. The SEP argued that EPs need to feel supported in the team, accepted unconditionally and feel safe enough to take risks and make some mistakes. The SEP stressed the importance of EPs not feeling judged in the workplace, but instead supported by practitioner colleagues (see Table 4.43 below for illustration). The SEP discussed the importance of smaller teams to ensure that EPs feel fully supported. The aim of the SEP’s system, in the SEP’s opinion, is to create a family ethos whereby each EP is accepted and supported by their colleagues. The SEP also discussed the importance of the skill set of the service manager to ensure that the EPs are not overly managed or mismanaged, but instead trusted to be professionals and deliver the best service they can (see Table 4.43 below for illustration). The SEP considered that by having an ethos of support for the psychologists enables them to be as successful as they can be, for others.

Table 4.43: Quotes Evidencing Organising Sub-theme 3: Meet the Needs of Applied Psychologists

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>“(EPs) have got to work within an environment that is non-judgmental...where you are accepted no matter what because I actually think that a lot of peoples stresses come from judgment...and actually if you are in an organisation where you know...(you are) not judged and (can) make some mistakes. It's not that stressful. Just like a family and I suppose what I want to create is a family and then you get mutual support...(and) you are completely accepted for who you are.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think smaller teams definitely but it’s about been mindful of the skill set of the person who is leading that group of psychologists that they don't become overly managerial...because I think they will restrict rather than set psychologists free because we are all professionals...I am not going to check up on psychologists because I trust that they will always be doing a good job...That is my hypothesis about management.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
“A family…that is what I intend to create. Everybody desperate to come to
work...because they feel as though they are making a big difference. That it isn’t a chore
that they aren’t counting the days to the holidays. I am serious, I am quite emotional
about it because I have lived that on the other side of it…I don’t want that for anybody
who works for me. Quite seriously because how can we know so much about psychology
and then see psychologists as managers apply such aversive techniques to get people to
do what they want them to do.” (CW1:SEP)

4.9.2.1.4 Organising theme 4: the specialist educational psychologist’s skills.
Working as an applied psychologist, as defined by the SEP, is an EP applying the skills they have
developed and continue to develop through CPD, in practice, in order to bring about positive
outcomes for CYP. The SEP’s ability to shape the EP system, to work as an applied
psychologist, enabled her to actively apply her specialist skills that ensured the positive outcomes
for the children with SEBD, at risk of school exclusion (see Section 4.7 above for more
information). The SEP’s skills were defined in relation to her knowledge and understanding of
child development (see Section 4.6.1 above for more information), her training in systems
psychology (see Section 4.6.2 above for more information) and her experience of working with
CYP with SEBD (see Section 4.6.3 above for more information). A direct link was therefore
identified between Main Theme 1 (Applied Psychologist) of Organising Theme 7 and Organising
Theme 4 (The Specialist Educational Psychologist’s Skills), in The Integrated Thematic Map (see
Figures 4.1, 4.5 and 4.8 above).

4.9.2.1.5 Organising theme 5: connect socially.
Working as an applied psychologist was described by the SEP as understanding the importance
of social relationships and making social connections with people in order to work with them to
create positive change for children. The SEP described how she applied psychology to make
social connections with people and that through making social connections, the SEP was able to
break down barriers and build trusting relationships. For school staff, the SEP described how
she was aware of the level of social communication she had to engage in to connect with people
in order to become part of the organisation. When the SEP was part of the organisation and had a trusting relationship with school staff, she was then able to effect positive change for the children (see Sections 4.7 and 4.7.2 above for more information). A direct link was, therefore, identified between Main Theme 1 (Applied Psychologist) of Organising Theme 7 and Organising Theme 5 (Connect Socially), in The Integrated Thematic Map (see Figures 4.1, 4.6 and 4.8 above for illustrations). Consultation (OT1) and Training (OT2) were methods through which the SEP connected socially with the school staff to effect the positive change whilst, the outcomes of the consultation and training were supported by the SEP’s ability to Connect Socially (OT5). A direct link was, therefore, identified between Organising Theme 5 (Connect Socially) and Organising Theme 1 (Consultation) and between Organising Theme 5 (Connect Socially) and Organising Theme 2 (Training) (see Figure 4.8 above for an illustration).

4.9.2.1.6 Organising theme 6: stay in the process.
Staying in the process with school staff and parents until a child was no longer at risk of exclusion, instead of completing a one off report or advice, was identified by the SEP as an important aspect to working as an applied psychologist and making positive change for CYP (see Section 4.8 above for more information). The SEP argued that an applied psychologist is one who is interactive in the process, who watches their recommendations being implemented to see a CYP grow and progress. The SEP stayed in the process by offering additional follow up support (see Section 4.8.1 above for more information) and by being available to schools and parents, when they needed her (see Section 4.8.2 above for more information). A direct link was, therefore, identified between Main Theme 1 (Applied Psychologist) of Organising Theme 7 and Organising Theme 6 (Stay in the Process), in The Integrated Thematic Map (see Figures 4.1, 4.7 and 4.8 above for illustrations).
4.9.2.1.7 Organising sub-theme 4: systems psychology.

One of the key elements to working as an applied psychologist, as identified by the SEP, was to apply systems psychology. Systems psychology was one of the SEP’s key skills developed in her professional training (see Section 4.6.2, above). The SEP’s ability to Shape the System (ST2), within which she worked, to work as an Applied Psychologist (MT1), enabled her to apply Systems Psychology (OSt4) within in her work (see Figure 4.8 above for an illustration). Applying systems psychology was identified directly by the SEP and three other participants, as a distinctive method applied by the SEP that created the positive outcomes for the children. The SEP argued that she never approaches situations in the same way because all situations are contextual and what works in one situations may not work in the next.

The SEP argued that, in order to support active change, EPs should employ a systems psychology approach that supports the creation of triangulated formulations and joint problem solving rather than a distant expert role (see Table 4.44 below for illustration). The SEP argued that psychologists cannot be dissatisfied that others have not taken on board their advice when they haven’t approached a situation from within the system and tailored their applied psychology to the individual environment. The SEP approached the children’s difficulties through systems psychology by gaining an understanding of the systems surrounding the children and each individual in the ecosystem. The SEP then applied different aspects of psychology tailored to the individual system (see Table 4.44 below for illustration). Three participants identified the SEP skills in understanding the child’s difficulties within the whole school and classroom environment (see Table 4.44 below for illustration). One participant commented on the distinctive ability of the SEP to pull everything in the context together to then tailor the recommendations to the individual child.
### Table 4.44: Quotes Evidencing Organising Sub-theme 4: Systems Psychology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“It interests me how some psychologists work because some psychologists are about their hypothesis. My hypothesis is this and this is what needs to be done and actually…everything is contextual. You have always got to work within the context that you are in.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“That is really my job…that’s the accepted role…that as an applied psychologist, it’s about improving outcomes for children in a holistic way and in order to do that you have got to look at it in a systemic fashion and behaviouristic psychology sometimes, cognitive psychology sometimes, attachment theory, you know, psychology sometimes, humanistic psychology sometimes as a needs must fit to that ecosystem.” (CW1:SEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“What I have found with Sarah is she understands the child, the background, the school. She seems to have a clearer picture of that child…What I found with Sarah is, if I didn’t understand the child (behaviourally), Sarah would say…look at what they are doing here and almost put all the pieces together for me, then give me the strategies.” (CW1:CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“But they (other professionals) didn’t seem to understand the children in a whole class setting. A big whole class setting with other sort of challenging children and then your children who aren’t challenging, who just get on.” (CW2:HT)</td>
</tr>
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#### 4.9.2.1.7.1 Link between organising sub-theme 4: systems psychology and organising theme 1: consultation.

The SEP's applied systems psychology through consultation with parents and school staff. A direct link was, therefore, identified between Organising Sub-theme 4 (Systems Psychology) of Organising Theme 7 and Organising Theme 1 (Consultation), in The Integrated Thematic Map (see Figures 4.1 and 4.8 above for illustrations). Through consultation, the SEP started with each individual and gained an understanding of their ecosystem through the listening step of the consultation (see Section 4.3.1.1 above for more information). Listening to individual’s pain (see Section 4.3.1.1.1 above for more information), stress and motivation (see Section 4.3.1.1.2 above for more information), enabled the SEP to understand each person’s world; their narratives of the problem, their levels of stress and what they would be able to take on. Listening to an individual’s needs and questions (see Section 4.3.1.1.3 above for more information), helped the SEP identify what she needed to do, to meet an individual’s needs and enter the ecosystem. The SEP’s ability to apply SFBT (George et al., 2010; Stobie et al., 2005) and the Solihull Approach...
(Douglas, 2010) also built people’s trust in the SEP, which enabled her to have a role in the ecosystem and devise an action plan (see Sections 4.3.1.1.1, 4.3.1.1.2, 4.3.1.2.2 and 4.3.1.2.2.2 above for more information). The SEP’s approach through systems psychology meant that support was context driven. The support was tailored to the needs of the individuals and their environment rather than being provided at a distance from the context, expert led and prescribed to the schools and parents through a report with recommendations, weeks later.

4.9.2.1.7.2 Link between organising sub-theme 4: systems psychology and organising theme 2: assessment.

The SEP applied systems psychology in her approach to the assessment process and aimed to triangulate the information generated from the different assessment methods. A direct link was, therefore, identified between Organising Sub-theme 4 (Systems Psychology) of Organising Theme 7 and Organising Theme 2 (Assessment), in The Integrated Thematic Map (see Figures 4.1 and 4.8 above for illustrations). The SEP used consultation, observation and a discussion with the child as assessment techniques (see Section 4.4 above for more information) in order to develop her understanding of the ecological impact upon the child’s behaviour and the ecological impact acting upon the school staff and parent’s ability to moving the child forward. A link between Assessment (OT2) and Consultation (OT1) was identified (see Figures 4.1, 4.3 and 4.8 above for illustrations) because the SEP made a number of assessments during the listening stage of the consultations with parents and school staff. The assessments taken during the consultations informed the SEP of what approach to apply with the parents and school staff during the action planning stage of the consultation and thereafter in relation to her further involvement and later assessments (see Section 4.4.1 above for more information). The observations enabled the SEP to assess the environmental context and understand the root causes of the child’s behaviour from an ecological perspective (see Section 4.4.2.2 above for more information). The observations also enabled the SEP to test out strategies in practice (see Section 4.4.2.1 above for more information). The discussions with the child developed the SEP’s
understanding of their world and perspective of their difficulties (see Section 4.4.3 above for more information). The information generated through the assessments was then triangulated by the SEP to develop a clearer understanding of the situation and systems surrounding the problem behaviour.
4.10 Summary of the Findings

Seven organising themes (listed below) were identified from the data. The seven organising themes were integrated directly or indirectly through Organising Theme 7 and were presented in an Integrated Thematic Map (see Figures 4.1 and 4.8 above for illustrations). The role of the SEP as an applied psychologist and the SEP’s professional identity and personal attributes, are two key aspects that impacted upon the SEP’s application of the organising themes that ensured the positive outcomes and are discussed below (see Sections 4.10.1 and 4.10.2).

The Seven Organising Themes:

- Organising Theme 1: Consultation
- Organising Theme 2: Assessment
- Organising Theme 3: Training
- Organising Theme 4: The Specialist Educational Psychologist’s skills
- Organising Theme 5: Connect Socially
- Organising Theme 6: Staying in the Process
- Organising Theme 7: The System within which the Educational Psychologist works

4.10.1 The participant specialist educational psychologist as an applied psychologist.

The findings from the current study emphasise the role of the SEP as an applied psychologist in effective SEBD work. The SEP argued that a core part of an applied psychologist’s role is when an EP applies a systematic approach to their work and becomes part of the ecosystem of a school and works with people to create change, rather than distant from the school and the problem (see Section 4.9.2.1.7 above for more information). In order to be an active change agent, an applied psychologist was, therefore, considered by the SEP to extend beyond the static and contained conduct of assessments and observations with follow up writing of an expert’s report. The SEP argued that an applied psychologist is an EP who is interactive in the process and applies different aspects of psychology in the moment, with people and then watches the recommendations being implemented to see a child grow and progress (see Section 4.9.2.1 above...
Practising as an applied psychologist enabled the SEP to apply psychology to Make a Positive Difference (OT7 – OSt1), Meet the Needs of Schools (OT7 – OSt2), Meet the Needs of Applied Psychologists (OT7 – OSt3) and Apply Systems Psychology (OT7 – OSt4) (see Sections 4.9.2.1.1, 4.9.2.1.2, 4.9.2.1.3 and 4.9.2.1.7 above for more information). The SEP applied psychology to make a positive difference by approaching the situation with the emphasis towards quality intervention in order to move the children forward. The SEP emphasised the importance of developing as a professional through continually learning and understanding children’s needs to provide a quality service that impacts positively on children.

The SEP applied psychology to meet the needs of schools by firstly identifying people’s needs and their questions during the listening step of the consultation process and then meet people’s needs during the second step of the consultation and thereafter by completing a second consultation and observation. The SEP also met people’s needs by having a system that provided a quick response when a school was in a crisis situation, by attuning to people’s emotional needs, by explaining the child’s behaviour, by communicating clearly, by being non-judgmental and by providing immediate and specific strategies to form an action plan. The SEP’s approach to the assessment of the children in the caseworks also met people’s needs as she did not follow her own agenda, but instead followed the school’s agenda. The SEP met people’s needs by staying with school staff and parents and by offering continued support until a child was no longer at risk of exclusion.

The SEP applied psychology to meet the needs of applied psychologists and identified a number of ways the EP system should be shaped. The system described, reduced the number of managerial restrictions on the SEP and practitioner EPs and set them free to have more flexibility in their work. The SEP also argued that EPs need to feel supported in the team, accepted unconditionally and feel safe enough to take risks to work as applied psychologists. The
SEP aimed to create an ethos of mutual respect and support for psychologists to enable them to apply psychology to make a difference for CYP (see Section 4.9.2.1.3 above for more information).

The SEP’s approach through systems psychology meant that support was context driven. The support was tailored to the needs of the individuals and their environment, rather than being provided at a distance from the context, being expert led and prescribed to the schools and parents through a report with recommendations. The SEP applied systems psychology through her use of consultation. Consultation (OT1) was used by the SEP to support the problem solving process with school staff and parents. The SEP engaged in a two stepped approach to move a conversation from problem orientated to solution orientated. The SEP firstly listened to people’s accounts of the situation and the child’s difficulties (Step 1) and then moved the conversation to forming an action plan for the child (Step 2). The listening process was important for the SEP to understand an individual’s ecosystem. Listening to individual’s pain and narratives of stress and of motivation, enabled the SEP to understand each person’s world and what they would be able to take on. The SEP’s ability to apply SFBT (George et al., 2010; Stobie et al., 2005) and the Solihull Approach (Douglas, 2010) to contain people’s pain and stress, built people’s trust in the SEP, which enabled her to have a role in the ecosystem. Listening to an individual’s needs and questions, helped the SEP identify what she needed to do, to meet an individual’s needs. In the second step (devise the action plan) the SEP had gathered enough information about an individual’s ecosystem to simultaneously shape an individual’s narratives to empower them to move the child forward and devise the strategies to form the action plan. The SEP shaped an individual’s narratives through her language. The SEP used language to explain the child’s behaviour, communicate clearly and be judgment free in her interactions with school staff and parents. The SEP devised strategies in the form of an action plan, on the day of the SEP’s visit, for people to implement immediately and provided instant
strategies to problems as they were discussed. The strategies devised were not general, but were specific to the individual child, the individual context and specific in relation to what the parent or the school staff had to do and say to the child to manage their behaviour (see Section 4.3 above for more information).

The SEP applied systems psychology through her use of Assessment (OT2). The SEP aimed to triangulate the information generated from the different assessment methods including, consultation, observation and a discussion with the child, in order to develop her understanding of the ecological impact upon the child's behaviour and the ecological impact acting upon the school staff and parent's ability to moving the child forward. A link between Assessment (OT2) and Consultation (OT1) was identified since the SEP made a number of assessments during the listening stage of the consultation which informed the SEP of what approach to apply with the parents and school staff during the action planning stage of the consultation. The observations enabled the SEP to assess the environmental context and understand the root causes of the child's behaviour from an ecological perspective. The observations also enabled the SEP to test out strategies in practice. The discussions with the children developed the SEP's understanding of their world and perspective of their difficulties. The information generated through the assessments was then triangulated by the SEP to develop a clearer understanding of the situation and systems surrounding the problem behaviour (see Section 4.4 above for more information).

Through working as an applied psychologist, the SEP was also able to apply her Specialist Educational Psychologist Skills (OT4) including her knowledge and understanding of child development, her training in systems psychology and her experience working with CYP with SEBD. The SEP was able to Connect Socially (OT5) through Consultation (OT1) and Training (OT2), to build trusting relationships with parents and school staff. Training (OT3) was also used as a method to Develop People's Skills (OT3 - ST1) through the use of group presentation and through Consultation (OT1). Through working as an applied psychologist, the SEP also
Stayed in Process (OT6) by being available to school staff and parents and through offering follow up support, until the children were no longer at risk of school exclusion (see Sections 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 above for more information).

In summary, the system within which the SEP worked and her ability to shape the system to work as an applied psychologist was perceived as being distinctive in bringing about the positive outcomes for the children, since the system enabled her to apply her specialist educational psychologist skills, connect socially (through training and through consultation), stay in the process and apply systems psychology through consultation and assessment.

4.10.2 The participant specialist educational psychologist's professional identity and personal attributes.
The SEP controlled the employment and management of her work to shape the educational psychology system to practise as an applied psychologist (see Section 4.9.2 above for more information). The SEP’s professional identity and personal attributes supported her to overcome the managerial restrictions to shape her practice in both the LA and independent sector. The SEP’s professional identity was associated with ‘leadership,’ ‘social constructivism’ (see Sections 4.10.2.1 and 4.10.2.2 below for more information) and ‘inclusion.’ The SEP was driven to maintain CYP within mainstream schools and to make systems work for schools and CYP. Her approach included everyone, particularly parents, equally in the process to support a positive outcome. Her approach appeared to be one of joining the problem and normalising the situation through making social connections and being non-judgmental, rather than problematising. The SEP’s personal attributes were similar to other professionals that work successfully with CYP with SEBD (Allison, 2005; Garner, 1999; Syrnyk, 2012) and supported her use of applied psychology to connect socially to others and attune to their needs (see Section 4.10.2.3 below for more information). The SEP’s professional identity and personal attributes are, therefore, central
to understanding how she was practicing as a SEP and the positive outcomes she was able to achieve.

4.10.2.1 ‘Leadership’ and the participant specialist educational psychologist’s professional identity.
The SEP interacted within the system, not as a passive follower and one who openly performs to the system, but one who questions and challenges. In relation to leadership theory (Allio, 2013; Zhu, Avolio & Walumbwa, 2009); whilst working for the LA, the SEP’s relationship with the ‘system’ as the ‘leader,’ could fit the characteristics of a ‘positive follower’, in that she was an independent critical thinker and took a proactive self-management approach to her work. However, her individual relationship with the system was more critical and challenging of the ‘leader’ (the system) than supportive. In this regard, the SEP appeared to be working as a self-proclaimed ‘manager’ of the ‘leader’ the ‘system’ (Allio, 2013; Zhu et al., 2009). Now working for her own IEPS, the SEP worked as a ‘leader,’ who encourages the IEPS’s EPs to work as ‘positive followers’ and work as applied psychologists. The findings, therefore, highlight the importance of the SEP’s professional identity within the system that enabled her to work as an applied psychologist and support the positive outcomes for the children.

4.10.2.2 ‘Social constructivism’ and the participant specialist educational psychologist’s professional identity.
The SEP’s social constructivist11 approach (Cromby & Nightingale, 1999) was indicative through her systems led and ‘anti-hypothesis bias’ approach, a lack in use of standardised assessment measures, the construction of solutions in response to people’s questions and her use of connecting socially, containing emotions, shaping narratives through discourse and staying in the process. In current literature, no academic papers were located that discussed the professional identity of a Specialist EP (SEBD). This study, however, highlights how Specialist EP’s (SEBD) successful outcomes may be as a result of their professional identity and in particular a social
constructivist approach to their work with CYP with SEBD (see Section 5.4.3.2 below for more information).

4.10.2.3 The participant specialist educational psychologist’s personal attributes. The SEP had personal qualities similar to other professionals who work successfully with CYP with SEBD (Allison, 2005; Garner, 1999; Syrnyk, 2012). Although this finding does not necessarily account for her skills and abilities in direct work with CYP, it is interesting to consider in relation to how her personality supported her interest within the area of SEBDs; her drive for the inclusion of CYP with SEBD; her social constructivist approach; her ability to shape the system; and her use of applied psychology to connect socially and attune to other people’s needs.

Research has found that teachers of SEBD children are perceived to be variously charismatic, eccentric, liberal and divergent (Garner, 1999). Personal characteristics include having a calm and relaxed demeanour; being highly attuned to others; being empathetic; being open, trustworthy and non-judgmental; being objective and open-minded; and having a high degree of self-awareness, personal emotional regulation and emotional security (Syrnyk, 2012). These characteristics are in parallel to the attributes of the SEP and her ability to connect socially with others; build trusting relationships through consultation; contain people’s feelings; be non-judgmental; and create an open and honest environment in order to problem solve (see Sections 4.3 and 4.7 above for more information).

In addition to the personal attributes, there are also parallels between the personal motivations of SEBD teachers and those of the SEP, in working with CYP with SEBD (Syrnyk, 2012). During discussions with nurture staff, Syrnyk (2012) found that they were intrinsically motivated in their work to observe personal growth (emotional and academic) and positive change in children. They were altruistic in their challenge to meet and overcome children’s difficulties and had a
sense of higher purpose from their achieved successful outcomes. In the present study, the SEP spoke specifically about the desire to see children grow and develop and how this translated into her perception of an applied psychologist as being one who uses psychology to be helpful and useful and one who stays in the process (see Sections 4.9.2.1 and 4.9.2.1.6 above for more information).

The parallels between SEBD teachers’ personal qualities and those of the SEP goes some way to further understanding her interest in the field of SEBD and her successful application of the strategies and methods she employed. It also suggests that her successful outcomes were not just a case of her skills and knowledge base, but also her personal qualities as well as having a clear professional identity. The comparison highlights that the SEP’s approach is not one that is unusual in SEBD work and is translated, although to a different degree, by teachers with children in the classroom. Garner’s (1999) perception of SEBD teachers as variously charismatic, eccentric, liberal and divergent is also an interesting comparison to make to the SEP’s perception of herself (see Section 4.9.2 above for more information). These personal attributes could explain her ability to not be restricted by the system, but instead be a liberator, a leader and a challenger and transform and recreate a system around her needs, to work within the best interests of CYP and work as an applied psychologist.

4.10.2.4 The generalisation of the participant specialist educational psychologist’s professional identity and personal attributes.

The findings on the professional identity and personal attributes of the SEP are intriguing generally on the effective practice of EPs in SEBD work and can be reflected upon personally in relation to an EP’s own attributes, strategies and methods employed in similar work. The findings also highlight the impact of the relationship between an EP’s identity, the educational psychology system and applied psychology. A systems perspective can be taken to consider how procedures within the system support flexible work for EPs to support inclusion (see Section
5.5.1 below for more information), but at the same time, in order to transfer the findings into other EPs’ practice, there appears to be an emphasis on the need of EPs to have the confidence to manage a restrictive system to work as an applied psychologist. Establishing whether other EPs would be able to challenge a system was, however, beyond the scope of this study.

When considering the generalisation of the SEP’s personal attributions and professional identity, it may not be the case that every EP can challenge managerial structures to then apply psychology in a similar way. Upon reflection, having every EP challenging the system, may be more problematic than liberating. It could also be argued that systems need some procedures to function successfully (Munro, 2011) (see Section 5.5.1 below for more information). That is not to say that the core elements of the strategies and methods employed by the SEP, particularly the two stepped approach to consultation and the building of personal relationships, could not be employed within other EPs’ applied practice; even those working in more a restrictive system and those who are less likely to challenge the system.

The need of EPs to shape their practice and professional identity to meet the needs of service users is not ‘new’ knowledge and has been previously discussed (Stobie et al., 2005). The current findings add to the discussion by arguing that in order to effect positive change for CYP with SEBD and to support the longevity of the educational psychology profession in the constant changing socio-political context (DfE, 2011a; DfE 2012a), EPs need to let go of their traditional bound practice and, instead, shape their professional identity into that of an applied psychologist.

In relation to ethical practice, although it has been considered a fair argument that within restrictive systems EPs could employ some of the core elements of the strategies and methods applied by the SEP (as described above in the current section), if an EP cannot apply important elements of social constructivism and stay in the process then an EP’s ‘inaction’ may lead to less favourable outcomes. In such cases, the current findings support an EP to work within the limits
of their practice, as described in the professional standards of practice (HPC, 2009) and consider whether they may be acting within the best interest of service users to delegate such cases to an EP with fewer restrictions or different skills. The findings from the current study, therefore, highlight the importance of an EP’s professional identity to support ‘ethically applied practice’ for CYP with SEBD.

To also work within the limits of their practice, an EP may need to account for their personal and professional capacity to manage emotive situations and take on the intensive emotions of others and contain them enough to support the positive outcomes. Wilson (1994) discussed the emotional health and wellbeing of the EP and described how the emphasis on clients’ needs and on service delivery can lead to an EP ‘burning out’. To prevent this and increase an EP’s emotional capacity, adequate supervision and CPD are recommended (Wilson, 1994). To support the capacity of the SEP to meet the needs of service users, it can be considered that she had high emotional resilience and benefited positively from her engagement in CPD. However, to describe the current findings within the capacity of other EPs, the professional and personal development needs to be considered, as emotional and professional capacities have resource implications on an EP’s ability to take on this role within SEBD. In this sense, professional identity and personal attributes stem beyond that of working as an applied psychologist to meet the needs of others and into the personal emotional health of an EP to work as an applied psychologist.
Social constructivism is a sociological theory of knowledge that argues that social processes are the root of experience and identity. Language is a carrier and creator of meaning, convections, morals and discursive practices that constitute relationships and individuals (Cromby & Nightingale, 1999).
Chapter 5
Discussion

5.1 Introduction
The discussion chapter comprises four main sections. The first section provides a brief overview of the identified gaps in the current literature as identified in the literature review chapter (see Chapter 2 above for more information), followed by a summary of the findings in relation to each research question. The second section looks at the implications for further research at the Specialist EP's (SEBD) level and the limitations of the present study. The third section describes the theoretical implications of the findings and discusses how the findings have contributed to knowledge on the management of Social, Emotional and Behaviour Difficulties (SEBD); on the effective role of the Educational Psychologist (EP) in behaviour consultations; and on the effective use of assessments of Children or Young People (CYP) with SEBD, at risk of school exclusion. The fourth and final section describes the implications of the findings for practice and discusses the importance of providing flexible support for inclusion of CYP with SEBD. The section concludes with a discussion on how the research findings inform the field on the role of the specialist in educational psychology practice.

5.2 The Identified Research Gaps and a Summary of the Findings in relation to the Research Questions

5.2.1 Overview of the gaps in the literature.
The literature review highlighted a number of positive outcomes for CYP with SEBD from EPs’ applications of psychology at the individual level (Hardman, 2001; Smith & Cooke, 2000; Thorne & Ivens, 1999). The studies were, however, limited in providing transferable knowledge into EP practice on how to support schools with CYP at immediate risk of school exclusion. They were limited in providing detailed accounts of the EPs’ background and skills. They were limited in explaining what assessments, methods, strategies and applications of psychology were used by EPs, particularly in consultation with school staff, and how they were put into practice in
emotionally driven situations. They were also limited in explaining the EPs’ unique contributions to the successful outcomes. The literature review highlighted a need for a research study to look more closely at an individual case and a Specialist EP in SEBD, to explore what strategies and methods are applied by a Specialist EPs (SEBD) to support positive outcomes for CYP with SEBD, at risk of school exclusion. The current research study aimed to address these research gaps by asking the following question:

**RQ1:** What strategies and methods did a Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD) use in effective specialist work to support Children or Young People with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, at risk of school exclusion?

**RQ2:** What was considered to be the distinctive contribution of the Specialist Educational Psychologist (SEBD) in effective specialist work to support Children or Young People with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, at risk of school exclusion?

5.2.2 Research question 1: what strategies and methods did a specialist educational psychologist (SEBD) use in effective specialist work.

The strategies and methods applied by the Participant Specialist EP in effective specialist work to support CYP with SEBD, at risk of school exclusion, were inclusive of:

- Consultation
- Assessment
- Training
- Connecting Socially
- Staying in the Process

In light of documentary evidence on the provision of Educational Psychology Services (EPS) (Scottish Executive, 2002); the application of consultation, assessment and training in the current study provides confirmatory knowledge on the role of the EP. The confirmatory knowledge on
the application of consultation, assessment and training is in relation to ‘what’ methods and strategies are applied by EPs and in the present study, a Specialist EP (SEBD). The current finding have, however, also provided ‘new’ knowledge on ‘how’ the methods of consultation, assessment and training are applied to support successful outcomes for CYP, as risk of school exclusion. For example, the findings highlighted the role of systems psychology in the application of consultation and a two stepped approach; Step 1: Listen and Step 2: Form the Action Plan, to build school staff and parents’ willingness and capacity to implement strategies to manage a child’s behaviour (see Sections 5.2.2.1, 5.2.2.2 and 5.2.2.3 below for more information). The Participant Specialist EP’s use of connecting socially and staying in the process also has provided ‘new’ knowledge on ‘what’ methods are applied in effective specialist work for CYP with SEBD (see Sections 5.2.2.4 and 5.2.2.5 below for more information). The current findings have, therefore, added to the discussion on the role of the EP in ‘how’ consultation, assessment and training can be applied to support positive outcomes and ‘what’ other methods and strategies EPs may apply in effective specialist work. The findings have provided an interesting consideration in that it is not always ‘what’ methods or strategies an EP uses, but rather ‘how’ they use the methods and strategies to support positive outcomes for CYP (Fallon, Woods & Rooney, 2010; Farrell, Woods, Lewis, Rooney, Squires & O’Connor, 2006).

5.2.2.1 Consultation.
The Participant Specialist EP used consultation as a method to aid collaborative problem solving conversations with school staff and parents, in order to form a joint action plan for an individual child. The Participant Specialist EP applied a systems psychology approach to her consultations and used consultation to move a conversation with parents and school staff from problem oriented to solution oriented, through a two stepped approach, Step 1: Listen and Step 2: Form the Action Plan.
In the present study, the use of consultation itself together with the use of Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) (Thorne & Ivens’s, 1999) in consultation and the use of dialogue to shape people’s narratives, all provide confirmatory knowledge on the methods used by EPs. Consultation has been found to be a core activity used by EPs (Scottish Executive, 2002). Educational Psychologists’ (EPs) use of SFBT through consultation and behaviour consultations, in particular, have already previously been explored (Brown, Powell, & Clark, 2012; O’Brien & Miller, 2005; Thorne & Ivens’s, 1999); while, Wagner’s (2000; 2008) consultation model discussed the use of dialogue to support people make a paradigm shift from within-child factors. The ‘new’ knowledge provided in the presented study was in ‘how’ consultation can shape school staff and parents’ narratives, willingness and capacities to apply strategies, whilst simultaneously devising an action plan for an individual child. For example, the findings in the current study highlight the importance of EPs, in behaviour consultations, being more directive in shaping narratives rather than externalising the problem to support others to problem solve themselves, as suggested by Wagner (2000; 2008) (see Sections 5.4.3, 5.4.3.1 and 5.4.3.2 below for more information). The findings suggest the importance of EPs’ ‘nurturing approach’ and having the ability to listen and contain the feelings of others during consultations. Although Hartnell’s (2010) study made reference to support staff’s ability to contain the stress of school staff (see Section 2.5.3.2 above for more information), the application of the Solihull Approach (Douglas, 2010) for adults, in behaviour consultations with EPs, had not previously been described. The consideration of an EP’s application of the Solihull Approach to contain adults’ emotions, therefore, also contributed to ‘new’ knowledge on ‘how’ EPs can use the theory within behaviour consultation to support positive outcomes for CYP with SEBD.
5.2.2.2 Assessment.
The Participant Specialist EP used assessment as a method to formulate her understanding of the situation surrounding the child from an ecological perspective to then inform the action plan in the consultations. The Participant Specialist EP’s ecological perspective was similar to that suggested through Bronfrenbrenner’s (1979) ecological systems theory (See Bronfrenbrenner, 1979 for an extended discussion). In the current study, the systems level approach to the assessment process aimed to triangulate the information generated from the different assessment methods. On the occasion of the presented caseworks, the Participant Specialist EP used consultation, observation and a discussion with the child as assessment methods (see Sections 4.4.1, 4.4.2 and 4.4.3 above for more information).

The findings from the current study provide confirmatory knowledge on the use of assessment as a method of EP practice (Scottish Executive, 2002) and the use of observation and discussion with parents, school staff and CYP as methods of assessment of SEBDs (Farrell, 1995). In particular, the effective use of Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) as an assessment method, used in discussion with CYP with SEBD, was found in the present study and is supported by previous research (Hardman, 2001). The findings also supported the use of Farrell’s (1995) assessment framework to increase objectivity of assessments of CYP with SEBDs and the importance of reflecting ‘on action’ as an assessment through intervention method, which has been suggested by Farrell (1995) and in frameworks for psychological assessment and intervention (BPS, 2002). Contributing to ‘new’ knowledge, was in ‘how’ the Participant Specialist EP triangulated the information generated from the observation, consultation and discussion with the child, to understand the child’s difficulties from an ecological perspective. The information was then used in consultation with school staff and parents, to effect positive change. The current findings also explained ‘how’ the Participant Specialist EP approached the assessment of CYP with SEBD. The approach was based on meeting people’s needs and
answering their questions to ensure active change rather than simply explaining the child’s difficulties.

5.2.2.3 Training.
The Participant Specialist EP used training as a method of supporting school staff to develop their skills to implement the action plan. Teachers’ access to training and use of training has been previously reported as an effective method of increasing a teacher’s capacity to manage challenging behaviour (Harrop & Swinson, 2000; Swinson, Woof & Melling, 2003). On this occasion, the Participant Specialist EP trained people and developed their skills through presenting to a group of welfare staff and through using consultation. Formal training in the form of a group presentation was not identified as an approach that was always applied by the Participant Specialist EP, but was applied in one of the caseworks. Developing people’s skills through consultation was, however, applied typically by the Participant Specialist EP in her specialist work and was applied in both of the caseworks (see Sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.1.1 above for more information).

The current findings provide confirmatory knowledge on the use of training as a method of EP practice generally (Scottish Executive, 2002) and provide ‘new’ knowledge on the application of training, to develop people’s skills to support CYP with SEBD, through the use of consultation.

5.2.2.4 Connect socially.
Contributing to ‘new’ knowledge was the use of connecting socially with parents and school staff as a strategy applied by the Participant Specialist EP to ensure the positive outcomes for the children with SEBD. In the present study, consultation and training were used as methods to connect socially, whilst the positive outcomes of the consultation and training were supported by the Participant Specialist EP’s ability to connect socially. The Participant Specialist EP was described to have had personal qualities, including a friendly and approachable manner that
enabled her to engage with people. The Participant Specialist EP was also described to have made people feel relaxed and reassured through her non-verbal skills including her facial expressions and her tone of voice (see Sections 4.7, 4.7.1 and 4.7.2 above for more information). The quality of the working relationship that EPs can establish between themselves, their service users or other professionals has been found to positively impact EP practice (Farrell et al., 2006). The importance of EPs’ interpersonal skills has also been explored (Shillito-Clarke & Jones, 1990) and supports the current findings. In particular, Dennis (2004) listed the interpersonal skills of the EP as being open, honest, supportive and easy to talk to and stated that the successful implementation of a consultation model is based on the relationship between the EP and school staff. When the relationship is established, the EP can be interpreted as being ‘part of the school,’ which in turn leads to even more successful consultations and outcomes (Dennis, 2004). In the present study, the ‘new’ knowledge suggests that by connecting socially with others, building relationships and having the ability to attune to others feeling, an EP can support positive outcomes for CYP with SEBD, at risk of school exclusion.

5.2.2.5 Stay in the process.
Contributing to ‘new’ knowledge was the importance of the Participant Specialist EP’s ability to stay in the process with school staff and parents until the children were no longer at risk of exclusion. The Participant Specialist EP stayed in the process by offering additional follow up support and by being available to schools and parents, when they needed her. The Participant Specialist EP’s ability to stay in the process enabled her to keep changing the strategies until the children were settled in school (see Section 4.8 above for more information).

The positive outcomes from the Participant Specialist EP’s ability to stay in the process, emphasises the importance of the method for supporting CYP with SEBD and also questions the ethical implications on not staying in the process, in that less favourable outcomes could result. The findings have, therefore, provided a reflection on the ethical practice of EPs in
supporting CYP with SEBD, at risk of exclusion. The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and the British Psychological Society (BPS) discuss the ethical responsibility of EPs to ensure the avoidance of harm by either the action or inaction of practitioner psychologists (BPS, 1999; HPC, 2009). The HCPC and the BPS emphasise an EP’s ability to working within the best interest of their clients. In the case of working with CYP with SEBD at risk of exclusion, the current findings suggest that this may involve the careful judgment from an EP of when and how they exit a case. In such situations, an EP may be informed by the current findings that staying in the process and being available to schools and families are important factors that ensure positive outcomes. An EP’s ability to invest their time in a case may, therefore, need considering to make sure an EP acts in the best interest of service users (BPS, 1999; HPC, 2009).

5.2.3 Research question 2: what was the distinctive contribution of the specialist educational psychologist (SEBD).

Educational Psychologists (EPs) have been defined as scientific practitioners who promote child development and learning through their applications of psychology at the individual, group and organisational level (Cameron, 2006; Curran, Gersch and Wolfendale, 2003; Fallon et al., 2010). Research has suggested that the distinctive contribution of EPs is in their academic background and training in psychology, their application of psychological knowledge to explain problems and their use of evidence based strategies (Cameron, 2006; Farrell et al., 2006). However, a definitive distinction between EPs and other professionals, in their services and skills set, is not clearly described, as some consider that alternative providers could carry out the same or similar work as an EP (Farrell et al., 2006). The distinctive and unique contribution of the EP’s or Specialist EP’s (SEBD) role in supporting CYP with SEBD, at risk of school exclusion, was identified as a research gap in the literature review of the current study and was addressed in the research questions. In the current findings, the distinctive contribution of the Participant Specialist EP in effective specialist work to support CYP with SEBD, at risk of school exclusion, included:
The shaping of the educational psychology system to work as an applied psychologist

The use of systems psychology through consultation and assessment

The use of specific consultation skills

5.2.3.1 The participant specialist educational psychologist’s ability to shape the educational psychology system to work as an applied psychologist.

The Participant Specialist EP’s ability to shape the educational psychology system to work as an applied psychologist was perceived to be distinctive in ensuring the positive outcomes for the children with SEBD, at risk of school exclusion. The Participant Specialist EP shaped the system by controlling the employment and managerial expectations on her work that influenced a schools access to her service and the role she was able to fulfil. The Participant Specialist EP’s ability to shape the educational psychology system freed up the constraints on her available time to schools, the type work she was able to deliver and the administrative tasks she was expected to complete. The flexible system enabled her to work as an applied psychologist (see Section 4.9.2 above for more information).

Towns (2013) discussed the importance of being an autonomous psychologist and the value of spending more time with clients to listen to their experiences, rather than being constrained by time or legislation. In her article, Towns (2013) was describing her experiences of becoming and working as a self-employed psychologist. There was, however, a difference between Towns’ (2013) and the Participant Specialist EP’s experiences of autonomy in shaping the system within which they work. Towns (2013) reported a desire to work autonomously and found that by working independently she was free from the political constraints of a Local Authority (LA), whereas the Participant Specialist EP portrayed autonomy in a LA and Independent Educational Psychology Service (IEPS) to work as an applied psychologist. Nevertheless, the potential benefits of an EP’s ability to have a degree of autonomy over the service they are able to provide is an important concept to consider from an individual professional’s perspective and from a
systems perspective, in meeting service users’ needs (see Section 5.5.1 below for more information).

The Participant Specialist EP defined working as an applied psychologist, as an EP who is interactive in the process that applies different aspects of psychology in the moment with people and then watches the recommendations being implemented to see a child progress. Through working as an applied psychologist, the Participant Specialist EP was able to apply the strategies and methods through consultation, assessment and training (see Sections 5.2.2.1, 5.2.2.2 and 5.2.2.3 above for more information). The Participant Specialist EP was able to support the positive outcomes by applying her specialist educational psychologist’s skills; by connecting socially with parents and school staff; and by staying in process until the children were no longer at risk of school exclusion. The Participant Specialist EP’s applied psychology was able to make a positive difference for the children and met the needs of schools (see Sections 5.2.3.1.1, 5.2.3.1.2, 5.2.3.1.3 and 5.2.3.1.4 below for more information). She was able to meet the needs of applied psychologists and apply systems psychology (see Sections 4.9.2.1.3 and 4.9.2.1.7 above for more information).

The Participant Specialist EP emphasised the importance of an EP’s use of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to continually ‘grow’ as an applied psychologist (see Section 4.6.1 above for more information). The Participant Specialist EP described the importance of developing skills in ‘how’ to apply psychology through professional training in social ecological models, in order to understand ‘how’ to apply knowledge to make a positive difference (see Section 4.6.2 above for more information). What was not particularly clear from the current findings was the purpose of continually ‘growing’ as a EP, as there appeared to be a contradiction between the need to continually develop new skills, but at the same time, the systems approach was applied in the same way in each casework and the strategies were described as non-specialised to the EP role and not ‘rocket science’ (see Section 4.3.1.2.2 above
for more information and Table 4.10 above for illustration). In one example, the Participant Specialist EP described how she read two books on intensive interaction to support the implementation of an intervention (see Table 4.41 above for an illustration). This would suggest that not all interventions are non-specialised and uncomplicated and, in some cases, CPD may be needed to develop specialist knowledge on interventions. It could also be considered that the Participant Specialist EP’s perceived importance of reading around theories, strategies and interventions on child development may have fulfilled her obligatory role to maintain fitness to practice (HPC, 2009) and, therefore, enabled her to ‘keep fit’ rather than ‘get fit’ in her ability to see each situation differently, stay engaged and remain open-minded.

5.2.3.1.1 The participant specialist educational psychologist’s skills.

The Participant Specialist EP’s skills were perceived to be particularly distinctive in her ability to apply the strategies and methods to ensure the positive outcomes for the children and were distinctive in comparison to other professionals, not trained in psychology. The Participant Specialist EP’s skills were defined in relation to her knowledge and understanding of child development (BPS, 2010a; BPS, 2010b), her training in systems psychology and her experience of working with CYP with SEBD. The Participant Specialist EP was perceived to understand a child’s behaviour; be able to explain a child’s behaviour in consultation and training; and be able to identify a child’s needs from observing the child in context, more so than other professionals (see Section 4.6 above for more information). In one example, the application of the Participant Specialist EP’s skills included her ability to provide specific strategies in relation to the individual child, the individual context and in relation to what the adults had to do or say to the child to manage their behaviour (see Section 4.3.1.2.2.2 above for more information). Some of the specific strategies included the use of social skills activities, a job for a child and behaviour management techniques such as use the broken record technique and concrete language (see Appendices Q and R below for illustration).
5.2.3.1.2 Connect socially.
The Participant Specialist EP’s ability to connect to people was perceived to be particularly distinctive in ensuring the positive outcomes that occurred from the consultations and training session. Working as an applied psychologist was described by the Participant Specialist EP as understanding the importance of making social connections with people, in order to work with them to create positive change for children. The importance of an EP’s interpersonal skills and their effective use has been previously explored (Dennis, 2004; Farrell et al., 2006; Figg, & Gibbs, 1990; Shillito-Clarke & Jones, 1990) and support the current findings. The Participant Specialist EP described how she applied psychology to make social connections with people and that through making social connections, she was able to break down barriers and build trusting relationships. Through building trusting relationships, the school staff and parents were perceived to have been more accepting of the action plan in the consultations; and from the training session, people were perceived to have been more engaged and more informed in how to manage the child’s behaviour (see Sections 4.7, 4.7.1, 4.7.2 and 5.2.2.4 above for more information).

5.2.3.1.3 Stay in the process.
Staying in the process with school staff and parents until a child was no longer at risk of exclusion was identified as an important aspect to working as an applied psychologist and making positive change for children. The Participant Specialist EP’s ability to work continuously with the school and change the strategies, if necessary, was considered particularly distinctive in ensuring the positive outcomes (see Sections 4.8, 4.8.1, 4.8.2 and 5.2.2.5 above for more information).

5.2.3.1.4 Meet the needs of schools.
The Participant Specialist EP’s ability to shape the educational psychology system and work as an applied psychologist to meet the needs of schools was particularly distinctive in ensuring the
positive outcomes for the children. The Participant Specialist EP also met the needs of parents and answered their questions. However, it was her ability to meet the schools’ needs that was considered instrumental and distinctive in preventing the children from school exclusion. The findings were supportive of other research in relation to the positive impact of a client centred approach (Hartnell, 2010).

In particular, the Participant Specialist EP had a flexible approach that enabled her to adapt the way she was working in response to the schools. The Participant Specialist EP was able to meet people’s needs by responding quickly to the crisis situation; by attuning to people’s emotional needs; by explaining the child’s behaviour; by communicating clearly; by being non-judgmental; by providing immediate and specific strategies; by applying a flexible assessment method; by having an agenda free approach that set about answering people’s questions; and by staying in the process until a child was no longer at risk of exclusion. In essence, the Participant Specialist EP’s approach was distinctive in building trust in her ability to be supportive in meeting people’s needs and helping them in a difficult situation (see Section 4.9.2.1.2 above for more information).

5.2.3.2 The participant specialist educational psychologist’s use of systems psychology through consultation and assessment.

The Participant Specialist EP’s ability to have an ecological perspective and apply systems psychology through her use of assessment and consultation was perceived to be distinctive in ensuring the positive outcomes for the children and distinctive from the skills of other professionals. Educational Psychologists’ (EPs) abilities to approach problems from a systems and ecological perspective and connect with individuals within a system to effect change for CYP, has been discussed and positively reported by other researchers (Miller & Frederickson, 2006; Frederickson, 1990). In the findings of the current study, the Participant Specialist EP’s
approach through systems psychology meant the applied strategies and methods were context driven.

The Participant Specialist EP applied systems psychology in her approach to the assessment process. The systems approach aimed to develop an ecological perspective of a child’s difficulties and the ecological impact acting upon the school staff and parents’ ability to moving the child forward. The ecological approach to the assessment process was distinctive in supporting the Participant Specialist EP apply the strategies and methods with school staff and parents (see Sections 4.4 and 4.9.2.1.7 above for more information).

The Participant Specialist EP applied systems psychology through the listening phase (Step 1) of the consultation process. Through listening, the Participant Specialist EP gained an understanding of an individual’s ecosystem and what she needed to do to move a child forward. The support through consultation was, therefore, tailored to individuals’ needs and their environment, rather than being provided at a distance from the context, expert led and prescribed to the schools and parents through a report with recommendations. In particular, participants perceived that the Participant Specialist EP’s distinctive contribution was her ability to understand the context of the whole class and the individual child to make the specific recommendations in the consultation process. Other professionals were considered not as equipped in psychology to understand a child’s behaviour or understand how theories in psychology apply in practice in the classroom. Other professionals were described to have treated the symptoms of the behaviour by applying a method or approach onto a child, rather than unpicking the root cause of the behaviour from an ecological perspective and, thereafter, applying specific strategies (see Sections 4.3.1.2.2.2 and 4.9.2.1.7 above for more information).

Even though the current findings argue for EPs to work within a systems approach and provide specific context related recommendations in order to be appear distinctive and successful, it is
not to say that other EPs, who work at a more ‘distant expert’ level, could not be as successful in achieving positive outcomes for CYP. Although the experiences of the participants in the current study would not support this argument, it could be argued that if other EPs can achieve successful outcomes by working in a different way to that of the Participant Specialist EP, it would suggest that other non-psychologists could also have a similar positive impact.

Having said that, in support of Farrell et al.’s (2006) findings, in the current study, the Participant Specialist EP’s perceived uniqueness did appear to be one of ‘degree’ rather than ‘kind’. Other professionals were perceived to have been able to provide support and strategies, but were not perceived to have had the skill set to implement the same approach as that of the Participant Specialist EP. In particular, the Participant Specialist EP’s contextual application, as opposed to clinical application, of the strategies further evidenced this point, as other professionals and those psychologists working at a distance from the context, were argued to provide recommendations, but they were general rather than context specific (see Section 4.3.1.2.2.2 above for more information). In this sense, the unique practice appears to be one of not ‘what’ the psychologists do, but ‘how’ they do it. In relation to the strategies and methods applied by the Participant Specialist EP, it may, therefore, not just be a case of engaging in consultation and assessment and that leads to the successful outcomes for CYP at risk of exclusion, but rather the way the Participant Specialist EP went about applying these methods. The discussion, therefore, comes back to the importance of Participant Specialist EP’s two stepped consultation approach (Step 1: Listening and Step 2: Form the Action Plan) based on working within an ecological framework to support an individual to move forward for a child (see Section 5.2.3.3 below on the Participant Specialist EP’s consultation skills).

The need for EPs to consider ‘how’ they are working is further highlighted by Boyle and Lauchlan (2009) who argue that psychological advice should be presented in a format that is meaningful and purposeful to the client. If the psychological advice is not meaningfully applied,
the impact will be minimal. Meaningful and purposeful approaches to offering psychological advice, in the current study, were not described to be provided within EP reports, but instead through ecologically driven action plans devised during consultation with school staff and parents. The study, therefore, raises the need to consider the unique contribution and meaningful approach of applying psychology through consultation and whether an EP report with recommendations, written at a distance from the school as an ecosystem and out of the process of consultation, is useful or distinctive practice in similar types of complex casework. The study also raised the need to consider the impact of the EP system on an EP's ability to apply these meaningful approaches, since a restrictive system could limit an EP's time to implement a varied role (see Section 5.5.1 below for more information).

5.2.3.3 The participant specialist educational psychologist’s consultation skills.

The Participant Specialist EP’s consultation skills were attributed by all the participants to be distinctive in comparison to other support services, in ensuring the positive outcomes that occurred for the children. The movement from the problem to a solution, through the two stepped approach, Step 1: Listen and Step 2: Form the Action Plan, was distinctive to the successful outcomes by supporting the parents and school staff build their willingness and capacity to implement strategies. Step 1 enabled the participants to feel listened to and have their feelings contained by the Participant Specialist EP, so much so, that they trusted her with their problem and followed her through to the action planning step (Step 2) of the process. In the second step, the Participant Specialist EP used her knowledge, gained through listening to the individuals, to shape their narratives and devise the strategies to form the action plans for the individual children.

The shaping of peoples’ narratives (Kohler-Riessman, 2002) through the use of the Participant Specialist EP’s language, was distinctive in enabling people to have a clearer understanding of the
child’s behaviour; believe that they could have a positive impact on the child; accept the suggested strategies; and have the confidence to implement them. The Participant Specialist EP’s ability to shape the narratives of parents, supported their participation in the process by giving them a voice and a role. The Participant Specialist EP’s ability to give a sensitive message to a parent through providing clear examples and being non-judgmental, was perceived by the parent to have helped them understand their impact on their child’s behaviour, more so than any other professionals. The Participant Specialist EP’s ability to shape narratives of school staff to understand the child’s behaviour, whilst also building their confidence to manage the behaviour, was distinctive to the successful outcomes for the child. School staff had a more empathetic understanding of the child’s needs and, at the same time, felt more in control of the behaviour.

The Participant Specialist EP’s non-judgmental approach with school staff that focused on acknowledging effort and providing affirmation, stopped school staff blaming themselves and protected their self-esteem, so much so, that the Participant Specialist EP could create a new narrative that the child could be saved. Acknowledging where everyone was emotionally and through providing affirmation was distinctive, therefore, in supporting the Participant Specialist EP’s ability to ‘hook’ into a person so that they became more open to being shaped. The listening stage (Step 1) was distinctive to the second step (Step 2: Form the Action Plan) in the consultation process. Hearing people’s pain and stress enabled the Participant Specialist EP to judge how fragile a person’s self-esteem was and what she needed to do, including the level of affirmation she needed to provide, to help move the person onto implementing the strategies with confidence.

The participants perceived that the use of consultation and the movement from the problem to a solution was distinctive in how the strategies were presented by the Participant Specialist EP in comparison to other professionals and other EPs. Other professionals and EPs were described to have either jumped straight to suggesting the solutions to the problems or to have written up
the recommendations in a report, rather than discussed them collaboratively with the school staff and parents. It is possible to consider that other EPs may have been applying a different consultation model (BPS, 2002; Gameson, Rhydderch, Ellis & Carroll, 2003; Wagner, 2000; Wagner, 2008) than that of the Participant Specialist EP. As previously described, the Participant Specialist EP’s model saw her employ a ‘nurturing’ approach to contain people’s emotions and a directive approach to shape people’s narratives, rather than a model that emphasised the externalisation of the problem, to access an individual’s own problem solving skills (see Sections 5.2.2.1 above and 5.4.3.1 and 5.4.3.2 below for more information). The findings, therefore, emphasis the distinctive relevance of the type of consultation model applied by EPs in successful behaviour consultations.

In the current study, participants commented on how problem solving collaboratively with the Participant Specialist EP to form the action plan and the forming of an immediate action plan, left on the day to be implemented straight away, was distinctive to the successful outcomes that occurred for the children. Receiving a report with recommendations weeks later was perceived to have not had the same positive impact. The Participant Specialist EP’s strategies were described as distinctive in the way she provided instant strategies to problems as they were discussed and provided specific strategies to the individual child, the situation and what the parent or school staff had to do and say to manage the child’s behaviour. The strategies suggested were described to be typically found in behaviour books and described by other professionals. What was distinctive in the Participant Specialist EP’s practice was her use of the two stepped approach to consultation to build a person’s willingness and capacity to apply the strategies (see Section 4.3 above for more information).
5.2.3.4 Critique of the current findings on the distinctive contribution of the specialist educational psychologist (SEBD).

In critique of the current findings, the accuracy of the likely uniqueness was more assumed than measured. There were a number of anomalies within the findings and in comparison to other studies. Included was the perception that no other non-psychologist professional could apply the ecological approach through consultation that involved using the Solihull Approach (Douglas, 2010) to contain the emotions of others. However, in Hartnell’s study (2010), successful outcomes for CYP were associated with support workers’ abilities to build mutual trust and respect with teaching staff through containing their emotions during their conversations. The support workers included other professionals as well as EPs and the ability to ‘contain’ was not described in specific relation to the EPs. In this case, the other professionals could have been the ones containing the feelings of school staff. Other anomalies include the tentative relationship between assessment and intervention due to the lack of generalised knowledge on the success of specific strategies (Miller and Frederickson, 2006) and the perception that the Participant Specialist EP knew exactly what strategies would work with the individual CYP. The Participant Specialist EP’s purely ‘systems led’ and ‘anti-hypothesis bias’ approach was also presented in the findings as a contradiction to the participants’ perception of the Participant Specialist EP’s ability to understand a child’s needs almost instantly from an observation. The debate on the distinctive contribution would, therefore, benefit from further exploration of the Participant Specialist EP’s skills (see Section 5.3.1 below for more information) and an accurate measure of an EP’s skills in applying psychology in comparison to other professionals, in addition to an accurate measure of the actual skills base of other professionals.
5.3 Implications for Further Research at the Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist Level and the Limitations of the Present Study

The present study has provided a wealth of information on what strategies and methods are applied by a Specialist EP (SEBD) in effective specialist work for CYP with SEBD, at risk of exclusion and the distinctive contribution of a Specialist EP (SEBD) involvement. Having said that, the current study is only an initial exploratory case study with two caseworks and, therefore, the generalisation of the findings is limited. As a result, the findings provide more in terms of insight than generalisation. A more exploratory investigation continues to be needed to saturate the research gap on the role of the EP in effective specialist work with CYP with SEBD, at risk of exclusion. Further exploration at the level of the Participant Specialist EP would be beneficial. It would be beneficial to further explore the Participant Specialist EP's skills and also a negative casework, whereby the Participant Specialist EP was unable to achieve positive outcomes for a CYP (see Sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 below for more information). Further in-depth exploration at the level of another Specialist EP (SEBD) would also be beneficial as the current study is limited in being a single case study design. Evaluating the work of another Specialist EP (SEBD) would extend the discussion on what strategies and methods are effectively applied in different contexts and whether similar or different factors are considered distinctive in different Specialist EPs’ (SEBD) effective specialist work. The decision not to conduct a case study series in the present study was, however, taken because sufficient substance was generated from one case study which merited an in-depth evaluation of the findings.

5.3.1 Further exploration of the participant specialist educational psychologist’s skills and skills development.

It would be beneficial to further explore the Participant Specialist EP's skills and skills development as it appears from the findings that the Participant Specialist EP’s applications of the strategies and methods were very skills based and not just intuitive. In the current study, the Participant Specialist EP commented that her professional training in systems psychology developed her skills as an applied psychologist to effect change for CYP with SEBD. The
Participant Specialist EP perceived that being trained in how to apply psychology into practice was more important to her than being trained on different aspects of child development and psychological theories, to apply in case psychology. The Participant Specialist EP considered that gaining knowledge on psychology can, instead, be generated through experience and is not as important as understanding how to apply that knowledge into practice. With hindsight, it would have been beneficial to have explored these concepts during the interview with the Participant Specialist EP, however, it was only during the data analysis that the importance of these reflections were made apparent. The Participant Specialist EP’s skills and skills development, therefore, merit further investigation to explore the role of systems psychology in effective practice.

It would, therefore, be beneficial to further investigate how the Participant Specialist EP’s training at undergraduate level, postgraduate level and her CPD supports her current practice; what training she has received and what elements are perceived to be most influential on her ability to apply psychology into practice. In particular, it would be beneficial to detail the Participant Specialist EP’s training in systems psychology. It would be beneficial to explore the Participant Specialist EP’s development of her knowledge and understanding of the suggested behaviour strategies, where they came from (undergraduate degree, postgraduate degree, CPD and/or experience in classrooms) and how she knew they would work. The information generated from further exploration of the location and development of the Participant Specialist EP’s skills would benefit the current investigation and findings on effective EP practice for CYP with SEBD, at risk of exclusion. The investigation would also assist EP practice more generally, as the information would be beneficial for training providers.
5.3.2 Further exploration of a negative casework.
It would be helpful to explore another level of practice from a negative piece of casework provided by the Participant Specialist EP in order to further explore the themes and provide a coherent truth to the current findings. The validity of the emergent theory from this individual in-depth case study would be supported through further exploring the strategies and methods employed by the Participant Specialist EP. For example, it could be that the Participant Specialist EP uses different strategies if the outcome of the casework appears to be less positive or she may use the same strategies to a less positive effect, for which the reasons why would be interesting to explore. This would help to further understand the strategies and methods employed within the present study and their applications more generally.

The additional exploration would be beneficial as the current study is limited by the number of caseworks discussed and does not provide a coherent truth to compare against the current findings. The research findings also display some contradictions that could be further explored through a negative casework. For example, the Participant Specialist EP voiced an ‘anti-hypothesis bias’ stance in her description of her systemic approach, that saw her make triangulated formulations and work within a less ‘distant expert’ and ‘knowing’ approach, but instead was more ‘collaborative’ and ‘helpful.’ At the same time, the Participant Specialist EP was perceived to be distinctive in her capacity to interpret CYP’s difficulties quickly through observation and was quoted in saying that an observation was sufficient enough to interpret what interventions were needed (see Sections 4.4.2.1 and 4.4.2.2 and Table 4.24 above for more information). Looking at a less positive piece of casework was, however, not possible in the current study as ethical approval was only provided for a safe exploration of the caseworks and findings.
5.4 Theoretical Implications of the Findings

5.4.1 The global structure of the section.
Three key points of discussion will be explored in the current section to describe the theoretical implications of the findings. The section will firstly discuss how the Participant Specialist EP’s strategies and methods applied through consultation, connecting socially and staying in the process inform the knowledge on the management of SEBD. In particular, the section will explore the importance of an ecological and systems approach with parents and school staff to develop their capacity to manage CYP’s behaviour, as well as the importance of having a non-judgmental approach. The second section will explore the findings from the Participant Specialist EP’s use of consultation and the specific skills she applied in successful behaviour consultations. The section will explore how the Participant Specialist EP’s directive approach in behaviour consultations informs practice on the ‘expert role’ of the EP and the importance of the role of the EP as ‘container’ and ‘narrative shaper’ to bring about positive outcomes for CYP with SEBD. The third section will explore the findings from the Participant Specialist EP’s effective use of assessments of CYP with SEBD. The section will explore how the Participant Specialist EP’s chosen assessments supported Farrell’s (1995) framework and the argument for a context driven approach to the assessment of CYP with SEBD.

5.4.2 The management of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties to prevent school exclusions.
The findings from the current study support the concept that the management of CYP’s behaviour is supported when schools and families work together; when parents understand their child’s behaviour and have an active role in the process; and when individual teachers have an empathetic understanding of children’s needs and have the confidence to implement specific behaviour management strategies (Cooper, 2011; Hartnell, 2010; Jones, 2003). The findings highlight the importance of considering the management of CYP’s behaviour and the support provided by EPs from an ecological perspective (Bronfrenbrenner, 1979). Effective practice
from EPs to prevent school exclusion should, therefore, include supporting all those directly involved with the CYP.

The Participant Specialist EP supported parents and teachers to work together; she supported parents’ involvement in the process and their management of their child’s behaviour, through the use of consultation. For example, during the consultations, the Participant Specialist EP built a non-judgmental relationship with parents and used her language to empowered parents to understand what they needed to do to manage their child’s behaviour. By increasing the parent’s ability to manage their child’s behaviour and join the problem solving process, the Participant Specialist EP was able to decrease the child’s risk of exclusion (see Section 4.3 above for more information).

The Participant Specialist EP’s approach was similar to that of Conjoint Behaviour Consultation (CBC) described by other researchers (see Sheridan & Colton, 1994 for an extended discussion), in that she had a collaborative conversation with parents and teachers that emphasised the importance of understanding the home environment and building the parents’ sense of responsibility in supporting the outcomes for their child. Conjoint Behaviour Consultation (CBC) has also been found to positively impact outcomes for CYP for various difficulties, including social and behavioural difficulties (Sladeczek, Madden, Illsley, Finn & August, 2006). The findings, therefore, further emphasise the importance and positive impact of involving parents and having a home-school relationship central to the intervention for CYP with SEBD.

In addition to supporting parents, the findings from the current study support the concept that the environment created by an individual teacher impacts upon the management of the behaviour of CYP with SEBD (Cooper, 2011; Hartnell, 2010; Jones, 2003) and that EPs are uniquely placed to offer specialist advice to support teachers to prevent school exclusions (Grant and Brooks, 1998). The current study supported Cooper’s (2011) argument and emphasised the
importance of starting from the perspective of the emotional health of teachers, in order to
successfully support them understand, cope and manage situations involving CYP. The findings
from the current study also emphasised the importance of providing behaviour management
strategies that are specific to the individual CYP, the individual context and clear in what the
teachers has to say or do to manage the CYP’s behaviour.

The literature review in the current study highlighted that teachers’ access to training and skills
development, their sense of efficacy and an internal locus of control when attributing the
management of CYP’s difficulties, all impact upon teachers’ abilities to manage SEBDs (Cooper,
2011; Harrop & Swinson, 2000; Swinson et al., 2003) (see Section 2.2.2 above for more
information). Research has also been found to argue that the mental health and wellbeing of
teachers needs considering since displays of warmth and empathy towards children’s difficulties
are challenged by teachers’ stress (Cooper, 2011). Cooper (2011) argued that EPs are challenged
in how they demonstrate empathy towards teachers’ stressful situations, while supporting shifts
in their understandings, attitudes and skills during an emotionally charged consultation (Cooper,
2011). How EPs balance the emotional health of teachers whilst developing their skills was,
unfortunately, not answered in Cooper’s (2011) study, but addressed in the current research
questions.

The present study built upon the research gap in Cooper’s (2011) study by suggesting that an EP
can balance the emotional health of teachers, against their skills development, through the skilful
use of a systems approach to consultation. The present study emphasised that through
consultation, trusting and judgment free relationships between EPs and school staff can develop
and support teachers’ understanding of children’s difficulties, their skills, confidence and belief
that they can manage the child’s behaviour. The present study emphasised the importance of a
the Participant Specialist EP’s ability to connect socially with school staff to build the trusting
relationships. The present study also emphasised the value of a two stepped approach to
consultation that firstly saw the Participant Specialist EP listening to and acknowledging teachers’ pain and stress in order to shape their narratives and capacity to implement an action plan, in the second step. The Participant Specialist EP’s perceived ability to contain teachers’ emotions and decrease teachers’ stress, together with the Participant Specialist EP remaining in the process, built a sense of security that they were being ‘helped’ and were instrumental in supporting the teachers’ emotional wellbeing to more forward for a child (see Sections 4.3.1.1.1, 4.3.1.1.2, 4.3.1.1.3, 4.3.1.2.1 and 4.8 above for more information).

An EP’s ability to decrease teachers’ stress is important to consider given that the increase in exclusions is attributed to the change in Government reform and teachers’ increasing pressure for academic results (Charlton, Panting & Willis, 2004; Daniels & Williams, 2000; Hartnell, 2010; Hayden, 1997; Parsons, 1999b). In the current study, one participant provided an example of when the Participant Specialist EP decreased their anxiety around achieving attainment results (see Table 4.4 above for illustration). The Participant Specialist EP’s ability to establish a relationship whereby the teachers felt contained was instrumental in the Participant Specialist EP’s ability to reduce a teacher’s stress and therefore, potentially, increase their capacity to cope with challenging behaviour. The finding is another example of the importance of working at the level of the emotional health and wellbeing of the teacher to increase a teacher’s inclusive practice.

**5.4.3 The educational psychologist’s use of consultation.**
The literature review of the present study identified the need for further research to identify the role consultation plays in supporting successful interventions for individual CYP with SEBD, at risk of school exclusion; the strategies and methods applied by EPs during behaviour consultations; and how EPs create environmental change by shaping teachers’ ecological perspectives, whilst accounting for their emotional health and wellbeing. The Participant Specialist EP’s use of consultation was perceived to be instrumental to the positive outcomes
achieved for the children (see Section 4.3 above for more information). It was not merely the use of consultation that led to the positive outcomes, but rather the strategies and methods applied through consultation that led the parents and school staff to move from the problem of the child’s behaviour to accepting an action plan to move the child forward. What the findings suggest about the expert role of the EP in behaviour consultations and the role of the EP as ‘container’ and ‘narrative shaper’ to bring about positive outcomes for CYP with SEBD, will be considered in the sections below (see Sections 5.4.3.1 and 5.4.3.2 below for more information).

5.4.3.1 The expert role of the educational psychologist in behaviour consultations. Consultation is defined as a model of service delivery that aims to create change through collective problem solving and shared responsibility for CYP’s difficulties, between an EP and school professional (Larney, 2003; Wagner, 2000; Wagner, 2008). The consultation is intended to be an indirect method of service delivery where no one has hierarchical power. The approach aims to move away from the perception of the EP as ‘expert’ to one of more collective problem solving based on creating change through shared responsibility of difficulties and active involvement in the problem solving process (O’Hagen & Swanson, 1983). Research has, however, suggested that consultants are more directive in their consultations and consultees can be more passive (Larney, 2003).

The findings from the current study support Gutkin’s (1999) argument that consultation can be both directive and collaborative at the same time. Although the Participant Specialist EP engaged in the core principles of consultation, in that she establish a relationship between herself and school staff, she worked systematically through the problem and school staff were left feeling like they had ownership over the strategies; the Participant Specialist EP was perceived to be directive in the consultations. She was also perceived as an expert in child development. The directive approach of the Participant Specialist EP was not to say that members of school staff were unresponsive in the consultations. Instead, the consultations were highly regarded by the
participants and considered to be collaborative and supportive. During the process of consultation, the level of communication varied between individuals with the first step being a listening activity for the Participant Specialist EP and the second step being led by the Participant Specialist EP’s use of language to shape narratives and form the action plan. Examples of the Participant Specialist EP’s directive approach were inclusive of her giving straight answers to questions regarding the child’s behaviour; giving instant strategies for problems as they were discussed; and in her approach to directly explaining the child’s behaviour and what people needed to do. In addition, the Participant Specialist EP’s role as container of emotions placed a different dynamic on the relationship; a less equal and more ‘nurturing’ dynamic.

5.4.3.2 The role of the educational psychologist as ‘container’ and ‘narrative shaper’ in behaviour consultations.

The role of ‘container’ and ‘narrative shaper’ provides a different perspective on how members of school staff raised their awareness of children’s difficulties and changed their responses to the child. Researchers suggest that through consultation, the psychologist engages in a process of enquiry through careful questioning that encourages the person to externalise the issue so that they are able to access their own problem solving skills. Through this process, the person is able to take a ‘helicopter’ view of the problem and make a paradigm shift from within-child factors (Wagner, 2008; Wagner, 2000). Within behaviour consultations, it is suggested that EPs have a key role to raise a school’s awareness of the needs of pupils with SEBD and their difficulties from an ecological perspective. Teachers can be supported to become more inclusive by eliciting the view that they can make positive contributions to deal with SEBD and prevent school exclusion (Gross & McChrystal, 2001; Swinson et al., 2003). In the current study, the process of increasing teachers’ inclusive approach to children through consultation was less associated with the questioning process to externalise the problem, so that
school staff could see the problem in a different way and access their own problem solving skills, but more of a directive process led by the Participant Specialist EP. The directive process saw the Participant Specialist EP become the container of people’s emotions, so much so that the individuals trusted her to have temporary ownership of their problem. The resigning of ownership of the problem onto the Participant Specialist EP was perceived to have supported her in moving people onto accepting the problem solving phase by instilling the confidence that she held the problem and was going to support them in moving the child forward. The Participant Specialist EP was then able to shape people’s narratives and devise the action plan. The shaping of people’s narratives was an active process led by the Participant Specialist EP rather than passive. Through building trusting relationships, the Participant Specialist EP was able to directly shape people’s narratives to understand the child and have the confidence to implement the action plan (see Section 4.3 above for more information).

The findings highlight the degree of skill level applied by the Participant Specialist EP in behaviour consultations and supports the notion of ‘sharp challenges’ faced by teachers working with CYP with SEBD and the need for different approaches of support (DfE, 2011a). The ‘sharp challenges’ may equate to a teacher’s feeling of stress associated with a CYP’s implied rejection towards them, the teacher’s sense of personal incompetence and the potential negative impact on other children.

In the current study, the findings highlighted the positive outcomes and potential need of a more directive approach in emotionally charged behaviour consultations. For example, the Participant Specialist EP was commended for her ability to provide an answer to a problem and a strategy, instantly, as they were being discussed (see Table 4.21 above for illustration). It could be suggested that when emotions are high and people are feeling out of control of a situation, they may benefit from a professional approach that is more directive, which communicates control and responsibility. They may benefit from a professional that builds a person’s resilience to deal
with the situation and regain ownership, rather than starting from the premise that the person is in control and will find their own solution. Being that more directive in the first place may indirectly build a person’s collaboration in the process and ownership of the problem. The process of consultation may, therefore, be more about containment of emotions to accept solutions than about creating solutions themselves.

The drawback of the role of the EP as ‘container’ and ‘nurturer’ rather than equal partner is one of empowerment. Although the Participant Specialist EP was reported in the current study to empower parents and school staff to understand the child’s behaviour and have the confidence to implement the action plan (see Sections 4.3.1.2.1. 4.3.1.2.1.1 and 4.3.1.2.1.2 above for more information), the role of ‘container’ could be perceived as disempowering. School staff and parents may be less empowered to problem solve and devise their own solutions. Instead, a degree of dependence may develop on the ‘container.’ To a small degree, this dependence was evidenced in the current study as one participant described how she often would consider how the Participant Specialist EP would deal with a given situation involving the child and what she would do, rather than problem solve herself (see Section 4.3.1.2.1.2 above for more information). In addition the approach may not meet everyone’s needs and in some cases a school may prefer a different approach.

Having said that, if a social constructivist approach is needed to support the ‘sharp challenges’ faced by teachers, then the containing of emotions may be the key approach to empowerment and, in that sense, if delivered appropriately, less disempowering than other approaches. In SEBD work, it may be considered that connecting socially and staying in the process are important processes, together with the use of containment through consultation. This may be because CYP with SEBD have difficulties that lead to outcomes in teachers that need supporting, in order to help the child. It may be the case that in the situations arising from those struggling to support CYP with SEBD, the adults may be more vulnerable and, therefore, require
functional support, that is not provided at a distance, and that answers their questions and contains their emotions. In this sense, the EP may need to help by containing people’s emotions, by staying in the process and by building trusting relationships through connecting with others. The primary client may need to be seen as the school staff who the EP supports, even though the aim of the involvement is to support positive outcomes for a CYP.

Although the findings from the current study provide more in terms of insight than generalisation, if a social constructivist approach is important for supporting those managing CYP with SEBD, then the concept of containment through consultation together with the emergent themes of staying in the process and connecting socially might be generalisable, as an EP might have to engage in these processes to deal with a person’s stress, irrespective of any other approaches or assessments applied.

5.4.4 The educational psychologist’s use of assessment.

The findings from the current study inform EPs’ practice on the effective use of assessments of CYP with SEBD, at risk of school exclusion and supports Hartnell’s (2010) argument that EPs’ assessments enable successful outcomes for CYP with SEBD. The literature review identified the difficulties in assessing SEBD objectively due to the difficulties in defining SEBD and the wide spectrum of associated difficulties (Farrell, 1995). Educational Psychologists’ (EPs) identification and assessment of SEBD was argued to be lacking in objectivity (Rees, Farrell & Rees, 2003) and critiqued for the lack in consistent approach and guidance on how to conduct their assessments (Rees et al., 2003). The assessments were argued to have led to least favourable outcomes occurring for CYP in some cases (Farrell, Harraghy & Petrie, 1996). Investigating how a Specialist EP (SEBD) assess SEBD and what methods and strategies they use to elicit positive outcomes, was identified as a research gap (McCall & Farrell, 1993). In the current study, methods of observation, consultation and discussion with the child were identified as successful methods of assessment.
Farrell (1995) listed a number of assessment methods including gaining reports from CYP, parents and teachers, conducting direct observations, interviews and clinical assessments. He also provided a structured framework to guide assessments and increase objectivity. In the current study, the Participant Specialist EP used a systemic approach to the assessment method and triangulated information from observation, consultation and discussion with the child. A number of psychological approaches were applied (Douglas, 2010; George, Iveson & Ratner, 2010; Stobie, Boyle & Woolfson, 2005), including PCP (Kelly, 2003), which was used to gain an understanding of a child’s self-awareness and has been found by others to be an effective assessment tool (Hardman, 2001) (see Section 4.4 above for more information).

The assessment approach adopted by the Participant Specialist EP was similar to that of Farrell’s (1995) recommended framework in that the Participant Specialist EP involved all parties in the assessment process; she considered all aspects of CYP’s behavioural/social context; and gathered triangulated information from an ecological perspective. Farrell (1995) also discussed the need to consider the parameters of the problem including looking into the history of the problem, the settings in which the problem occurs, the relationships amongst key individuals and the CYP’s self-image. The completion of the assessment was suggested by Farrell (1995) to be conducted through a plan-do-review cycle, as an assessment through intervention method, which has also been described in other frameworks of psychological assessment and intervention (BPS, 2002).

In the current study, the Participant Specialist EP covered each of the aspects suggested by Farrell (1995) as she asked parents to explore the child’s history, she observed the setting where the problem existed, her observation in the classroom identified the relationship between the child and the school staff and she used PCP to identify the child’s self-image. The Participant Specialist EP also adopted an ecological perspective and approach to the assessment process that was similar to that suggested through Bronfrenbrenner’s (1979) ecological systems theory. The
Participant Specialist EP provided follow up support to evaluate the success of the interventions as recommended by Farell (1995) and described within frameworks of practice (BPS, 2002).

Although the study was not measuring Farrell’s (1995) assessment framework, the findings have indirectly provided an analysis of the framework and suggested positive outcomes as a result. The Participant Specialist EP’s application of a number of the framework’s elements also suggests the objectivity of her assessment approach and the need for objectivity in assessment approaches with CYP with SEBD, at risk of exclusion.

The typical nature of the application of the assessments was discussed. The Participant Specialist EP described that although she generally applied consultation, observation and discussion with the CYP in SEBD cases, the application of assessments was context driven. The aim and use of assessment methods were more associated with gaining a holistic view of the child and the situation and answering people’s questions, than following a set assessment procedure. The Participant Specialist EP may, therefore, have applied different or additional assessments, depending upon the situation, and the questions being asked by school staff and parents. The aims of the assessments were associated with meeting people’s needs and supporting the positive outcomes, rather than explaining the child’s difficulties. The aim was, therefore, for the assessments to be meaningful and useful in practice (see Section 4.4 above for more information).

Rees et al.’s (2003) study on the frequency of assessment methods used in SEBD cases and the types of interventions applied, identified a high variation and lack of consistency amongst EPs. Rees et al. (2003) called for an identified consensus approach to SEBD assessment grounded in psychological theory that focuses on recommending specialist interventions. In the literature review of the current study, it was argued that a generic assessment approach may be an unrealistic expectation on a phenomenon that is subjective by nature and often presented by
complex environmental factors. Having a generic assessment approach was argued to not necessarily lead to successful outcomes for individual CYP (see Section 2.5.3.1 above for more information). The current findings further support this argument and suggest that, in effective practice, the assessment of SEBD is not confined to a generalised approach, but instead context driven to understand a child holistically, meet people's needs and answer their questions to move CYP forward. The findings may also account for a varied and lack of consistent approach to assessments of SEBD as found by Rees et al. (2003). It could be suggested that evaluations of the objective use of assessments of SEBD should not be made on the frequency of the use of assessment measures by EPs, but rather as an evaluation of the successful outcomes as a result of the assessment measures taken. The findings also support a more flexible framework or guidance on assessment methods as described by Farrell (1995) (see above in the current section for more information) and an emphasis on understanding the barriers to EPs’ objective use of assessments to increase effective practice and decrease the use of assessment methods to fulfil EPs’ preferences rather than the specific needs of CYP or the situation (Rees’ et al., 2003).

5.5 Implications of the Findings for Practice

5.5.1 The importance of educational psychology services providing flexible support to schools for inclusion.
The findings from the current study highlight the need for EPSs and EPs to offer flexible support for inclusion of CYP at risk of exclusion, in order to meet the needs of schools and conserve the distinctive contribution of EPs. School staff, in this sense, could be argued to be the client of the EPs, since effective practice has been considered to be associated with meeting the needs of those supporting the CYP rather than the CYP themselves. At the forefront of the support, the emotional health and wellbeing of the school staff was highlighted along with pre-school approach that made systems work for individuals rather than the system itself.
In relation to providing flexible support, restrictive systems were critiqued in being bureaucratic and reactive rather than preventative (see Section 4.9.1 above for more information). To meet the needs of schools and support EPs in their effective practice, it could be argued that the EP system could help by providing a quick response to crisis situations; could decrease the bureaucratic tasks to gain EPs’ involvement for crisis situations; could have a system that supports EPs stay in the process and increase their availability (such as, having a crisis telephone line); and could have a system that supports the emotional wellbeing of the EPs. The increase in commissioned services (Fallon et al., 2010) may indirectly see an increase in flexible systems and the flexibility to provide services that are tailored to clients’ needs, but even within a more restrictive system, it could be argued that the flexibility to support crisis situations does not have to be too great to assume a degree of success.

Educational Psychologists (EPs) themselves could also help to meet schools’ needs by more often asking and responding to people’s questions; checking back with people that their support has been helpful and useful; making time to listen, talk and build relationships; attending and attuning to people’s emotional needs; communicating clearly; being non-judgmental; being available to schools; providing follow up telephone calls or meetings; and by considering their own bureaucratic tasks and relevance of writing a report in comparison to providing strategies in the form of an action plan. Educational Psychologists (EPs) could have regard for a degree of flexibility in their timeframe and could consider working 90% of their time on ‘typical’ EP tasks and have 10% flexibility for situations that require more intensive support.

The need to provide a flexible approach that supports EPs’ work as applied psychologists may be important to retain the distinction between the practice of an EP and that of another professional. This is particularly prominent in new legislative proposals to the identification and assessment of SEN (DfE, 2011a; DfE, 2012a). The findings from the current study highlight the perceived distinction between the Participant Specialist EP’s delivery of the strategies for the
individual children and those provided by other professionals and EPs. The production of a report with general recommendations was perceived to be similar to the service provided by a specialist teacher (see Sections 4.3.1.2.2 and 4.3.1.2.2.2 above for more information). To provide a unique contribution, in the commissioned market place, EPs may need a flexible approach that increases their ability to practice as applied psychologists and as distinctive practitioners that support the inclusion of CYP with SEBD.

Although positive outcomes from a flexible approach have been argued, in order to provide a successful flexible system, the balance between protocol and professional judgment needs considering since professional judgment alone may not necessarily lead to the best outcomes for CYP (Munro, 2011). The Participant Specialist EP’s argument was pro-professional judgment to ensure the system did not restrict her ability support the most positive outcomes for the children. Munro (2011) argued, however, when considering the best possible outcomes for CYP from within the practice of social work, for a balance between the effective use of protocols, evidence based practice and professional judgment. Having a clear balance between the rules and the use of professional expertise was emphasised since if they are skewed, professionals were argued be less clear in how to work effectively (Munro, 2011). Munro (2011) described how some procedures play an important role to describe best practice and reduce variations in the quality and type of service delivered. Procedures were also considered as valuable as a checklist for professionals to review their work and in supporting joint working by setting out basic rules over roles. Less favourably, procedures were critiqued in dampening creativity, decreasing professional ownership and decreasing motivation to develop skills, as people can become more passive when they were managed by overly procedural guidelines. Munro (2011), therefore, provides a counter, but balanced, argument that can be translated into the current findings. It could be suggested that although the Participant Specialist EP’s approach supported positive outcomes, on these occasions (through her use of professional judgment and a flexible
approach), if her approach is not supportive of procedures then it may be somewhat limited in the extent of its effectiveness. Potentially, therefore, the approach could be even more effective than reported in the present study. Within this argument, it would be desirable if there is flexibility in the Participant Specialist EP’s approach to accept procedures, especially if evidence based practice supported the use of a procedure in effective practice.

For a more restrictive or more complex system (for example, those involving multiple employees involved in various establishments and with other professionals), it may, therefore, be important to have a balance between the use of procedures and professional judgment. The correct balance may enable EPs to not be restricted by the system, but instead be supported to offer flexible support to schools and through which, increase a school’s capacity for inclusion.

5.5.2 The specialist role in educational psychology practice.

The role of the Specialist EP generally and the Specialist EP (SEBD) in effective work with CYP with SEBD, at risk of exclusion was highlighted as a research gap in the current literature and was addressed in the research questions of the current study. The contribution to investigating the role of the Specialist EP was considered essential to strengthen the skills and knowledge within EPs’ practice, to inform the discussion on the distinctive contribution and to support the overall field of educational psychology on the role and creation of specialisms.

The findings reported on the development and application of a Specialist EP’s (SEBD) skills. The Participant Specialist EP’s application of her skills was through working as an applied psychologist (as defined by the Participant Specialist EP herself) and involved applying psychology to make a positive difference and meet schools needs through consultation, assessment, training, connecting socially with school staff and parents and by staying in the process. The Participant Specialist EP emphasised the importance of CPD and her continual access to literature to support her skills development and practice. The Participant Specialist
EP’s skills development was also attributed to her professional training in systems psychology, her knowledge and understanding of child development and her experience. The Participant Specialist EP argued for EPs to be trained in social ecological models to understand how to apply psychology rather than gaining knowledge on psychology, which could be generated through experience. This concept reduces the pressure on Noll, Horrocks and Anderson’s (1983) concern that the specialist role is challenged by the need for EPs to acquire a common body of knowledge to be a generalist first, rather than a specialist. Instead, the Participant Specialist EP supported the notion of training EPs to practice as specialist first, in that they would be trained to apply psychology rather than gaining a deep knowledge base in psychology. The role of the specialist in this case was effective and distinctive, but to further investigate the development of specialisms, the idea of training EPs on systems psychology is an interesting concept to further evaluate. The investigation requires additional exploration, beyond the scope of this study, in order to understand firstly the Participant Specialist EP’s skills and skills development (see Section 5.3.1 above for more information); and secondly, the role of systems psychology in supporting the development of the specialist role. Although the research remains limited, the current findings add continued support for Dennis’ (2003) argument that the development of specialisms is a critical factor, likely to influence the effectiveness of EP services in the future, given that the outcomes from the Participant Specialist EP’s involvement were both effective and distinctive in preventing children with SEBD from being permanently excluded from school.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Formal Letter to Principal Educational Psychologist of the Independent Educational Psychology Service

Dear …………. (Educational Psychologist)

I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist (EP) studying at The University of Manchester. I am conducting a piece of research on how specialist Social Emotional and Behaviour Difficulties (SEBD) EP offers effective support for children/young people at risk of permanent school exclusion. For the purposes of this study the specialist SEBD EP is defined as a Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) registered EP who within their establishment (either LA or independent practice) has developed an understanding and experience within the area of SEBD to be defined as a specialist. Definitions are inclusive of job title, self-identification and identification amongst practitioner colleagues.

My intention is to explore positive case examples whereby involvement by an EP has led to positive outcomes for the child/young person. I aim to enrol one EP for the study. The selection criteria will include two separate mainstream schools (primary or secondary) who requested the EPs involvement for a child/young person with SEBD and at the time of request the child/young person was at risk of permanent school exclusion. As a result of the EP’s involvement, positive outcomes for the child/young person were achieved. The EP’s involvement with the school will be complete at the time of the participation in the study and have occurred within the last twelve months.

For each case work I intend to interview yourself and the key school professionals you worked with. Each interview will take place in…, take no longer than one hour and will be arranged at a convenient time for you. Informed consent from participants and the parents/guardians of the child/young person will be needed prior to the interview and participants will have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. All information gathered will be confidential and all local authority names, school names and individuals’ names will be anonymised in the write up.

If you are happy to participate please contact me at…. Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any additional questions regarding the research.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you,

Jennifer Waite
Trainee Educational Psychologist
School of Education
The University of Manchester,
Oxford Road, Manchester
M13 9PL
Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet: Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist

An Exploration of Educational Psychology Support for Children at Risk of School Exclusion

Participant Information Sheet – Educational Psychologist
You are being invited to take part in a study that aims to investigate how a specialist Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) Educational Psychologist (EP) offers effective support for children/young people at risk of permanent school exclusion and what is the EP's unique contribution to the process. The research will be carried out by a Trainee Educational Psychologist as part of their Doctoral training in Child and Educational Psychology. Before you decide to take part, it is important for you to understand why the study is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully 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. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Who will conduct the study?
Jennifer Waite (Trainee Educational Psychologist)
School of Education
The University of Manchester,
Oxford Road, Manchester
M13 9PL

Title of the study
An Exploration of Educational Psychology Support for Children at Risk of School Exclusion

What is the aim of the study?
The aim of the study is to see how a specialist Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) Educational Psychologist (EP) offers effective support for children/young people at risk of permanent school exclusion. The study aims to explore positive case examples whereby involvement by an EP has led to positive outcomes for a child/young person.

Why have I been chosen?
You have been chosen because you are specialist SEBD EP and have agreed to identify two positive case examples.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?
You will be asked to meet with the trainee psychologist on two occasions (one for each casework) and discuss on each occasion for up to one hour the strategies and methods used by yourself and your unique contribution to the positive outcomes achieved for the individual child. The meeting will be audio recorded. The areas for discussion in the interview will be sent to you prior to the meeting to enable you time to reflect on your answers.

What happens to the data collected?
The data will be used as part of the trainee psychologist’s Doctoral Thesis. The trainee psychologist may also present the findings at a research conference for colleagues. You will be given the opportunity to receive feedback on the research findings in an informal joint meeting.
with yourself and the other participants in the study. The feedback will not discuss individual responses but rather the overall research findings.

**How is confidentiality maintained?**
All information provided from the interviews will be treated as confidential in line with Manchester University policy. All local authority names, school names and individuals’ names will be anonymised in the write up. You will not have direct access to other participant’s interview data. You will have access to the general themes identified from your interview to check that your opinions have been analysed accurately. Data from the audio recordings will be stored and kept securely in line with Manchester University policy. Only the trainee psychologist will have access to the raw data. Information will only be shared with supervisors or practitioner colleagues once all names and personal information has been anonymised. The write up of the research will be publically available. Within the write up, every effort will be made to ensure that participant’s identities remain hidden.

Exceptions to anonymity will be taken if a participant reveals that they are being harmed in any way or states that they have, or intend to harm someone else. In such cases the researcher has a duty to report to an appropriate authority. This will be done with the participant’s knowledge and it will be agreed with them whom to tell.

**What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?**
Participation is voluntary. 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 be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

**What is the duration of the study?**
The duration of your involvement in the study will be 2x one hour interviews (one for each case study).

**Where will the study be conducted?**
The study will be conducted at your place of work and will take place at a convenient time for you, during working hours.

**Will the outcomes of the study be published?**
The outcomes of the study will form a doctoral thesis and may be published.

**Contact for further information**
Please do not hesitate to contact me at… if you have any questions or would like to discuss the research further.

**What if something goes wrong?**
If you wish to make a formal complaint about the conduct of the study then please contact the Head of the Research Office, Christie Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL.

**Please note:** The trainee psychologist has received training in taking consent as part of the training programme.
Appendix C: Participant Consent Form: Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist

SPECIALIST EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

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

1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.

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.

3. I understand that the interviews will be audio-recorded.

4. I agree to the use of anonymous quotes.

6. I agree that any data collected may be passed to other researchers.

7. I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books or journals.

I agree to take part in the above project

Name of participant

Date

Signature
Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet: Head Teacher

An Exploration of Educational Psychology Support for Children at Risk of School Exclusion

Participant Information Sheet - Head Teacher

You are being invited to take part in a study that aims to investigate how a specialist Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) Educational Psychologist (EP) offers effective support for children/young people at risk of permanent school exclusion and what is the EP’s unique contribution to the process. The research will be carried out by a Trainee Educational Psychologist as part of their Doctoral training in Child and Educational Psychology. Before you decide to take part, it is important for you to understand why the study is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully 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. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Who will conduct the study?
Jennifer Waite (Trainee Educational Psychologist)
School of Education
The University of Manchester,
Oxford Road, Manchester
M13 9PL

Title of the study
An Exploration of Educational Psychology Support for Children at Risk of School Exclusion

What is the aim of the study?
The aim of the study is to see how a specialist Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) Educational Psychologist (EP) offers effective support for children/young people at risk of permanent school exclusion. The study aims to explore positive case examples whereby involvement by an EP has led to positive outcomes for a child/young person.

Why have I been chosen?
You have been chosen because you are the head teacher of a school who has experienced positive outcomes following an EP involvement for a child who at the time was at risk of permanent exclusion.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?
You will not necessarily be formally involved in the study (unless you were directly involved with the EP in the casework) so you will not need to meet with the trainee psychologist. Your consent for the study is being sought because the study will take place in your school and involve your members of staff.

What happens to the data collected?
The data will be used as part of the trainee psychologist’s Doctoral Thesis. The trainee psychologist may also present the findings at a research conference for colleagues. You will be given the opportunity to receive feedback on the research findings in an informal joint meeting.
with yourself and the other participants in the study. The feedback will not discuss individual responses but rather the overall research findings.

**How is confidentiality maintained?**
All information provided from the interviews will be treated as confidential in line with Manchester University policy. All local authority names, school names and individuals’ names will be anonymised in the write up. The write up will be publicly available and within the write up, every effort will be made to ensure that participant’s identities remain hidden. Data from the audio recordings will be stored and kept securely in line with Manchester University policy. Only the trainee psychologist will have access to the raw data. Information will only be shared with supervisors or practitioner colleagues once all names and personal information has been anonymised.

Exceptions to anonymity will be taken if a participant reveals that they are being harmed in any way or states that they have, or intend to harm someone else. In such cases the researcher has a duty to report to an appropriate authority. This will be done with the participant’s knowledge and it will be agreed with them whom to tell.

**What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?**
Consent is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to consent to the study. If you consent to the study by signing the consent form you are still free to withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason.

**What is the duration of the study?**
The duration of your staffs’ involvement in the study will be 1x one hour interview per staff member.

**Where will the study be conducted?**
The study will be conducted at your school and will take place at a convenient time for your staff, during working hours.

**Will the outcomes of the study be published?**
The outcomes of the study will form a doctoral thesis and may be published.

**Contact for further information**
Please do not hesitate to contact me at… if you have any questions or would like to discuss the research further.

**What if something goes wrong?**
If you wish to make a formal complaint about the conduct of the study then please contact the Head of the Research Office, Christie Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL.

**Please note:** The trainee psychologist has received training in taking consent as part of the training programme.
Appendix E: Participant Information Sheet: School Professionals

An Exploration of Educational Psychology Support for Children at Risk of School Exclusion

Participant Information Sheet - School Professionals
You are being invited to take part in a study that aims to investigate how a specialist Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) Educational Psychologist (EP) offers effective support for children/young people at risk of permanent school exclusion and what is the EP's unique contribution to the process. The research will be carried out by a Trainee Educational Psychologist as part of their Doctoral training in Child and Educational Psychology. Before you decide to take part, it is important for you to understand why the study is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully 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. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Who will conduct the study?
Jennifer Waite (Trainee Educational Psychologist)
School of Education
The University of Manchester,
Oxford Road, Manchester
M13 9PL

Title of the study
An Exploration of Educational Psychology Support for Children at Risk of School Exclusion

What is the aim of the study?
The aim of the study is to see how a specialist Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) Educational Psychologist (EP) offers effective support for children/young people at risk of permanent school exclusion. The study aims to explore positive case examples whereby involvement by an EP has led to positive outcomes for a child/young person.

Why have I been chosen?
You have been chosen because you are a school professional who has been involved with a child who has experienced positive outcomes in school, following an specialist EP's involvement and who has been identified by the specialist EP as a positive case example.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?
You will be asked to meet with the trainee psychologist for up to one hour to discuss the strategies and methods used by the EP and their unique contributions to the positive outcomes achieved for the individual child. The meeting will be audio recorded. The areas for discussion in the interview will be sent to you prior to the meeting to enable you time to reflect on your answers.

What happens to the data collected?
The data will be used as part of the trainee psychologist’s Doctoral Thesis. The trainee psychologist may also present the findings at a research conference for colleagues. You will be
given the opportunity to receive feedback on the research findings in an informal joint meeting with yourself and the other participants in the study. The feedback will not discuss individual responses but rather the overall research findings.

**How is confidentiality maintained?**
All information provided from the interviews will be treated as confidential and in line with Manchester University policy. All local authority names, school names and individuals’ names will be anonymised in the write up. The write up of the research will be publicly available. Within the write up, every effort will be made to ensure that participant’s identities remain hidden. You will not have direct access to other participant’s interview data. You will have access to the general themes identified from your interview to check that your opinions have been analysed accurately. Data from the audio recordings will be stored and kept securely in line with Manchester University policy. Only the trainee psychologist will have access to the raw data. Information will only be shared with supervisors or practitioner colleagues once all names and personal information has been anonymised.

Exceptions to anonymity will be taken if a participant reveals that they are being harmed in any way or states that they have, or intend to harm someone else. In such cases the researcher has a duty to report to an appropriate authority. This will be done with the participant’s knowledge and it will be agreed with them whom to tell.

**What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?**
Participation is voluntary. 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 be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

**What is the duration of the study?**
The duration of your involvement in the study will be 1x one hour interview.

**Where will the study be conducted?**
The study will be conducted at your place of work and will take place at a convenient time for you, during working hours.

**Will the outcomes of the study be published?**
The outcomes of the study will form a doctoral thesis and may be published.

**Contact for further information**
Please do not hesitate to contact me at… if you have any questions or would like to discuss the research further.

**What if something goes wrong?**
If you wish to make a formal complaint about the conduct of the study then please contact the Head of the Research Office, Christie Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL.

**Please note:** The trainee psychologist has received training in taking consent as part of the training programme.
Appendix F: Participant Information Sheet: Parents/Guardians

An Exploration of Educational Psychology Support for Children at Risk of School Exclusion

Participant Information Sheet - Parents/Guardians

You are being invited to take part in a study that aims to investigate how a specialist Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) Educational Psychologists (EP) offer effective support for children/young people at risk of permanent school exclusion and what is the EP’s unique contribution to the process. The research will be carried out by a Trainee Educational Psychologist as part of their Doctoral training in Child and Educational Psychology. Before you decide to take part, it is important for you to understand why the study is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully 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. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Who will conduct the study?
Jennifer Waite (Trainee Educational Psychologist)
School of Education
The University of Manchester,
Oxford Road, Manchester
M13 9PL

Title of the study
An Exploration of Educational Psychology Support for Children at Risk of School Exclusion

What is the aim of the study?
The aim of the study is to see how a specialist Social Emotional and Behaviour Difficulties (SEBD) Educational Psychologist (EP) offers effective support for children/young people at risk of permanent school exclusion. The study aims to explore positive case examples whereby involvement by an EP has led to positive outcomes for a child/young person.

Why have I been chosen?
You have been chosen because you are the parents/guardians of a child who has experienced positive outcomes in school following a specialist EP’s involvement and your child was identified by the specialist EP as a positive case example.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?
You will be asked to meet with the trainee psychologist for up to one hour to discuss the strategies and methods used by the EP and their unique contributions to the positive outcomes achieved for your child. The meeting will be audio recorded. The areas for discussion in the interview will be sent to you prior to the meeting to enable you time to reflect on your answers.

In addition to being asked to participate in the study, you are also being asked to give your consent to the overall research study, given that, the research will discuss how the EP achieved positive outcomes for your child.
What happens to the data collected?
The data will be used as part of the trainee psychologist’s Doctoral Thesis. The trainee psychologist may also present the findings at a research conference for colleagues. You will be given the opportunity to receive feedback on the research findings in an informal joint meeting with yourself and the other participants in the study. The feedback will not discuss individual responses but rather the overall research findings.

How is confidentiality maintained?
All information provided from the interviews will be treated as confidential in line with Manchester University policy. All local authority names, school names and individuals’ names will be anonymised in the write up. The write up of the research will be publically available. Within the write up, every effort will be made to ensure that participant’s identities remain hidden. You will not have direct access to other participant’s interview data. You will have access to the general themes identified from your interview to check that your opinions have been analysed accurately. Data from the audio recordings will be stored and kept securely in line with Manchester University policy. Only the trainee psychologist will have access to the raw data. Information will only be shared with supervisors or practitioner colleagues once all names and personal information has been anonymised.

Exceptions to anonymity will be taken if a participant reveals that they are being harmed in any way or states that they have, or intend to harm someone else. In such cases the researcher has a duty to report to an appropriate authority. This will be done with the participant’s knowledge and it will be agreed with them whom to tell.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?
Participation is voluntary. 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 be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

What is the duration of the study?
The duration of your involvement in the study will be 1x one hour interview.

Where will the study be conducted?
The study will be conducted at your child’s school and will take place at a convenient time for you, during working hours.

Will the outcomes of the study be published?
The outcomes of the study will form a doctoral thesis and may be published.

Contact for further information
Please do not hesitate to contact me at… if you have any questions or would like to discuss the research further.

What if something goes wrong?
If you wish to make a formal complaint about the conduct of the study then please contact the Head of the Research Office, Christie Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL.

Please note: The trainee psychologist has received training in taking consent as part of the training programme.
Appendix G: Participant Consent Form: Head Teacher

HEAD TEACHER CONSENT FORM

If you are happy to consent to the study please complete and sign the consent form below.

I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.

I understand that my consent to the study taking place is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time without giving a reason.

I understand that the participants who will take part in the study will be interviewed and their interviews will be audio-recorded.

I agree to the use of anonymous quotes.

I agree that any data collected may be passed to other researchers.

I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books or journals.

I agree to give consent in the above project

Name of participant ___________________________ Date ___________________________ Signature ___________________________
Appendix H: Participant Consent Form: School Professional

SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

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

Please Initial Box

I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.

Please Initial Box

I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

Please Initial Box

I understand that the interviews will be audio-recorded.

Please Initial Box

I agree to the use of anonymous quotes.

Please Initial Box

I agree that any data collected may be passed to other researchers.

Please Initial Box

I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books or journals.

Please Initial Box

I agree to take part in the above project

Name of participant ___________________________ Date ___________________________ Signature ___________________________
Appendix I: Participant Consent Form: Parent

PARENT PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

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

I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.

I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

I understand that the interviews will be audio-recorded.

I agree to the use of anonymous quotes.

I agree that any data collected may be passed to other researchers.

I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books or journals.

I agree to take part in the above project

Name of participant _____________________________ Date _____________________________ Signature _____________________________
Appendix J: Participant Consent Form: For the Study to Involve their Child

PARENT CONSENT FORM (FOR THE STUDY TO INVOLVE THEIR CHILD)

If you are happy to consent to the study please complete and sign the consent form below.

Please Initial Box

I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.

I understand that my consent to the study taking place is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time without giving a reason.

I understand that the participants who will take part in the study will be interviewed and their interviews will be audio-recorded.

I agree to the use of anonymous quotes.

I agree that any data collected may be passed to other researchers.

I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books or journals.

I agree to give consent in the above project.

Name of participant: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________  Signature: ___________________________

The University of Manchester
Appendix K: Interview Schedule: Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist

1. Can you firstly explore the context/background to the school and the individual casework?

2. Can you recap from when you first became aware of the individual child or referral, your involvement with the child and the other professionals – what happened?

3. Was your involvement typical in relation to other similar cases? What were the challenges (if any) of this casework? Was there anything specific about this particular case or context that may have impacted upon your practice?

4. What strategies and methods did you use to support the school staff/parents? Or... How did you set about helping the school staff/parents... what did you do? Do you always apply the same strategies?

5. What would you describe as the facilitators to the success of the child’s outcomes? What approach was most successful? What/how did you contribute?

6. Are there any other professionals that could provide the same strategies and methods that you offered and achieve the same outcomes?

7. What was distinctive about your contribution to the successful outcomes for the child? Are they unique to the EP role?

8. Is there a distinction between your contributions to effective SEBD work offered to this particular school and that which could have been provided by other non-specialists EPs?
Appendix L: Interview Schedule: School Professionals

1. Can you firstly explore the context/background to the school and the individual child becoming at risk of permanent exclusion?

2. Can you recap from the beginning, the SEPs involvement with the child, yourself and the other professionals – what happened?

3. What did the SEP do? How did the SEP help you? What strategies/methods did they use?

4. What would you describe as the facilitators to the success of the child’s outcomes? What were the main reasons why successful outcome was achieved for the individual child? How did the SEP contribute to that success? Could anyone else have done the same thing?

5. Are there any other professionals that could provide the same strategies and methods (or support) that the SEP offered and achieve the same outcomes? Could another EP have done the same?

6. What was distinctive about the SEPs contribution to the successful outcomes for the child? Are they unique to the EP role?
Appendix M: Interview Schedule: Parents

1. Can you firstly explore the context/background to your child’s school and the background to your child becoming at risk of permanent exclusion?

2. Can you recap from the beginning, the SEPs involvement with your child, yourself and the other professionals – what happened?

3. What did the SEP do? How did the SEP help you? What strategies/methods did they use?

4. What would you describe as the facilitators to the success of your child’s outcomes? What were the main reasons why successful outcome was achieved for your child? How did the SEP contribute to that success? Could anyone else have done the same thing?

5. Are there any other professionals that could provide the same strategies and methods (or support) that the SEP offered and achieve the same outcomes? Could another EP have done the same?

6. What was distinctive about the SEPs contribution to the successful outcomes for your child? Are they unique to the EP role?
Appendix N: Thematic Analysis: The Key and Pictorial Illustrations of the Colour Coordinated Sticky Notes to Represent each Participant’s Initial Codes

The initial codes were represented for the caseworks on Post-it notes as described in the key below, for both research questions. When the codes generated for research question 1 and research question 2 were combined into The Integrated Thematic Map, the code RQ2 was placed on the Post-it notes that represented a direct response to research question 2, to support the analysis and the write up of the findings and discussion.

### The Key to the Sticky Notes for Casework 1 for Research Question 1 and 2

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Participant</th>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Note Colour</th>
<th>Pen Colour</th>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Teacher</td>
<td>YELLOW</td>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teacher</td>
<td>ORANGE</td>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Key to the Sticky Notes for Casework 2 for Research Question 1 and 2

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Colour</th>
<th>Note Colour</th>
<th>Pen Colour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specialist EP</td>
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<td>GREEN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Teacher</td>
<td>YELLOW</td>
<td>GREEN</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Head Teacher</td>
<td>ORANGE</td>
<td>GREEN</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>BLUE</td>
<td>GREEN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A picture of the forming thematic map to illustrate the sticky notes
Further examples of the forming thematic map to illustrate the sticky notes.
Appendix O: Thematic Analysis: A Pictorial Illustration of the Grouping of the Participant Specialist Educational Psychologist’s Initial Codes for Casework 1 and Casework 2

The initial grouping of the Participant Specialist EP’s initial codes for casework 1
The initial grouping of the Specialist EP’s (SEBD:ITPS) initial codes for casework 1 and casework 2
Appendix P: Thematic Analysis: The Completed Thematic Map including the Grouping of all the Participants’ Initial Codes for Research Question 1 and Research Question 2 into Emergent Themes
Appendix Q: Action Plan for Casework 1

- For John to use a wobble cushion to assist his sensory integration.

- When John is given an instruction, to use concrete language such as: “put that away…thank you,” and “make the right choice…you can…or…thank you.”

- Do not enter a debate with John. Use the broken record technique…follow through with anything that he has been asked to do, do not give up.

- Teaching support should give prompts non-verbally:
  1. Thumbs up for being on task
  2. Pointing to the teacher to encourage him to listen

- Involvement in a social skills group at least weakly, using the red file of Social Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL).

- To give John some responsibility and a job.

- For John to have handwriting practice at least three times a week.

- Explore the possibility of teacher controlled wrestling in P.E.
Appendix R: Action Plan for Casework 2

- Visual timetable of his days. Walk him through it, “we do this…then we do that.”

- All adults in school, no negative language. “I want you to…” NOT “I don’t want you to…”

- To be given short instructions. Smile when saying the instruction and always follow it with “thank you.” Repeat the instruction ‘broken record technique’ until he follows it. Can also use, “the rule is…”

- All children in school to be taught how to manage a situation where they are finding another child’s behaviour threatening or unwanted. Use, “No Stop,” accompanied by an arm out with the palm up and facing the other child.

- Each lesson, George to be given 5 ‘talk cards.’ He uses one each time he talks to the teacher whether he is picked or he interrupts. Reiterate, “the rule is…”

- With adults in the classroom, when he wants to tell you something, “thank you, tell me that at the end of the lesson, come to me at playtime to tell me.” This should be put on his timetable.

- To be given one job only.

- Ten minute slot with a small group of children who are good conversationalists. Discuss topics that he is not interested in and note how quickly he disengages or tries to change the subject. Any unusual responses.

- If George walks off when being spoken to by the welfare staff they are to have a card to send inside for Mrs X or Mrs X to go outside, but the member of the welfare team is to give the instruction with X and X there. He is then to have 6 minutes of “time out” at the side if the playground. X and X to stay out for those 6 minutes to ensure that he stays in the same spot.
Appendix S: The Coding Framework for the Content Analysis of the Action Plans

The coding framework for the content analysis was made up of three simple categories that aimed to triangulate the participants’ opinions that the Participant Specialist EP provided specific recommendations; that the strategies emphasised adult control; and that the strategies were not ‘rocket science’ (see below for an example of the coding framework).

The Coding Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Action Plan: Casework 1</th>
<th>Action Plan: Casework 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>√ or X</td>
<td>√ or X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Recommendations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not ‘Rocket Science”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first category evaluated whether the strategies were specific in relation to what adults had to do and say to manage the child’s behaviour by considering whether the behaviour management strategies were clear and examples were provided (for the action plan recorded by the head teacher it was considered that if valid examples were provided by the Participant Specialist EP, the head teacher would have considered these important enough to note them on the action plan). The second category evaluated whether the strategies emphasised the adults maintaining control by considering whether any strategies were presented specifically for this aim and whether any of the strategies, when put into practice, would result in the child following an adult’s direction or instruction. The third category evaluated whether the strategies were not ‘rocket science’ by considering whether the strategies would be likely to be familiar to other educational professionals, would be clear and not technically complex. Once the evaluations had been taken, the findings from the content analysis were cross referenced with themes in the Integrated Thematic Map (see Sections 4.3.1.2.2.2 and 4.3.1.2.2.2.1 above for more information).
### Appendix T: Table Demonstrating the Codes Generated from the Inter-coder Reliability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Example from Inter-coder A</th>
<th>Example from Inter-coder B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Joint working</strong></td>
<td>Joint action planning/problem solving</td>
<td>EP has joint working as a core belief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborative problem solving</td>
<td>EP using language that indicates joint working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage school/home to collaborate</td>
<td>Joint working facilitates trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Build relationship between home and school</td>
<td>Joint working, collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bridging relationships between home and school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Joint working between EP, school and parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consultation</strong></td>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>EP using consultation to increase understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To develop understanding</td>
<td>Using consultation to effect change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborative in consultation</td>
<td>Use of consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listen in consultation</td>
<td>Expert end of consultative continuum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listen and hear pain in consultation</td>
<td>Non expert end of consultative continuum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indirect and directive consultation</td>
<td>Listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consultation with parents, start positive</td>
<td>EP moving discussion onto to action planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening for stress in consultation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening for motivation in consultation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stay in the process/review progress</strong></td>
<td>Came back two weeks later</td>
<td>EP sees support as a continuous process not just one off involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never one off</td>
<td>Plan-do-review on short time scales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Follow up phone call</td>
<td>EP using innovative methods of reviewing progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second observation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review progress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be present and available</td>
<td>Plan do review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non jargon language</td>
<td>EP using non jargon language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a conversation that everyone understood</td>
<td>Differentiating language in consultation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use language to explain the child’s behaviour</td>
<td>Sensitive discussing difficulties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have positive talk and problem free talk. Using SFBT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match parents in their language. Equality in conversation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saying positive things about the child. Strengths</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meeting needs/being flexible</strong></td>
<td>EP flexible as a practitioner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be available</td>
<td>EPs need to be flexible, able to adapt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not about the EP about the needs of others</td>
<td>Tailoring service delivered to meet client’s needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible approach</td>
<td>Immediate access to support and advice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet people’s needs</td>
<td>Availability of EP practically as well as emotionally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpersonal skills</strong></td>
<td>EP non judgemental</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathetic and understanding</td>
<td>Empathy, seeing it from their perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-judgmental</td>
<td>Interpersonal skills, empathy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledge and respect towards parents</td>
<td>Empathy, understanding of parents’ needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be kind</td>
<td>EP building relationship with mother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>Practical strategies</td>
<td>Important for EP to listen to staff so can offer tailored strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies on the spot</td>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t overload staff with strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies that work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies into practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not too many</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative division of strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>EP using psychological assessment methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the child’s behaviour communicating – the need, the function.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shaping beliefs and changing views</th>
<th>Shape mind-set of the strategies</th>
<th>EP sensitively challenging views</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get people to change themselves</td>
<td>Changing attitudes, approaches to negative behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get people to be self-motivated</td>
<td>EP role is to increase understanding of the child and therefore staff motivation to help and response to child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape people’s willingness to apply strategies and change response to the child</td>
<td>EP sees their role as developing intrinsic motivation of staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Say positives then explain the child’s behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action plan</th>
<th>EP initiated plan</th>
<th>Psychology being used-solution focused,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stayed until had plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need a plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always leave a plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action plan over report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applying Psychology</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>strengths based</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using psychology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>positive psychology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix U: The Calculation of the Inter-coder Validation

The researcher identified 10 codes in the segment of transcript. The colleague identified 10 codes in the segment of transcript. Out of a total of 20 codes there was agreement on 18 of the codes. The percentage of absolute agreement was high at 90% (18/20 x 100). The absolute agreement with account for the agreement expected by chance was sufficient and of high agreement at 80% (18-2/20 x 100).
Appendix V: Research Risk and Ethical Assessment Form

RESEARCH RISK AND ETHICS ASSESSMENT

School of Education, University of Manchester

For UG & PGT Research assignments & dissertations
and PGR Pilot Studies & Research assignments only
(NB: PhD & Professional Doctorate students should complete a UREC form for dissertation research)

The School of Education is committed to developing and supporting the highest standards of research in education and its associated fields. The Research Risk and Ethics Assessment (RREA) resource has been created in order to maintain these high academic standards and associated codes of good research practice. The research portfolio within the School of Education covers a wide range of fields and perspectives. Research within each of these areas places responsibilities of a differing nature on supervisors and students subject to course, level, focus and participants. The aim of the Research Risk and Ethics Assessment is to assist supervisors and students in assessing these factors.

The School has determined three levels of Research Risk each of which have a number of associated criteria and have implications for the degree of ethical review required. In general, the research risk level is considered to be:

- **High** IF the research focuses on groups within society in need of special support, or where it may be non-standard, or if there is a possibility the research may be contentious in one or more ways.
- **Medium** IF the research follows standard procedures and established research methodologies and is considered non-contentious.
- **Low** IF the research is of a routine nature and is considered non-contentious.\(^1\)

Agreement to proceed with research at each of these levels is provided by an appropriate University Research Ethics Committee, a School of Education Research Integrity Committee member, or by the supervisor/tutor respectively (Figure 1, page 13).

**How to complete the Research Risk and Ethics Assessment form.**

This form should be completed by School of Education students and their supervisors in all cases, except where a pre-approved assignment template currently exists.\(^2\)

Students and supervisors should complete this form in consultation with the School of Education Ethical Practice Policy Guidelines.\(^3\) There are five sections to this document:

- Section A – Research Summary Information (page 2)
- Section B – Outline of Research (page 3-4)
- Section C.1 – Criteria for HIGH risk research (page 5-6)
- Section C.2 – Criteria for MEDIUM risk research (page 7)
- Section C.3 – Criteria for LOW risk research (pages 8-10)

---

\(^1\) A reasonable person would agree that the study includes no issues of public or private objection, or of a sensitive nature.

\(^2\) For courses with approved templates see: [http://www.education.manchester.ac.uk/intranet/ethics](http://www.education.manchester.ac.uk/intranet/ethics)

\(^3\) [http://www.education.manchester.ac.uk/intranet/ethics/](http://www.education.manchester.ac.uk/intranet/ethics/)
Instructions on procedure are provided at the end of each section.

The questions that follow have been designed to assist supervisors and students in determining the appropriate risk level. It may be appropriate for supervisors and students to review and discuss responses to these questions together. A member of the School’s Research Integrity Committee should be contacted if there are questions about the most appropriate response to any question. Instructions on subsequent stages of the process are provided at the end of each section.

RESEARCH RISK AND ETHICS ASSESSMENT

School of Education, University of Manchester

For UG & PGT Research assignments & dissertations and PGR Pilot Studies & Research assignments only

(NB: PhD & Professional Doctorate students should complete a UREC form for dissertation research)

To be completed by RIA administrator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RIA reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Date received: | Date approved: |

SECTION A - SUMMARY OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL

This section should be completed by the person undertaking the research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A1. Name of Person/Student:</th>
<th>Jennifer Waite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2. Student ID (quoted on library/swipe card):</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3. Email Address:</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4. Name of Supervisor:</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5. Supervisor email address &amp; contact phone no.:</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6. Programme (MEd, PGCE, MSc, BA etc):</td>
<td>D.Ed.Ch.Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A7. Year of Study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A9. Course Code</td>
<td>EDUC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 A list of current RIC members is available at: http://www.education.manchester.ac.uk/intranet/ethics/
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A10. Title of Project:</th>
<th>Effective Educational Psychology Support for Children at Risk of School Exclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A11. Project Start and End Dates:</td>
<td>On confirmation of ethical approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A12. Submission Date:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A13. Location(s) where the project will be carried out:</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A14. Student Signature:</td>
<td>Jennifer Waite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If this is a student project the following question to be completed by **SUPERVISOR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A15. Assessed Risk Level</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A16. Date</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SECTION B – DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH**

This section should be completed by the person undertaking the research.

**B1. Provide an outline description of the planned research:**

The planned research will involve an exploratory multiple case study design looking at how specialist Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) Educational Psychologists (EP) offer effective support for children/young people at risk of permanent school exclusion and what is the EPs unique contribution to the process. There will be two case studies each with multiple data gathering. The rational for the research is to strengthen the skills and knowledge of EP practice and to understand the distinctiveness of psychological contributions in light of the changes proposed by the Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) review.

The research study aims to address the gaps in the research by asking:

RQ1: What strategies and methods do Educational Psychologists use in effective specialist work to support children/young people with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties who are at risk of school exclusion?

RQ2: What is considered to be the distinctive contribution of Educational Psychologists in effective specialist work to support children/young people with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties who are at risk of school exclusion?
B2. The principal research methods and methodologies are:

The research will involve an exploratory multiple case study design. There will be two case studies in total. Each case study will involve one EP, the key school professionals involved with the individual child/young person and possibly the child/young person’s parents/guardians. The total number of participants will be unclear until the case studies have been identified. Two EPs in total will be involved in the study. Each EP with have two case studies each and therefore there will be multiple data gathering for each EP. One-to-one semi-structured interviews with the EP, school professional and possibly the parents will address all the research questions and positive case examples will be used. Each interview will be no longer than one hour long. The interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed.

B3. Please indicate which of the following groups are expected to participate in this research:

☐ Children under 16, other than those in school, youth club, or other accredited organisations.
☐ Adults with learning difficulties, other than those in familiar, supportive environments.
☐ Adults who are unable to self-consent.
☐ Adults with mental illness.
☐ Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the researcher.
☐ Prisoners.
☐ Young Offenders.
☐ Other vulnerable groups (please detail)

OR

5 The person with learning difficulties has appropriate support within the setting from accredited support workers or family members.
None of the above groups are involved in this study

B4. Number of expected research participants: 12-16

B5. The research will take place

- within the UK
- within the EU
- within the researcher’s home country if outside the EU
- wholly or partly in non-EU countries which are not the home country of the researcher

---

6 The researcher’s ‘home country’ is defined as one in which (1) the researcher holds a current passport through birthright or foreign birth registration, (2) a country where the researcher has resident status, or (3) where the researcher holds a permit or visa to work, has a contract of employment, and is not a UK tax-payer.
SECTION C – RESEARCH ASSESSMENT

The following sections should be completed by the person undertaking the research in discussion with their supervisor/tutor with advice from a member of the School’s Research Integrity Committee where appropriate.

C.0 – Criteria for research classified as HIGH RISK - NRES

☐ The study involves primary research with adults who are unable to self consent.

☐ The study involves primary research with prisoners.

☐ The study involves primary research with NHS patients or NHS staff, or on NHS premises.

If either of these options are selected then please complete an NRES application. See your supervisor for further guidance.

C.1 – Criteria for research classified as HIGH RISK (tick any that apply)

I/we confirm that this research:

☐ involves vulnerable or potentially vulnerable individuals or groups as indicated in B3

☐ addresses themes or issues in respect of participant’s personal experience which may be of a sensitive nature (i.e. the research has the potential to create a degree of discomfort or anxiety amongst one or more participants)

☐ cannot be completed without data collection or associated activities which place the researcher and/or participants at personal risk

☐ requires participant informed consent and/or withdrawal procedures which are not consistent with accepted practice

☐ addresses an area where access to personal records (e.g. medical), in collaboration with an authorised person, is not possible

☐ involves primary data collection on an area of public or social objection (e.g. terrorism, paedophilia)

☐ makes use of video or other images captured by the researcher, and/or research study participants, where the researcher cannot guarantee controlled access to authorised viewing.

☐ will involve direct contact with participants in countries on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office warning list7

☐ will involve direct contact with participants in countries outside of the European Union or the researcher’s home country (see footnote 6, page 4)

☐ involves face to face contact with research participants outside normal working hours8 that may be seen as unsocial or inconvenient

8 For example, in the UK, normal working hours are between 8am-6pm, Mon-Fri inclusive.
will take place wholly or partly without training or qualified supervision

requires appropriate vaccinations which are unavailable

will take place in locations where first aid and/or other medical support or facilities are not available within 30 minutes

may involve the researcher operating machinery, electrical equipment, or workplace vehicles, or handling or working with animals at the research location(s), for which they are not qualified, and where a qualified operative or handler is not available to act as supervisor.

If ONE OR MORE of the options in section C.1 has been selected and the research is not review/evaluation of professional roles or practice, approval to proceed with this submission must be made by the appropriate UREC committee. The supervisor and person undertaking the research should submit:

- Section A – questions 1-16
- Section B – questions 1-5
- Section C.1
- Complete the UREC form.

If ONE OR MORE of the options in section C.1 has been selected and the research is review/evaluation of professional roles or practice, approval to proceed with this submission must be approved by a member of the School of Education Research Integrity Committee. The supervisor and student should submit:

- Section A – questions 1-16 (page 2)
- Section B – questions 1-5 (page 3-4)
- Section C.1
- Complete the School of Education Research Integrity (Ethics Approval)

Documents should then be submitted to Ethics.Education@manchester.ac.uk.

The QA Administrator will identify and forward your completed documents to a member of this committee for approval.

*All other supervisors and students should continue to section C.2 on the next page*
C.2 – Criteria for research classified as **MEDIUM RISK** (tick any that apply)

I/we confirm that this research:

- is primary research\(^9\) involving children or other vulnerable groups which involves direct contact with participants.

- is primary research which focuses on data collection from professionals responding to questions outside of their professional concerns.

- is primary research involving data collection from participants outside of the EU or the researcher’s home country via direct telephone, video, or other linked communications.

- is practice review/evaluation involving topics of a sensitive nature which are not personal to the participants.

- involves visits to site(s) where a specific risk to participants and/or the researcher has been identified, and the researcher may not be closely supervised throughout.

- requires specific training and this is scheduled to be completed before fieldwork starts, or, training will not be undertaken but the research will be closely supervised by an academic advisor with appropriate qualifications and skills.

- requires vaccinations which have been received, or are scheduled to be received in a timely fashion.

- requires face to face contact with research participants partly outside normal working hours\(^10\) that may be seen as inconvenient.

- takes place in, or involves transport to and from, locations where the researcher’s lack of familiarity may put them at personal risk.

- may require the operation of machinery, electrical equipment, or workplace vehicles, or handling or working with animals at the research location(s), for which they are not qualified, but such operation or handling will be undertaken under close supervision from a qualified operative or handler.

If ONE OR MORE of the options in this section has been selected, approval to proceed with this research proposal must be completed by a member of the School of Education Research Integrity Committee. The supervisor and student should submit:

- Section A – questions 1-16 (page 2)
- Section B – questions 1-5 (page 3-4)
- Section C.2
- Complete the School of Education Research Integrity (Ethics Approval) document\(^11\).

These documents should then be submitted to Ethics.Education@manchester.ac.uk.

---

\(^9\) For definition see School of Education Ethical Practice Policy Guidelines

\(^10\) In the UK normal working hours are between 8am-6pm, Mon-Fri inclusive.

\(^11\) This document and guidance for completion can downloaded from [http://www.education.manchester.ac.uk/intranet/ethics](http://www.education.manchester.ac.uk/intranet/ethics)
The QA Administrator will identify and forward your completed documents to a member of this committee for approval.

All other supervisors and students should continue to section C3 on the next page.
C.3 – Criteria for research classified as **LOW RISK** (tick all that apply)

Complete C3.1 and/or C3.2 as appropriate and then section C3.3 (tick all that apply)

**C 3.1 Research not involving human participants**

I/we confirm that this research proposal:

- [ ] is not of high nor medium risk to the researcher, in accordance with the criteria provided in sections C.1 and C.2 respectively.
- [ ] is Secondary research (i.e. it will use only material that has already been published or is in the public domain).
- [ ] is Secondary data analysis (i.e. it will only involve data from an established data archive).

If you have ticked one of the options in C3.1 above, and C3.2 does not apply, you should now complete section C3.3

**C 3.2 Research involving human participants**

I/we confirm that this research (tick as appropriate):

- [ ] is not of high nor medium risk to the researcher, or participants, in accordance with the criteria provided in sections C.0, C.1 and C.2 respectively.
- [ ] A reasonable person would agree that the study addresses issues of legitimate interest without being in any way likely to inflame opinion or cause distress\(^{12}\)
- [ ] is Practice review (i.e. the research involves data collection from participants on issues relating to the researcher’s professional role, in a setting where the researcher is employed or on a professional placement)
- [ ] is Practice evaluation (i.e. the research involves data collection on a student’s professional role, in a setting where the researcher is employed or on a professional placement. The data collected will be used for comparison against national or other targets or standards).
- [ ] is Primary research on professional practice with participants in professional roles.
- [ ] is Market research (i.e. the research may involve data collection from the general public approached or observed in public locations for the purposes of market investigation).
- [ ] is Primary research using a questionnaire completed and returned by participants with no direct contact with the researcher.

**C 3.3 I/we confirm (tick as appropriate):**

**Research context**

\(^{12}\) A reasonable person would agree that the study includes no issues of public or private objection, or of a sensitive nature.
the research will be conducted wholly with the European Union, or outside the EU but in the researcher’s home nation

the researcher is not in a position to coerce potential participants

the location(s) of the research are not listed on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office warning lists\(^\text{13}\)

Primary or practice research involves no vulnerable group (as indicated in question B3).

Primary or practice research will be conducted in a public space or building (e.g. the high street, the University campus, a school building, etc)

**Codes of Practice**

I/we have read the School of Education Ethical Practice and Policy Guidelines

the researcher will abide by the School of Education’s Ethical Protocol detailed therein

the researcher is aware of and will abide by any organisation’s codes of conduct relevant to this research

**Researcher skills/checks**

all necessary training procedures for this research have been completed

all appropriate permissions have been obtained to use any database or resource to be analysed in Secondary research

all relevant enhanced CRB checks have been completed

written permission to be on the site to conduct primary research has been received

**Risks to researcher**

the researcher will not travel through or work in research locations which may have unlit areas, derelict areas, cliffs, or local endemic diseases

no specific vaccinations are required to undertake this research

first aid provision and a trained first aider are available where appropriate

the researcher will only operate machinery, electrical equipment, or workplace vehicles, or handle or work with animals at the research location(s) if they are qualified to do so

the researcher will not give out personal telephone information to participants, or owners of secondary data resources, in relation to the research project

Primary or practice research will be carried out within normal working hours at a time convenient to participants.

Public and private travel to and from the primary or practice research location(s) are familiar to the researcher and offer no discernible risk.

Rights of participants

participant information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, and all other documentation relevant to this research have been discussed by supervisor/tutor and student and approved as covering required headings as illustrated in the School of Education Participant Information and consent templates

the researcher understands the Data Protection Act and the University Data Protection Policy and all data will be handled confidentially and securely

Research Integrity

no data will be collected before approval of the study by the supervisor/tutor

the researcher will report any issues arising during the course of the study that conflict with the School of Education protocol, immediately to the supervisor who has signed the ethics approval and suspend data collection pending advice from that supervisor/tutor

the researcher will report any proposed deviation from the research specification outlined in this assessment to the supervisor/tutor to update the current assessment or clarify any need for further approvals BEFORE such changes are made

Research output

the only publication/output from this research will be the assignment or dissertation unless consent has been obtained from participants for further dissemination

When satisfied with the assessment, Supervisors should complete section C3.4

---

14 For example, in the UK normal working hours are between 8am and 6pm Mon-Fri inclusive.
C3.4 When satisfied that the assessment is correct, the supervisor should complete this section.

For ‘low risk’ research approval items in bold must be ticked and one or more of the specific research criteria as appropriate.

The supervisor confirms:

☐ The submission has been discussed and agreed with the person(s) undertaking the research.

☐ The student has had appropriate training and has the skills to undertake this study, or has qualified supervision in place.

☐ The research activities outlined in the proposal involve low risk to the student researcher or potential participants.

and one or more of the following as appropriate:

☐ Primary or Practice research will not address issues of public or social objection or of a sensitive nature.

☐ Information giving and consent taking processes follow School of Education guidance.

☐ Secondary research assignment/project has appropriate resource or database access permissions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C3.5 Supervisor’s signature</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

IF all relevant items in BOLD are confirmed and in addition all specific criteria relating to primary, practice or secondary research are confirmed as appropriate, the supervisor should:

- Review Section A – questions 1-16 (page 2) ensuring the level of risk is noted and dated
- Review Section B – questions 1-5 (page 3-4)
- Review Section C – questions C3.1 – C3.4 (pages 8-10)

These documents, along with relevant draft questionnaires/interview topics, information sheets and consent forms, should then be submitted to Ethics.Education@manchester.ac.uk for which the QA administrator will acknowledge receipt. Copies should be retained by the supervisor.

Any amendment to low risk approved research submissions should be recorded and signed-off by the supervisor in section 3.6 (page 12) as necessary. Approved amendments should be forwarded to ethics.education@manchester.ac.uk for which the QA administrator will provide acknowledgement. A copy retained by the supervisor.
To be completed if/when applicable:

*This section will record any applications made during the life time of the Project regarding minor deviations from what was approved.*

**Minor\(^\text{15}\) deviation to assessed research agreed (1):**

**C3.6 Details of deviation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisor’s signature</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Other deviations from approved research proposals should be sent to the chair of the appropriate committee:

- UREC – Chair (via UREC Secretary Tim.Stibbs@manchester.ac.uk)
- School of Education – RIC Chair ([ethics.education@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:ethics.education@manchester.ac.uk))
- RREA – Supervisor with copies to [ethics.educations@amanchester.ac.uk](mailto:ethics.educations@amanchester.ac.uk)

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\(^{15}\) Minor deviations from previously approved research submissions are defined as those which neither change the nature of the study nor deviate from any participatory research groups previously identified. Supervisors should contact a member of the SoE Research Integrity Committee for advice if in doubt.
Figure 1: Review routes for research proposal review and sign-off
Appendix W: The School of Education Research Integrity Committee: Ethical Approval Form

**School of Education**

**Ethical Approval Application Form**

for UG, PGT Research Projects and Professional Doctorate* Students

The ethical approval application form must contain answers to all the questions indicated in the boxes below, if they do not apply please state why.

**SECTION 1 Student Details /Identification of the person responsible for the research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Student:</th>
<th>Jennifer Waite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student ID (quoted on library/swipe card):</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Address:</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Supervisor:</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme (MEd, PGCE, MSc, BA etc):</td>
<td>D.Ed.Ch.Psychology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION 2 PROJECT DETAILS (Please expand boxes to fit answers)

2. **Aims and Objectives of the Project**

A. Provide a statement of your research aims and objectives including research questions.

The research aims to explore how specialist Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) Educational Psychologists (EP) offer effective support for children/young people at risk of permanent school exclusion and what is the EPs unique contribution to the process. There will be two case studies each with multiple data gathering. The rational for the research is to strengthen the skills and knowledge of EP practice and to understand the distinctiveness of psychological contributions in light of the changes proposed by the Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) review.

The research study aims to address the gaps in the research by asking:

RQ1: What strategies and methods do Educational Psychologists use in effective specialist work to support children/young people with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties who are risk of school exclusion?
RQ2: What is considered to be the distinctive contribution of Educational Psychologists in effective specialist work to support children/young people with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties who are risk of school exclusion?

B. What is the justification for the research? (why is it an area of importance/ has any similar research been done)

Children/young people who demonstrate features of social, emotional and behaviour difficulties (SEBD) become at risk of permanent exclusion from school. In the academic year of 2009/2010 the annual school exclusion statistics highlighted that an estimated 5,740 children/young people were excluded from mainstream primary, secondary and special schools (DFE, 2011a). Individuals excluded from school become at risk of problems associated with social adjustment including juvenile and adult criminality (Zigler, Taussig and Black, 1992), early school drop-out (Parker & Asher, 1987), drug abuse (Farrington, 1991), poverty (Parsons, 1999) and later physical and mental health problems (Cooper Drummond, Lovey, & McLaughlin, 2000). Educational Psychologists (EP) support schools and individual teachers to apply behaviour management strategies to decrease the number of permanent exclusions (Hartnell, 2010). There are research gaps on the effective strategies and methods employed by specialist SEBD EPs and the justification of the distinctive contribution of EPs in effective SEBD work. Continued research is essential to continually strengthen the skills and knowledge of EP practices and to understand the distinctive contribution provided by psychology services in light if the Special Educational Need and Disability review (DfE, 20011b).


C. What are the main ethical issues and what steps will be taken to address them?
Ethical issue 1: the researcher’s involvement at the beginning or during the process with the professionals may impact the outcomes for the individual child/young person.

Steps to be taken: Participant participation in the study will take place following the EP involvement with the individual child/young person. Even though it is unnecessary that a conversation with a neutral person would necessarily cause harm it is considered to be in the best interest of the child/young person for the research to be involved after the EP involvement.

Ethical issue 2: consideration for including/not including the individual child/young person in the study.

Steps to be taken/considerations made: Children/young people will not be included in the study. Even though it would have created a rich data set to involve the individual children/young people, it is considered unethical to involve them in the study as their involvement may impact their continued success in school.

Ethical issue 3: involvement of the child/young person’s parents/guardians in the study.

Steps to be taken: The ethical issues surrounding parents/guardians involvement in the study include the possible power imbalances between education staff and/or other professional staff and the parents themselves. Parents/guardians may feel obliged to take part in the study. There may also be experiences of worry or distress surrounding the topic area given that their child was at risk of permanent exclusion. Given that EPs aim to gain parental/guardians’ involvement and parents/guardians have a right to be involved in matters concerning their child, the study will seek to give parents/guardians the opportunity to be directly involved in the study. The EPs will be asked to only select appropriate caseworks whereby parents/guardians will be able to provide informed consent to the overall study involving the professionals discussing their child and their individual participation in the study. The EPs will therefore positively ascertain that all caseworks do not involve parents/guardians who are classified as vulnerable (unable to self-consent) and therefore will not be chosen as potential casework in the first instance. To try to reduce the possibility of parents/guardians feeling obliged to take part in the study, information sheets will be provided to parents/guardians explaining their right to not take part in the study or withdraw from the study at any time. Informed consent for the overall study will be gained from the child/young parents/guardians regardless of their direct involvement in the study.

In addition the appropriate ethical approval will be gained if health service professional are going to be invited to participate in the study and for all participants (including parents/guardians irrespective of their direct involvement in the study), informed consent will be established prior to the interview through a participant information sheet and consent form.

2. Methodology

A. Please outline the design and methodology of the project, including the methods of data collection and the methods of data analysis and the theoretical framework that informs it.

The research will involve an exploratory multiple case study design. There will be two case studies in total. Each case study will involve one EP and two caseworks. Each casework will involve the EP, the
key school professionals involved with the individual child/young person and possibly the child/young person’s parents/guardians. The total number of participants will be unclear until the caseworks have been identified. Two EPs in total will be involved in the study. Each EP will have two caseworks each and therefore there will be multiple data gathering for each EP. One-to-one semi-structured interviews will address all the research questions and positive case examples will be used. In accordance with Manchester University’s ethical guidance each interview will take no longer than last 1 hour to complete. The interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. Thematic analysis will be used to analyse the transcripts. Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phase model will be used as a guide. The themes will be identified in a theoretical and deductive analysis process, driven by and strongly linked to the research questions. The themes will be devised at a semantic and interpretive level.


B. A description of the research procedures/activities as they affect the study participant and any other parties involved.

Specialist SEBD EPs will be approached by formal letter asking for their interest in taking part in the study. Once the EPs have agreed to take part in the study they will be asked to identify two caseworks. The schools, professionals and parents/guardians identified will then be approached through the EP who will inform them of the research and ask for their participation. All participants will be given a two week period to consider whether they would like to take part in the study. Following ethical approval, information sheets and consent forms will be sent to and completed by all those involved in the study. Consent will also be sought from the Head Teacher of the schools for the participation of their school staff in the study. Parental/guardian consent will be gained regardless of their direct involvement in the study. Following the return of the signed consent forms, the researcher will contact the participants to arrange the interviews. Each one-to-one interview will be approximately 1 hour long (in accordance with Manchester University’s ethical guidance) and each EP will be interviewed twice (once for each casework) and each casework participant will be interviewed once.

The research should not cause a substantial amount of additional work for the participants. Correspondence between the researcher and the school staff will be informative but brief prior to the interviews. The interviews will be arranged during the most appropriate times for the participants but within normal working hours.

C. Please state your experience in conducting the research procedures/activities and provide supporting evidence.

In my current role as a Doctoral student I have attended seminars on research in Educational and Child Psychology and conducted a research study on how teachers and teaching assistants work together to support children with Special Educational Needs. For my undergraduate degree in Psychology in Education accredited by the British Psychological Society I completed all the necessary research related training (seminars and lectures) and the research projects (including a dissertation)
in order to be awarded the Bsc. For my undergraduate dissertation I conducted one to one semi-structured interviews with Educational Psychologists (EP), teachers and parents addressing expectations of the EP role.

In my working capacity I have conducted research for a local authority (within which I worked) that involved formulating and administering a questionnaire on the SEAL outcomes. I also conducted focus groups and analysed questionnaires (including the Myself as a Learner questionnaire and the Classroom Environment Measure) to measure pupil’s perceptions of their school environment.

Attach copies of any draft instrument / interview guide / screen prints, and so on.

3. Participants

Give the number of participants; sex; age group and location

Number of participants: the total number of participants is unclear until the characteristics of the caseworks emerge. The number of expected participants could be between 12 and 16. The intention is to involve 2 EPs each with two caseworks each. Each casework will involve the EP and the school professionals (possibly also the parents/guardians) who were involved with a child/young person. The school professionals may include the class teacher, the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), the Teaching Assistant (TA) and head teacher. Other professionals may include non-school actors who work within the LA such as behaviour support workers or professionals who work outside of the LA and within the health service. If health service professional are going to be invited to participate in the study then the appropriate ethical approval will be gained.

Sex: unknown

Age: Unknown but age 20+

Location: 4 X schools – two caseworks from 2 primary schools and two caseworks from 2 secondary schools.

B Will your project include participants from any of the following groups? (Tick as appropriate)

The project will involve teachers and TAs in their professional capacity and will not involve any of the below groups.

- [ ] Children under 16
- [ ] Adults with learning difficulties
- [ ] Adults with mental illness
- [ ] Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the researcher
- [ ] Prisoners
- [ ] Young Offenders
Other vulnerable groups (please detail)

C. If your project includes vulnerable populations please explain why it is necessary to include them in your study, including measures you will take to avoid coercion.

The project does not involve vulnerable populations however, parents/guardians involved in the study are categorized as ‘other vulnerable group’ in the Research Risk and Ethics Assessment, section C.2 because their engagement in the study will be affected by their need to comply with services and may experience the possible tendency to feel intimidated. Measures to be taken to avoid coercion from the EP involved in the case. The parents/guardians will be invited to participate in the study via the researcher and therefore a third party rather than the school or EP; the parents/guardians will be asked to participate in the study (and the research itself will be conducted) at the end of the EP involvement rather than during and the parents/guardians will be given two weeks to consider whether they would like to be involved in the study. The EPs will also positively ascertain that all caseworks do not involve parents/guardians who are classified as vulnerable (unable to self-consent) and therefore will not be chosen as potential casework in the first instance.

4. Recruitment (please append any advertisement you will use)

A. How will potential participants be:

   i) Identified

The case studies will be identified during the researcher’s placement at the designated Educational Psychology Service. The intention is to recruit positive casework examples of EP involvement. Recruitment of the specialist EPs will take the form of self-selection. Local Authorities will be approached and asked if they have an EP within their service who fits the selection criteria (see below) for the study. The EPs fitting the selection criteria will be approached by formal letter and asked for their interest in taking part in the study. Once the EPs have agreed to take part in the study they will be asked to identify two caseworks that fit the inclusion criteria (see below). The schools and professionals identified will then be approached through the EP who will inform them of the research and ask for their participation. All participants will be given a two week period to consider whether they would like to take part in the study.

Selection criteria for the Specialist SEBD EPs

For the purposes of this study a specialist SEBD EP will be defined as a Health Professions Council (HPC) registered EP who within their establishment (either LA or private practice) has developed an understanding and experience within the area of SEBD so as to be defined as a specialist. Definitions are inclusive of job title, self-identification and identification amongst their practitioner colleagues.

Selection criteria for the caseworks

The intention is to recruit positive casework examples of EP involvement. For each EP the selection criteria will include two separate mainstream schools (primary and/or secondary) who requested an EP involvement for a child/young person with SEBD and at the time of request the child/young person was at risk of permanent school exclusion. As a result of the EP involvement, positive
outcomes for the child/young person were achieved. The EP involvement will be complete at the
time of the participant recruitment and have occurred within the last six months. The EP will identify
and therefore justify the definitions of at risk of permanent exclusion of the children/young people
identified to take part in the study.

ii) Approached and Recruited

Recruitment of the specialist EPs will take the form of self-selection. Local Authorities will be
approached and asked if they have an EP within their service who fits the selection criteria (see
above) for the study. The EPs fitting the selection criteria (see above) will be approached by formal
letter and asked for their interest in taking part in the study. Once the EPs have agreed to take part
in the study they will be asked to identify two caseworks that fit the inclusion criteria (see above).
The schools, professionals and parents/guardians identified will then be approached through the EP
who will inform them of the research and ask for their participation. All participants will be given a
two week period to consider whether they would like to take part in the study.

B. How will your recruitment policy avoid putting any overt or covert pressure on the
individual to consent?

The recruitment avoids putting overt pressure on individuals by firstly recruiting through a self-
selection process and giving the participants a two week period to consider whether they would like
to take part in the study. The information sheets state that participants will have the right to
withdraw from the research at any point. After a school has expressed an interest in the research
the researcher will contact the participants/parents or guardians directly to forward the information
sheet and consent form. At all points during the research and during the interview the participants
will be reminded about the confidentiality of information and their right to withdraw participation.

C. How long will the participant have to decide whether to take part in the study?

The EPs will be given two weeks to consider whether they would like to take part in the study and
reply to the email and attached letter. Once the EPs have expressed an interest in the study and
highlighted potential caseworks – the school professional, Head Teachers, parents/guardians will be
sent the information sheets and will also have two weeks to express their interest in participating in
the study.

D. State any payment or any other incentive that is being made to any study participant.
Specify and state the level of payment to be made and/or the source of the funds/gift/free
service to be used and the justification for it.

No payment or incentive (other than being in the knowledge that through enabling the research
area to be explored they are developing research understanding) will be given for participating in
the research.

5. Risk and Safeguards

Please outline any adverse effects or risks for participants

A. What is the potential for adverse effects of a physical nature; risks or hazards, pain,
discomfort, distress, or inconvenience, to participants?
The participants may be inconvenienced in the organisation and conduction of the interviews. The exact time of the interviews is estimated at 1 hour per one-to-one interview (In accordance with Manchester University’s ethical guidance). The total number of interviews per school is unknown as the number of participants in unknown. If schools decide to arrange the interviews during teaching time, teachers may need to arrange for a cover supervisor to take their class during the interview.

B. Will any topics discussed (questionnaire, group discussion or individual interview) be sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting, or is it possible that criminal or other disclosures requiring action could take place during the project?

It is not expected that the interview questions and topics discussed in the interview will lead to any disclosures that would be classified as a psychological or social risk. The topics may be classified as a sensitive nature to the child/young person’s parents/guardians if they take part in the study but given that the intention is to find positive casework examples, it is expected that positive outcomes for the child/young person and therefore the parent/guardian have occurred which decreases the sensitivity of the topic.

C. What is the potential for adverse effects, risks or hazards, pain, discomfort, distress, or inconvenience, of a physical or psychological nature to you as the researcher?

There are no foreseeable adverse effects expected to impact or inconvenience me as the researcher.

D. What precautions have been taken to minimise or mitigate the risks identified above in A, B, C?

Positive case examples will be generated through the selection process. The participants and parents will receive an information sheet as a means of giving informed consent that will inform the participants of the nature of research topic, confidentiality and feedback. Participants will be briefed and debriefed during the interview and a contact email address will be given to the participants so they can contact the researcher if they have any questions regarding the research or interview.

To minimise the inconvenience of the interviews, the researcher will be flexible in the organisation of the interview times and plan them in advance with the individual participants. Interviews will however take place during working hours and due care will be taken to ensure that the research will not interrupt normal organisational procedures.

6. Consent

A. Detail how informed consent/assent will be obtained.

Written information sheets and consent forms will be given to participants and the parents/guardians of the child/young person.

B. If the participants are to be recruited from a vulnerable groups (3B) give details of the extra steps taken to assure their protection.

The project does not involve vulnerable populations however, parents/guardians involved in the study are categorized as ‘other vulnerable group’ in the Research Risk and Ethics Assessment, section C.2 because their engagement in the study will be affected by their need to comply with
services and may experience the possible tendency to feel intimidated. Measures to be taken to avoid coercion from the EP involved in the case. The parents/guardians will be invited to participate in the study via the researcher and therefore a third party rather than the school or EP; the parents/guardians will be asked to participate in the study (and the research itself will be conducted) at the end of the EP involvement rather than during and the parents/guardians will be given two weeks to consider whether they would like to be involved in the study. The EPs will also positively ascertain that all caseworks do not involve parents/guardians who are classified as vulnerable (unable to self-consent) and therefore will not be chosen as potential casework in the first instance.

### 7. Data Protection and confidentiality

**A. Will the pilot study use any of the following activities at any stage?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electronic transfer by email or computer networks</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, e-mails or telephone numbers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication of direct quotations from respondents</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of audio/visual recording devices</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage of personal data on any of the following:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual files</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home or other personal computers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University computers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X Private company computers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptop computers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data and results obtained from the research will only be used in the way(s) for which consent has been given.

**B. Please provide details on the measures you will employ to comply with the Data Protection Act and the University Data Protection Policy?**

All information regarding school names and participant information will only be stored as an anonymised document. Audio recordings will be stored on two encrypted data sticks. During the data gathering and analysis stage of the research, the data sticks will be kept securely at the researcher’s home in a lockable draw. Thereafter the data sticks will be kept securely at the University of Manchester by the custodian of the data for five years. For the duration of the analysis of the study the data will also be backed up on an encrypted external hard drive which will also be kept securely at the researcher’s home. After the study and when the data sticks have been given to the custodian of the data, the backed up copy of the research will be destroyed. Electronic transfer via email will only be used for the initial letter to EPs.

**C. What measures have been put in place to ensure confidentiality of personal data? Give details of whether any encryption or other anonymisation procedures have been used and at what stage?**

All identifiers including EP, school, the child, teachers, TA and authority names will be
anonymised in the transcripts and in the write up of the study. All names and addresses will be stored separately to the data and therefore not on the encrypted data sticks.

D. Where will the analysis of the data from the study take place and by whom will it be undertaken?

The analysis of the data will take place in a private study area by the researcher. No one else will have access to the data.

E. Who will have control of and act as the custodian for the data generated by the study?

The researcher’s supervisor will have control of and act as custodian for the data generated by the study.

F. Who will have access to the data generated by the study?

The researcher will have access to the data generated as might the student’s supervisor, in order to guide the student’s methodology but only when all links that could identify participants have been removed.

G. For how long will data from the study be stored?

During analysis and write up of the research the data will be kept in a secure drawer at the researcher’s home and accessed only by the researcher. After the research has been written up the data will be stored securely at the University of Manchester for 5 years.

8) Reporting Arrangements

A. Please confirm that any adverse event will be reported to the Committee

Any adverse events will be reported to my supervisor in the first instance who will then inform the committee.

B. How is it intended the results of the study will be reported and disseminated?

(Tick as appropriate)

X Peer reviewed scientific journals

X Internal report

X Conference presentation

X Thesis/dissertation

☐ Written feedback to research participants

☐ Presentation to participants or relevant community groups

☐ Other/none e.g. University Library
C. How will the results of research be made available to research participants and communities from which they are drawn?

The researcher will offer the participants to receive feedback on the research topic in an informal meeting/telephone call. The participants will be informed that the feedback will not discuss the information provided in their or their colleague’s interview. In the feedback the overall research study will be discussed in relation to previous research findings and placed within the wider context of research topic.

D. What arrangements are in place for monitoring and auditing the conduct of the research?

The student’s supervisor will monitor the research.

E. What are the criteria for electively stopping the research prematurely?

Any unforeseen harm that cannot be resolved.

9. Sponsorship

Provide information on whether the study is in receipt of any external funding. Confirm who will act as sponsor of the research.

No external funding has been received or is required.

10. Conflict of Interest

Have any conflicts of interest been identified in relation to this project?

No conflict of interest has been identified at this point in application. Should a conflict of interest become apparent as the study progresses then UREC will be informed.
Appendix X: Email of Ethical Approval of the Proposed Research Study

Dear Jennifer

Ref: PGR-77139330-A1

I am pleased to confirm that your ethics application has been approved by the School Research Integrity Committee (RIC) against a pre-approved UREC template.

If anything untoward happens during your research then please ensure you make your supervisor aware who can then raise it with the RIC on your behalf

Regards

XXX
PGT & Quality Assurance Administrator
School of Education

Tel: +44(0)161 275 3390
Working Week: Tues - Fri
http://www.education.manchester.ac.uk
http://www.education.manchester.ac.uk/intranet/
## Appendix Y: Time-line and Time Budget of the Thesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Completed by</th>
<th>Time Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Consult with university tutor and placement supervisor to consider areas to research, plan the research methodology and to clarify quires.</td>
<td>12\textsuperscript{th} December 2011</td>
<td>7 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conduct initial literature review and read literature.</td>
<td>12\textsuperscript{th} December 2011</td>
<td>2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete draft proposal to university tutor</td>
<td>6\textsuperscript{th} January 2012</td>
<td>4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Receive feedback on proposal</td>
<td>30\textsuperscript{th} January 2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete research proposal and submit the proposal to The School of Education, Manchester University</td>
<td>6\textsuperscript{th} February 2011</td>
<td>3 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compose and send letter to EPs to initiate interest in study and to identify possible cases</td>
<td>April 2012</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attend thesis panel</td>
<td>20\textsuperscript{th} February 2012</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Receive thesis panel feedback</td>
<td>21\textsuperscript{st} February 2012</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Complete ethical approval application</td>
<td>24\textsuperscript{th} February 2012</td>
<td>1 day</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ethical approval completed and given</td>
<td>April 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete information sheets and consent letters for EPs, parents/guardians and school staff to participate in the study</td>
<td>April 2012</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prepare interview</td>
<td>April 2012</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schedules and questionnaires</td>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td>Write up</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:1 one hour interviews with the participants</td>
<td>1:1 one hour interviews with the participants</td>
<td>Transcription of the interviews</td>
<td>Literature review</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2012 to May 2013</td>
<td>May 2013 to June 2013</td>
<td>June 2013 to July 2013</td>
<td>April 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 hours</td>
<td>14 days</td>
<td>14 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct the thematic analysis of the transcriptions</td>
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<td>Methodology</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>April 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Results</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>July 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion</td>
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<td>August 2013</td>
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<td>7 days week</td>
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<td>Final write up and submit electronic copy and two hard bound copies of the thesis to the university</td>
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<td>April 2013</td>
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<td>2 days</td>
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<td>Submit copies of the thesis to mock viva tutors</td>
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<td>Submit final copy of the thesis</td>
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