Creating an attachment theory and adoption psychology based training programme for parents and school staff

A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree of Doctor of Educational and Child Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities

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# Table of Contents

Table of Contents ................................................................. 2  
List of Figures and Tables ......................................................... 8  
Abstract ................................................................................. 9  
Declaration ........................................................................... 10  
Copyright Statement ............................................................... 11  
Acknowledgements .................................................................. 12  
Lists of Acronyms .................................................................. 13  

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION ......................................................... 14  
1.1 Introduction .................................................................... 14  
1.2 Local Context ................................................................ 14  
  1.2.1 Local Adoption Training and Support .............................. 15  
1.3 National Context ............................................................. 16  
1.4 Adoption ......................................................................... 17  
  1.4.1 International Picture of Adoption ................................. 19  
  1.4.2 National Picture of Adoption ........................................ 20  
  1.4.3 Local Picture of Adoption ............................................... 21  
  1.4.4 Governmental Policy .................................................... 21  
  1.4.5 Adoption Processes ...................................................... 22  
    1.4.5.1 Stage 1 ................................................................ 22  
    1.4.5.2 Stage 2 ................................................................ 22  
    1.4.5.3 Stage 3 ................................................................ 23  
    1.4.5.3 Stage 4 ................................................................ 23  

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW .............................................. 26  
2.1 Aim ................................................................................ 26  
2.2 Strategy for Literature Review .......................................... 27  
  2.2.1 Literature Strand One ................................................ 27  
  2.2.2 Literature Strand Two ................................................ 29  
2.3 Key Terms ....................................................................... 30  
2.4 Impact and Development of Attachment Theory .................. 31  
  2.4.1 Social Skills ............................................................... 32  
  2.4.2 Behaviour Development ............................................... 33
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1 Epistemological Position</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2 Axiological Position</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3 Ontological Position</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.3 Research Design</strong></td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 Considered Designs</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1.1 Action Research</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1.2 Case Study Design</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1.3 Various Other Designs</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.4 Rational for chosen design</strong></td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.1 Mixed Method Design</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.5 Data Gathering</strong></td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.1 Needs Assessment</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.2 Document and Content Analysis</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.3 Thematic Analysis</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.4 Questionnaire</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.5 Focus Group</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.6 Research Protocol</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.6.1 Phase 1</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.6.2 Phase 2</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.6.3 Phase 3</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.6 Sampling and participant recruitment</strong></td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.1 Steering Group Participants</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.2 Training Programme Participants and Inclusion Criteria</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.3 Evaluation Group Participants</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.7 Critique of Method</strong></td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.8 Timeline and Time Budget</strong></td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.9 Operational Risk Analysis</strong></td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.10 Ethics</strong></td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS</strong></td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Introduction</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Programme Preparation</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.1 Needs Assessment</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.1.1 Step 1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.2 Theme 2 Analysis ................................................................. 147
4.4.3 Theme 3 Analysis ................................................................. 148
4.4.4 Theme 4 Analysis ................................................................. 148
4.4.5 Theme 5 Analysis ................................................................. 149
4.4.6 Theme 6 Analysis ................................................................. 150

4.5 Research Question Two ................................................................. 150
  4.5.1 Qualitative Analysis ............................................................... 151
  4.5.2 Quantitative Analysis ............................................................... 154

4.6 Research Question Three ............................................................ 156
  4.6.1 Qualitative Analysis ............................................................... 157
  4.6.2 Quantitative Analysis ............................................................... 159

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION............................................................... 161
  5.1 Introduction ........................................................................... 161
  5.2 Overview of RQ1 .................................................................. 162
  5.3 Overview of RQ2 .................................................................. 165
  5.4 Overview of RQ3 .................................................................. 168
    5.4.1 The Role of the EP ......................................................... 169
  5.5 Coach Consult Method Evaluation ........................................... 171
    5.5.1 Evaluation Criteria ............................................................ 173
      5.5.1.1 Tier 1 Evaluation ......................................................... 174
      5.5.1.2 Tier 2 Evaluation ......................................................... 175
    5.5.2 Limitations of Evaluation .................................................. 176
    5.5.3 Impact of Evaluation ......................................................... 177
  5.6 Impact on Practice ................................................................. 178
    5.6.1 Impact on EP Practice ....................................................... 179
    5.6.2 EPS Comments ................................................................. 180
    5.6.3 Impact on Adoption Services .............................................. 181
    5.6.4 Linking Training Outcomes into Practice Development ......... 181
    5.6.5 Implications on Parents and School Staff Training ............... 182
  5.7 Limitations of the Research ..................................................... 182
    5.7.1 Documentary Analysis ....................................................... 182
    5.7.2 Mixed Methods ................................................................. 183
    5.7.3 Questionnaire Development .............................................. 183
List of Figures and Tables

Figures
Figure 3.1: Research Phases ............................................................... 77
Figure 4.1: Theme 1 ........................................................................ 110
Figure 4.2: Theme 2 ........................................................................ 115
Figure 4.3: Theme 3 ........................................................................ 121
Figure 4.4: Theme 4 ........................................................................ 125
Figure 4.5: Theme 5 ........................................................................ 129
Figure 4.6: Theme 6 ........................................................................ 134

Tables
Table 2.1: Attachment Styles and Identifying Behaviour ...................... 43
Table 3.1: Method and Data Analysis .................................................. 77
Table 3.2: Session topics and Estimated Timeframe ......................... 87
Table 3.3: Steering Group Participants .............................................. 89
Table 3.4: Training and Evaluation Programme Participants .............. 91
Table 3.5: Timeline and Time Budget .............................................. 94
Table 3.6: Operational Risk Analysis .............................................. 95
Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics for Parents, Teachers and Others ....... 144
Table 4.2: Summary of Frequency for Statistics ............................... 144
Table 4.3: Individual Frequency Statistics for Participants ................. 145
Abstract

**Background:** The Local Authority (LA) in which the researcher works has a high proportion of Adopted Children (5.5% of all Cared For Children), which is well above the national average. As part of placement duties the researcher began developing working relationships with the Adoption and Special Guardianship (ASG) Team, which supported children, schools and parents. ASG identified a lack of understanding among school staff and parents with regard to issues faced by adoptive children and support from the Educational Psychology service was requested. The focus of the research was to create a new training programme to be delivered in schools to members of staff and adoptive parents in partnership with the ASG team.

**Participants:** Twenty participants took part in both focus group and training programme. These were parents of adopted children, representatives from the children’s schools, an EP and ASG team members.

**Methods:** A mixed method design was conducted gathering qualitative and quantitative data for pre and post evaluation of the training programme. Information was gathered using a mixture of semi and unstructured structured focus groups and pre- and post evaluations through questionnaires which gathered ordinal scale data and personal statements. Content analysis and statistical analysis were used to analyse outcomes.

**Analysis/ Findings:** A range of themes was found in pre-programme creation generated from initial focus group data, focusing on experience sharing parental and school support, awareness of attachment issues and their impact on behaviour and learning and support to create strategies for children in schools and at home.

**Conclusion/ Implications:** The creation of the training programme was able to address the needs of parents and school staff and awareness of attachment issues was raised. The unique contribution of the EP was identified and discussed and possible implications for future research into this area were identified.
Declaration

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## List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASD</td>
<td>Autistic Spectrum Disorder</td>
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<td>ASG</td>
<td>Adoption and Special Guardianship</td>
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<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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<td>BPS</td>
<td>British Psychological Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFC</td>
<td>Cared For Child</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuous Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DfE</td>
<td>Department for Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>EP</td>
<td>Educational Psychologist</td>
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<td>EPS</td>
<td>Educational Psychology Service</td>
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<td>EY</td>
<td>Early Years</td>
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<td>LA</td>
<td>Local Authority</td>
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<td>LAC</td>
<td>Looked After Child</td>
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<td>PostQ</td>
<td>Post Questionnaire Questions (PostQ)</td>
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<td>PreQ</td>
<td>Pre Questionnaire Questions</td>
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<td>PTSD</td>
<td>Post Traumatic Stress Disorder</td>
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<td>RREA</td>
<td>Research Risk and Ethics Approval</td>
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<td>RQ</td>
<td>Research Question</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEN</td>
<td>Special Educational Needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>SENCo</td>
<td>Special Educational Needs Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SoE</td>
<td>School of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEP</td>
<td>Trainee Educational Psychologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Coalition governmental reforms in Education and SEN are beginning to change service delivery in schools and in other educational settings (DfE, 2012a; DfE, 2012b). The role of the Educational Psychologist (EP) is developing and evolving with these changes. There are similar changes and reforms in UK Adoption processes and procedures and how services for adoptive children their families access this support. The aim of the governmental reforms of the adoption process is to streamline services and shorten the time children spend within the Cared For system and identify potential and appropriate family settings.

In addition to clearer guidelines for supporting families and securing funding, the Coalition Government proposes to shorten the time of identifying appropriate families to fewer than six months. This process time includes assessment and training and placement of child. These changes are presented in An Action Plan for Adoption: Tackling the Delay (DfE, 2012b). These governmental changes have been met with criticisms from a variety of sources and LAs are struggling to meet the needs of the local population. This research aims to investigate the needs of the adoptive families and their schools and create support systems to meet these needs.

1.2 Local Context

The Educational Psychology Services (EPS) within the Local Authority (LA) covers a large area, stretching from the north of the borough bordering a large metropolitan city to smaller towns in the south. Each EP is assigned a cluster of primary schools and a number of feeder high schools. Operating within a cluster basis allows the EP to work in
a cooperative relationship with each school and offer appropriate and individualised interventions based on need. Each EP specialises in interest groups such as Special Educational Needs (SEN), Looked After Children (LAC), Early Years (EY) and Specialist Behaviour teams. As part of a Doctoral EP placement, the researcher has been tasked with developing working relationships with new and evolving teams in the borough, which have not worked directly in partnership. Through practice development facilitated by supervision, the Adoption and Special Guardianship (ASG) Team was identified as an emerging specialist team supporting adoptive children, their families and carers. The expanding role of the ASG team includes developing support structures for educational settings in the LA including primary, secondary and nursery settings.

1.2.1 Local Adoption Training and Support

The ASG team is based in the West of the borough and works closely with many of the schools for which the researcher is the named EP. Since 2006 the team has worked closely with approximately 20-30 new children each year who have struggled to settle in with their new families and new schools. This work is done primarily on a one-to-one basis or small group work with the children and their families. Support and training is then offered to schools and are developing strategies and protocols to work in partnership with schools and families.

A high level of schools in the LA (based on anecdotal information given by ASG staff) have begun to request attachment awareness training and creating support networks to meet the needs of their identified adoptive children. At the time of research there are no requirements for schools to enquire about the domestic status of the child, i.e. Cared For Child (CFC), Fostered or Adopted. At the time of research preparation (September-October 2012) the ASG team attended individual meetings with schools and parents and
report that the same issues are present in all of these meetings. This is not ideal as they are a small team with limited resources. Based on past evaluations of parenting support training conducted in 2006, the ASG team has identified a lack of psychological knowledge and has requested some support in this area from the EPS.

Although the ASG has been supporting parents to develop new skills to support the ongoing issues of their children, the ASG team are developing new methods of support for primary and secondary school by increasing knowledge and understanding of the needs of adopted children in education. Training offered to adoptive parents consists of the following services:

- Counselling, advice and information
- Support groups; adults, teenagers and children
- Assistance with contact where the child is still in contact with their birth family
- Assistance to help the adoptive relationship remain stable
- Assistance if the adoptive relationship is breaking down
- Therapeutic services
- Financial support
- Adoption Support - Groups and Events

LA Adoption and Special Guardianship Team (2013)

1.3 National Context

A recent national study (Selwyn, Wijedasa & Meakings, 2014) indicated that these relationship breakdowns are due to disruption caused by complex and negative behaviour due to childhood trauma and neglect (supported by anecdotal information by ASG team). Although these instances only effect 3.7% of national adoptions, these vary
between various LAs. Similarly, the capability of LAs to support this specific population effectively does vary. The identification and treatment of children with attachment issues continues to be difficult to identify and the report highlights that more research must be conducted in this area. These children have displayed difficult behaviours and the schools have struggled with dealing with and supporting these children. The report concludes that the training and support of parents is essential to the long-term care of adopted children. Unfortunately this report does not include relationships with childcare and academic environments and the needs of these settings.

The implication for the Coalition Government and LA is that they are responsible to support the child through their educational development and wellbeing. This responsibility ends when the child is placed in a permanent adoption placement and all LA responsibility ends, including funding and support through their academic development. Although Adoption falls under the term Cared For, this only applies to children who have not been placed in a permanent setting. The Cared For system can therefore be viewed as a spectrum of guardianship, which children can move along depending on their circumstances, age and individual needs.

1.4 Adoption

The majority of adoption cases at a national and local level in the UK are due to parents who have been assessed to be unable to provide adequate care to meet a child’s needs and the children have been removed for their own safety (DfE, 2012d). The majority of removal of children into social care services was identified due to severe abuse or neglect (62%, First Statistics, DfE 2012f), with family dysfunction (15%) being the next major factor leading to the safeguarding of child.
Once a child has been chosen for a placement with adoptive family, an Adoption Order is given. This is only applied for and given when parental responsibility has been transferred from the biological parents or social worker to the adoptive parents. This legal term denotes a placement as permanent with full parental responsibility and rights given to the adoptive family.

There is widespread research, which identifies a high prevalence of learning and developmental difficulties experienced by adoptive children (Silver, 1989). This includes research which shows adoptive children are at higher risk of mental health issue in care (Rushton, 2004) and children in post-adoption services more likely to receive counselling and support for mental health issues compared to non-adopted peers (Merritt & Festinger, 2013). Due to difficult early familial circumstances such as alcohol or physical disability of the biological parent(s), adopted children are more likely to experience difficulties developing alongside their non-adopted peers (Silver, 1989). These difficulties can manifest themselves as behavioural problems, global or specific delay or abilities to develop alongside peers in the classroom environment. When exposed to more than one risk factor, such as parental substances misuse pre and post natal, adopted children perform lower during cognitive assessments compared with non-adoptive peers exposed to similar substance misuse (Ornoy et al., 2010).

This would suggest that adoptive children are more at risk of mental health issues due to their developmental, physical and familial experiences compared to similar non-adopted peers. These developmental issues will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.
1.4.1 International Picture of Adoption

Adoptions on a global level do vary significantly. In a report to the United Nations (UN), the Department for Economic and Social Affairs stated that international adoption accounts for approximately half of all adoptions worldwide (UN Report, 2009), 60% of which are adoptions under the age of 5. The report ranks the UK as having the fourth highest levels of adoption, incorporating domestic and international adoption cases. While the majority of adoptions in the UK are identified as domestic adoption, other countries, such as France, Norway and Switzerland have experienced a fall in levels of domestic adoption and primary numbers of adoption come from international adoptions (UN Report, 2009). The report does not elaborate on the reasons for these trends, merely stating the developments of national adoption policies.

Dalen (2001) reports that the majority of Norwegian adoptions, approximately 600 per year, are identified as international adoptions. The main focus of the research is conducted on the educational, cognitive and psychological development of international and multi-ethnic adoption in Norway, as levels of same country and ethnic group adoption is at a low level in the country (Dalen, 2001). These cases are described as visible adopted children as Norway has a relatively low level of multicultural population. The article goes on to make a point that “invisible” adoption has further difficulties as educational settings and other agencies might not be aware of the adopted status of the child. It is therefore important to make these invisible adoptions more visible for school settings by creating a safe environment in which families feel that they can work together with the schools and to be understood.

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1 Dalen (2001) defines invisible adoptions as adoptions, which occurs within the same countries and/or ethnic group (p. 41). Dalen makes this distinction when there are no visible sights that the child is not the biologically related to the parents. The majority of adoptions in Scandinavia are international.
Rushton (2010) states “Slowly increasing knowledge of developmental patterns should at least assist in presenting more realistic expectations to carers, in estimating a likely timescale for difficulties to attenuate and in tailoring more effective placement preparation and support.” (p. 42). This has implications into the levels of research within adoption. Historically this research has been focused on language and educational inclusive practices (on an international level) rather than the behavioural implications this process can have, such as research investigating attachment issues among CFC and adopted children.

This is changing, especially in the UK as attachment research among adopted children is increasing. The Attachment in Adoption Research Project at the Anna Freud Centre is a continuing research project investigating this very area (Hodges, Steele, Kaniuk, Hillman & Asquith, 2009). The project used narrative story telling with young adopted children to assess Internal Working Models and levels of Secure, Insecure and Disorganised Attachment styles. The project strives to identify prevailing behavioural and emotional traits among the children in relation to their current relationships with adopted parents. Further discussions on the uses of tools and models for attachment evaluation will be presented later in this chapter.

1.4.2 National Picture of Adoption

Three thousand and fifty children were adopted in the UK in 2011. The British Association for Adoption and Fostering (2011) reported that 2% of the children adopted were under the age of one year old while 71% were aged one to four and 24% five to nine. DfE (2012f) report that children in local authority care has risen by 2% from 65,520 children in 2011 to 76,050 in 2012 (Burns, 2012). This rise in adoption is attributed to the development of adoption policies and the further development of Safeguarding Policies.
1.4.3 Local Picture of Adoption

The LA has approximately 402 children registered as CFC and 22 (5.5%) of these are identified as adopted (LA, 2013). The report identified 16 children being aged 0 – 2 years old and 6 children as 5 – 10 years old. This is well above the national average and a contributing factor in the development of this research.

At the time of this research there were no requirements for schools to be informed regarding the child’s status as adopted. This would only be shared if the families share this with the school. ASG team members have expressed a concern that many children are not known to the local authority and are only involved when the child is involved in an incident.

1.4.4 Governmental Policy

The Coalition Government has developed reforms and new measures to identify more potential adopter families and to shorten the adoption process to make it more productive. In An Action Plan For Adoption: Tackling the Delay, the DfE (2012b) proposes actions to reduced delayed adoptions, shorter placement waiting for children, fast tracking for established adopter families and “radically speed up the adopter assessment process so that two months are spent in training and information gathering (a pre-qualification course) followed by four months of full assessment” (p. 4).

This does, however, not address the suitability of adoptive parents or take into account the possible support and training for adoptive parents. At the time of research there are no statutory guidance on the level of support given to adoptive parents and it is the responsibility of the LA to offer this support. This includes continued support in the home; raising parental skills and knowledge of the child’s potential issues. As there are a
variety of approaches and no uniformity with regard to approach for support, it is not possible to discuss all approaches here. Local initiatives are discussed in 2.5.5.2.

1.4.5 Adoption Processes

An Action Plan for Adoption (DfE, 2012b) aimed to develop a clear and better understanding of the adoption process and make this more accessible for potential adopter parents. The following is surmises the adoption process adapted from Government Guidelines for Adoption (DfE website for Adoption, July 2013).

1.4.5.1 Stage 1

For a child to be adopted in the UK, he/she must be under the age of 18, not be married or in a civil partnership. Both parents must consent to the adoption unless they are found to be unable to give consent (due to mental illness or if the child is at risk under the supervision of the birth parent). The adopted parent(s) must be over 21 years old and must undergo a vetting procedure to establish suitability. This is done through an adoption agency operating within LA jurisdiction.

1.4.5.2 Stage 2

The basic adoption process begins with prospective parents contacting adoption agencies. The adoption procedure can take up to eight months\(^2\) if adopter parents are found to be suitable. New Coalition Government proposals aim to reduce this to six months. Assessments of the home and parents and a thorough investigation into the family takes place, including police checks. A social worker sends an assessment report to

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\(^2\) In An Action Plan for Adoption: Tackling the Delay (DfE, 2012b), the Coalition Government proposes to shorten this time to under 6 months, including assessment and training and placement of child.
an independent adoption panel. This is a group of people who are experienced in adoption and will make any further recommendations to the adoption agency based on initial family assessment.

1.4.5.3 Stage 3
Once this procedure takes place and the parent(s) are found suitable, the process of finding a child will begin. This can be initiated through adoption agencies in the UK or if the parents prefer an overseas child, procedures can be followed through the guidance of specialist adoption agencies. These adoptions must adhere strictly to adoption policy of the individual country. This form of adoption is conducted through negotiation with the various governmental departments responsible for children’s wellbeing and guardianship. Then this has been agreed, procedures for the registration of the adoption prior to the child coming to the UK comes into effect. This incurs some legal costs for the adoptive parents.

1.4.5.4 Stage 4
Once parent(s) and child have been identified to be suitable and after the child has lived with the adoptive parents for a period of 10 weeks, an adoption court order is applied for through the legal courts. This court order gives the adoptive parents full parental responsibility for the child.

The main argument for the Coalition Government proposals to radically change the adoption procedure is due to the delay in accessing and identifying potential suitable adoptive families. This delay can therefore potentially cause further levels of distress and harm for child and adoptive parents. The aim of the proposals is to reduce the waiting time for appropriate adopter parents to be identified, streamline the time for parents in
assessment and training and get children into these homes more efficiently and quickly. Critics state that this can create more problems and is unrealistic and report that this will cause deficits in quality service delivery (“Peers rubbish Michael Gove claim over race barrier to adoption”, 2012; Burns, 2012). In addition this will also create further challenges to find families with appropriate attributes, knowledge and skills to cope with the many issues of adopted children of all ages while at the same time provide appropriate levels of safeguarding for children (Munroe, Hollingsworth, Meetoo and Simon, 2013).

When any educational reform is put into effect, there are consequences to workload, quality of service and ability to meet targets. Day (2002) states that common to all major governmental reform, specifically within Education, that it does result in increased workloads, pays little attention to the identities of those involved (such as teachers) and proposes major challenges to already embedded practices. Although at times necessary, there are always be difficulties in overcoming barriers and these will be met with resistance. Although Day (2002) does focus attention on Educational reform, it is important to be aware that this can be true to any reform, especially radical reform such as proposed by Tackling the Delay (DfE, 2012b) as this will have a massive impact not only on service procedure but more importantly on service provision. Day (2009) reported that through reforms proposed within Education of the same year, an “acknowledgement of the limitations of top-down reform could be observed” (page 148). It can be argued that this has been continued with Coalition Governmental reforms to create autonomous schools with the freedom to create a personalised curriculum for individual children (DfE, 2012a).
The purpose of the research is to create, develop and evaluate a training programme to meet the needs of parents and schools by raising awareness of the issues experienced by adopted and cared for children. The aim is to challenge preconceptions of adopted children and their issues and begin the process of building awareness in the participating schools. This training package will then be offered to a wider number of schools to meet the training requirements of the staff and local adoptive parents attached to those schools who have not attended attachment theory training previously.
Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Aim

The aim of the literature review is to present the subjects relevant to the thesis development while providing a narrative to bring the subjects together and identify the gaps in the local authority provision. The Coalition Government has put in place radical Educational reforms and aims to further develop the adoption process in the United Kingdom (UK) by making the process more transparent and to shorten waiting times to identify potential adoptive parents with suitable adoptive children (DfE, 2013). This has started a LA process of developing new strategies for parental, educational and child support and service delivery.

At the time of this research it is the role of the LA to identify potential and suitable adoptive families for children but there is no uniform model of support post adoption. The following research aims to present the issues experienced by adoptive child and presents a snapshot of how the gaps in provision were addressed and developed. The unique contribution of the EP will be considered and creation of a training programme will be evaluated against existing programmes supported by EP involvement.

The chapter will present a review of the literature and the key terms used to develop an understanding of the research area. The research strategy will be presented, taking into account two strands of literature review. The first will focus on investigating and presenting attachment and the developmental effects experienced by adopted children. A second strand of literature review will focus on investigating training models for the support of parents and school staff with regard to EP support and facilitation. Search terms for both literature strands will be discussed and final evaluation tools for potential
training models will be presented and critically evaluated. In order to give a view of the work and support of EP’s contribution, the importance of the EP as a group facilitator will be discussed and critically evaluated. This chapter will also consider local training offers and support given to parents and educational staff.

Finally the chapter concludes with a summery of the LA adoption statistics and their needs, the development of the research, the gap in the research, research questions and the expected unique contribution this research will have on the role of the EP.

2.2 Strategy for Literature Review

The methods for gathering literature and information for the research identified and developed through supervision sessions and using the University of Manchester’s library electronic resource systems. The literature review was developed to incorporate two strands of research areas Adoption, Attachment Theory and Interventions and Adoption training and parent and teacher training including EP contributions. This enabled the researcher to develop an understanding of Attachment Theory and its relevance in education and what training and support was available for parents and school staff. Furthermore this research strand would look at the potential contributions of the EP to attachment and adoption training for parents and school staff.

2.2.1 Literature Review Strand One

The first literature review started with a generic search of peer-review database sites under the sections of Psychological Sciences and Education using the search terms Adoption and Attachment Theory and Interventions. Databases PSYCHINFO, SAGE, ERIC, WILEY LIBRARY and SCIENCE DIRECT were explored using the search terms above. Initial searches were limited to English language Journals and publications of articles over the
last twenty years were included. Where historical cases and articles were discussed, such as Bowlby (1973), the search parameters were extended beyond initial time ranges to include specific article for historical development. This was included to understand the development and evolution of research in this area.

Using the same databases, a more thorough investigation was conducted within clearer and more specific search parameters. Articles were limited to publication within five years of search dates and abstracts were used as considerations to further support the effectiveness of the search. Keywords such as Attachment, Adoption, Neurobiology and Support were further used to limit search items for specific sections of the literature review. Google Scholar was used to generate a wider article search, which did include some none-peer reviewed articles and publications. This search did include PowerPoint presentations from colleagues from other universities and EP services, which informed the overall understanding of the literature. The wide range of information and research provided rich data sources for the development of understanding of attachment theory and the effects of adoption on the social, emotional and behavioural development of children.

Searches of LA and EP Services were considered to investigate any potential training and support for schools or other professional organisation, using Attachment and Adoption as key word searches. This provided an overview of current support packages available to professionals supported by EP involvement and how other organisations have developed training strategies and opportunities to support parents and professionals. This search provided the researcher with information regarding breath of services between various LA services and methods of support. It became clear that there is very little uniformity of support given to adoptive families between LAs. This includes services and support to
meet the needs of adoptive families through various services both private, voluntary and through the LA itself.

A search through media outlets such as the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) and the Guardian was also utilised to generate current and up-to-date information to understand public and private understanding and opinion on the subjects of adoption and government development in the area. Policies and procedures on a national and local level for adoption were developed through using the Department for Education (DfE) website, providing current and past legislation and statistical figures. Both archived and current legislation was considered to understand development of policies and proposed amendments to procedures. To gather information of the issues and procedures facing adopted children and their families, the Adoption and Fostering Association website was used. This provided a comprehensive understanding of the training provided to caregivers and information regarding the issues faced by adopted children.

2.2.2 Literature Review Strand Two

A second literature review for identifying training programmes for parent and school staff was conducted using similar methods as the initial literature review. This included investigating the effectiveness of EP involvement and potential unique contribution of the EP. Search terms were developed through supervision and shared some similarities to the overall search strategy. This strand of investigation and review focused on potential evaluation models for the design of the study with regard to attachment and adoption. The literature review started with a generic search on peer-review database sites under the sections of Psychological Sciences and Education using the search terms Adoption, Training and Parental and Teacher Training. As in previous literature review strand, databases PSYCHINFO, SAGE, ERIC, WILEY LIBRARY and SCIENCE DIRECT
were explored using the search terms above. Initial searches were limited to English language journals and publications of articles over the last 10 years were included. This moved the initial search from 370 results. The majority of the training programmes reviewed or evaluated focused on the development of specific parental programmes for Adopting and Fostering.

*Educational Psychologist* was also used in combination with the above as a search term to investigate the possible contributions of EP work into this area of specialism. This, however, yielded no useable literature. This creates an issue as the focus of research investigates the usefulness of a training programme and evaluating the impact of EP involvement in Parent and School Staff training.

Using the DfE website and searching for parental support training yielded fifty one results, all focusing on various issues and needs to support and develop parenting skills. Using *Adoption* as a filter showed one result (Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care – Prevention, see 2.7.1), however EP, EPS and teaching staff are not mentioned as part of the intervention (Fisher, Kim & Pears, 2009).

2.3 Key Terms

Through literature searches, both peer review and through media and Governmental departments, it was clear that *Cared For Children* (CFC) and *Looked After Children* (LAC) were used interchangeably to identify and categories vulnerable children within the Safeguarding process. The DfE (2012a) defines these children as:

- Those children who are in care through a care order under section 31 of the Children Act 1989.
- Those accommodated on a voluntary basis through an agreement with their
parents under section 20 of that Act, or agreement with of the child if they are over 16.

- Children placed away from home under an emergency protection order.
- Children on police protection/remand/detention (section 21 of the Children Act).

The *Cared For Children* and *Looked After Children* terms are used interchangeably throughout the literature. Both refer to a group of children who have entered a safeguarding process and been removed from their biological families and placed in foster care or Special Guardianships (defined later in this chapter). For the purposes of this research the term Cared For Children or Cared For Child (CFC) will be adopted throughout.

The DfE (2012f) states that 73% of CFC fall under the umbrella term Fostered; 10% reside in children’s homes while 17% reside in a variety of settings including Special Guardianships or Residential Schools. The White Paper on The Importance of Teaching (DfE, 2010) states that “the strategic role of LAs, the key roles of supporting vulnerable children, which includes, specifically, looked after children” (p. 6, para. 5.30) and that “the LAs broader role in relation to children’s services and their continuing to act as the corporate parent for looked after children with a key role in improving educational attainment” (p. 65, para. 5.41).

**2.4 Impact and Development of Attachment Theory**

The prevalence of negative relationships will have a negative effect on the development of the child’s skills to form and maintain relationships. The development of insecure and disorganised attachment styles can be argued to be a result of ineffective parenting styles and negative arousal cycles in early development. In extreme cases of neglect, children
who have experienced severe and prolonged privation are associated with negative attachment styles (Rutter, Kreppner & O'Conner, 2001). Brodzinsky and Schechter (1993) suggested that adopted children are more vulnerable to a host of psychological and school-related problems compared to their non-adopted peers. Some studies have shown a correlation between age at adoption and the severity and prevalence of mental health issues (Verhulst, Althaus, Verluisden & Bierman, 1990).

2.4.1 Social Skills

Early childhood development is paramount to the development of resiliency and the ability to be flexible in thinking and adapt to new and possibly difficult situations. Fahlberg (2012) identifies four areas in which children who experience inadequate developmental factors (meeting the emotional and physical needs of the child) related to attachment in early childhood might become stuck. These can be understood as:

- Developmental delays in physical, cognitive, and psychological ability.
- The child may have developed abnormal (or maladaptive) patterns of behaviour.
- Unresolved separation issues may cause the child to become stuck.
- Misperceptions, either on an organic or psychological basis, can be very potent in terms of hindering the usual progression of growth and change.

The potential for becoming stuck is therefore linked to the biological and experiential factors of the child’s development, which will directly affect the child’s ability to function and adapt to new situations.

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3 Fahlberg understood the term stuck as a fixation (page 289) and as an inability to move on within stages of physical, emotional and psychological development.
2.4.2 Behaviour Development

Statistics released by the DfE (2012) report that 62% of UK children who were identified as being CFC experienced severe neglect and abuse, with a reported increase of 2% per year since 2008. In a survey of 6200 children and families in the United States it was found that over 50% of these children showed signs of emotional and behavioural problems, with even higher rates among children who were later placed into out-of-home care (Burns et al., 2004). International figures for mental health and behaviour problems for children in the Cared For system does vary (Wichstrøm and Berg-Nielsen, 2011) these can be argued to be dependent on cultural factor. The probability of a child being adopted or being in the Cared For system and experiencing difficulties with behaviour will therefore be high.

2.4.3 Emotional Development

Dalen (2001) argues that a child adopted at a young age (>1 year old) will have a higher level of success to develop a positive attachment style and have better opportunities for healthy development. Other studies, however, have shown that the age of adoption does not play a crucial role in the child’s development (Cederblad and Höök, 1999). There is therefore a largely differing opinion as to what extent early adoption and attachment and whose mental health difficulties will have on the infant. There is also emerging evidence on age of placement of adopted and fostered children in relation to the risk of insecure attachment (van den Dries, Juffer, van IJzendoorn and Bakermans-Kranenburg 2009). The understanding of these issues is therefore paramount to be able to meet the possible needs of the children in adopted and fostered care.

Children who experience difficulties early on will therefore be affected by these experiences. Children such as cared for or adopted children will have experiences that
could limit their ability to develop and become stuck emotionally. The danger for children with attachment issues becoming stuck is that it can lead to further mental health issues due to the unique situations adopted children can experience. Ford, Vostanis, Meltzer and Goodman (2007) found that the prevalence for disorders for children in care in the UK are five times greater than in non-disadvantaged private households. This is backed up by the prevalence of attachment, attention and behavioural difficulties.

These difficulties are made more complex in cases where children have been removed from their homes and families and have now been placed with new families. The ASG report, however, that the borough has a high level of adoptions where the relationships between home and school break down due to behaviour difficulties and misunderstandings of communication between family and academic settings. Little research has been presented which looks at the levels of relationship breakdown between family and home. The researcher could not find adequate reports, which present these levels at a national or local level.

Selwyn, Wijedasa and Meakings (2014) report national levels of relationship breakdown of placement relationships (between adopted child and parents) to be at 3.7%. The majority of these cases involve adoptive teenagers and violence directed towards adoptive parents. The report goes on to say that many parents feel underprepared to deal with their children’s emotional and behavioural problems and that support is not given when needed. It can be argued that many of the same issues could exist when relationships between home and school break down due to the emotional behavioural difficulties of adopted children in schools and the school’s misunderstanding and inexperience of the child’s issues due to early trauma and adoption.
2.4.4 Education

As previously stated in this chapter Silver (1989) states that there is a higher prevalence of learning and developmental difficulties experienced by adoptive children. This assertion was supported further by Raleigh and Kao (2013), who state that adopted children are more likely to have special education needs and “scoring lower than their biological peers” (p. 143). These issues can be due to underdevelopment of biological factors, as an adopted child might not have experienced the same nurturing as many of their peers (Prior and Glazer, 2006). This has implications on the ability of adopted children to function in a classroom environment and be able to function alongside peers of similar age and ability.

In *Inside I’m Hurting* (Bomber, 2007) discusses the issues, thoughts and feelings experienced by children in adopted services and focuses on the ability of those children to develop attachment issues and what might stand in the way of developing healthy attachment. The work discusses and presents practical strategies for schools to support children with attachment difficulties, with specific focus on CFC and adopted children. The main argument of this book is that there is a social myth that adoptive children are at the end of their journey and that as long as they placed in secure and a calm, predictable environment their issues or difficulties will diminish.

The work identifies that the earlier the trauma and/or loss the more extensive the consequences on the child’s development. There is often developmental vulnerability as a result. Walker and McGlone (2013) underline the importance of physical contact in the development of not only emotional wellbeing but also the ability to develop social skills and awareness. This will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.
2.4.5 Support and Training offers

In the follow up work *What about Me?* (Bomber, 2011) continues to develop strategies to support inclusive practices for schools. These strategies summarise the emotional, social and biological development for Cared for Children. Central to the learning and strategies presented in the book is making staff aware of the protective strategies already developed among CFC or adopted child. Cared For Children have a higher probability to have a disrupted school experience (DCSF, 2009). Many of these pupils have developed rigid systems for self – protection and their defences and alarm systems will have served a survival purpose in another context but can interfere with their learning capacity within the school context.

The main learning points for these works can be summarised by supporting staff to develop positive, safe and supportive relationships. These can be powerful vehicles towards adaption and recovery; that every relationship has the capacity to either confirm or challenge all that has gone on before. Bomber (2011) argues for a system based on early intervention aimed at the adopted child or Cared For Child’s needs. The interventions proposed are to move children from insecure and disorganised attachment by providing safe and continual access to supportive and empathic sources, being either in the school environment or at home. There is a need to develop strategies, understanding and knowledge to support children in the classroom. This support and training must therefore be individualised and specific for the child while at the same time support the home and school environments.

2.4.5.1 Adoption Training Process

Potential adopters undergo a period of assessment such as interviews, background checks and inspections of the home to ensure suitability as adopter parents. During this
period, potential adopters are required to attend adoption awareness training and suitability assessment. Prior to attending the sessions, parents are invited to attend preparation groups to explore challenges and issues experienced by other adopter parents. All post training and assessments are conducted locally through the support of social workers, adoption teams and agencies (First4Adoption, 2013). The implication is that not all adoptive parents have access to the same level of training and support arrangements. Support post adoption is also varied and in some LAs there is no support given (Selwyn et al., 2014).

2.4.5.2 Adoption Training for Parents

At the time of this research, there is no specific training programme developed for the support and training of adoptive families beyond what is available locally in individual LAs (DfE, 2012d, Selwyn et al. 2014). The LA in which this research was conducted has a variety of support opportunities offered to new adoptive parents (see 1.2.1 adoption support and training in the LA where this research is conducted,

Palacios and Brodzinsky (2010) state that there is a need for further and more effective research exploring the effectiveness and appropriateness of preparation and education programmes for adopter parents, both pre- and post-adoption. Although there are developments in case study design within adoption research, little empirical research is reported in the article.

There is still little UK research being conducted even with the development of the Coalition Government’s plans for adoption reform (DfE, 2012a; DfE, 2012b) and there were a limited number of studies, which have looked at how these reforms can impact on the placement family and educational setting. Selwyn et al. (2014) have studied the effects
of disruption in the home due to unsupported families. The research focused on the experience of 70 adoptive parents through survey and interview, investigating the child’s background, parental experiences of placement and support and the outcomes of the adopted children. Among it’s finding the report highlighted the inadequate and varied support given to parents pre- and post adoption.

The reported concluded that parental support and services needed to be developed and expanded to increase the likelihood of a positive placement experience for the child and family. It can therefore be argued that the streamlining of adoption services, as proposed by Governmental reform, will cause further issues if families are not given adequate and appropriate training and support pre and post adoption. This claim can be further extended to include schools and other educational settings as Tackling the Delay (DfE, 2012a) does not expand on the level at which support and training should be delivered, merely developing a streamlined and shortened adoption identification process.

2.4.5.3 Adoption Training for School Staff

At the time of this research there is no national or local focus on developing schools staff’s understanding of adoption issues with regard to academic, social, emotional or behavioural development. This also included the issues experienced when disruption or relationship breakdowns occur between the family and home due to behavioural and emotion issues of children due to adoption. LA adoption teams will support local schools if a child is known to the service (Adoption and Special Guardianship Team, 2013). As discussed previously this is support is not uniformed and does vary across LAs. Although the White School Paper on the Importance of Teaching (2010) does specify that teachers must support vulnerable pupils, including CFC (p. 62), no specific training is offered as support and adoption as an area for concern is not mentioned.
2.5 Issues faced by Adopted Children

As previously mentioned Adopted Children are at higher risk of mental health and behavioural issues due to high levels of neglect and abuse (DfE, 2012c). As discussed above, disruption and interruption of consistent caregiving will have an effect on a child's ability to form positive relationships and develop social and emotional skills and their ability to develop coping skills. Infants instinctively attach to their carers (Prior & Glazer, 2006). Consequently, development of relationships or attachments both positive and negative serves a biological function of promoting protection and survival and as stated by Rutter, Kreppner & O’Conner (2001), children who have experienced negative caregiving are more likely to develop negative attachment styles.

2.6 Attachment Theory

Attachment theory is identified as central to the support and understanding and it has been argued to be one of the most important theories linked to difficulties in adoption services (ASG team opinion). British psychiatrist Bowlby (1973) hypothesised that the early relationship with the primary care giver had major implications for future life. This lead to the development of the Internal Working Models (IWM) that occur from the early interactions and relationship building between infant and caregiver (Bowlby, 1973). A negative relationship would therefore create the foundation for future negative relationships. As previously discussed, this development is based on a need for safety, security and protection. This need is paramount in infancy and childhood when the developing individual is immature and vulnerable (Prior & Glazer, 2006). A child’s ability to develop skills in social and emotional development would be influenced throughout life. Parental rejection or emotional detachment has been found to have strong links with childhood depression (McLeod, Weisz and Wood, 2007).
Bowlby developed his theories through three works known as the “Attachment and Loss” – trilogy (Attachment and Loss, Volume 1 Attachment, 1969, Volume 2 Separation: Anxiety and Anger, 1973 and Retrospective and Prospective, 1982). Central to Bowlby’s (1973) attachment theory was the view that attachment behaviour can be understood as “a special class of behaviour with its own dynamics distinct from the behaviour and dynamics of either feeding or sex, the two sources of human motivation long regarded as the most fundamental.” (p. 668).

Therefore the infant need to satisfy themselves is not limited to the need to satisfy hunger or other primary needs, but an innate human need for security, trust and regulation of social and emotional needs. This need can therefore be understood as an instinct, which exists in all human beings.

Schaffer (1996) described the development of attachment could be understood as four phases present in the first 24 months of a child’s life. Phase 1 could be seen as the pre-attachment phase (birth to 2 months) consisting of indiscriminate behaviour based on social interaction with primary care giver. Phase 2 (attachment-in-the-making, 2 – 7 months) begins with the infant beginning to recognise faces. The identity of the primary caregiver has begun to develop and leads to Phase 3 (7 – 24 months) being described as straightforward attachment categories as infant displaying separation anxiety and shyness among others. Phase 4 is categorised as a partnership with caregiver and infant begins to take a more active role in setting personal goals with caregiver as the safe and secure base (24 months and onwards).

It can be argued that a negative relationship would therefore be likely to create the foundation for future negative relationships. A child’s ability to develop skills in social
and emotional development would be influenced throughout life. Lifelong research within attachment is continuing within the international community. A longitudinal study *Trygg i Trondheim* (Safe in Trondheim) conducted in Norway by The Norwegian Institute of Science and Technology, investigates the development of attachment styles and mental health issues. Wichstrøm & Berg-Nielsen (2011) continue to develop and conduct a follow-up study of 1000 four-year-old children since 2006 and are investigating the impact of childhood mental health and psychiatric difficulties in early childhood and how these will affect the child’s developing attachment styles. The early results of the study indicate that approximately 7.1% of participants can be classified as having a mental health issue compared with USA data suggesting 14-24%. These issues include ADHD, complex behavioural difficulties, anxiety, and depression. The study also suggests that posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), manic depression and Asperger’s Syndrome as extremely rare in this age group. The on-going research suggests early intervention and cooperation of parents are key to the successful support of children with negative attachment issues.

2.6.1 Neurobiology of Attachment

There is a growing link between the understanding of Attachment Theory and Neurobiology (McDonald, Berlow & Thomas, 2013). The development of brain in pre-birth infants has a direct link to the levels of cortisol hormones and its potential toxic effect on brain development due to prolonged exposure. Research shows that there is a strong correlation between maternal and foetal cortisol levels associated with supportive or non-supporting caregiving environments (Bakermans-Kranenburg & van Ijzendoorn, 2011). Perry (1997) reported that children experiencing negative and abusive relationships pre- and post-birth showed a 20-30% reduction in both cortex and limbic system development compared with children experiencing nurturing caregiving.
Bracha, Ralston, Matsukawa, Williams and Bracha (2004) stated that any child exposed to prolonged and highly stressful environments are exposed to prolonged and potentially damaging levels of cortisol. This leads to possible constant states of hyper arousal such as fight or flight or may lead to dissociative responses such as freeze and surrender. The implications of the heightened arousal and stress experienced by children in negative or abusive environments will have a biological and physical impact on their ability to process information, develop coping, communication skills and will influence their ability to develop understanding of relationships.

2.6.2 Attachment Styles

Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters and Wall (1978) identified that attachment would be classified into the following three categories and is adapted into the table below. A fourth category (Disorganised) was identified and added by Main and Solomon (1990). These attachment styles can be defined by distinct set of experiences of caregiving and manifested behaviour. Although these can be investigated through the application of various observational tools (see 2.6.3), each attachment style can be summarised by the following table (continued overleaf).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Care Giving</th>
<th>Manifested Behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>Primary caregiver is consistent and available and meets the needs of the child. Child begins to learn that all needs will be met when needed</td>
<td>The child shows good signs of being well adjusted and balanced. The child is more able to venture away from care giver and able to form positive relationships with others as foundation and base is secure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insecure-Avoidant</td>
<td>Primary caregiver is consistently unavailable and do not meet the needs of the child. Child begins to learn that their needs are not met</td>
<td>More interested in the environment than relationships. The child will actively avoid contact and eye contact with people including caregiver and peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insecure-Ambivalent</td>
<td>The primary caregiver is inconsistently available and the child will be focused on attempting to get their needs met</td>
<td>Preoccupied with, but unsatisfied by relationships as they do not have the skills to develop positive relationships. They desire closeness but seem to be unable to settle and are constantly moving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorganised</td>
<td>Caregiving style is inconsistent and unavailable to meet the child’s needs.</td>
<td>The child is unable to make sense of the relationships around them and can be classified as experiencing internal chaos.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ainsworth et al. (1978) hypothesised that approximately 50-70% of the population develop a Secure Attachment while 30+% experience and develop an Insecure Attachment. This was broken down further to include Avoidant would be experienced by 20-30% of the Insecure Negative Attachment, Ambivalent could effect <10% and Disorganised Attachment by approximately <15%. The difficulty with identifying the exact number is due to Ainsworth’s research being conducted among middle-class American families (Parke, 1999). The figures must therefore be viewed with some bias. There is some research that these figures are too small or have changed significantly in the international community. In Chile 52% of adopted adolescents show a sample of
insecure-avoidant attachment (Escobar and Santelices, 2013). It is difficult to attain universal numbers for these attachment styles due to the individual cases and the experiences of children in varying cultural settings (UN Report, 2009). Therefore all levels for attachment styles must be viewed individually and with some level of scepticism.

The development of a secure or insecure attachment is perpetuated by the arousal and relaxation cycles (Fahlberg, 2012). This cycle is described as an infants needs being communicated by arousal and these being met by a primary caregiver leading to security, relaxation and the development of trust (Positive Arousal Cycle). When these needs and arousal are not met or rejected the infant will develop insecurity, continue to experience hyper-arousal and dissociation (Negative Arousal Cycle). The need for self-regulation is paramount to be able to function in a multifaceted and complex society. The ability to self-soothe and integrate emotional complexity and social awareness is expected and necessary to function in society (Fahlberg, 2012). It is therefore through the early relationship with primary caregiver that the child is able to develop these skills through interaction and closeness.

The interaction of caregiver and infant and the development of emotional self-regulation and biological and cognitive development are known as interactive synchrony. This interaction plays a vital role in the development of social interaction and infant emotional communication (Tronick, 1989). Therefore the caregiver becomes the guide for emotional awareness and expression.

Feldman (2007) highlighted the impact of early experiences on lifelong learning and resilience and concluded that “early experience [between infant and caregiver] is critical for the
development of symbol use, empathy, emotional resonance, and self-regulation and lays the foundation for the child’s later capacity for intimacy throughout life.” (p. 346)

It can be argued that these early experiences and the ability of the caregiver to support and appropriately meet the needs of the child, is fundamental to the child’s ability to function and develop. This is therefore true not only in the classroom but also for lifelong learning.

2.6.3 Attachment Assessment

The following is a short summary of some of the tools used to assess a child’s attachment style and to identify the internal working model of a child’s attachment or relationship with caregivers and other peers. The interventions are all based on classical models of attachment and intend to investigate the Internal Working Model of the infant, child and adult.

2.6.3.1 Strange Situations (Ainsworth, Blehar, Water & Wall, 1978)

This was designed and carried out in clinical situations with children 12 – 18 months old to identify the behaviour of being separated from the mother, observing levels of distress and reunited after a short time. This allowed the researchers to identify goal directed behaviour of the child and mother. The outcomes of these designs were then the basis of the attachment styles presented above (Table 1).

2.6.3.2 Manchester Child Attachment Story Task (Goldwyn, Stanley, Smith & Green, 2000)

This model was based on clinical development and scientific evaluation. The aim is to evaluate a child’s internal representation of their attachment to a primary caregiver and
internal working models by observing and evaluating a child’s interaction through play. Four scripted story games are conducted with gender and culturally sensitive dolls and toys between primary caregiver and child. These games and vignettes are designed to heighten emotional arousal and observe behaviour.

2.6.3.3 Adult Attachment Interview (George, Kaplan and Main, 1985)

Used among adults to identify attachment themes through language and memory of their attachment with primary caregivers. This interview investigates and attempts to identify the adult’s Internal Working Model of attachment by allowing the adult and interviewer to explore the relationships the adult has to primary caregivers.

2.6.3.4 The Circle of Security Project (Marvin, Cooper, Hoffman and Powell, 2002)

This attachment-based intervention designed for caregivers and pre-school children. This is specially designed to support children to move from a disorganized attachment style to a secure attachment.

2.6.4 Identification of Attachment

The identification of attachment styles is therefore based on observable behaviour and interaction between child and caregiver. There is a tendency for the behaviour observed in attachment to be mistaken for other conditions, especially if the developmental and family circumstances are not known. Moran (2009) argues that the increasing level of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) diagnosis in Britain can be linked to issues of attachment rather than ASD as a condition. It is estimated that 1 in 100 children are autistic with approximately 100000 children given a formal diagnosis of autism. While overall the number of children with SEN remains at 2.8%, the number of children whose statement lists autism as a primary need has increased by 5% since 2011 (DfE 2011). It
can be argued that observable behaviour can be interpreted differently from a variety of perspectives. Any identification of negative attachment styles therefore must be viewed with this bias as Moran (2009) has identified the overlapping tendencies of both attachment behaviours and issues with those behaviour and emotion patterns of children with Autism.

Moran (2009) discusses the similarities and differences between Attachment and ASD and how behaviour, which can be mistaken for ASD tendencies, could be attributed to attachment like tendencies. These similarities are presented in the Coventry Grid (Moran, 2009). The Coventry Grid is a practical checklist tool to raise the awareness of school staff to observe and distinguish between presenting behaviours of children. The grid takes into account that the child's attachment behaviour is based on creating secure links to the environment while the ASD child attempts to make the world conform to their concepts and their perspectives. Both groups of children can present with difficulties with flexible thinking while at the same time be demanding and ritualistic (Moran, 2009).

2.6.5 Critiques of Attachment Theory

There is some discussion among EPs as to how helpful the use of attachment theory can be while working in an inclusive environment promoting the needs as children, parents and school staff (Slater, 2007). The article suggests that there is a tendency within Western culture for the use of attachment theory to be used as a tool to blame mothers and other primary caregivers for the attachment difficulties of the children. It is therefore of importance for the EP to remain non-judgemental and support the child, parent and school while working with a child with attachment difficulties.
There are critics of attachment theory who question the relevance of the development of relationships as being a primal driving force for the infant. As mentioned above Bowlby (1973) regarded the primary drive of a child are not only limited to satisfying hunger, but also a need for security, trust and closeness to the primary caregiver. This is at odds with other psychological perspectives such as Psychoanalytical theory in which Freud would argue that the needs of an infant to gratify itself was orally based and begins with the need to satisfy hunger (Parke, 1999). Fonegy (2001) argues against Bowlby’s theory from the Psychoanalytical perspective due to the fact that the theory moves the focus of primary drives away from sex and procreation towards a need for closeness and satisfying needs.

One of the main and early arguments is that the use of the term attachment can be detrimental and in fact does not give a clear indication of what the term attachment could be (Goldberg, 2000). Bowlby later revised his theory in 1988 and focused on risk and resilience of the child, which has a significant impact on the child’s attachment rather than a deterministic attribute (Rutter & O’Connor, 1999). Slater (2007) also notes that it is this deterministic attitude, which can have implications for the inclusion of EP work in schools and with other services.

Bee and Boyd (2007) suggested that early attachment theory did not account for change and development of attachment among children and suggested that this remains a constant. Allan and Land (1999) discuss the development and changes in attachment in adolescents, specifically towards the primary caregiver are an innate development when children develop into adolescence. Goldberg (2007) argues that even children with a poor start in life can still develop positive attachments and not necessarily negative ones. This argument would also account for the difficulty of maintaining Bowlby’s theory
of Internal Working Models and whether these are static and do not evolve with experiences. Critics do discuss the validity of attachment theory as it is based on Internal Working Models (Zeanah, 1996).

As most of the interventions mentioned earlier in this chapter can attest to, most interventions are based on promoting constant and emotionally available caregivers rather than interventions based on changing and developing internal working models. Critics have questioned whether any interventions can address this directly.

The researcher has also experienced difficulties using the term attachment difficulties within the work of an EP, especially working with CFC and their families as the term has lead to misunderstandings as to the meaning of the term Attachment. Although many (parents and other professionals) find the term to be helpful, it can cause confusion when talking about positive and negative attachment styles, as there are negative connotations to the term. When discussing the conception of attachment as a term, explaining it as relationship style has been more helpful for parents and school staff.

2.6.6 Strengths of Attachment Theory

Attachment theory attempts to understand the effects on trauma having a direct consequence the future development of a child’s attributes of personality and relationships and human interaction. Slater (2007) also argues that it is the ability of attachment theory to be interdisciplinary which gives it a marked advantage beyond other theories of behaviour. The theory has developed across a great variety of disciplines such as social work, Clinical and Educational Psychologists and educational professionals by drawing on many different theoretical drives and bridging gaps.
One of the main strengths is the theory gives behaviour a meaning and asks professionals to look at this communication on individualistic level. Geddes (2005) argues that understanding behaviour and what it attempts to communicate enables professionals to respond appropriately. Slater (2007) also argues that it is by understanding the behaviour and what it communicates which is the fundamental need for understanding attachment theory.

2.6.7 Implications for EP Work

As mentioned earlier, Slater (2007) states that a high number of EPs find it difficult to accept and use the term attachment in their professional practice due to the negative connotations towards the role of the mother and some of the deterministic traits of the theory. However Dalen (2001) and Rushton (2010) do agree that the difficulties experienced by adopted children invisible to professionals in an educational setting can and will have a detrimental effect on their academic and social, emotional and behavioural development.

It can therefore be argued that the EP can bridge the gap between attachment theory, the understanding of the implications of the theory and its applicability in the educational setting and what can be done to develop support networks for these children. It is on this basis that the work conducted by the EPS and ASG Team has begun to raise awareness of attachment issues in schools and in the home and how this might affect adopted children specifically and support schools to build a safer environment by creating an individual support network for that child.

The gap in knowledge is based on anecdotal information gathered and observed by the work conducted by the ASG team. They report that more and more schools have begun
to request attachment awareness training for their staff. In a report for the Centre for British Teaching (CfBT) Education Trust, Wetz (2010) identifies the gaps that are still not being addressed in current UK Teacher Training. The report summarises that in order for teachers to fully support children and young people, a greater understanding of their development is fundamental. At the time of this research, The Department for Education offers online materials for schools and teachers, which address attachment theory but only as additional training for teachers of learners with severe, profound and complex learning difficulties (DfE, 2013).

Governmental policies have been slow to respond to the issues reported by schools and by parents, but have now begun to address these needs. As part of the Government Adoption Reform for 2013-2014 funding for LA adoption services has been in two parts. This funding is based on local needs. Part A has secured grants of £100 as non-ring fenced funding based on the Sure Start model (support for under 5s and allocated to areas of high deprivation among the population). Part B allocates £50 million (ring fenced and secure) as financial support has been “based on the number of children placed for adoption per LA and the number of children with an adoption decision still waiting to be placed for adoption per LA” (DfE, 2013).

There has been widespread criticism from adoption services and media outlets that are concerned that the steps taken by the Government will weaken the role of support for adopted children in local authorities. Media interest has focused on the reforms the Government are making to improve adoption services within the educational environment. The BBC reports that the Government wishes to streamline the adoption process and remove the Local Authority role within the process (Sellgren, 2013). The Guardian has also been critical of governmental reform and accuses Secretary of State
for Education, Michael Gove, of being short sighted when accusing local authorities and social workers of delaying the adoption process (“Peers rubbish Michael Gove claim over race barrier to adoption”, 2012). Although some of the reforms prosed by the government have been met with approval. Parents are to be given a more active role in the adoption process and given more support pre and post adoption (Burns, 2012).

This is further supported through by Selwyn et al. (2014) who argue that post adoption support is critical for the continued positive development of adoption placements. Governmental reforms aimed at empowering parents to create supportive and stable home environments have been some of the driving forces for the work being done by the ASG Team. This would also be true for schools to build a safer environment by creating an individual support network for that child. The work conducted by the EPS and ASG Team has begun to raise awareness of attachment issues in schools and in the home and how this might affect adopted children specifically. The team requested EP involvement as psychological input had been identified as fundamental to the development of the work between parents and schools. The work will focus on the creation of a training package to be offered in schools for staff and parents and to be facilitated by ASG team staff and Educational Psychologists.

2.7 Training Programmes Considered

Established parenting programmes for the support of adopted children are varied and are not clearly offered to adoptive parents. Literature search found the majority of training courses available for parental development limited to the foster care support. Although useful for the development of skills for adopter parents, these training programmes focus on the support of children moving into the CFC process, such as movement into care homes (DfE, 2012e).
It is therefore the responsibility of the LAs to offer support and offer training to the adoptive parents. However there is no uniformity to this support. In a major evaluation of the developments within UK adoption and following the successful identification of adoptive families for children, Selwyn et al. (2014) investigated the levels of disruption (relationship breakdown) that occurs within UK adoptive families. The research found that only 3.7% of UK adoptions end in disruption (a change in the adoption process and the child/teenager/young person enters the adoption process again). The report suggests that a higher level of understanding, training and awareness building must be given prior to adoption to perspective parents wishing to adopt. The study reports that it is essential to empower parents to understand the possible issues and negative behaviours adoptive children might experience to raise the possibility of a successful permanent placement.

Among the many recommendations made by the report, essential to this process must be to “Improve training, supervision and support needs for foster carers and family placement workers in relation to the carer’s and professional’s role and responsibilities for children who move from foster care to an adoptive family.” (p. 289). This improved training would therefore also be needed for adoptive parents to support their own understanding of the issues experienced by adoptive children. As has been mentioned here, there is no singular training programme offered to adoptive parents to raise awareness of the potential issues experienced by adoptive children.

As training programmes for adoptive parents are difficult to identify and programmes facilitated in the UK are limited, the literature search included search terms such as Foster Care and International to increase the results. Presented below are three programmes designed to support development of relationships between carer and child.
2.7.1 The Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC)

The Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care programme is described as a prevention programme, which delivers a supportive and intense training package for foster carers. The aim of the programme is to empower foster carers to be able to support children at risk of serious and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Research focused on stability of placements found the effectiveness of this programme to increase the overall potential and stability of the placement (Fisher, Kim & Pears, 2009).

2.7.2 Attachment and Biobehavioural Catch-up (ABC) Intervention

Developed by Dozier, Lindhiem, and Ackerman (2005), the ABC intervention focused on developing attachment strategies and relationships between foster carers and children in the American Cared For system. The aim of the intervention was to target three areas for development:

1. Helping carers to interpret children’s negative and disruptive behaviour
2. Helping carers overcome their own issues and judgements that conflict with nurturing due to these complex negative behaviours
3. Support to develop safe and secure environments to aid the child’s positive development

One of the key strengths of the intervention is that it has a clear step-by-step process, which the participants follow when preparing to become foster carers. Support is given in the individual homes with the facilitators coaching the participants to support the family in developing strategies. At the time of this research, this programme is not facilitated in the UK and is not offered to adoptive parents or within the foster cares system. The difficulty with replicating this in the UK is the process has been developed for the American Cf system and has not been standardised and tested for the UK
population. Although this might not be necessary to do so, it would have to be developed to include information about the UK adoption process.

2.7.3 Incredible Years

Webster-Stratton (2002) focuses on the support of parents through role-play, video stimulation, group work and home support. The aim of the training programme is to develop positive parenting strategies in a supportive environment and through group situation. Evidence does support the effectiveness of the programme for a wide range of families such as social or cultural background (Menting, Orobio de Castro & Matthys, 2013). Linares, Montalto, Li and Oza (2006) identified a rise in positive parenting strategies among foster carers and biological parents using Incredible Years. The intervention did look at co-parenting strategies and supportive developments rather than raise awareness of attachment styles, complex behaviour resulting from early trauma in adoption.

The limitation of using the Incredible Years as an evaluation model is that the focus of the training method is didactic and trainer focused rather than based on direct participant experience and joint problem-solving. This has the potential to exclude the support and training of school staff and EP involvement, which makes the inclusion of such training programmes as evaluation tools inappropriate. Although the participants evaluate each session and overall training programme, the trainer or group facilitator conducts sessions through a position of authority. For any training to be appropriate investigating the areas of interest, there must be problem-solving models of training rather than didactic in nature.
Similarly to the Incredible Years training model, the MTFC and the ABC Intervention are models designed to coach parents in dealing with behavioural issues and creating individual strategies to support children and strengthen relationships between family members. This would imply a level of teaching and coaching rather than developing understanding and raising awareness to implement meaningful change. While the ABC Intervention relies on the coach supporting the parents in the home, this is not appropriate with regard to the development of work between EPS and ASG. Furthermore it is not possible to conduct in the classroom or in the home within the timeframe of the research.

2.7.4 Chosen Model for Evaluation

As previously stated the difficulty was to find a suitable model, which would take into account work being done in schools and by parents. As the research aims to investigate the possible unique contributions of EP involvement, any training programme must have this as part of its structure. Within Literature Review Strand Two (see 2.2.2) a search for a model of training was conducted that permitted conjecture and ownership by the participants of systematic changes within any given system (such as homes and schools).

Possible evaluation models were investigated and presented through the supervision process. Dutton (2012) suggested a problem solving training model, which focuses on the development and ownership of individual issues within a system and supporting participants to make systematic changes as part of a training model. The Coach Consult Method (Balchin, Randall & Turner, 2007) was developed as a systematic approach designed to facilitate and support systematic and long-term changes in a system, empowering the participants to make these appropriate changes while being supported
by EP involvement. This training model attempts to support three objectives, which aim to support change at a systemic level within an organisation:

- Direct effect – having an effect on the target children
- Training effect – developing skilled staff and sustainable change
- General effect – whole school development.

Balchin et al. (2007) concluded that training needs ‘to be owned by the school rather than the EP, be embedded within the school context, and address the ‘real’ needs identified therein.’ (p. 240)

At the time of this research there is no tested model for adoption and attachment training. Through supervision and discussion regarding the development of this research, the Coach Consult Method has been found to be effective in evaluation of promoting systemic change in schools and therefore be useful in the evaluation of outcomes of this research. This is done through long-term support, empowering participants to take ownership of their training and its outcomes and creating a supportive network beyond the training programme. This model for evaluation has been created by the EPS in Falkirk. Although it focuses on supporting play and academic development in schools, it does look at the elements required and facilitated by EPs to support sustained changes in schools.

The training offered to schools looked at improving quality of play opportunities for children in participating schools by training staff to become Project Managers and creating a support network for staff. Eight sessions were offered and looked at the importance of play for children’s development while putting emphasis on play. The
training programme highlighted the possible benefits for the participating schools and for the participants and began a process of creating a support network to allow each other to support work further in their schools.

The Coach Consult Method suggests the correct level of support to be given by EPs to schools to evaluate and affect changes in policies and procedures within the school environment and by empowering school staff to manage and develop long-term and sustainable changes in their schools. Through consultation and discussion with supervisor it was felt that this model would be ideal for the evaluation of this training project and will be used to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of this research.

The model was evaluated using a two-tiered system, evaluating the direct effects experienced and observed by the participants of the training model (Tier 1) and a self-evaluation done by the researchers themselves looking at the training and general effects experienced by themselves and the school participants (Tier 2). The aim of the training model itself was “to improve the quality of play experience for pupils in primary schools and develop the skills of school staff in managing sustainable and embedded change” (p. 249).

The evaluation was followed up after seven months with a questionnaire completed by participants. In Tier 1, schools reported that there was a reduction in numbers of incidents and the need to conduct post interventions. Head Teachers and other staff reported that their trained Project Managers seemed to take ownership of their initiatives and felt supported and able to conduct long-term work. In Tier 2 analysis of the general effects showed that the training was viewed as satisfactory and did meet all the aims set forth by the researchers. In the evaluations of the training effects the Project Managers felt confident and supported to conduct their work in their schools. The researchers
concluded that the Coach Consult Method was a positive model for EPs to conduct with schools to support sustainable and direct changes:

“The coach consult method used by the EPs achieved this by teaching skills in successful project management, such as needs analysis, intervention planning and evaluation. The method differed from more usual forms of working with teachers, such as consultation, project work and in-service training, while incorporating the successful elements of these approaches.”

Balchin et al. 2007, p. 252

Critical to the decision to include this method for evaluation of the research was that the model is not presented as a method or as a strict set of steps to be taken for EP facilitated training. It is argued that this is a set of principles, which the EP could follow to support systemic and long-term positive changes within each educational setting participating in the training. Balchin et al. (2006) argues that positive long-term and effective outcomes from training occurs when:

- The training is planned and negotiated.
- The training identifies the needs of the school.
- It is relevant to practice.
- When it involves the whole school.
- That it fosters independence of staff.
- Techniques and methods presented during training are modelled, coached and scaffolded beyond the training course.
- An opportunity to receive feedback and support from other professional.
Although it was a small-scale project and research (participants involved in training n=4 and evaluations for long-term support n=8 including participants line manager/head teachers) the participants reported positive experiences of the training and long-term support received. Fox (2009) highlighted that the Coach Consult Model encourages EPs to empower change at the systemic level rather than impose change alone.

Balchin et al. (2007) encourage the use and individual adaptation for services and that further research must be done by psychological services to further investigate the effectiveness of the model. They highlight growing trends for services to develop their individual methods of service delivery. It is due to these findings that the model will be incorporated as an evaluation tool for this research into adoption and attachment training for parents and schools in the local authority. Validity and reliability is difficult to establish as the sample size of participants is low, a certain level of social desirability bias might be present and the subjective nature of the training will have an effect on the overall outcomes of this research. If this model is to be used in this piece of research, these limitations must be taken into account when establishing an evaluation of the outcomes experienced by the participants.

The lack of usable literature demonstrates a gap in literature. Not only within the development of effective training techniques aimed at raising awareness of attachment and adoption, but also how effective EP facilitation of training and support can contribute to long-term and positive outcomes. Although the Coach Consult Method can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the training programme proposed for this research, it is not completely compatible. The model relies on further one-to-one support, which might not be possible to achieve in the limited timeframe of this research. It also relies on creating support networks beyond initial training. Although if these
elements cannot be included in any overall evaluation of effective support of a training
programme for parents and school staff, it can still be used to measure the positive
impact of the training and the effectiveness experienced by the participants. Although
this might be subjective to the participants themselves, it can be considered as building a
foundation for evaluation to be developed further.

2.8 Background for this Research

Through the development of practice fieldwork experience, development of cross team
partnership was identified as essential to the development of the EPS. The support and
development of work with the ASG was considered to be vital in this regard. Steps were
taken to develop lines of communication and development of potential casework and
training opportunities.

2.8.1 Adoption and Special Guardianship Team

As part of the practice placement, the researcher was tasked in developing a working
relationship with new and evolving teams in the borough. One of these primary tasks has
been developing a working relationship with the ASG Team. The team offers services,
support and training to children, school staff and carers. This team is based in the West
of the borough and works closely with many of the schools for which the researcher is
the named EP.

The team consist of social workers, education support and keyworkers. The team offers
training and support to new and existing adopters and Special Guardians (family
members, in many instances grandparents, who are awarded guardianship status of
children) and one-to-one support to children in their homes or in educational settings.
This support consists of emotional, social and behaviourual support to children and their
adopted families and is now developing new training opportunities to professionals and to carers.

2.8.2 Demographics for Adopted Children known to ASG Team

Since 2006 the team has worked closely with approximately 20-30 new children each year who have struggled to settle in with their new families and new schools. This work is done on a one-to-one basis or in-group work with the children and their families while at the same time support is given to schools. According to the ASG team there are high levels of cases in which the relationships between child and school have broken down. These children have displayed difficult behaviours and the schools have struggled with dealing with and supporting these children. More and more schools have begun to request awareness training and support networks to meet the needs of their children. At present the ASG team attends individual meetings with schools and parents and act as mediators between carers, their children and the educational setting. This is not ideal as they are a small team with limited resources. They have also identified a lack of psychological knowledge and requested some support in this area from the EPS.

2.9 Conclusion

Through consultation with ASG team members and EPS was identified that cooperative work could be developed and that opportunities could be generated for joint training in schools and with parents. The purpose of the research is to therefore develop a training programme to meet the needs of parents and schools by raising awareness of the issues experienced by adopted and CFC. The aim is to challenge preconceptions of adopted children and their issues and begin the process of building awareness in the participating

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4 During Phase 1 of the research (see section 3.5.6.1) a mandate for joint training was provided by participants of a steering group. Please see Chapter 4 for more details.
schools. Selwyn et al. (2014) recommend that schools must take steps “Improve support for adopted children in schools. Children were bullied in schools because of their adoptive status.” (p. 290).

Many of the recommendations of the report suggest raising the awareness of parents and schools to the issues and experiences of adopted children. This includes how their experiences affect their ability to function alongside their peers in the classroom as well as understanding the implications their experiences might have on their development. Although adopted children, rather than CFC, are the focus of this research, much of the literature presented here makes reference to both. The training package will be focused on the adopted children and their families and the educational settings they themselves attend. This training package will then be offered to a wider number of schools to meet the training requirements of the staff.

2.10 Research Questions

**RQ1** – What are the needs of participants in relation to understanding and supporting attachment and adoption?

**RQ2** – To what extent has the programme developed the participants’ understanding of the needs of adopted children?

**RQ3** – What have been the benefits of a training programme supported by EP involvement?

RQ1 will look at the specific needs of the participants and how these needs might be addressed while RQ2 focus on the development of knowledge and give the participants a chance to evaluate their development. RQ3 was included at the request of the EPS to evaluate the possible impact of EP involvement.
2.11 Contribution to Knowledge

The research aims to understand the unique contribution of EP. The unique role of the EP and the impact this has on outcomes for parents and teachers to begin the process of communication and understanding of adoption and attachment. As there is a gap in literature investigating models in which the EP can effectively support and facilitate change. As parents and school staff will be focused on their own perspectives, the EP will be able to support, challenge and facilitate any interaction and is able to play a strategic role across a variety of varying strategic leads (Fallon, Woods & Rooney, 2010). This unique role positions the EP to support a variety of services and be able to communicate effectively with a variety of professions, including parents.
Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, the focus of this research was to create a new training programme; deliverable to school staff and adoptive parents in partnership with the ASG team in the L.A. All involvement from the ASG Team had been requested by the schools as part of their continuing professional development and through the analysis of needs performed by the ASG team. This generated the following three research questions:

RQ1 – What are the needs of participants in relation to understanding and supporting attachment and adoption?

RQ2 – To what extent has the programme developed the participants’ understanding of the needs of adopted children?

RQ3 – What have been the benefits of a training programme supported by EP involvement?

The following chapter outlines the steps taken by the researcher to investigate the interventions being planned in the local authority by EPS and ASG Team. The rationale of the research will be discussed and some of the fundamental issues experienced by the researcher will be presented, which has had a bearing on the development of the research design. This will be followed by outlines exploring the researcher’s epistemological and ontological positions.

The chapter will go on to detailing the design of study, the considerations taken to the development of research, information on recruitment of participants and details on data
collection and analysis. This will include the method considered in the analysis including the process of data analysis. Finally all ethical considerations will be presented and evaluated to ensure that all participants’ needs are protected and catered for.

3.2 Research Position

The development and design of this research is fundamentally based in the core values and abilities of the researcher (Bryman, 2001). To understand the possible limitations and barriers within the design of the research, steps were taken to understand the position of the researcher in terms of values, philosophy and worldview, which with impact and shape the progress of the design.

3.2.1 Epistemological Position

The epistemological position of the researcher is Critical Realist. This position was established based on the core values and worldview of the researcher. The focus of the Critical Realist is to be aware of the natural order, the events and discourses of the social world. “We will only be able to understand—and so change—the social world if we identify the structures at work that generate those events or discourses” (Bhaskar, 2011 p. 2). This position and understanding of the real world and the implication and observation of events echoes the understanding of the researcher. Bryman (2001) argues that the critical thinking and investigation of the approach can suggest approaches that will substantially change the whole system. Therefore understanding the individual parts that make the whole will enable systematic change throughout the system.

Bhaskar (2011) states that any research which investigates the social sciences occur in an open system, which continually interacts and reacts with the environment. Therefore the approach of the Critical Realist was adopted as the most appropriate approach as the
research will take place in an open system, i.e. a non-clinical setting. This is the best-fit approach as it allows the researcher to investigate the social paradigm of this methodology by looking for changes that will affect the whole.

3.2.2 Axiological Position

The theory of axiology examines the role of values within research. Although attempts will be made to remain neutral and to not influence the outcomes, any value or self-concept held by the researcher will have a direct impact on delivery of research (Hart, 1995). Axiology attempts to identify and understand the role of values held by researchers and how these interact and influence elements within the research. Pomeroy and Edwards (2005) define axiological theory within research as “structures, [which] define personality, character, skills, defences, emotions, motivations, behaviours, and the whole subject matter of psychology. The study of the value phenomena is a critical to the practice of clinical psychology as is to sociology, political science, and economics.” (p. 25).

Therefore the values of the researcher will have an impact in relation to the development and execution of the research. It will also influence the focus and to an extent the outcome of the research. However, by identification of such relevant values, as can be views in 3.2.1 prevent them from becoming a barrier and will support the development of the structure of the research design. This will be the responsibility of the researcher to keep these values in awareness to avoid negative influence of the research outcomes.

Fundamental to the research presented here is that developing understanding that sustainable change and support for the well-being of the child must happen holistically. Although steps will be taken to minimise the influence of the researcher, it is impossibly this will not occur. The values held by the researcher will therefore influence the
direction the study will take. It will also impact the analysis of the work, as deeply held values will affect the researcher’s ability to remain neutral. As the safeguarding of the child operates as the fundamental and guiding principle of the research, any approach will be person-centred and the values of the participants will be taken into account.

3.2.3 Ontological Position

Ontology can be defined as a “the field of philosophy that studies and postulates what is ultimately real and fundamental” (Slife and Richardson, 2008, p. 700). This can be distinguished from a pure epistemological position, which focuses on what is knowable and what exists. The research is designed to ascertain the views of the individuals. Each of these agents (parents and other professionals), including the researcher, will bring their own experiences and values and these will have an impact on the research and the direction it will take. This will also be true with regard to the analysis of the results including the conclusions and outcomes of the research.

3.3 Research Design

The aim of this research was to produce, conduct and evaluate the process of a new training programme. This would occur by encouraging communication and experience sharing between staff and parents and working in a holistic and supportive partnership between the home and the school. The literature review identified gaps in the development of training support for parents and school staff as facilitated by EPs. The main aim of the training package was to challenge and develop systems of support and to begin to make changes to how schools might view challenging behaviour in their environments. Partnership work and effective communication between parents and schools is also fundamental to the success of this research.
Protocols will have to be established within this research paradigm to not only create the training package but also to invite participants, identify areas of concern that could be covered in the programme and how to evaluate the effectiveness and usefulness of the training programme. As the Coach Consult Method (Balchin et al., 2007) has been identified as an appropriate evaluation model, this was taken into consideration when designing an appropriate method of investigation.

### 3.3.1 Considered Designs

The method of design was considered based on the needs of the ASG, EP and LA services and the epistemological position of the researcher. It was clear that the development of the research questions would have an impact on the design of the research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) and that any method of investigation would have to suit EPS delivery. This would raise the possibility of making any outcomes meaningful and set in the real world. Consideration was given to various methods and through exploration of the various methods; the design of the research was developed. As discussed in 3.2.2 this was based on the needs of the individuals involved and the needs of the LA and University frameworks. As identified in the literature, a gap in knowledge exists in terms of evaluating the effectiveness of EPs as facilitators in Attachment Theory and Adoption psychology.

As part of the investigation of potential and appropriate research method, Research Methods in Education, chapters 11-19 of Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) was used to develop possible methodologies to be used in the data gathering and analysis of the research. Presented below are some of the considered research designs.
3.3.1.1 Action Research

Action Research was considered as part of the focus and design of training programme. Its focus is to initiate change and improvement of a system at a local level. It makes attempts to understand, improve and reform practices within any organisations such as a LA or classroom and strives to be accessible for both academics and non-academics. A main strength of Action Research is the focus and identification used in reflective practice. This encourages the researcher to identify patterns and develop further understanding to initiate change. It could be argued that this would be ideal for the research being conducted in the LA developing further tools to initiate change.

A fundamental tool within Action Research is the use of reflective journals and practices to identify developments and challenge the researcher to critically evaluation developments and facilitate further changes. A key principle within this field of research was developed by Kemmie and McTaggart (1992) and echoes the Consultation Model (Wagner, 1992). This method of consultation looks at initiating change through a plan-do-review model. This would lead to limitations as a viable methodological tool for the researcher as any research conducted was time limited and very little opportunities to evaluation within a plan-do-review model.

Through the development of the collaborative partnership between the ASG team and the Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) as a representative of both EPS and the University, considerations must be made to the limited timeframe imposed by all parties. This timeframe was negotiated and agreed upon based on the academic needs of the TEP and the University and the needs of the ASG team to deliver quality service delivery in the LA. Any research design must be able to meet all the requirements of the University and commissioning partners while at the same time not becoming a barrier to
the researcher. Therefore the use of Action Research would not be viable as a research and analysis model as it requires delivery, which is beyond the researcher within the timeframes negotiated with the LA and University. Furthermore, as Action Research aims at identifying patterns through the use of various tools and is not compatible as this research aims to create a training programme based on the needs of the target population and evaluating its effectiveness. If this training programme was already developed Action Research would potentially be a viable research.

3.3.1.2 Case Study Design

The development of Case Study design was also considered. Yin (2013) identified three distinct categories within case study design:

1. Descriptive
2. Interpretive
3. Evaluative

Similar to action research, the focus of any case study research is to strive to achieve accessibility of any reader and to identify and understand the subjective development and understanding of the participants. The fundamental aim of the research is to create and evaluate the design of a training programme and investigate the potential outcomes of the training delivery rather than the individual’s experiences of the training method. There are several arguments why this method of analysis was not viable for this research. Considerations must be made as to the numbers of participants involved. If low numbers of participants are included in the overall data gathering, the training programme will not be able to develop further for a larger population. Although the basis of this research is focused on the development and evaluation of a training programme and identifying and
evaluating the experiences of a relatively small group of participants, the potential to
develop and generalise the results are there. Generalization could come from including
higher numbers of participants but this was also not possible at the time of research. Any
form of generalisation would therefore be an issue of context and sample size rather than
research design adopted and evaluated.

3.3.1.3 Various Other Designs

Due to the real life research element of this programme creation, both Field Research
(Baily, 1996) and Ethnography (Brewer, 2000) were considered. Both are viable
methodological tools as they focus on observations of development and delivery (Field
Research) and broad use of multi-method qualitative data gathering such as interview and
discourse analysis. Both were rejected due to time limitations set by LA and University
expectations on research and the any information gathered would be superficial and not
go into enough detail to evaluation expectations and impact. This limits the potential use
of these methods.

3.4 Rationale for chosen design

The aim of the research is to explore subjective and objective impact of a newly designed
training programme for parents and school staff and evaluate any experiences and
outcomes against an established EP supported training programme. Further
improvements were also investigated for future training developments and EP practice.
There was a necessity to create a method, which allowed the researcher to understand the
issues experienced by the LA and ASG, investigate the impact of the intervention and
supported by rich data sources. Furthermore it was also essential to create a programme,
which would potentially meet these needs whilst evaluating any impact of this
intervention. Due to the uniqueness of the training programme and the process of
identification of gaps in knowledge in this area, steps were identified to gather information from a number of sources. The multiple data sources identified, the research will be designed as a mixed methods design, collecting qualitative and quantitative data.

### 3.4.1 Mixed Method Design

The focus of the research was to investigate the impact of the design of a training programme for parents and school staff and provide data to support the limited amount of research into this area. The mixed method design was considered to be most appropriate as it enabled the linear progression of identification of needs, creation, facilitation and evaluation.

Using a mixed method design would support data gathering from a variety of data sources and support information gathered over time and provide a subjective and objective view of the experience (Gorard and Taylor, 2005). This would give the researcher the opportunity to ground any developed tool such as the training programme in reality while measuring any perceived objective and subjective experience.

Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007) define Mixed Method Research as “a synthesis that includes ideas from qualitative and quantitative research” (p. 113). This can be understood to remain a highly dynamic and developing area of research design. This entails that any methodology based on Mixed Methods can use tools from both disciplines to strengthen the outcomes by giving a holistic and rounded experience to the reader. Although the use of Mixed Methods design has grown with increasing popularity, Povee and Roberts (2014) report low levels of research being conducted within training methodologies aimed at professional and academic psychological practices. This would also include all environments. The concerns raised in their research highlight a need to conduct clear
rationales for the use of the method, that the use must come from the development of research questions, a clear balance must be kept between qualitative and quantitative and that research bias will always have an impact on the outcome of any investigation.

Considerations were made with regard to the presence of the researcher within any training programme. Although research bias can be an issue within any methodology, the presence of the researcher can have positive and negative effects on the outcome of the training facilitation and evaluation. Although Hart (1995) stresses that there are some difficulties for the Insider Researcher to remain neutral in these research designs, Yakushko, Badiee, Mallory and Wang (2011) state that there is merit being on the inside of any research. This process enables understanding, a shared ownership and experience among participants and fosters a sense of community and belonging. Although their research focuses on the experiences of belonging to minorities and gender, this sense of belonging and actively being a part of the process can be beneficial to any process. Central to the research conducted by Balchin et al (2007), the Coach Consult Method aims to develop continued strategic changes within schools. Systematic change within the school and school policy was achieved by encouraging participants to take ownership of the process and a sense of belonging. The presence of the EP through the programme and beyond could be argued to support this assertion.

Qualitative research is defined by Bryman (2001) to be research focused on the social understanding and interaction within a system, open to interpretation and by attaching meaning to observable elements. As the research questions require a of subjective experience of the participants, recording and using qualitative data will enrich the gathered data (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003) and give a clearer understanding of the impact of the training programme. This form of data gathering will support a more in-depth
understanding of the subjective experience and identify some changes over time. Any research within this paradigm sees the value of subjective experience of the real world and the application of this knowledge to a greater understanding of the whole.

The use of both qualitative and quantitative data will enable the researcher to illustrate the objective experience while at the same time the subjective experience. All tools for such analysis will be presented and discussed later in this chapter. As based on the definition given by Johnson et al. (2007) tools from both approaches will be incorporated into the design to investigate the research question. The gathering of rich data from both qualitative and quantitative sources will enrich the research and accurately reflect the impact of the outcomes on participants.

Tashakkori & Teddlie (2003) state the importance of integration of both qualitative and quantitative research methods in all stages of research as vital for the successful data analysis. The use of Mixed Methods must therefore be present through all stages of research and form the basis of all data collection and analysis.

Adapted and abridge from Tashakkori & Teddlie (2003)

1. Stage of Inquiry – when the research questions are formulated, questions should be represented by both qualitative and quantitative questions.

2. Data Collection – tools used should gather information from both sets of paradigms such as open-ended questions in interviews and information gathered from questionnaires.

3. Data analysis – this stage should transform qualitative themes into quantitative items and scales to support and uphold the validity of the results.
4. Interpretation – examining the results should be done by integrating both sets of data gathered into one whole.

It is essential that the research follow these steps in its development as allows a rich overview of the needs of the population and facilitates an appropriate research design. If a Mixed Method design is adopted, any data gathered, both qualitative and quantitative, must follow a concurrent model design. As there are weakness and strengths of both qualitative and quantitative data collection, the use of both sets of data will complement and demonstrate a stronger validity of the data sets. A concurrent data gathering design, i.e. gathering both sets of data at the same time rather than sequential, will increase the validity of the data analysis (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 190).

3.5 Data Gathering

The use of Mixed Method design involves the use of multiple data sources. As the aim of the research is to create, facilitate and evaluate the impact of a newly created training programme for parents and school staff, any data gathering as illustrated in the figure below (continued overleaf):
Each phase represents a step in the research protocol including data gathering and programme creation. Each phase has an individualised protocol and tools for analysis developed specifically to enable completion of data collection. These phases follow the 4-step model of Tashakkori & Teddlie (2003) and were developed following negotiation within LA and University frameworks.

Table 3.1: Method and Data Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the needs of participants in relation to understanding and supporting attachment and adoption?</td>
<td>Phase 1 Needs Analysis (qualitative) Steering group (qualitative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 3 Focus Groups (qualitative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent has the programme developed the participants understanding of the needs of adopted children?</td>
<td>Phase 1 Needs Assessment (qualitative) Steering group (qualitative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 2 Main Study –Pre and Post evaluations (qualitative)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table above maps out how each research question will be investigated and which tools will be incorporated in the data collection.

### 3.5.1 Needs Assessment

The use of needs assessments and analysis (within a classroom setting looking at the needs of the students) has been developed from research with social welfare (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). This method of identification of needs and the ability for an organisation or group to meet these needs has many varying methods and protocols. The Needs Assessment Checklist created by Griesbach, Hopkins, Russell and Rich (2004) was used to form and conduct the needs assessment through the use of steering groups. Although originally developed to identify the needs of service users within addiction services, the step-by-step process was evaluated as being the best-fit model for this research. Through the stage of inquiry, this process enabled the researcher to develop specific interventions for the training programme and identify the specific needs of the target population.

The needs assessment (Griesbach et al. 2004) identified the following as the key steps to understanding the issues faced by an organisation and how these needs might be met:
1. Identify key individuals to be involved in a steering group.
2. Define the target population for the needs assessment.
3. Ensure their needs are the focus of the needs assessment.
4. Communicate the aims of the needs assessment to service providers.
5. Decide who will carry out the needs assessment (partner agencies or an external contractor).
6. Consider whether additional assistance may be needed (with data collection, data entry and analysis, and/or report writing). Get a commitment from the relevant staff as soon as possible.
7. Estimate the cost and identify the source of funding for the needs assessment.
8. Identify the appropriate overall approach to your needs assessment.
9. Gather existing sources of information about the needs of your target population and consider what this information tells you about their needs.
10. Identify existing services in your area that are already available to meet the needs.
11. Consider the ways in which you will obtain the views of your target population about their needs, and whether ethical approval is needed.
12. Consider the ways in which you will obtain the views of the service providers about the needs of the target population. Think of ways to engage busy staff in your needs assessment and how to allay people’s fears or concerns.
13. Ensure that information is analysed and interpreted and that conclusions are drawn.
14. Consider how those who gathered the information can be involved in the analysis and how the results can be relayed back to all those who contributed to the process.
15. Once you have identified the needs of your target population, priorities them considering all the options for meeting them and develop an implementation plan. Consider how the views of the service users could be taken into account in the prioritisation and option appraisal process and how to ensure service providers are involved in the development of the implementation plan.
16. Once agreement is reached on the changes to make, consider how to monitor and evaluate them.
17. Consider the most appropriate methodology for the evaluation and whether it can be done internally or by an external consultant.
Prior to any training package creation and delivery, the needs assessment was conducted to gather information on the needs of schools and parents and begin the process of training package planning, generating qualitative data. The ASG conducted a series of training sessions with adoptive parents in 2007. These sessions were evaluated and parents were able to share opinions and concerns for future development. A summary feedback report (see Appendix A) was analysed (see outcomes presented in 3.5.2) and incorporated into the needs assessment. Permission to use these data was given at the time of evaluation as participants gave their consent for the ASG team to use the information gathered to develop further training opportunities.

3.5.2 Document and Content Analysis

Document and Content Analysis were used to form part of the preparation for the training programme. The use of this approach offered an unobtrusive method of information gathering (Robson, 2011). This method is also allowed the researcher, through the use of Content Analysis within the documents, to avoid misquotation (Elson and Abbott, 2004).

Content Analysis (Miles and Hubberman, 1994) was be used on the transcripts generated by steering groups to gather data to inform programme design. As discussed previously, the use of this method of data gathering gives a rich picture of the needs and values of the past, which can inform the delivery of future projects. Any content used and identified in the previous evaluation was checked (verbally) with some third party participants as to their accuracy and relevance.
3.5.3 Thematic Analysis

Thematic Analysis was used on transcripts from focus groups and interview (which are audio recorded) and was used to answer RQ1-3. The focus group questions will be generated based on the training programme content. The six-phase model (Braun and Clark 2006) was used to develop themes, linking the themes closely with the research questions.

The six-phase model steps are:

1. Familiarise oneself with the data.
2. Gather initial codes.
3. Search for themes.
4. Review themes.
5. Thematic networks creation.
6. Describe and explore the thematic network.

As this has been identified as an under-researched area, it was important that the analysis was an “accurate reflection of the content of the entire data set. In such an analysis, some depth and complexity is necessarily lost (...) but a rich overall description is maintained.” (p. 83). There is some disagreement as to the effectiveness of any data analysis in qualitative research. The themes were therefore peer assessed by one other TEP colleague to increase validity of the themes identified and increase reliability.

The data were displayed using Thematic Networks (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The diagrams and figures generated (see Figures 4.1 – 4.6) from the data gathering were used to illustrate the interactions between themes and allow for a greater understanding of
themes and how they interrelate. There emerged two levels of themes, these being Basic Themes (containing information derived directly from the text) and Organising Themes (grouping these themes together under a unifying banner). In cases where Basic Themes were identified and considered to be similar, these were incorporated into one Basic Theme. This process was considered through the triangulation as being appropriate to the research outcomes and reflective of the participants’ issues and concerns.

3.5.4 Questionnaire

The training programme was evaluated by a pre and post questionnaires (see Appendix G and H). These was created based on the areas of needs identified by the steering groups and the development of the RQs. Evaluation questionnaires were used to investigate the areas covered by the participants, measure the usefulness of the programme and record individual experiences of the programme. Oppenheim (1992) states that the use of pre and post evaluations can determine true cause and effect relationships while at the same time “gives us information about associations or correlations” (p. 29).

The questionnaire was designed as an ordinal scale questionnaire (Strongly agree to Strongly disagree). This collected non-parametric data; descriptive statistical analysis of was gathered for RQ2-3. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) will be used process the data gathered from the questionnaires. In line with the methodological design, Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) will be analysed to determine the quantitative outcomes of the investigation (Fields, 2013). Content analysis was also be used in the sections offered participants the opportunity to offer personal evaluations on the structure, format and materials used in the training package.
3.5.5 Focus Group

The use of focus groups is considered to be an effective data-gathering tool, as it will have the potential to generate large amounts of rich data (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas & Robson, 2001). If there is an opportunity to gather many sources of information at once, Barbour and Kitzinger (1998) state that the uses of focus groups are:

“particularly suited to the study of attitudes and experiences around specific topics.
Interviews are more effective for tapping into individual biographies, and focus groups are invaluable for examining how knowledge, ideas, storytelling, self-presentation and linguistic exchanges operating within a given control context.”

Gathering a variety of different points of view can strengthen any research as a form of triangulation (Cohen et al., 2011). There are disagreements as to what size of group is most effective, but Cohen et al. (2011) stated that anything from between four and ten participants would provide an effective and ideal range of experiences and opinions.

The use of the interview and focus group process was used in both phases 1 and 3, through the steering group as mentioned above and through the evaluation process. As part of the needs analysis of the research, data and information was gathered using a steering group consisting of representatives from the ASG team, adoptive parents and school staff. Robson (2011) reports that opinions on group size do vary. Therefore the larger the group will result in a greater generalizability and accuracy of any data gathered.

To illicit answers within a focus group interview, three structures can be adopted to ensure rich data sets within a mixed methods design (adapted from Robson, 2011):
• **Structured** – the interviewer adheres to a strict schedule of questions with possible responses to cover a wide area of interest.

• **Semi-structured** – pre-planned questions are used as a guide to navigate through the process, however these might be modified by the process itself and not followed strictly.

• **Unstructured** – a general area of interest is known but the interview within the focus group remains informal at all times.

Based on the personal preferences of the researcher, a semi-structured approach was originally adopted for the facilitation of the focus group with a semi-structured interview schedule prepared (see Appendix Q). At the time of planning research, this protocol was adopted for both needs assessment steering group (phase 1) and the training programme evaluation group (phase 3). This was abandoned after the welcome statement and initial question was given as it became clear that the focus group would benefit from prompts rather than questions to illicit responses.

### 3.5.6 Research Protocol

In order to develop the training programme, which effectively addresses the current issues and gaps in knowledge in the LA, these steps are necessary to identify the necessary areas to be discussed and developed. This must also be relevant to:

• The issues experienced by previous parents and teachers.

• The issues of current parents and staff.

• Understand the role of the EP as a trainer and facilitator.
• The training package must also be replicable and be able to be evaluated by the participants for its usefulness and relevance.

Each phase of the research will be conducted independently and will lead onto the next after each is concluded. Each phase will be presented with clear and independent protocols

3.5.6.1 Phase 1
As discussed, a thorough needs analysis was conducted to highlight and address any particular areas for concern. This included document and content analysis of a previous training programme evaluation report conducted by ASG teams (see Appendix A). This needs and document analysis was also supported by content analysis and incorporating the needs and issues of the ASG. The outcomes of the needs analysis were shared with the EPS and ASG teams followed by strategic planning meetings to establish long-term goals and structure of any training package, including timeframes and priority areas and division of work.

A steering group was convened to assess the needs of the present parents and school staff. The participants (see 3.6) were identified and invited by ASG and compromised of parents and school staff who had already received some support and training from the ASG team. These invites comprised of telephone calls place to potential participants. All participants were informed of the purpose of the steering group, consent was obtained and explained and all relevant documentation (see Appendix B) was conducted prior to the steering group commenced audio recording.
The steering group was conducted in a neutral environment. A semi-structured interview with the participants was chosen to identify any issues experienced by the participants. An introduction question was used to start the evaluation, however the facilitator attempted to say as little as possible to allow participants to discuss freely. Transcripts of the conversations were used to generate qualitative data through Thematic Analysis. These themes will be utilised as the basis of any training programme creation. The focus group continued for two and a half hours. The first hour was transcribed for the use of theme generation. McLellan, MacQueen and Neidig (2003) state there are no standardised formats for transcription and therefore the use of full, partial and summary are all considered to be appropriate forms of transcription. This will be taken into consideration when developing a transcription of the steering group.

3.5.6.2 Phase 2

The researcher, based on the outcomes for Phase 1, developed the training package material in association with ASG team members. The themes generated by the thematic and content analysis were used to structure sessions 1-3. These sessions would be delivered through a mixture of taught sections and discussions and sharing of experiences of the participants. The number of sessions was dictated through the timeframe negotiation of the EPS and ASG teams. It was decided upon that three sessions were needed to conduct the training required and a fourth was needed as an evaluation session.
Table 3.2: Session Topics and Estimated Timeframe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic and Session Title</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1 Attachment and the Brain</td>
<td>Approximately one month period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 2 Challenges for the Child, School and Family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 3 Attachment and Adoption – Next Steps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 4 Evaluation of training package</td>
<td>Approximately two months after initial training period</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As previously stated, participants (see 3.6) were identified by the ASG who fit the following criteria:

Parents

- Adoptive parents who have not previously attended attachment training supported by ASG team.
- Previously not known to the ASG team.

School Staff

- School staff who have not previously attended any form of attachment training supported by ASG team.
- Must be in contact with the parents attending the training programme.

Initial phone calls were conducted to potential participants to assess potential interest. These were followed up by official letter and emails (see Appendix C and Appendix D respectively), inviting parents and school staff to participate in the training. As the training was evaluated as part of a doctoral thesis, participants were informed of this and consent forms (see Appendix E) and participation forms (see Appendix F) were included.
in initial paperwork. Participants were given the option of attending the training programme but abstaining from the research. All documentation (excluding University documentation) was generated through negation between EPS and ASG teams. All invitations were followed up by reminder emails to all participants.

3.5.6.3 Phase 3

The main body of research was evaluated in two parts. Initial evaluations of the training programme were conducted using pre and post evaluations (see Appendix G and Appendix H) before the delivery of session one and at the end of session 3. These evaluations would allow the participants to evaluate their own initial knowledge levels, their experiences of the programme structure and facilitate an opportunity to comment on the process experienced by the participants. This process aimed at generating quantitative data on the usefulness of the training while at the same time evaluating positive and potential negative impact. Qualitative information was also generated by giving participants the opportunity to share personal experiences and opinions of the training programme with the group.

Session 4 incorporated a focus group with participants being invited back to evaluate the outcomes of the training package, its usefulness and what still needed to be developed for any future delivery. Qualitative data was gathered after a fixed term, post training, to enrich the overall detail of the usefulness of the programme. This was done using a semi-structured focus group. If this was not possible to conduct and participating schools were only been able to send one member of staff to participate in training programme, an interview format would have been adopted to gather information. If it was not possible to find a time and place to meet, telephone calls were considered to be appropriate to use with the permission of the participants. Although not required, all
participants opted to attend the evaluation session as they felt it was essential to continue
to share experiences and saw value in the training programme.

3.6 Sampling and participant recruitment

The participants for the various phases of research and data gathering were identified
and recruited through the ASG team. This was decided from a practical standpoint as
they had already established relationships with the schools and adoptive parents.

3.6.1 Steering Group Participants

The ASG team identified ten participants male and female above the age of 20 years of
age for the steering group from a variety of professional groups. These included adoptive
parents, school staff and ASG team members. They were invited to come together and
talk about their experiences in adoption and education and if they were able to identify
any gaps, which are not being addressed. As there would be individuals who are not able
to attend due to other commitments, inviting the maximum numbers would allow for
any such eventuality.

Table 3.3: Steering Group Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Code</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PC1</td>
<td>ASG Team Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC2</td>
<td>ASG Team Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC3</td>
<td>Parent and School Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC4</td>
<td>Parent and Teaching Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC5</td>
<td>Class Teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.6.2 Training Programme Participants and Inclusion Criteria

The ASG team identified a purposive opportunistic sample of participants from partner schools and families to take part in the training programme. The inclusion criteria for participants were as follows:

- Adoptive parents and school staff whom had not previously attended attachment training supported by the ASG team.
- Adoptive parents whom had not been known to the ASG staff and were newly referred to the service. This would include those who have recently moved into the area and those who have recently become aware of the training and services proved by the LA to adoptive parents.
- School staff attending the training must have worked or supported the adoptive family or child in the school environment and have been in contact with the adoptive parents\child attending the training programme.

This was offered, as a free training programme on the experiences of adopted children in schools and it was made clear that attachment theory was to be used as a theoretical basis of the course. It was be made clear to them at that they would be taking part in research, which would be clearly explained in the participation forms given to each invitee (see Appendix F). The participants were given the option of withdrawing from the research element of the programme but were still given the opportunity to attend the training programme.

Sessions would be held at the ASG offices as these were considered to be appropriate and neutral venue for all participants. Adoptive families from the invited schools were also invited to attend. The schools in which there are children already known to the
Adoption Team, were invited first. A wider invitation was given to include all schools in the area. Approximately 20+ participants were invited to attend the training course. These were from the schools, which the children and young people they already work with attend.

Table 3.4: Training and Evaluation Programme Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Code</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TPC1</td>
<td>Parent (Female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPC2</td>
<td>Parent (Female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPC3</td>
<td>Parent (Female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPC4</td>
<td>Parent (Female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPC5</td>
<td>Parent (Male)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPC6</td>
<td>Parent (Male)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPC7</td>
<td>EP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPC8</td>
<td>SENCo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPC9</td>
<td>Specialist Teaching Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPC10</td>
<td>Specialist Teaching Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPC11</td>
<td>Specialist Teaching Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPC12</td>
<td>ASG Team Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPC13</td>
<td>ASG Team Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPC14</td>
<td>Class Teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6.3 Evaluation Group Participants

All participants who attend the training programme were also invited to the focus group session. As previously stated the ideal number for an effective focus group can range between four and ten individuals. Complete attendance was encouraged but not fully required for the final session. However, for any participants who was not able to attend would be invited to share their experiences through written accounts or verbally. Participation Information Sheets were given to each individual prior to attending the
training course (see Appendix F). Consent forms were also given prior to attending (see Appendix E).

**3.7 Critique of Method**

There are limits to the use of the method designed for this research, as it comprises of both quantitative as well as qualitative data gathering. The main aim of the inclusion of both data gathering methods was to enhance and complement each other. The strength of gathering non-parametric data and descriptive statistics allows for a greater understanding of the experiences of the participants to be observed and categorised in such a way as to show development and a before, during and after picture of their experiences. Thematic Analysis and Content Analysis are subjective in nature as it depends on the researchers ability to code and identify themes from the material gathered. Although this is essential for the Critical Realist and is useful to identify and instigate change, this is done so from a certain level of bias. To limit the any level of bias, all thematic and content analysis conducted will be peer reviewed and triangulated with another TEP.

It can also be argued that the data gathering can also be biased, as this is not standardised and that the information gathered from the focus groups and interviews are personal statements and cannot be generalised and therefore limited. It does, however give the researcher an opportunity to gather evidence and information from both parents and school staff with in-depth and local knowledge. Interpersonal skills are also essential to put the interviewees at rest and engage as much as possible in the process. There are also limits with regard to the range of participant experience, especially dependant on the accessibility of staff and parents being able to attend the training sessions and whether they are able to attend the feedback sessions.
The presence of the researcher within the training process will have an effect on the participants’ experience and their ability to accurately evaluate their own experiences and will impact of the training programme evaluation. Hart (1995) highlights the difficulties of the Insider Researcher within the collaborative process. The difficulty will be experienced as the researcher “remaining neutral” (p. 212).

There are also limits to the data gathered in terms of accuracy. Because of the interview/focus group style of data gathering there will be some level of wanting to please the researcher and give responses that reflect positively, not only on themselves but also the schools and in the case of the parents, their own parenting style and child. It will important that this is limited by making certain that participants were aware of the confidential nature of the study and that all responses were completely anonymised. This can work well in the data gathering stage if participants are at ease and reflected on their own practices and the procedures and work of their employers. Transcription will also be time consuming however useful to identifying themes but will provide rich data for future design and development of attachment training in the LA. To increase the reliability and validity of these analyses, triangulation of the data (data gathering from multiple sources and critique through supervision and fellow researchers) will be included to reduce some of the subjective bias of the analysis. Data analysis triangulation was defined by Thurmond (2001) as “the combination of two or more methods of analyzing data.” (p. 254).

For the purpose of triangulation of data and to increase research validity and reliability, all data analysis was analysed first by the researcher and finally by external corroborators (fieldwork supervisor and fellow TEP).
3.8 Timeline and Time Budget

Phases 1-3 were planned and negotiated through cooperation with ASG team members, line management of EPS and University supervision. Although it was clear that this needed to be flexible and react to the needs of the ASG and LA, it was essential to remain to the self imposed deadlines of the project. This was essential to the completion of each phase as the research was linear in nature.

Table 3.5: Timeline and Time Budget

<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>Meet with Adoption and Special Guardianship Team to identify gaps in provision and possible areas of joint team working</td>
<td>November 2012</td>
<td>1 Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visit and information gathering at Adoption and Special Guardianship Team</td>
<td>December 2012</td>
<td>1 Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attend North West Continuing Professional Development (NWCPD) Day to network with other professionals working within Adoption Services and Attachment Theory</td>
<td>12th December 2012</td>
<td>7 Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planning meeting for needs assessment</td>
<td>May 2013</td>
<td>2 Weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steering Group completion</td>
<td>June 2013</td>
<td>1 Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creation of training programme</td>
<td>July 2013</td>
<td>1 Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Programme including evaluation session</td>
<td>November 2013</td>
<td>3 Months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>Pre and post evaluations of training development among staff followed up by evaluation session</td>
<td>November</td>
<td>3 Months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>Transcribe focus groups</td>
<td>July 2013</td>
<td>2 Weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thematic Analysis of focus groups</td>
<td>August 2013</td>
<td>1 Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SPSS data analysis on pre and post evaluations of training</td>
<td>December 2013</td>
<td>1 Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write Up</td>
<td>Organisation of information and themes gathered</td>
<td>August 2013</td>
<td>1 Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final write up and submission to university</td>
<td>May 2014</td>
<td>4 Months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.9 Operational Risk Analysis

As part of the development of ethical procedures for the research, a risk analysis was conducted to safeguard the well-being of the participants. This would ensure that all ethical and moral safeguards were in place and would minimise any potential risk to the participants.

Table 3.6: Operational Risk Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk including personal safety risk</th>
<th>Level of Risk</th>
<th>Contingency Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School might refuse to allow staff to participate in research</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Be certain to be clear on the possible added benefits this research could have for provision in schools. Stress the added skills being developed for staff that attend and the generalizability of these skills. Ensure that they have the means to contact research at any time if they need clarification on research subject. Address any concerns they school might have. Ensure that they are aware that the training being offered to staff is free of charge and the value it will add to the school and staff’s professional development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents might refuse to participate in research</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Stress the added skills being developed for parents that attend and the generalizability of these skills. Ensure that they have the means to contact research at any time if they need clarification on research subject. Address any concerns they might have. Ensure that they are aware that the training being offered is free of charge and the value it will add to communication and understanding between adopter families and schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff might wish to withdraw from focus groups</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Make sure that staff has the opportunity to contact me with any questions they might have and be approachable if anyone has misgivings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents might wish to withdraw from focus groups</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Make sure that staff has the opportunity to contact me with any questions they might have and be approachable if anyone has misgivings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in arranging time for staff and parents for interview</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>By allowing flexibility in timeline and arranging interview times as early as possible in the Autumn term, will give researcher more time in rearranging participants.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.10 Ethics

The research was risk assessed to be of Medium Risk for participants. Attachment Theory and Adoption and experiences of both might be of a sensitive nature. Facilitators and researcher were present at all times to support and take action if any situations require them to support participants in ensuring their safety. As this was considered be an emotional subject there was the potential that there might be some distress for the researcher but supervision and peer supervision were used for support.

Before each session the participants were made aware of the sensitive nature of the topics we were going to be discussing and covering. Time for debriefing at the end of each session was made available for all. Confidentiality was explained and reinforced at each session and participants were asked to keep any personal information they might hear in the session confidential. They were given the option of withdrawing from the session if they became upset and a private space was made available. The research was conducted in accordance to ethical guidelines set by the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2009).

An RREA Ethics form (Appendix I) and SoE Ethical Approval form (Appendix J) was submitted to the University of Manchester Research Risk and Ethics Approval. All parties involved were given as much opportunity as possible to understand the nature, purpose and anticipated consequences of taking part in the study. The process of informed consent ensured schools understood what they were agreeing to, what would happen to the data produced and how the data would be used. All participants, school staff and EPs were debriefed at the end of their participation in accordance with ethical guidelines (BPS, 2009).
All participants were provided with a summary of the findings of the study in the near future. The feedback process took the form of conversations over the telephone to individual or groups of individuals, where appropriate. This feedback focussed on their contributions to the work and the overall findings of the research.
Chapter 4 Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

The following chapter will outline the findings of the research as detailed in the previous chapter. As the method was a mixed design and followed a three-phased research process, qualitative and quantitative data were collected to answer the following research questions:

RQ1 – What are the needs of participants in relation to understanding and supporting attachment and adoption?

RQ2 – To what extent has the programme developed the participants’ understanding of the needs of adopted children?

RQ3 – What have been the benefits of a training programme supported by EP involvement?

The following chapter outlines the results from the three-phased research process. Data were gathered using a needs analysis and assessment of the local authority, EPS and ASG Team, focus groups using thematic and content analysis and a pre- and post questionnaire all designed to gather rich data. The research evaluates the effectiveness of the training and to establish the utility of the training programme as supported by EPs. The creation and evaluation of a unique training programme based on local needs, the chapter considered the development of the training programme package prior to any analysis of data gathered from various sources and its implications to the research questions.
As identified in 3.5.1 (Table 3 Method and Data Analysis) each research question was investigated throughout the three-phased research model and supported by a rich variety of data sources. Each research question was reviewed and the data pertaining to each question were analysed and presented.

The Coach Consult Method (Balchin, Randall and Turner, 2007) was identified as a method for evaluation as discussed in detail in 2.8.3. This formed the basis of the discussion of results and usefulness of the training programme (Chapter 5). Its ability to support short-term and long-term interventions for the families and schools involved was also considered.

4.2 Programme Preparation

As discussed in Chapter 3 the development of the training programme was based on a needs assessment, document and content analysis of previous interventions (see Appendix A) and the themes generated employed content and thematic analysis of a steering group consisting of parents and school staff who have already taken part in some ASG support.

4.2.1 Needs Assessment

The Needs Assessment Checklist (Griesbach, Hopkins, Russell & Rich, 2004) was used primarily to determine and analyse the need for this intervention. It also determined the initial focus of the steering and focus group and development of the training programme. The needs assessment identified the following as the key steps.
4.2.1.1 Step 1

**Identification of key individuals to be involved in a steering group**

These were identified through the on-going partnership development work conducted as part of service delivery in the LA. The ASG team identified parents and school staff as the primary target group for any short-term and long-term interventions. Any steering group would be drawn exclusively from the constituent members of these groups.

4.2.1.2 Step 2

**Definition the target population for the needs assessment**

As a joint programme had not been delivered earlier, previous participants from other courses (parental support and school based training) were deemed the most appropriate to include in any steering group. These participants were required to work closely with adopted children and attended some support or training to understand the needs of their children at home and in an educational setting. Additionally they were also required to understand the needs of the groups they themselves represented.

4.2.1.3 Step 3

**Ensuring their needs were the focus of the needs assessment**

All parties involved in the organisation of the steering group took steps to ensure that the group focused on the needs of the participants. Although a semi structured design was adopted in the facilitation of the group (including questions posed during the session) the involvement of the researcher and the intention of the research was made clear.
4.2.1.4 Step 4

Communicating the aims of the needs assessment to service providers

Participation forms (see Appendix F) and consent forms (see Appendix E) were given to the participants prior to the session. The session was started and introduced by the researcher and the details of the aims of the steering group were restated.

4.2.1.5 Step 5

Deciding who will carry out the needs assessment (partner agencies or an external contractor)

The researcher and two members of the ASG team took an active role in the facilitation and running of the session. The appropriateness of this helped provide unique experiences and knowledge from their respective fields.

4.2.1.6 Step 6

Consideration of whether additional assistance may be needed (with data collection, data entry and analysis, and/or report writing). Obtaining a commitment from the relevant staff as soon as possible

As primary researcher, it was decided that one person would be most appropriate to collect data through transcript analysis and be responsible for the storage of store any information confidential in circumstances. Consistency within this approach, including data gathering and analysis ensured fidelity and validity of the outcomes.

4.2.1.7 Step 7

Estimating the cost and identify the source of funding for the needs assessment

There were no additional costs required for the needs assessment. The ASG provided the location and refreshments needed during the session.
4.2.1.8 Step 8

Identifying the appropriate overall approach to your needs assessment

As identified in 3.5.1 and 3.5.2 content and thematic analysis were considered to be most appropriate method of analysis qualitative data collected by the steering group. This approach aimed to enable the harvesting of rich data from appropriate sources and to form a better understanding of the training approaches previously used.

4.2.1.9 Step 9

Gathering existing sources of information about the needs of your target population and consider what this information tells you about their needs

Document and content analysis of previous parental training evaluations (see Appendix A) were used to inform the steering group process as well as develop a clearer understanding of their needs. This was discussed in more detail in 4.4.2.

4.2.1.10 Step 10

Identifying existing services in your area that are already available to meet the needs

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, there are no services beyond the already existing services provided by ASG team and there are no specific services supporting parents and school staff with adopted children. Although of high quality, the support provided by the ASG was only given when requested by schools and parents. This support would be triggered post incident if behaviour were an issue for the adoptive child in school and in the home.
4.2.1.11 Step 11

Considering the ways in which you will obtain the views of your target population about their needs, and whether ethical approval is needed

All ethical considerations were made and discussed in 3.11. The researcher transcribed the views of the steering group in an attempt to continue accuracy and consistent approach of the document. The accuracy of the transcript was shared with the participants’ pre analysis.

4.2.1.12 Step 12

Considering the ways in which you will obtain the views of the service providers about the needs of the target population. Think of ways to engage busy staff in your needs assessment and how to allay people’s fears or concerns

Steps were taken in creating the participant forms and emails and letters were designed to be as informative as possible and answer any concerns that participants might have had. This was restated prior to the steering group to inform the participants of their rights to withdraw and withhold their viewpoints. Time for the steering group was also considered and facilitated in a time of day, which most participants would find it easier to attend. For school staff this would be during the longer afternoon break time or after 3pm. For parents this could potentially best suited during the day when their children were at school.

4.2.1.13 Step 13

Ensure that information is analysed and interpreted and that conclusions are drawn

Content and thematic analysis was used to identify themes and begin the process of constructing the training programme and address the issues and concerns of the
population group. These themes were considered to be the foundation of the training programme and are presented in more detail in 4.2.4.

4.2.1.14 Step 14
Consider how those who gathered the information can be involved in the analysis and how the results can be relayed back to all those who contributed to the process
Accuracy and validity of the analysis was strengthened through a triangulation process with fellow TEP, fieldwork supervisor and ASG team members. The transcript was shared with the participants to assess whether the document accurately reflected the views of the participant.

4.2.1.15 Step 15
Once you have identified the needs of your target population, prioritise them considering all the options for meeting them, and develop an implementation plan (consider how the views of the service users could be taken into account in the prioritisation and option appraisal process and how to ensure service providers are involved in the development of the implementation plan)
This step was difficult to implement, as the focus of the steering group was to explore and identify the possible training and knowledge needs of parents and school staff when supporting adopted children with attachment difficulties. Any implementation plan would have to be constructed by the researcher and the ASG team with regard to programme delivery and structure. It was considered inappropriate that the steering group participants were a part of this planning beyond their original remit. If any further development of the research, such as future training developments, were considered beyond the original study then it would be possible to consider the views of the
participants. This would be vital to evolve and develop the training programme and is discussed in 5.8.

As the themes identified and developed through the analysis process were considered to be essential, all themes were included in the training programme creation. Participants were given the option of taking part in the programme itself and to offer their views from conception of the programme, through delivery and formal evaluation of its effectiveness.

4.2.1.16 Step 16

**Once agreement is reached on the changes to make, consider how to monitor and evaluate them**

Through analysis of the steering group and subsequent document and content analysis (see 4.2.2) and the identification of themes. The programme structure was designed to include relevant topics based on Organisational and Basic Themes and the ability to evaluate the short-term effectiveness but also the possibility of long-term effectiveness. A fourth session was included in the design of the training programme, which would attempt to evaluate the programme by inviting participants to comment on the effectiveness of the training programme, the outcomes for their children and the possible improvements needed to be made. As the Coach Consult Model (Balchin et al., 2007) was used to evaluate the research, this was also used as a possible design structure to facilitate and support long-term effective change for the participants.
4.2.1.17 Step 17

Considering the most appropriate methodology for the evaluation and whether it can be done internally or by an external consultant

Due to the time limitations of the research imposed by University and LA timeframes, it was not possible to employ external consultation as an external effectiveness evaluation tool. A fourth session was included to allow participants to evaluate their own experiences and learning. Pre and post questionnaires were also used to gather data for analysis, which included qualitative and quantitative data sources.

The needs analysis was effective in highlighting the steps required for this research to investigate the needs of the LA, EPS and ASG teams. Simultaneously this investigated and highlighted the needs of service users, i.e. the parents of adoptive children and school staff responsible for social and emotional support and academic development. The effectiveness in this form of analysis is the step-by-step process for planning and information gathering. There were clear instructions and there is a linear and progressive form to the analysis. It can be argued that this was the appropriate form of analysis and supported the development of the research and its delivery.

4.2.2 Outcomes of Document and Content Analysis

A variety of data sources were established to assess the needs for the development of the training programme and to establish ways in which these issues might be addressed. As discussed in the methodology section, document and content analysis were conducted on previous evaluations of training given to adoptive parents. These evaluations were based on qualitative and ordinal data questionnaires given to the participants and summarised in a feedback report (see Appendix A). The report included the evaluations and thoughts of sixty-three out of one hundred and fifty-six distributed questionnaires. Unfortunately
the researcher only had access to the feedback report and not the original training evaluations. Therefore these sets of data would have to be considered with some bias and reliability of the evaluations had to be based on the recollections of the staff involved. The aim of the report was to highlight the needs of the participating adoptive parents. Additionally, it aimed to investigate areas for concern that had yet to be addressed by the LA and the participating support agencies, including the ASG team and school staff.

Parents felt that additional support was needed for their children, including one-to-one support from schools, small group work to develop social and emotional awareness and that schools must be supported to empower the children in their academic and personal development. Parental support beyond the day-to-day interaction with the school was needed by many parents, especially those who identified themselves as being new to the school admissions process as well as dealing with children with multiple social and emotional problems.

With regard to communication between home and school, most participants reported they had a good level of communication with their schools. However some reported that most of this communication was due to negative incidents involving their children and that they struggled to develop positive and meaningful dialogue. A suggested strategy was the development of clear lines of communication and support networks and having a named official person within the school. The role of the named person would be advocacy for the adopted child within the school environment.

The report summarised the parents’ views of what worked well. The data were largely supportive of the views of the EPS and ASG team in maintaining that meaningful
support can foster dialogue within the school. This dialogue was broadly supportive of classroom mentoring, classroom modelling and enabling anxiety reducing strategies to be employed in school. The report advocated more training for parents and school staff with a focus on raising awareness of attachment issues and the impact of early trauma for children, sharing knowledge. Furthermore the feedback report advocated the importance of encouraging partnership work beyond parents and school staff. At the time of the report (March 2006) a request for EP involvement in the assessment of these children was highlighted by a number of parents who go on to advocate that the need for a *multi-professional* approach could be beneficial in tackling complex needs of adoptive children.

Parental feedback report did highlight specific issues and concerns experienced by the participants at the time of report. These concerns and issues focus on their children’s development in the educational system, a lack of support and understanding in the school system and the opportunity to develop cooperative support systems with schools. Whilst the report reflected a good understanding of the parental and child’s needs, the researcher could locate no clear evidence of dissemination to partner schools. It can therefore be argued that no opportunity existed at the time of the report to be an effective agent for change.

### 4.2.3 Outcomes of Steering Group

The aim of the steering group data gathering was to investigate and identify potential themes and issues, which could be covered in the training programme. As mentioned in 3.5.2 themes were generated from transcripts (see Appendix K) and arranged using Organisational Themes (six in total) and individual Basic Themes.
4.2.3.1 Themes

The aim of this section will be to explore the organisational themes collected from the steering group and attempt to describe the basic themes present under each organisational theme. Sample texts presented in italics are used from the transcript including page and line number (see Appendix K) to illustrate the ideas and the main concerns of the participants. Themes were generated using thematic analysis and deductive reasoning. These were identified and arranged using colour coding (see Appendix L) by identifying similar themes throughout the transcript and organised into identifiable groups. The validity of these identified themes was then interrogated data with fellow TEP, ASG team members and fieldwork supervisor through an established triangulation method described in 3.5.5 and were considered to be representative of the issues and concerns of the participants and correctly recorded and analysed. The themes presented here are arranged into six Organisational Themes with Basic Themes arranged beneath.

4.2.3.1.1 Theme 1

Organising Theme: Awareness

The steering group viewed the raising of awareness among school staff and parents as a principal issue. The issue itself was the impact of past experiences and trauma effecting adopted children in the here and now.

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5 Please note that all quotations attempt to be accurate at the time of recording and any grammatical anomalies are intentional and are made by the speaker, not the researcher at interview. Where clarity is needed, words and phrases are added by the researcher and placed in brackets.
Basic Theme: The Hidden Child

The ASG Team members felt that it was essential to raise awareness of the “Hidden Child” and the issues experienced by that child. At the time of research there is no requirement on school applications to inform any school whether the child is adopted and therefore in need of possible support.

“There is nothing on the forms at the moment to say whether your child is adopted when you apply to the school, there is not that significant understanding of why information must be shared and I think that will happen as we go down the route. But again (thinking about) the hidden child, if you have moved schools and you have started again with a new family there are no obligations to tell that school about the child.”

ASG Team Member (PC2), p. 10, line 13-18

Basic Theme: Educating the Educator

Continuing within the theme of raising awareness, the steering group felt that it was essential to raise the awareness of teaching and school staff into the issues experienced by adopted children and their families. This has particular relevance as this can have
outcomes in their present ability to function in an educational setting. For any training or intervention to be effective, a holistic understanding of the needs of the adopted child is deemed to be essential.

“I think that attachment and understanding of it is growing in terms of levels of understanding within the education setting. But I would say very strongly that early trauma and abuse and a legacy of that creates massive barriers to learning but that could just pop up one day or at any time reflected across the whole term or a whole year. And it’s almost about educating the educators.”

Parent and School Governor (PC3), p. 2, line 7-12

Basic Theme: Challenges in School

Challenges facing adopted children were thought to be vital for both short-term and long-term interventions. The steering group felt it important to identify and remove these barriers in schools and to raise awareness of how these challenges can manifest in the academic setting.

“…we have been aware of for many years that children who have experienced early trauma and abuse may have attachment issues. They have particular challenges in school.”

ASG Team Member (PC1), p. 1, line 16-18

Basic Theme: Attachment Theory

As the participants all had a level of knowledge of the importance of attachment theory and its implication into the physical, social, emotional and academic development of
adopted children, this would be essential for any training programme to establish as its foundation.

“… I would also say that attachment is the most important as loss and grief which can have a massive effect on a child’s learning.”

Parent and School Governor (PC3), p. 2, line 14-15

**Basic Theme: Barriers to Learning**

As presented above, the challenges faced by adopted children seemed to be misunderstood and not considered to be a priority among school staff. The steering group felt it was important for parents and schools to work together to plan strategies and interventions to identify and remove any barriers experienced by these children.

“… early trauma and abuse and a legacy of that creates massive barriers to learning.”

Parent and School Governor (PC3), p. 2, line 10

**Basic Theme: Attachment Goes Beyond Adoption**

It was discussed by the steering group that raising awareness of the implications of attachment was not limited to the past but also to the present and future development of the adopted children. It was discussed that this was not only limited to adopted children but was an issue affecting every single child in the classroom. It was also felt that this issue was not only limited to the classroom but also the home and the importance of both settings to discuss and understand the child’s behaviour.
“Because if schools don’t understand about attachment issues, and they don’t understand about the life long implications of the early trauma, then they would logically think ‘well what is going on at home? Why is the child behaving this way?’”

Parent and School Governor (PC3), p. 13, line 17-20

Basic Theme: Understanding and Empathy

It was through understanding and empathy that the steering group felt would begin the process of supporting these children more effectively. Therefore any training programme would have to not only raise awareness of the experiences of adopted children, but also raise the empathy and understanding of the school staff of these issues.

“They will deal with that child (…) the same as everybody else. With the understanding that (adopted children) are very different from the rest.”

Class Teacher, (PC5), p. 6, line 20-21

Basic Theme: Consequences of Childhood Trauma

A natural extension of the raising of awareness and empathy is the discussion of the consequences of trauma and how this effects the present. The magnitude of timing of the event is no protection from the impact this might have on daily life.

“That is the key, I think. It is getting the adults to understand what really happens. There is a consequence for trauma.”

Parent and School Governor (PC3), p. 11, line 15-17
Basic Theme: Judgment of Others

The stigma associated with perceived negative behaviour and the implications these judgements have on the self-esteem and self-worth among adopted children, were considered to be of importance.

“You don’t want them to judge but they end up judging anyway. That child needs that same reassurance from a teacher as they do from a parent”

Parent and School Governor (PC3), p. 12, line 20-22

Basic Theme: Further Referrals

There was a perceived lack of understanding and knowledge of how to support these children beyond the school setting. Although the ASG was working closely with adoptive families, schools were still unsure who potential could be involved in these cases, especially with those children who are not known to be adopted. A lack of transparency was identified as being problematic with some agency involvement. A strong assertion was the need to identify and raise awareness in the support structures for school staff in developing short-term and long-term intervention through strategic planning.

“…I wouldn’t have known exactly who to contact in schools until recently”

Parent and Teaching Assistant (PC4), p. 16, line 31-32

Basic Theme: The Culture of Blame

Parents felt that there was a culture of blame with regard to the behaviours of their children and that these behaviours must be attributed to their parenting styles.
4.2.3.1.2 Theme 2

**Organising Theme: Support**

A vital point for the steering group was the development of support systems for both parents and school staff. This encompassed the development of networks existing beyond the school and home environments and developed around a framework of cooperation.

**Figure 4.2: Theme 2**

![Support Diagram]

**Basic Theme: Training and CPD in Schools**

The ASG team and EPS felt that the use of continual professional development (CPD) was an essential component to the development of awareness and long-term strategic changes in the school environment. School staff development would therefore be an integral part of this training programme.

“So when I came into this role I saw the value in training for schools”

ASG Team Member (PC2), p. 11, line 29-30
Basic Theme: Designated Educational Support Staff

The steering group identified a lack of a coordinated approach to the support of adopted children. Support was expressed for the development of as a liaison figure and named member of staff as a trusted adult for the one-to-one support of the child in the school and classroom.

“They almost need a named individual, a named adult with a relationship already built up and some kind of relationship.”

Class Teacher (PC5), p. 8, line 25-27

Basic Theme: Support for Parents

Among the parents in the steering group, the support of other parents was important, as the empowerment of this group would in extension support the development and safety of the adopted children.

“I think support for parents is a very big thing for me.”

Parent and Teaching Assistant (PC4), p. 8, line 25-27

Basic Theme: Support for Staff

As with the support of parents, the teachers felt it was essential that school staff were given the correct and appropriate tools to support children in the classroom. Teachers do see the value of continual development and how this development of knowledge will benefit all children with attachment issues, not merely adopted children.

“.when I came into this role I saw the value in training for schools”

ASG Team Member (PC2), p. 1, line 29-30
Basic Theme: Impact on Parents’ Confidence

The difficulty that some parents experience is being judged by their child’s behaviour in the classroom and in the school. The steering group also felt that it could be a struggle for parents at home if they were not empowered to support their children’s attachment and behavioural issues.

“Time and time again we hear that parents are being alienated by other parents because of the behaviour of their child.”

Parent and Teaching Assistant (PC4), p. 1, line 29-30

Basic Theme: Impact on Children's learning in schools

Perhaps the most fundamental message the steering group wished to impart to any future training programme was the impact attachment issues would have on a child’s ability to function in a classroom environment. Without support given to children with these issues they would not be able to learn.

“…attachment is the most important as loss and grief which can have a massive effect on a child’s learning.”

Parent and School Governor (PC3), p. 2, line 14-15

Basic Theme: Positive and Negative Labels of Adoption

Similarly to the theme of judgements and how this can affect the self-worth of adopted children, judgements and labels can affect the child, but also impact on the parents and staff. The negative label can become associated with the child’s behaviour and ability to learn and function in the classroom environment. This theme is also closely linked to the
raising of awareness and the development of understanding and empathy for the adopted child.

“And the children can end up getting a negative reputation in school. And as soon as that has set in there are very difficult things to address.”

ASG Team Member (PC1), p. 2, line 14-15

**Basic Theme: Who to contact for Support**

The steering group felt that it was important to make clear to both schools and other parents whom they can contact for further support and training when dealing with the issues of adopted children.

“As a school, we need to know who to contact. It needs to be quite obvious to school.”

Parent and Teaching Assistant (PC4), p. 3, line 22-23

**Basic Theme: Avoiding and Recognising Crisis Point**

Through the development of support systems, the steering group felt that it was essential to develop an understanding of the behavioural patterns of children and to support the child to develop an understanding of themselves.

“5: To avoid these high-stakes plays. That would be very useful.

1: About where we come in.

5: Yeah. At the crisis point and avoid that situation.”

Class Teacher (PC5) and ASG Team Member (PC1), p. 4, line 4-11
Basic Theme: Socialisation for Children

It was considered not merely essential for children to be supported to function in the classroom and be able to take an active part in learning, but also be given opportunities to develop social skills and be able to take part in these activities.

“It is then going to be that much harder, because the children don’t get invited to (inaudible), to each other’s houses the same parties, don’t go to the park in the holiday, because it is all through parents that become friends that the children then build those positive relationships.”

Parent and School Governor (PC3), p. 14, line 7-13

Basic Theme: Teams in LA

The LA was identified as being key to the spreading of information and the ability to support both schools and teachers, but that this was difficult to access as there seemed to be little cross agency support. The delivery of information across the LA and to schools was also identified as an issue not being addressed effectively by the steering group.

“It’s difficult to get information out there beyond a school bulletin.”

ASG Team Member (PC2), p. 17, line 12

Basic Theme: Integration for Parents

The support given to parents was considered to be necessary in creating support networks. To bring parents in contact with each other, possibly via support networks in schools.
“Because those relationships (parental friendships) start to build in most toddler groups, don’t they? Parents will bump into each other all the time in the local communities. And if you don’t start to access that click until you have a child yourself. So if you enter that at a different level, you might never get in.”

Parent and School Governor (PC3), p. 14, line 27-31

**Basic Theme: Existing Relationships**

Support and understanding was felt by the steering group to extend to establish and past relationships in the child’s life. The impacts of which can be experienced in the present.

“The constant message from him (the adopted child) was he had his half brother here looking at him in his imagination all through the day and couldn’t get beyond that. And it is a half brother that he doesn’t see”

Parent and School Governor (PC3), p. 14, line 27-31

4.2.3.1.3 Theme 3

**Organising Theme: Strategies**

The steering group viewed the development of strategies to support children, school staff and families together as being of central importance. Not only must these strategies be effective in supporting children but they must also be individualised and address the needs of the child and the team around the child.
Basic Theme: Worked Well/Not Worked Well

The researcher asked what worked well and what has not worked so well in relation to the support of adopted children and the training of school staff. Most participants shared their knowledge of this area and were keen to share their experiences.

"(The school) called the adoption services in and gave him strategies that would fit (....). Simple strategies like that".

Parent and School Governor (PC3), p. 2, line 30-33

Basic Theme: Triggers

Closely linked to the avoiding crisis points and difficult situation, the steering group identified that through individualised strategies and the building of secure and trusting relationships, staff would be able to identify the triggers of negative patterns of behaviour and begin to focus on positive relationship building.

"They don’t really stand out. There are triggers."

Class Teacher (PC5), p. 4, line 1
**Basic Theme: Individual and Tailored**

Fundamental to the steering group was the understanding that any strategy or intervention within a school must be individualised and created around the child and family to address their needs.

“It’s got to be tailored. I think that is the key for this. I mean, one of my other children has ADHD and her needs are very different from my eldest, for him is the loss and grief.”

Parent and School Governor (PC3), p. 3, line 9-11

**Basic Theme: Tackling Behaviour**

Behaviour and ways of addressing these behaviours was key for the steering group. These needed to be focused on supporting the child to make positive choices and to take responsibility for their behaviour and the consequences of those behaviours.

“I think that is very important (...) to look towards strategies and behaviour that is happening at home and in school and to put those two things together”

ASG Team Member (PC1), p. 1, line 23 and p. 2, line 1-2

**Basic Theme: Transitions Through School Day**

The ASG identified that anxiety evident in the adopted child would greatly influence the schools’ ability to support any positive development. Areas for concern, based on the experiences of the ASG team, are transitions through the school day and during the transition from primary to secondary school.
“I think the schools are getting very good at bring us on board on the transitional side. In a busy school day that is quite difficult to do that and I think I see that as very much see it as our role, if we have that knowledge and just to facilitate that transition.”

ASG Team Member (PC2), p. 3, line 28-32

Basic Theme: Named Adult

The steering group felt it important to develop support in creating tailor made and useful strategies as identified in previous organisational themes such as Designated Educational Support Staff.

“They need help to actually integrate themselves. They almost need a named individual”

Class Teacher (PC5), p. 8, line 24-25

Basic Theme: Meeting Individual Needs

In any training programme created by the EPS and ASG team it must be vital to stress that any intervention or strategy must be personal and meet the individual needs of that child.

“But what he actually needs right now is some strategies in place for a safe place to go.”

Parent and Teaching Assistant (PC4), p. 7, line 15-16

Basic Theme: The Class Supporting the Child

A holistic approach to the support of the child was felt to be most effective. The involvement of the class around the child was identified as being a useful and effective tool in this support.
“…we look at strategies to try to bring the whole class around to supporting a child as well. And we have been doing that quite successfully at times, haven’t we?”

Parent and Teaching Assistant (PC4), p. 14, line 18-20

Basic Theme: Building Support Networks

As was discussed above all strategies have to be created to support not only the child but also the parents and school staff themselves.

“But I do think having that additional pastoral understanding and being able to guide and probably more so in secondary than primary”

Parent and School Governor (PC3), p. 8, line 12-14

Basic Theme: Building Relationships

Through the development of support networks within the school and named staff, the steering group felt it would be helpful to create safe and secure environments and to help the child develop skills to create newer relationships.

“Even if it is just meeting up every now and again, asking ‘how is it going’?”

Class Teacher (PC5), p. 8, line 26-27

Basic Theme: Team around the Child

As previously stated, a holistic approach seemed to be vital in supporting long-term and short-term outcomes for the child. The development of skills, awareness and understanding of the management of the school was identified as being vital and must be included in any future training programme.
“Because sometimes, (inaudible) parent governors might have children in schools themselves and if you can really get that kind of thing across not just the head or the leadership team, it’s just a thought that has come into my head. There is absolutely no reason why a governor could not be invited.”

Parent and School Governor (PC3), p. 14, line 18-20

4.2.3.1.4 Theme 4

Organising Theme: Experiences

The sharing of experiences was identified by the steering group as being of value to any training programme. Not only would this give weight to the information shared during any training programme but it would also allow the participants to take ownership of any further interventions and support of their children.

Figure 4.4: Theme 4

Basic Theme: Duty of Care

The participants were aware that there must be a duty of care philosophy present throughout any support of an adopted child. It is through this support that the child will develop positive strategies and self-care.
“(The) child needs that same reassurance from a teacher as they do from a parent. That underneath it all your duty of care is there as any other children and you wanted to be there.”

Parent and School Governor (PC3), p. 12, line 21-23

**Basic Theme: Prevention vs. Intervention**

Historically the ASG team reported that any interventions put into place in the LA were reactive rather than preventative. The steering group shared their concerns that this was still the case and that this should change if any positive work could be done in the LA for adopted children, their families and the schools they attend.

“Researcher: So at the moment it is a bit more fire fighting rather than prevention and trying to have things in place?

3: I hope not. It can be.

4: I think the last bit, in percentages but in reality it is fire fighting and we can see that it is moving more towards what it is a wide spread of knowledge.”

Researcher, Parent and School Governor (PC3) and Parent and Teaching Assistant (PC4), p. 4, line 13-22

**Basic Theme: Changing Culture**

As this training programme will tackle the on-going issues of adopted children in schools, the steering group felt that it was vital that by working cooperatively that any change in culture and work practices would be more effective in the short- and long-term.
“If you can train the school stuff to speak with parents and speak to the other children, you can then make the switch.”

ASG Team Member (PC1), p. 6, line 29-31

**Basic Theme: Knowledge**

The training programme must be focused on the development of knowledge and sharing of experiences would empower the participants to make any meaningful changes.

“…in reality it is fire fighting and we can see that it is moving more towards what it is a wide spread of knowledge.”

Parent and Teaching Assistant (PC4), p. 4, line 21-22

**Basic Theme: Sharing Experiences**

The steering group identified that the sharing of experiences would be vital for learning and that the participants of the training programme should be given opportunities to share their knowledge and experiences for the benefit of the group.

“It was pointless at looking at the provision in a wider context and looking at the aims of that statement, because that is the icing of the cake. More informally we were sharing information about a vulnerable child and sharing that with the school. Especially if there wasn’t a statement involved. But there is definitely a role for that information sharing.”

ASG Team Member (PC2), p. 5, line 5-9
Basic Theme: A Successful Placement

By giving the right level of support and training, the benefits of a successful placement would ensure that the child would be more able to meet the challenges in school and in their futures.

“You do forget for a long time what are these children have gone through especially maybe when children have had our successful placement very early. So you haven’t seen so many issues as a constant. And then you do forget on a day-to-day basis until something comes up”

Parent and Teaching Assistant (PC4), p. 3, line 28-31

Basic Theme: The "Normal" Experience

Fundamental to all the participants was to allow the child to have a normal experience in school and at home. However there was an acknowledgement that an adopted child might not have this and that adoptive parents might struggle to come to the realisation that their child might miss out on this due to their past experiences.

“… everyone wants to see their child as just a normal child like everybody else.”

ASG Team Member (PC1), p. 9, line 5-6

4.2.3.1.5 Theme 5

Organising Theme: Communication

This theme focused on the steering groups thoughts on the essential message of any training programme and consisted of some of the factors, which had not been discussed historically in the LA. The steering group felt that any intervention should focus upon
developing communication between parents and school staff, supporting the child to find their own voice and to extend communication across the school.

**Figure 4.5: Theme 5**

![Diagram]

**Basic Theme: The Child's Voice**

Although the steering group wished that any training programme would focus on the development of understanding, empathy and skills of the parents and school staff attending, their children would also be the focus of the sessions. Communication of the child’s voice and supporting them to find this voice was critical for the participants. Any exploration of this theme within the training programme must find ways of underlining the individual needs of the child.

“*And in some senses in a training course it would be quite good to have. Something like that would work. Having the children’s voice.*”

Parent and School Governor (PC3), p. 9, line 5-6
Basic Theme: Working with Parents and School

As identified in the needs and document analysis, no training had been delivered in the LA for both parents and school staff. The steering group felt that this would be beneficial for the long-term outcomes of their children.

“We do (training and support) separately between schools and between parents. Either in the home or at training events. And I suppose part of the interest for us is to bring them together. Because I don’t think we have done much of that.”

ASG Team Member (PC1), p. 9, line 5-6

Basic Theme: When Relationships Break Down

The ASG members present in the steering group were very concerned that there were a higher level of relationship breakdown in the homes of adoptive families but also between these families and school. Work within the programme should be focused on the communication of needs and finding common goals and strategies for the families and school staff.

“I think that is very important being on the same side. There are situations where we have been in play (inaudible) breakdown of relationships between parents and school. And that can be where everybody is very defensive about their role.”

ASG Team Member (PC2), p. 12, line 26-28

Basic Theme: Reinforcement of the past

As discussed previously in this chapter, the understanding that the child’s past is a constant in the present and will affect the child. These negative experiences can be reinforced in the present through patterns of behaviour and thought. The steering group
wished that this awareness should be communicated to the training programme participants and for them to find new ways of dealing with these patterns.

“And that is when the relationships within the dates can really work, because it reinforces every day and not getting it quite right. “

Parent and School Governor (PC3), p. 6, line 24-25

Basic Theme: Training for Wider Staff

To effectively support continued change in schools (Balchin et al., 2007) and supported through the Changing Culture theme, the steering group felt that by giving new skills and knowledge to the wider school staff and not merely teaching staff.

“That is an important place to start, isn’t it? Especially within training. In terms of invariability to cascade that information throughout schools. I haven’t really thought about that.”

Class Teacher (PC5), p. 10, line 25-27

Basic Theme: SENCo/Governors/MDS (Midday Supervisors)

Involving the wider staff would support a holistic approach for the support of children with attachment issues. As identified by the literature and through the experiences of parents, school staff and the ASG it is during unstructured times during the school day and through the support of school management that long-term effective change will be most effective. Involving Governors could support change at a high level as it would benefit the whole school while the day-to-day support staff would be able to support the children during unstructured times such as break and meal times.
“2: So some governor trained people (need to be invited)?

5: They do have a block for (training).

3: I think they do and it is very very valuable to invite that as part of the training. I think it would also be very valuable when we do attachment training in schools”

ASG Team Member (PC2), Class Teacher (PC5) and Parent and School Governor (PC3), p. 16, line 6-13

Basic Theme: Information Sharing

The steering group identified that any training must also focus on the sharing of information of attachment issues for adopted children beyond the current systems for effective information sharing.

“It’s difficult to get information out there beyond a school bulletin.”

ASG Team Member (PC2), p. 17, line 12

Basic Theme: Home vs. School

As previously mentioned the steering group reported that it was through effective communication and support between home and school, which would be beneficial to the adopted child. If any training programme was to be delivered it must support the development of communication channels between the home and the school environment and encourage mutual support between the two.

“…it’s with that support of what is happening at home. And quite often we see time and time again, the same behaviour in school. And not the same level of behaviour at home”

ASG Team Member (PC2), p. 12, line 31-33
Basic Theme: Who Needs to Know? / Responsibilities

Clear roles and responsibilities must be developed in the training programme to allow effective communication within the school environment. This system should be clear from the moment the child is known to the school to ensure that effective support systems are in place for the child and their family. The steering group felt this must be addressed in the training.

“There is nothing on the forms at the moment to say whether your child is adopted when you apply the school, there is not that significant understanding of why information must be shared”

ASG Team Member (PC2), p. 10, line 13-16

Basic Theme: Communication through behaviour

The child remains the focus of the steering group. This theme links with several others previously discussed. These issues must be communicated through the training programme as it will foster understanding and empathy and remove the possibilities for negative judgements made by school staff.

“In my role as a parent would say as well that there is a genuine lack of understanding within schools as the reasons behind the behaviour. And I think that attachment and understanding of it is growing in terms of levels of understanding within the education setting”

Parent and School Governor (PC3), p. 2, line 6-9
4.2.3.1.6 Theme 6

Organising Theme: Governmental and School Policies

Throughout the steering group process was that there was a lack of understanding and knowledge within the LA and of the rights and procedures for adoptive children in education. The steering group acknowledged that for any meaningful change to occur, it must be done at several levels, not just by frontline staff and parents. They wished that information from local and national levels be shared with the training programme participants to begin the development of individual strategies and support networks.

Figure 4.6: Theme 6

Basic Theme: Adoption Processes

The parents among the steering group felt that there are still misunderstandings regarding the issues and the networks in place to place adopted children in new homes and how their past experiences effect the present. This was evident during the needs assessment carried out with the ASG team who felt there was still misunderstandings regarding the social, emotional and developmental needs of adopted children.

“I have been met with comments of why do adopted children need this?”

ASG Team Member (PC2), p. 9, line 32-33
Basic Theme: Safeguarding and Confidentiality

The steering group was clear that all strategies and support networks that could be developed through the training programme must be considered and delivered using clear safeguarding procedures and for the participants to understand the need for confidentiality. Not only for the children but their adoptive families also. There might be policy that will be effected by governmental and LA policies.

“…safeguarding does have to apply, particularly with the damage that is done…”

ASG Team Member (PC2), p. 7, line 29-30

Basic Theme: School Procedures

There was some clarity needed during the steering group session as to the procedures that might affect adopted children, including SEN and behavioural support procedures. The steering group felt that this would have to be discussed and made clear in any programme development.

“When you are trying very hard to put all the strategies into place. There has already been this threat of exclusion and it goes again against what we are trying to convey. And I do know that the school rules do have to be applied”

ASG Team Member (PC2), p. 8, line 5-8

Basic Theme: Up-to-date Information

The steering group expressed the need for up-to-date information as essential for any planning and service delivery in schools and in the home. This would allow any short-term and long-term planning to be more effective.
“And that it is as if you have to wait to this massive incident before we call you guys (the ASG team). Possibly if we had a kind of a little bit more up-to-date information about where to refer back to you. To avoid these high-stakes plays. That would be very useful.”

Class Teacher (PC5), p. 4, line 2-5

**Basic Theme: Distinction between Cared For and Adopted Children**

The steering group felt that there was a need to distinguish between the spectrum of the Cared For system and to stress that adopted children had not only gone through that system but that all safeguards set up for their care had broken down and that becoming adopted was not the end of their journey, but merely the beginning.

“This September any chance was ever been in the Cared For arena and I have noticed that a whole range of day clubs now, that used to be a bursary for a cared for child is now advertised as cared for or adopted child. So there is quite a few little, very subtle changes that are going to go towards that”

ASG Team Member (PC2), p. 10, line 10-13

**4.2.4 Programme Structure**

The needs analysis and steering group highlighted similar concerns and issues for both adoptive parents and school staff. There is a need to develop and deliver training that encourages cooperation between the home and school environments while at the same time raising the awareness of attachment issues. Furthermore it was essential to raise awareness of issues affecting the child’s ability to learn and develop in a school and stable home environment.
As discussed previously, through negotiations, a four-session programme (see Appendix M) was agreed on to offer participants training in attachment and adoption awareness. Through discussion of outcomes from document analysis, needs analysis and steering group thematic analysis, three sessions were planned to cover the themes and issues highlighted by the steering group. A fourth session was organised as an evaluation session. An overview of the session plan and details of the individual sessions can be seen in Appendix N.

Promoting understanding and empathy among the participants was fundamental to the training programme. Each session was constructed using the six organisational themes developed from the steering group data analysis. Although the organisational themes of Communication and Experiences (see 4.2.3.1.5 and 4.2.3.1.4 respectively) were present throughout the sessions, the other themes were used as foundation data for the material and construction of the programme. The aim of the programme was therefore to encourage and support participants to raise their understanding of the issues experienced by their children and empower them to make strategic and long-term changes in their schools. This training would ensure continued and effective support and development of their children within the school and home environments.

4.2.4.1 Session 1

Attachment and the Brain

Raising awareness of attachment theory and the impact of early trauma and experiences was a central theme identified in the thematic analysis and document analysis. The focus of session one was to encourage the parents and school staff to ask questions and take an active part in the sessions. Activities, information and materials (see Appendix M) were chosen to inform the participants, to raise their awareness and to encourage empathy and
understanding of the issues faced by adoptive children. The session incorporated the organisation themes identified by the steering group, which focused on raising the awareness of attachment theory and the impact of biological and neurobiological factors. Raising the awareness of the participants with regard to the issues experienced by adopted children was also essential for this session.

Organising Themes used specifically for session outcomes:

- **Awareness (see 4.2.3.1.1)** – Central to this session was to raise awareness of Attachment Theory and the implication of the nature/nurture debate. Specific references and literature (McDonald, Berlow & Thomas, 2013; Bakermans-Kranenburg & van Ijzendoorn, 2011) was used to support the participants understanding of Attachment Theory and Neurobiology.

- **Governmental (see 4.2.3.1.6)** – The National and Local picture of adoption was discussed to raise awareness and understanding of the ASG service support and the variety of services available to parents and schools.

- **Experiences (see 4.2.3.1.4)** – This allowed the participants opportunities to share experiences and knowledge with one another. This also linked to participant experiences with attachment and their understanding of this area (see 2.6.1 and 2.6.2).

- **Communication (see 4.2.3.1.5)** – It was essential for the participants to link theory, knowledge and understanding and begin the process of communication (Geddes, 2005; Slater, 2007) argues that understanding behaviour and what it attempts to communicate enables professionals to respond appropriately.
Confidentiality was explained and consent was verified (see Appendix E) and initial questionnaires (see Appendix F and 4.3.1) were given at the introduction of the session. The Burning Question Activity (see Appendix O) was used to evaluate what questions participants wished answered as part of the training and would be revisited at the end of session three.

4.2.4.2 Session 2

Challenges for the Child, School and Family

Session two was designed to revisit some of the themes discussed in session one, namely what the challenges for adopted children might be at home and in the school while at the same time encourage and promote empathy and understanding. Throughout the sessions the participants were encouraged to share their experiences and expertise as parents and educators.

Organising Themes used specifically for session outcomes:

- Strategies (see 4.2.3.1.1) – These were discussed and presented as possible tools to be used in the home and the classroom. The participants were given opportunities to share good practice and experiences.
- Governmental (see 4.2.3.1.6) – Information was shared and discussed with regard to the processes and policies schools adhere to with regard to behaviour and SEN.
- Experiences (see 4.2.3.1.4) – This was designed to promote and raise empathy for the adopted child but also to raise awareness between the participants of their own needs.
- Awareness (see 4.2.3.1.1) – Linked closely with Experiences.
• Communication (see 4.2.3.1.5) – Opportunities for the participants to become the voice and advocate of the child and to develop an awareness of the potential issues and needs of the child within each new environment such as the home and school.

• Support (see 4.2.3.1.2) – Developing support networks and how these might function within the school and between the home and school environments.

An opportunity was taken to explore the challenges experienced in school by the children, but also by the school staff. This was done to develop empathy towards school staff. Attachment strategies and how attachment behaviour might be identified in the classroom and in schools was also discussed and explored by the participants.

4.2.4.3 Session 3

The Way Forward

The penultimate session was aimed at the developing individualised strategies and support systems for the children represented by the participants. Some of the strategies from the previous session were discussed and participants were encouraged to use some of the tools shared in the sessions to tailor interventions. Nurturing and safe environmental systems were discussed and presented to support children and systematic change in schools and in the home.

Organising Themes used specifically for session outcomes:

• Support (see 4.2.3.1.2) – The participants were given the opportunity to ask questions and address any areas of the training that remained unclear. Next steps were discussed in what needed to be done to develop support between the home
and the school. Participants were encouraged to take ownership of this and make it meaningful for themselves and their children’s development.

- **Strategies** (see 4.2.3.1.1) – The participants were supported in taking steps to create supportive networks to aid communication (as above).
- **Awareness** (see 4.2.3.1.1) – The participants were invited to reflect on their learning and to address any gaps in their knowledge.
- **Experiences** (see 4.2.3.1.4) – The participants continued to share their experiences and develop their understanding of the shared experience of the training programme and how this might benefit the families, children and schools.
- **Communication** (see 4.2.3.1.5) – As above.

Participants discussed the issues of transition through the school day and transitions between schools such as from primary to secondary. The issues and difficulties children with attachment difficulties might experience were also discussed. Long-term strategies and how these might be developed with the school were examined and explored. The session concluded with an evaluation of participants’ learning conducting the Burning Question activity was helpful to highlight potential next steps.

### 4.2.4.4 Session 4

**Evaluation**

This session was planned and delivered two months after the initial three sessions. The aim was to allow some time for the participants to share their experiences in their schools and to begin the process of developing support networks and understanding of the issues experienced by adoptive children. It was hoped that school staff could report on the sharing of information with school faculties and for the participants to report
back some of the continuing issues. The session was constructed to facilitate discussion and followed a semi-structured process with the researcher posing three questions to the group (see Appendix P).

The aim of this discussion was to evaluate future improvements of the training programme. The participants were consulted regarding what went well, what was lacking and what still needs to be done in the training programme. The result was a number of statements regarding the outcome for parents and school staff attending the training, what they themselves felt needed to be improved and what was still needed to be developed in terms of the training programme delivery.

4.3 Statistical Analysis

The training programme was evaluated through the use of questionnaires at the initial session and at the end of session three. 100% of the participants returned a pre- and post evaluation questionnaire. The items and analyses of these questions are presented below and will be discussed at the development of this project. Analysis included measures of dispersion such as standard deviation and measures of central tendency (mean), which were calculated to aid the evaluation of the effectiveness of the training planning. The post questionnaire also allowed individuals to share thoughts and concerns with regard to the programme and to offer suggestions to what needed to be improved.

4.3.1 Questionnaire Questions

In order to clarify the tables below, questionnaire questions are presented as the following:
Pre Questionnaire Questions (PreQ)

PreQ1 – The sessions and workshop will be relevant to my interests

PreQ2 – I am satisfied with my knowledge and understanding of adoption in education prior to the training

PreQ3 – I am satisfied with the information provided prior to the training programme

PreQ4 – I am satisfied with the overall organisation prior to the programme

Post Questionnaire Questions (PostQ)

PostQ1 – The sessions and workshops are relevant to my interests

PostQ2 – I am satisfied with my knowledge and understanding of adoption in education after the training programme

PostQ3 – I am satisfied with the information provided during the training programme

PostQ4 – I am satisfied with the overall level of organisation throughout the programme

PostQ5 – It is helpful to get the opportunity to work and share experiences with peers

PostQ6 – I am satisfied with the overall experience of the training programme

PostQ7 – I would attend a programme of this type again of given the opportunity

In the tables presented below (see overleaf), all questionnaire questions are represented by their code number and are referred to in the written text as such throughout the chapter.
Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics for Parents, Teachers and Others

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Fourteen Parents, Teachers and Others attended the training programme (n=14). Each questionnaire question for the all participants are presented by the Minimum and Maximum scores, Mean (average score) and Standard Deviation (Tendency for Dispersal of all participant scores).

Table 4.2: Summary of Frequencies for Statistics

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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Fourteen Parents, Teachers and Others attended the training programme (n=14). Each questionnaire question for the all participants are presented by Mean (average score) and Standard Deviation (Tendency for Dispersal of all participant scores).
Table 4.3: Individual Frequency Statistics for Participants

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For Parents n=6

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For Teachers n=4

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For Others n=4

4.4 Research Question One

What have been the benefits of completing the training course?

Data show that the participants felt that the delivery and the aims of the training programme were beneficial and addressed some of the needs of the participants. The development of analysis of the steering group data produced six themes, which the steering group participants felt were appropriate and essential for the development of raising awareness of the issues and needs of adopted children and attachment theory.
The thematic analysis highlighted themes and common concerns that were backed up by the initial evaluation report (2006) as well as the training evaluation session.

Although the feedback report indicated that parents viewed the support of their children to be vital for their development, the researcher could not find any direct indication that this evaluation was an agent for change in the LA. The development of communication systems was still not addressed and strategies were needed between parents and schools to work collaboratively. Although the parents felt that they had been supported and valued the training, schools and other partner agencies were not involved in this training. Based on the summery report of the parent training in 2006 (Appendix A) this need was not being met and formed the basis for this research project.

The following is an analysis of the six themes identified through the thematic analysis with regard to the participant evaluation of the training programme. Themes developed from thematic analysis of the steering group session indicated the areas in which parents and staff needed to meet the needs of the target group. The aim of the training sessions was to address the themes identified and present through information sharing, discussion and strategic planning of individual needs and concerns of the participants.

4.4.1 Theme 1 Analysis

Awareness

The main focus of the training was to raise awareness of the issues related to adoption and attachment theory. Activities within the structure of the programme aimed at discussing the need to develop skills and knowledge of the participants while at the same time allowing parents and school staff to explore the challenges faced by adopted children.
Parents reported in the evaluation session that there had been some developments in these areas, reporting through the questionnaires that they valued “To hear and share information and practices within the home and school settings and how this information can be shared and used possibly to inform practice” (Appendix P, p. 7, line 3-5) and that: “(I most valued) talking with parents and teachers and sharing” (Appendix P, p. 6, line 4).

This was addressed throughout the training programme. Identified as essential by the steering group participants, this needs was addressed and delivered in all aspects of the materials and programme.

4.4.2 Theme 2 Analysis

Support

The development of support networks for school and home was an important long-term intervention within the training programme. Identified by Balchin et al. (2007) as an essential element for the positive and long-term systematic change, the training programme was designed to develop this structure of support. The programme allowed for the participants to discuss and explore the levels of support needed for children, to allow parents and staff to share experiences and question one another.

At the Evaluation session parents reported that “It’s no longer us against them” (Appendix P, p. 1, line 6) and that “We as parents have felt that we have been banging our heads against a wall. We are now seeing that we are being listened to.” (Appendix P, p. 1, line 10-11). This statement is significant as it highlights a development in perspectives among parents and school staff. This demonstrates the positive development and benefits for parents as the programme provided a forum to facilitate change. Both support for parents and school
staff was essential to address the needs of the participants and to be effective in raising awareness of attachment theory and the issues experienced by adopted children.

4.4.3 Theme 3 Analysis

Strategies

Staff reported that they felt similarly that the development of strategies shared and discussed in the programme has had a positive impact within the school environment and that “many of the strategies shared worked well within the school. This has helped to enlighten the school and support the parents.” (Appendix P, p. 1, line 4-5).

Although identified as positive, the participants wished that more time were established to develop these strategies further. All participants wished for “more time to develop individual strategies in the training sessions” (Appendix P, p. 5, line 5). Due to the limited time restrictions of the programme structure, more time could not be used for strategy development. This is a limit of research and programme structure and will be discussed in more detail in 5.7.

4.4.4 Theme 4 Analysis

Experiences

Similarly to 4.4.1, parents and school staff rated the opportunity to develop new strategies, share knowledge of the needs of their children and to share these experiences. This development would suggest that sharing experiences and knowledge from a variety of sources would benefit training programme participants. “(I have found most useful with the training programme has been) listening to parents and school staff.” (Appendix P, p. 6, line 14).
4.4.5 Theme 5 Analysis

Communication

Parents have begun to see the development of understanding and support among school staff as a direct result of the training programme. This also supports the need to focus on development of communication networks among parents and schools and how this communication can be used to support children in academic settings.

Parents reported that there were indications that some changes were taking place in relation to the perspective taken by schools. A parent reported “a review took place for my child. The style of the teacher and school leadership seems to have changed. The situation hasn’t changed massively with my child but the attitude of the school management has.” (Appendix P, p. 1, line 7-9). This is a substantive development for school staff and parents, as it demonstrates a shift in perspectives and practice as cooperation is beginning to become more important. Paramount to the foundation of attachment theory and the support of children with negative attachment styles is the holistic support of the child. It is not merely the responsibility of the school or parent to support the child but through cooperative work that this will be more effective.

The participants report that the benefits of the attending the programme had a direct impact on their child’s experience, stating “parents and school staff participants valued working with the home and the school.” (Appendix P, p. 2, line 4-5).

The training programme encouraged the participants to share information and experiences with one another in order to raise awareness and empathy but also to encourage meaningful communication between a variety of groups. The focus of communication seemed to support this development among parents and school staff as
it encouraged the participants to share information and modulate language towards the positive and supportive rather than merely on the negative. As communicating effectively through not only the child but also between home and school and in cooperation, participants report an increase in understanding of individual needs through exploring attachment theory and the experiences of adopted children.

4.4.6 Theme 6 Analysis

Governmental and School Policies

Similarly to 4.4.1 and 4.4.3, policies and up-to-date information was communicated through the training programme. Not only through session one (National and Local Picture of Adoption, 4.2.4.1) but also through the section of challenges for the school (4.2.4.2).

The aim of the training programme was to raise the awareness and understanding of the needs of adopted children and in doing so raise empathy among the participants. It can therefore be argued that participants rate their experiences based on the realisation that the increase in awareness will have an impact on their roles within the school setting. It can also be argued that due to the high levels of participation (100% for each session, including the evaluation session) would further indicate the continued benefits experienced by the participants.

4.5 Research Question Two

To what extent has the programme developed the participants’ understanding of the needs of adopted children?

The data suggests that participants had a positive experience during the training programme. The construction of the programme was based using rich data gathered and
analysed from a variety of sources and aimed at addressing those areas for concern identified through document and steering group analysis. As was shown in the improved results between Pre and Post Questionnaire questions, the participants’ understanding of the needs of adopted children can be argued to be improved and developed post training. Similarly, both individual statements from participants through the questionnaires and evaluation session show that participants are developing positive strategies for support and understanding and are able to put the information shared towards the improvement of their children.

4.5.1 Qualitative Analysis

The Development of Strategies (Organisational Theme) was identified as being essential and necessary to the development of work between parents and schools. The thematic analysis of the steering group identified the need for participants to understand the causes of negative behaviour and develop an understanding of this as a communication tool. It can be argued, based on the outcomes of the qualitative data gathering, that this had a varying level of understanding and outcome. The basic theme of Tackling Behaviour aimed at developing strategies to support and develop positive outcomes and encourages the child to take steps towards taking responsibility for their behaviour. Although this does enable empowerment of the child and begin the process of taking control of their existence, this does emphasise within child factors further and does not discuss the implications of understanding the fundamental communication of that behaviour. The participants rated this as an essential development for any further training programme as there was a need “More time to develop strategies” (Appendix P, p. 5, line 2)
This would indicate that more time needed to be used to explore specific roles of communication through behaviour and how this might be developed further. The steering group discussed the within child factors and how this might be misunderstood by school staff and parents and felt that this would be beneficial for participants to explore and discuss. There was a need to “Teach the Teacher” (Appendix P, p. 3, line 5).

This proposed that the parents as the expert of their child support the school staff in understanding the needs of the child and explore new ways of supporting that child. This became a discussion point as it implies that parents must take an active role in developing an understanding of their children and to begin to plan further steps towards understanding. The training programme aimed to raise this awareness and encourage participants to explore the needs of the child and how these need have a direct impact on the child’s ability to function in a school and home environment.

“It can’t just be the class teacher that supports the child. It has to be the whole school.”

Class Teacher, Appendix P, p. 3, line 6-7

This development shows clearly that the participants’ understanding of the needs of children has highlighted the need for the home and school to work closely together. Throughout the evaluation sessions and through the questionnaires given to the participants, it is clear that a holistic approach and cooperation will be most effective in supporting children. The training sessions encouraged the participants to share their experiences, both positive and negative and to allow them to empower each other by beginning to plan for the future.
It is difficult to state with absolute clarity that this experience has a similar value for every single participant from parents, teachers and others, but this does indicate that there has been a positive development within the group. The Post Questionnaires highlighted individual views on how the training supported their development. The group valued the possibility to learn from others through sharing information and experiences with others.

Cooperation and the opportunity to share experiences and practices allowed the participants to develop new strategies and to develop new avenues of support for adopted children. These views seemed to be held across all three groups, as there was a shared opportunity for participants to develop understanding of the issues of adopted children. As one school staff stated within the evaluation session:

"Different ideas and suggestions for working with the child I support."

Teaching Assistant, Appendix P, p. 6, line 23

Participants rated the sharing and developing ideas and strategies most helpful for the supported child. This was supported further by one parent who rated the most helpful element within the training programme:

"Hearing theory delivered by team members. Always useful to hear different ways of thinking about attachment and strategies and approaches"

Parent, Appendix P, p. 6, line 14-16

The training programme offered the participants the opportunity to increase their knowledge within the field of adoption and attachment theory and be able to begin the
process of shaping individualised strategies through the interaction with other professionals including parents.

4.5.2 Quantitative Analysis

The data suggested that the target population invited to the training programme was appropriate. The high Mean value of 5.00 for both PreQ1 and PostQ1 Mean (5.00) indicates the participants rated the importance of attachment as high for all groups. The SD. dropping from .392 to .000 suggested a there was a higher consensus among the scores of the participants.

Among parents there no variance of scores among the participants for PreQ1 and PostQ1 (SD .000). This would suggest that parents rated the importance of the training programme and its relevance to their interests and needs. Among Teachers and Others there is a drop from standard deviation of .500 to .000 for the same questions indicating that there is a shift in perception among those groups and a higher level of consensus among the participants. Represented among Others are members of the ASG team who will naturally feel that attachment training and creating support networks for parents and school staff is crucial for the support of adopted children. This might account for the SD of .500 and a further drop to .000 at the end of the training programme, indicating a drop of variance among participants.

There is an increase in mean scores across all pre and post evaluation questionnaire for questions 1-4 (with the exception of a .25 difference between PreQ1 and PostQ1 for Teachers) indicating an increase in knowledge and understanding of the training programme material and subject of attachment and adoption. As was discussed in 4.4
participants valued the opportunities presented in the training programme and rated their experiences as positive.

With regard to PreQ2 and PostQ2, the participants rated their knowledge as higher in the post questionnaire than the pre questionnaire and the SD of scores shows a lower level of variance among participants (with the exception of Others by a small increase of a SD score of .500 to .548). These results can indicate that there has been an increase in confidence among the participants in most of the participants and support the statement that the programme has increased the participants’ knowledge and understanding of the subject.

Although there is no variance in scores among parents (SD .000), for Teachers remained varied results for both Pre and PostQ2 as the SD. was .500 for both sets of questions. SD for both sets of questions for Others increased from .500 to .548 indicating a slight increase of discord among the group. Reasons for this rise might be varied, but an explanation might be that Teachers and Others view their role within this training programme as more demanding and the need for more information and support is greater.

The increase in Mean for both PreQ2 and PostQ2 suggest that the participants rate the attendance of the training programme as beneficial to their roles as parents and school staff. Across all three groups there is an increase in values as the participants rated post question higher than pre question. This would support the statement that participants rate the benefits of completing the training programme as positive.
PostQ5 requires the respondents to rate their overall experience of the training programme. The high level of consensus among all three groups of participants shows that they rated the overall experience as positive and beneficial. As can be seen in the table for descriptive statistics is merely due to the mean value among parents to be 4.75. There is very little significant variance within SD of the overall score (.267) this being due to a score of .500 among Teachers and .000 from Parents and Others. This can be argued to be due to teachers feeling of being overwhelmed by the subject at times (as was discussed above in 4.4) and that there is a greater emphasis for schools to work in cooperation with the home and other organisations.

4.6 Research Question Three

What have been the benefits of a training programme supported by EP involvement?

Based on the information provided from the statistical data gathering, needs analysis and later evaluations would suggest that the support provided by an EP was positive and appropriate to the development of support networks. There seems to be a greater difference between the results reported by the academic professional groups (Teachers and Others) and the parental group. This can be interpreted as a variance in personal views and experiences in the usefulness of EP support, but personal statements indicate that the EP involvement does provide a positive and helpful contribution to the development of the child. The variance in the score might therefore indicate the groups’ ability to use the information provided based on their own level of understanding rather than rating the usefulness of EP support. The statistical data suggested that there is an increase in the overall knowledge and experiences of the group. This can argued that the through the personal statements and views of the participants supports the usefulness of EP involvement and how this has benefited the groups’ unique perspectives.
4.6.1 Qualitative Analysis

The document analysis highlighted parental requests for EP involvement at the assessment phase. Parents identified the need to involve other professionals in supporting their adopted children beyond the school and ASG involvement. Through the feedback report for the parental training in 2006, this involvement was merely focused on the assessment of children for SEN funding, academic support and improvement of mental health. Schools were seen as the gatekeepers of EP involvement and there was little understanding on how this involvement could be accessed.

The training programme aimed to develop the participants’ understanding of the issues experienced by adopted children. It also gave an opportunity to develop individualised strategies and support systems for parents and school staff. This process strengthened by schools and parents taking ownership of these strategies. As identified by the steering group, these strategies needed to be tailored and individualised to meet the needs of the child, building support networks and building relationships for children and between parents and the home. Parents reported post training that due to the support offered it could be reported that some development in school perspective towards parents had changed:

“The parents have become ambassadors for their children in the schools.”

Class Teacher, Appendix P, p. 1, line 14-15

The parents reported that they were becoming more valued as a partner with regard to the development of their children in schools. Prior to the training, many parents shared the following view:
"As an adopted parent, the hardest thing has been supporting the school and the classroom on how to support my child."

Parent, Appendix P, p. 3, line 1-2

It can therefore be argued tentatively that this changing and developing view can be attributed to the usefulness of the training and the appropriate level of materials and support offered through the training programme. Participants indicated that they valued the opportunity to inform their own practice, to discuss and share information between themselves and other professionals and “the opportunity to reflect on sessions” (Appendix P, p. 7, line 9).

The programme gave the participants the opportunity to debrief and discuss any outcomes that the previous sessions might have on their situations. Parents indicated the usefulness of the training; for example that “(This training) gives hope for the future” (Appendix P, p. 9, line 4).

This statement is significant as it was through the involvement of the EP and ASG teams that this change in perspectives developed. Communicating effectively was essential to the development of the participants’ understanding of adoption and attachment theory. This communication was not merely aimed at communication between parent and school but also supporting the understanding of communication of the needs of the child and the importance of including the staff at a school level, not merely at a frontline level.

The Evaluation session indicated that the participants were developing their understanding of the subject and were requesting further support from the EP and ASG
team. Parents and school staff continued to feel that “All the supportive networks have been taken away from parents when they become adoptive parents” (Appendix P, p. 3, line 4) and that “Training is good but support must be needed to translate into real world solutions” (Appendix P, p. 4, line 6-7). This indicates that the participants valued the input of the EP but also felt that this would have to continue if long-term developments were to be effective in their schools.

4.6.2 Quantitative Analysis

The data provided from the questionnaires do indicate a variance in scores provided from the participants. Although all of these scores increase in value, there are indications that these do vary across the participants. PreQ3 and PostQ3 were designed to rate the participants’ views of the usefulness of the information provided pre and post training. Although both Teachers and Others rated the information as highly helpful and no significant differences in standard deviation in scores, parents’ scores indicate that this had various results as indicated by the Mean value increasing from 3.83 to 4.00. This would suggest that there are a variety of ratings among the six parent participants, each with their own and individualised perception of the usefulness of the information provided pre and post training programme.

Teachers and others indicated a lower mean score (3.00 and 3.25 respectively) for PreQ3, which increased to 5.00 for both scores. This would indicate that teachers and others rated the materials more consistently across all participants while parents indicated a more varied response. An argument can be made that the material provided a more comprehensive academic support with parents becoming an ambassador for the child. It can also indicate that teachers and other professionals are perhaps more comfortable in using materials and incorporating this information into their practice.
PostQ6 and PostQ7 indicate that the participants did value the training programme and would attend further sessions and training opportunities if this were offered. Both teachers and others rated this question highly (Mean scores of 5.00) indicating a high level of satisfaction with the experiential opportunities level provided by EP and ASG. There was a greater variance in scores among parents, which indicated a varied experience for this particular group. There remains a SD of .408 for both PostQ6 and PostQ7 among parents, indicating that there was a level of variance among the scores of the individual participants.
Chapter 5 Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The aim of the research was to create and evaluate a training programme based on attachment theory and adoption psychology. The research evaluated the effectiveness of the training and attempted to establish the suitability of the training programme as supported by EPs. The chapter outlined and consider research questions in relation to the literature presented and discussed in chapter 2 of this research. The following research questions were investigated:

**RQ1** – What are the needs of participants in relation to understanding and supporting attachment and adoption?

**RQ2** – To what extent has the programme developed the participants’ understanding of the needs of adopted children?

**RQ3** – What have been the benefits of a training programme supported by EP involvement?

The Coach Consult Method (Balchin, Randall and Turner, 2007) was identified as an evaluation model to compare results and evaluate outcomes. This is discussed in detail with regard to the research questions and outcomes of the mixed methodology outlined in chapter 3. The potential impact on practice for EP services and partner teams was considered and what contribution this research will make to local knowledge and practices for adopted children in academic and domestic environments. Finally the limitations of the research and potential future implications were considered.
Preparation of the training programme was based on a needs analysis and assessment of
the local authority, taking into account local needs of school staff and parents. Content
analysis was conducted on a feedback report of an attachment-training programme for
parents in 2006. This was followed by a steering group, which was facilitated to assess
the needs of potential participants analysed through thematic and content. The themes
generated by the steering group data were organised and presented in a clear and precise
manner and related back to the presenting literature and needs of the population.
Themes were then subjected to a triangulation process to increase validity and reliability
of the results. The results and themes were discussed and developed further through
consultation with TEP colleague and fieldwork supervisor and were considered to be
representative and correct.

The training programme was evaluated using a pre- and post questionnaire all designed
to gather rich qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data were then presented
as part of the evaluation session conducted at the end of the training programme;
approximately two months post the initial training period. Chapter 4 presented analysis
of all data with regard to the research questions and the impact on the training
programme design.

5.2 Overview of RQ1

What are the needs of participants in relation to understanding and supporting
attachment and adoption?

This research question was investigated throughout the three phases of the research but
centres around the development of the needs analysis within phase one. Using data from
a rich variety of sources, it can be established that the participants were aware of the
benefits of attending the training programme and that they were able to rate this
experience as positive and useful. The analysis of the steering group data informed the creation of the programme, highlighting through Thematic Analysis six areas of interest to address the needs of the population. The appropriateness of these themes were further subjected through a reliability and validity process by fellow TEP colleagues, ASG team members and fieldwork supervisors. This would further support the accretion that the themes developed through the thematic analysis were appropriate representation of the views of the steering group.

It can be argued that the themes, subjects and activities chosen for the programme (Awareness, Communication, Experiences, Support, Strategies and Government Policies, Appendix K) were evaluated as appropriate and positive for the participants (Appendix M and Appendix P). Although the outcomes and evaluations must be viewed with some level of bias, data suggest that the themes highlighted from the steering group were appropriate as the foundation of the programme. Both parents and school staff expressed that “sharing experiences with professionals and parents” (Appendix P, p. 9, line 11) was essential, suggesting that the themes of Communication and Experiences were appropriate for the training programme creation and delivery.

The use of these materials were negotiated through the work with ASG colleagues and aimed at promoting discussion and providing the participants with a source of information for their continuing CPD. Qualitative and quantitative data collected indicated an increase in knowledge and awareness of attachment theory and its impact on adoption and children’s learning. Rushton (2010) highlighted that it is through the slow increase in knowledge and preparation that empowers domestic and academic settings to form realistic expectations in “tailoring more effective placement preparation and support” (p. 42). The development of the needs assessment through the application of a steering group
was essential to understanding of the needs of the population and developing tools and information to address those needs. It could be argued that some of these needs were highlighted through the steering group and addressed appropriately by the training programme participants.

Subthemes were identified by the training programme participants as helpful to their learning experiences. Basic theme such as the Hidden Child was identified by the steering group and through thematic analysis as being essential to the raising of awareness of the participants and linked closely with the basic theme of the Voice of the Child. Although the adopted children were not present through the training, it was essential to keep them in the present when supporting their parents and school staff. By bringing the children into the discussions and keeping focus to their needs, participants would be able to begin the process of working together, creating safe and supportive environments and making the needs of the child more visible and understood as advocated by Dalen (2001). The discussion of strategies and the development of new ways of supporting adopted children was valued by both the steering group through the identification of Strategies and Communication and by the participants themselves through working cooperatively and “taking theory and strategies into schools” (Appendix P, p. 7, line 20).

Support for parents and school staff was identified as essential for the continued development of adoptive parents. Basic Themes of Support for Parents and Support for Staff indicated that the empowerment of both parents and staff would support the development and safety of the adopted children. Appropriate tools such as strategies and knowledge would further this understanding and support. School staff acknowledged the value of continual development and how this development of knowledge would benefit all children with attachment issues, not merely adopted children. “Sharing information with
parents/schools/teams of attachment and views” (Appendix P. p. 7, line 23) suggested this was an appropriate approach for the continued support of adopted children. It could be argued that the needs of the participants were addressed appropriately by the identification of some of the needs through the steering group process and were addressed by the training programme.

5.3 Overview of RQ2

To what extent has the programme developed the participants’ understanding of the needs of adopted children?

Investigations took place regarding how the participants rated an increased level of understanding of the subject of adoption and attachment theory and the impact this may have on the child’s development in both the home and school environment. The data, which support the research question, were gathered through all three phases of the research, beginning with the needs and steering group analysis and the participant’s self-rating of pre and post training. The aim of the training programme was to provide the participants with a level of understanding of attachment theory and adoption psychology and support them further with developing strategies and support networks in their schools. The final evaluation session proved vital in assessing the usefulness of the training and enabling the participants to view the learning and outcomes in an objective manner.

As was presented in the previous chapter, participants rated their experiences of the training programme as being positive and were able to qualify these experiences through qualitative and quantitative data sources. Although the sets of data analysed for this RQ were similar to the previous research question, this focused on the increase or potential decrease in participants’ understanding of the issues experienced by adopted children. As
the organisational theme of Awareness with particular emphasis on basic theme of Understanding and Empathy, the training focused on these themes as central and critical for the development of Cultural Changes (basic theme) in creating support systems for children between the home and the school.

The identification of these themes and the use of these in the training programme suggests that this provided the participants with the opportunity to discuss and develop their understanding and, as was shared during the Evaluation session “The parents have become ambassadors for their children in the schools.” (Appendix P p. 1, line 14-15). The changes in the standard deviation score for parents, teachers and others indicate that there is a lower level of variance in responses and a higher level of consensus.

Quantitative data suggested that the participants’ understanding of the needs of adopted children were rated higher post training. Similarly, evaluations of the training programme were equally supportive of RQ2. Participants reported developing positive strategies for support and understanding in cooperation with the wider school beyond the classroom.

Raising awareness of behavioural, social and emotional development in relation to creating strategies for schools and parents was essential to this increase in understanding of issues experienced by adopted children. As previously discussed, children identified as CFC or adopted are considered to be 50% more likely to show signs of emotional and behavioural problems, (Burns et al., 2004). With the DfE (2012a) reporting that 62% of UK CFC experienced severe neglect and abuse, with a reported increase of 2% per year since 2008 there are concerns that these high levels of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties will remain and increase. Furthermore, as discussed in the training
programme, lack of awareness of these issues, impact and lack of clearly developed strategies will cause school settings to fail in their support of adopted and CFC children.

In Chapter 2 it was reported that the Coalition Government proposed a reduced waiting time for appropriate adopter parents to be identified, in order to simplify the adoption process, assessment and training. This would have the theoretically driven outcome of identifying potential adoptive parents more effectively with children. Critics (“Peers rubbish Michael Gove claim over race barrier to adoption”, 2012; “The number of children in the care system in England is raising, official figures show”, 2012) claimed that this streamlining would create or exacerbate existing problems. Selwyn, Wijedasa and Meakings (2014) identified training and support of parents post adoption as being essential to the safeguarding of continued positive adoption placements. Munroe, Hollingsworth, Meetoo and Simon (2013) highlighted that it is through continued and intense training and support that the process will enable children to function, which was the aim of the training programme.

It is therefore plausible to assert that it is through further training, awareness building and working holistically which will benefit the families of adoptive children and their school settings, as opposed to simplistic streamlining of processes as suggested by the Coalition Government. In addition to streamlining of processes, it is essential that any assessment of placement must take into account the age and experiences of the child when identifying appropriate placement families. Some research presented in chapter 2 suggested that early adoption will have no impact on the development of positive attachment styles and does not play a crucial role in the child’s development (Cederblad and Höök, 1999) while others such as Dalen (2001) suggested that adoption below the
age of one years old of age will increase the likelihood of developing a positive attachment style.

Participants discussed the difficulties of understanding and raising awareness of the issues experienced by adopted children, as there was little empathy among school staff and other parents for this subject. Parents reported that there were still misunderstandings and a view that adopted children should no longer be affected by their experiences as they were in supportive and safe environments at home and at school (Bomber, 2007). As discussed by van den Dries, Juffer, van IJzendoorn and Bakermans-Kranenburg (2009), there is still varying evidence suggesting the impact adoption and early traumatic experiences will have on adopted children’s level of mental health. Also discussed was the emergence of evidence, which places a greater risk of developing insecure attachments. A clearer understanding of these issues and how they might be influenced by the child’s early experiences are essential to increase the likelihood of positive outcomes in the school environment.

5.4 Overview of RQ3

What have been the benefits of a training programme supported by EP involvement?

Information and evidence supporting this research question was gathered through the initial stages of the research and supported by the final evaluation of the training programme. The evaluations suggested that the support provided by an EP was positive and appropriate to the development of support networks. There seemed to be variances between groups as to the statistical analysis of the data. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, one interpretation is that the involvement of the EP was considered positive and made a positive contribution.
The dynamic facilitation of the training sessions allowed participants to develop individualised strategies. These potential strategies would allow parents and partner schools to develop short- and long-term strategies and interventions. The evaluation of the training programme did highlight the continuing issue of the “Hidden Child” and that awareness of the needs of adopted children is not fully considered. Raising the awareness of school staff to the potential issues experienced by adoptive children could facilitate this process. Participants reported that there are possible developments within the school and that parents are being listened to when supported by school staff. The benefits to the adoptive family are apparent, as they no longer feel like they were: “banging their heads against the wall” (Appendix P, p. 1, line 10-11).

5.4.1 The Role of the EP

It was suggested through the qualitative data that the role of the EP was central to the delivery of the training programme and through the continued work of support system development. The EP is therefore uniquely placed; through their training and knowledge of contexts to support parents and school staff, to be an advocate for the child and deliver strategic changes within the school setting.

The steering group identified the need for up-to-date information and delivery of Governmental reforms and the impact on the educational setting. As Day (2002) suggested, all Governmental reforms can cause distress and increased workloads in Education. This is evident for the participants who reported concerns with regard to impact that funding has had on adopted children. As previously mentioned, governmental proposals for adoption reform (DfE, 2012b) have been criticised by the media (Burns, 2012; “Peers rubbish Michael Gove claim over race barrier to adoption”, 2012) as being unrealistic and too radical. Procedures and Governmental policies
underlining all change in schools were considered by the steering group to be fundamental to the delivery of appropriate and sustainable changes in school. It would therefore be appropriate to argue that the interpretation and contribution of this knowledge of changes in governmental reform could be delivered and supported by EP involvement. As the participants observed “Training is good but support must be needed to translate into real world solutions” (Appendix P p. 4, line 6-7).

The EP would be ideally placed to support this delivery and development in translating the training into real world solutions, which are appropriate for the child, parents and school. It can be argued that the EP would be able to work alongside the participants and develop individualised strategies for support.

In Chapter 2, research was presented which focused on the developmental challenges faced by adopted children with regard to their ability to function alongside their peers in education. Silver (1989) and Raleigh and Kao (2013) both reported a high prevalence of learning and developmental difficulties experienced by adoptive children and a higher probability of SEN. It is therefore difficult to predict what the individual needs of the adopted children will be at any given age and time. This puts pressure on the school to dynamically assess the needs of the child and put strategies into place, which will meet those needs. The social myth (Bomber, 2007) described the preconception of many professionals of adoptive children as being at the end of the journey and that their issues would diminish and resolve themselves in a calm, supportive and loving family environment. As these issues are varying and will be dependent on the personal circumstances of the child, it was vital that any training programme support the participants to developed an understanding and raise level of knowledge of the potential
issues in order to meet those needs of their children. It can be argued that the EP is in a position to meet those needs.

5.5 Coach Consult Method Evaluation

The Coach Consult Method (Balchin, Randall and Turner, 2007) was identified as a means for evaluation for the training programme created for this research. The literature review of training programmes developed for parents and school staff for this subject area demonstrated a gap in knowledge. As discussed in previous chapters, a gap within the research exists which supports the assertion that parent and staff training programmes are effective in long-term and short-term interventions for adopted children. Similarly, at the time of research, there was no tested model for adoption and attachment training. There was also a gap identified which investigated the effectiveness of EP facilitation within training and support and what contributions are made to long-term and positive outcomes by EP involvement. A best-fit evaluation model was established to evaluate the usefulness of the training programme, while at the same time evaluate the ability to support short-term and long-term interventions for the families and schools.

The aim of the Coach Consult Method was to promote effective and long-term systematic changes in schools through supportive networking and ownership of these changes by participants. This was facilitated by local EPs through training, and later through one-to-one support. As discussed in chapter 2, the method suggests a level of support post-training facilitated by the EP to affect changes at a school level for the benefit of children and to sustain these changes at a systematic level.
The Coach Consult Method argued that the following set of principles would be essential for the positive long-term and effective outcomes from training. This would occur when:

1. The training is planned and negotiated.
2. The training identifies the needs of the school.
3. It is relevant to practice.
4. When it involves the whole school.
5. That it fosters independence of staff.
6. Techniques and methods presented during training are modelled, coached and scaffolded beyond the training course.
7. An opportunity to receive feedback and support from other professional.

Items 1 – 4 were identified through the needs analysis and were carefully considered through the planning process as discussed in detail in Chapter 3. By considering these items, the training programme was created based on realistic and relevant issues and concerns and identified the appropriate population. This created an environment in which participants were eager to attend, felt that this was relevant to their work, and that the training would have a positive outcome on their practices.

Item 5 would be dependent on training delivery. As was identified through the steering group, the experiences of both parents and staff were essential to the understanding of adopted children. The sharing of these experiences and the ability to build on these understandings and knowledge was essential to enhance the positive experiences of the child in schools and in their homes. Analysis of the training programme, both pre and post training evaluations indicate that the training was relevant to the participants,
appropriate to their needs and was viewed as positive to their continued learning and development.

Items 6 and 7 are difficult to evaluate due to the negotiated timeframe of the research and the limitations on provision as discussed in 3.3.1. Although some post training evaluation was conducted, this could only evaluate some of the short-term outcomes of the training programme and indicate the potential of long-term effects (see below). However, through the evaluation session conducted with participants post training, outcomes indicated that long-term support was needed in individual support systems and that this would strengthen any and all outcomes within each school and family attached to that school.

5.5.1 Evaluation Criteria

The Coach Consult Method investigated the impact and effects of the training at three levels using a two-tiered evaluation system (Balchin et al. 2007, p. 243):

- **Direct effect – having an effect on the target children (Tier 1).** These effects and observations were evaluated by the participants’ pre and post training.

- **Training effect – developing skilled staff and sustainable change (Tier 2).** This was based on a self-evaluation done by the researchers. This evaluation looked at the experiences of the training model and the development of knowledge and skills of the trainers and participants.

- **General effect – whole school development (Tier 2).** This evaluation came post training and looked at the long-term implications of the training in the school settings and the possible impact this would have on the school environment.
The aim of using the two-tiered system will be evaluated against the outcomes of the adoption and attachment theory training programme and will make an attempt to indicate the validity of the claims as part of the research questions.

5.5.1.1 Tier 1 Evaluation

**Direct Effects**

The evaluation of the Coach Consult Method was conducted seven months post training with a questionnaire completed by participants. This was not possible due to the limitations set by University and LA. Initial evaluation was therefore conducted approximately two months following the three sessions of the training programme. During the initial assessment and evaluation in original location of research (Falkirk), schools reported that there was a reduction in numbers of incidents. Balchin et al. (2007) also reported that school staff were evaluated by individual line management within respective schools. These evaluations indicated that the participants were taking ownership of the school initiatives and felt supported.

Participant evaluation indicated that there are movements within school ethos towards the understanding of attachment issues and how this will impact on the child’s ability to learn and function in a school environment. “My school is becoming more understanding and willing to explore more areas than before.” (Appendix P p. 3, line 18-19).

Parents still feel that work needs to be done to raise the awareness of school staff and other parents. Some parent participants remarked that they had experienced a high level of ignorance and bias towards their child.
“There is still some confusion and ignorance with regard to adoption and attachment. Head Teacher has shared with a parent: “That was then and this is now and they (the child) should not have these problems. They have a good mummy”.”

Parent, Appendix P, p. 1, line 16-19

It can be concluded that the participants, working in partnership, have taken steps to advocate for the child and are able to support systematic changes within the school environments for the benefit of the child. Difficulties can arise, however, as these evaluations are limited to the immediate effects of the training programme. It was not possible to establish long-term effects due to the immediacy of the research needed for University and LA.

5.5.1.2 Tier 2 Evaluation

Training Effects

At the time of evaluation, the participants and their management rated the training effects of the Coach Consult Method as satisfactory and therefore appropriate for the school and the development of their staff. As can be clearly surmised by chapter 4 and the evaluations conducted as part of the training programme research, the participants rated the training as appropriate, positive and lead to an increase in knowledge and understanding of the issues experienced by adopted children. Although evaluation could not be established from the school management at the same level investigated by Balchin et.al (2007) with regard to empowerment of staff and the development of strategies and services within the school, there is clear evidence to suggest that this will happen. Participants were clear in their evaluations that schools were beginning to show signs of listening to the concerns of parents and developing their own understandings of the issues of the child.
General Effects

The final evaluations of the Coach Consult Method indicated that schools were making developments based on the training experienced by their school staff and that the increase in knowledge and support was being incorporated into “everyday life in the school” (Balchin et al., p. 247). These changes were also perceived to evolve, and that staff were encouraged to maintain changes within the school.

Evaluations on this level were not possible to be conducted within the framework of this research and within the time limitations set forth by University and LA criteria. It was therefore not possible to assess and evaluate the long-term effects of the training programme. However some indications of positive general effect can be deduced from the evaluation outcomes.

5.5.2 Limitations of Evaluation

There are limitations of evaluating the Coach Consult Method with the adoption and training programme created to meet the needs of adoptive parents and school staff in LA. Although the structure of the training programme was not affected by the structure of the Coach Consult Method, the limitations were set on the number of sessions offered to the participants. The Coach Consult Method was able to offer eight training sessions while the Adoption and Attachment Training Programme was constructed to offer three. However there is sufficient comparison between the structure and length of the sessions, the principle difference being the Coach Consult Method consisted of one-hour sessions and the training programme consisted of four hours per session (commencing at 10am and completing at 2pm).
One of the aims of the training programme was to offer support and continual facilitation to schools. Although this was established and evaluated in Falkirk at the seven-month interval, this was not possible to be conducted in the limited timeframe of this research. If long-term effects were to be investigated, this would have to be conducted as a separate research project.

The number of participants and the variety of those participants could not be evaluated against the outcomes reported by Balchin et al. (2007). Although the Coach Consult Method had $n=4$ participants during training and $n=8$ for evaluation (including line managers and other management staff) the training programme evaluated here was able to include a higher number of participants and the evaluation was conducted by the participants themselves. This increase in participants would by definition increase validity and reliability of the results. This has the implication that results are more generalizable and the results can be argued to be representative.

5.5.3 Impact of Evaluation

As discussed previously there was no usable evaluation model and there existed a gap in the research. The Coach Consult Method was primarily used as a model for evaluation due to the emphasis on training and support for systemic change in schools. Furthermore the method emphasises the role of the EP as facilitator (Fox, 2009). RQ3 asked participants to rate the impact and usefulness the facilitation of the EP would have on the training programme. Although this must be viewed with some uncertainty due to the potential presence of the social desirability bias (wanting to please the researcher) the data does suggested that the opportunity to share knowledge from a variety of professionals, including EP knowledge of psychology, had a positive impact and would
support the assertions made by Fox (2009) and Balchin et al. (2007). The outcomes of this research would support:

1. The inclusion of EP involvement.
2. The EP offering unique skills and knowledge to the development of strategic systematic changes.
3. Empowering varying groups to take ownership of the training they have received.

Compatibility of the two methods for training was discussed in detail in Chapter 2. The main issue between the two models is the limitations of timeframes, to evaluate the impact of long-term interventions and the ability to conduct one-to-one support in individual settings. The main focus of the evaluation was to assess the impact of the training programme as facilitated by an EP and create a foundation for systemic changes in schools and adoptive families. It can be therefore argued that the Coach Consult Method was effective to evaluate and assess the positive impact of the training and the effectiveness experienced by the participants. As has been presented through this chapter and previous chapters, this training was effective in increasing the knowledge and understanding of adoption and attachment issues for both parents and school staff. Furthermore the Coach Consult Method was an appropriate evaluation tool as there are still gaps in this area of knowledge that this research has attempted to contribute to.

5.6 Impact on Practice

The training programme emphasised core features needed for any systemic changes required for short- and long-term changes for the benefit of children. If any changes are to be meaningful and appropriate, the needs of the child, the family and the school must
be known and central to any planning and development. The approach must be holistic and dynamic in nature and take advantage of varying knowledge bases. Training must be given to key members of staff and parents to maintain and evolve any planned and individualised strategies. Furthermore this must be supported long-term to facilitate appropriate and dynamic change.

5.6.1 Impact on EP Practice

The outcomes of this research will have implications on the training and support practices of the EPS and its partnership work within academic settings. Statements from participants clearly indicate that the training not only increased the knowledge of parents and school staff, but also has contributed to further development in schools and will be of benefit for those directly and indirectly involved.

The research indicates that a supportive environment must be developed for possible long-term interventions to be effective. This will impact upon the delivery of services if long-term improvements of services are to be considered to be effective. The EP is in a unique position to offer knowledge, understanding and perspective to support a variety of individuals and groups.

The method of indicating needs and area for delivery was essential to identifying the research focus. This method of needs analysis would therefore be appropriate to deliver future research projects as well as identifying further training programmes. This needs analysis can be developed further to establish the impact of this training programme and the possible evolving strategies which need to be developed in the area.
Essential for parents and staff attending the training was the opportunity for “Listening to experiences of parents and school staff, hearing theory delivered by team members (EP and ASG). Always useful to hear different ways of thinking about attachment and strategies and approaches.” (Adoptive parent, Appendix P, p. 6, lines 14 – 16). The impact of EP involvement can be summarised by the participant evaluation (Appendix P) in the following points:

- EP in the role of interpreter (between varying groups).
- Supporting long-term and meaningful systematic change.
- Contribution of psychological knowledge.
- Problem solving and consultation.
- Advocate for the parents and the child.

5.6.2 EPS Comments

The outcomes of the research have been welcomed by the EPS and are considered to be useful and important in contributing to the understanding of adoption and attachment theory. The LA have commented that this research has contributed to the understanding of the unique contribution of the EP and the cooperation and partnership work that needs to be established and developed between the home and the school.

Individual EPs have remarked that the research will have a positive impact on their practices and possible service delivery. The training developed as part of this research indicates that for long-term and effective change there must be further support networks developed beyond initial training. The research has demonstrated the importance of being able to work dynamically with various partners from a variety of backgrounds and the EP has a unique role. This could have an impact on service delivery as it proposes further study and research by the EPS.
5.6.3 Impact on Adoption Services

The ASG team have continued to work effectively with new adoptive parents and are making progress in working with schools to raise the awareness of adoption and attachment issues. The results and data indicate that training and support must be delivered in partnership between parents and schools to continue to be effective. The research could underpin the existing work conducted by the ASG and contribute to the development of their services in schools and in partnership with other agencies and teams such as the EPS.

As discussed in 2.4.4 and 2.4.5 governmental reforms proposed by the Coalition Government will have an impact on the ASG’s ability to develop and continue services in the LA. As supported by Selwyn et.al (2014) more training and support must be given to parents post adoption.

5.6.4 Linking Training Outcomes into Practice Development

As discussed above, the research outcomes will have a direct effect on services and practices of both EP and ASG services. The development of the training programme has the potential to focus the service training methods within the EPS when delivering training to a variety of groups to facilitate sustainable changes in educational environments. If service delivery was to be developed steps should then be taken to standardise a method of delivery (discussed in 5.8). Another possible outcome of this training programme would be service delivery across other teams and professionals in the LA, such as training opportunities for school staff, partner teams and non-professionals. Although these teams will have various aims and areas of interests, the research has the potential of developing methods for service delivery and for the EP to take a leadership role.
5.6.5 Implications on Parents and School Staff Training

The training programme was successful in delivering a method of information sharing which was useful for parents and school staff. It did not exclude prior knowledge and instead encouraged the participants to share experiences and develop mutual empathy and understanding.

The participants rated their experiences as positive and useful to their work. The data analysis indicated an increase in knowledge and understanding and was considered to be appropriate. This went some way in meeting the participants' needs. This would suggest some generalizability to training delivery to other groups.

5.7 Limitations of the Research

As discussed above and in other sections of this research, the validity and reliability of the results and the design of the research attempted to remain objective and impartial at all times. It is important to be aware of the potential limitations developed in the research and how these might affect the analysis of the outcomes and implications of this.

5.7.1 Documentary Analysis

The needs analysis was primarily based on the analysis of secondary data (Appendix A). The major limitation of validity and reliability of the report centred on the narrative of the report being a summary feedback report and not the individual evaluation or details in which data was analysed. Although documentary analysis was considered a valid method (Yin, 2013), the difficulty and limitation of using secondary data as a source are the possibility of subjective, selective and unrepresentative perspective presented by the author (Cohen et al., 2011). Although the feedback evaluation report was considered to
be representative of the views of the participants (member checking) there was no possible way to ascertain the reliability and validity of this data source, so the results of this documentary analysis must be viewed with a certain degree of caution.

5.7.2 Mixed Methods

The three phases of research were developed through the supervision process to explore the anecdotal needs of the ASG and LA adoption services. Each phase followed a logical and linear progression, each phase informing the next, which in turn would affect the potential outcome, design and facilitation. A mixed method design was considered to be most appropriate as it enabled the linear progression of identification of needs, creation, facilitation and evaluation (Table 3.1) with regard to the research questions. As identified in 3.4.1, a mixed method design would support an exploratory investigation and rich data gathering from a number of varying sources (Gorard and Taylor, 2005).

Improvements to the design could have been developed through the simplification of the three-phased process. The process could have been improved if the focus of the research was specifically investigating the impact and long-term effects and outcomes of the intervention rather than an evaluation of the created intervention over a restricted time period. The process could have been simplified incorporating two rather than three phases incorporating a needs analysis and evaluation of the intervention. This would have the potential for the researcher to investigate the impact of the intervention rather than evaluate the process.

5.7.3 Questionnaire Development

Through the process of self-reflection and critical evaluation, the use of the questionnaires as a pre and post qualitative measure could have been developed
specifically to investigate the importance of the six themes developed through the steering group rather than the development of the training programme facilitation. Although useful as a tool for developing the facilitation of the programme, steps could have been taken to specifically investigate the areas identified by the steering group. This potential redesign could invite the participants to rate their perception of each area, pre and post on an ordinal scale similar to the original design of the questionnaire (see Appendix G and H).

Although this is a departure from the original focus of the quantitative investigation of the mixed-methods design, it would have the benefit of making the research more specifically focused on the development of the intervention and the impact this would have on the participants rather than focused on the evaluation process. The redesigned questionnaire would support the potential refocus on the impact of the intervention rather than the evaluation of the creation of a new intervention.

5.7.4 Quantitative Data Analysis

The use of both qualitative and quantitative data was identified by the researcher as a means to illustrate the potential objective as well as the subjective experience of the participants. The development of the quantitative elements of the research focused specifically on the pre and post evaluation of the participants with regard to Research Question 2 and 3. This was developed to investigate and quantify the development of views among the various groups among the participants. It was hoped that this would not only identify potential areas for improvement, but also develop an understanding of the role of the EP and the impact of the issues addressed by the training programme.
As identified in 5.7.4 the development of a redesign of the use of questionnaires (focussing on the usefulness and appropriate use of raising awareness of the six themes as identified by the steering group data) would have a direct impact on the usefulness of the quantitative data investigation and the development of these tools within the investigation.

An attempt was taken to improve the generalizability of the results by developing tools to measure quantifiable results of the training programme. However, due to the relatively small sample group any information gathered would struggle to be generalizable. This could only be argued to be appropriate with a larger group or if the training programme was replicated on a number of occasions. Similarly the potential of the social desirability bias (as discussed in 5.5.3), could be argued to be inescapable and would make any participation feedback subjective.

5.7.5 Dual Role of Practitioner Psychologist and Researcher
The time limitations placed on the researcher by LA and University had a direct impact on the development and facilitation of the research. The various perspectives and priorities had to be included to address the needs of the various teams developing new partnership roles (ASG and EPS) while at the same time a need to justify and develop and understanding of the unique contribution of the EP. On personal reflection there was no conflict of interest within the research between the dual natures of the role. It is understandable that this has the potential to be a conflict, but the development of the research was a collaborative one between the LA, EPS, University and ASG.
5.7.6 Evaluation rather than Intervention

The research was designed to investigate the needs of the identified population and attempt to create an intervention to address these needs. The focus was investigating the impact and evaluation of the intervention rather than the impact of the intervention. This culminated with the focus of development of the role of the EP in the LA and developing new partnership roles to other teams in the LA. This would have an effect on the focus of the research and the ability for the research to function within an imposed time frame.

The time restrictions placed on the research meant that it was not possible to develop an understanding of the long-term effects of the training and the implications of developing support network for parents and school staff. As identified by participants through the evaluation process (Appendix P) more time should have been included to develop strategies for communication and clearer and individual interventions for each individual child.

As discussed above, any redesigned research procedure could potentially benefit from the investigation of a direct evaluation of an existing intervention rather than the creation of a new one and through individual support and facilitation (such as the specific design of the Coach Consult Method, Balchin et al., 2007 or Incredible Years, Webster-Stratton 2002). An alternative approach could be on an individual intervention level and focus on the needs and priorities within that system. This could involve a facilitation of the intervention in one setting, such as wider population of the school environment. Participants could include school leadership team, governors, midday supervisors, administrators and adoptive parents within that school.
5.8 Next Steps

The evaluation of the training programme and subsequent analysis of the results has highlighted areas for future development and possible next steps for the development of EPS provision and partnership work with other teams in the LA. The aim of the research was to create and evaluate an adoption and attachment theory based training programme. As was presented in Chapter 4, the programme can be considered to be successful as results indicated increase in knowledge and usefulness. This must be developed further and meet existing needs of the population. A process of standardisation of the training method can contribute to this process.

The development of support networks was identified as being important and vital to the continuing work conducted between home and school environments. Although it was not possible to investigate this in detail, further research must be conducted to establish long-term and developed networks for the support of parents and school staff. This would support the assertions of improved and long-term usefulness of the training by linking more closely to the post training support facilitated by EP input.

The evaluation of the training programme highlighted continuing questions such as the need to assess and identify attachment styles within school environments and some questions regarding possible treatments. Although this has been discussed as being difficult to do so (2.6.3 and 2.6.4) participants wished further discussion and investigation in this area within the training programme.

Participants also requested clarification regarding the possible observable behaviours of adopted children. Although the training programme attempted to introduce and raise awareness of behaviour as a communication tool, further explanatory factors for
internalising and externalising behaviours were requested. Steps need to be taken to clarify this if the training programme was to be reproduced and developed further.

**5.9 Considerations for Future Research**

The study was able to support its research questions regarding the research questions and found the training to be positive, useful and appropriate to the target population. The possibility of developing the training further should therefore be considered. A development of the methodology and taking steps to make the training model generalizable could be taken. This could be achieved through comparison studies on larger and diverse populations.

As discussed previously more research must be done to investigate the development of support networks beyond initial training and short-term interventions. If replicable, future research could be undertaken to investigate the long-term effects of this training programme, develop clear strategies in evolving support networks and suggestions on improvements could be made. The identified research gap with regard to training in adoption and attachment for parents and school staff should be considered. There are still unanswered questions as discussed in 5.8, which could be investigated by further empirical research.

If replicated, and on the recommendations of the steering group and the evaluations of the participants, a wider population of the school environment should be invited to similar training. Participants would therefore include school leadership team, governors, midday supervisors and administrators. As discussed in 5.7.6 a possible training delivery could be conducted in one setting and could be supported fully by parents to educate and support school staff.
5.10 Personal Reflections

The personal learning of the researcher has been intense and can be reflected in the breadth of the research itself. Not only in the subject of adoption and attachment theory but also in the training and support field as an organiser. The literature highlighted the continuing and developing importance of attachment theory in academic settings. Although issues in adoption are continuing to be important to the LA, the research shows that there still exists a lack of knowledge. The project was ambitious in scope and too large for a single person to deliver without the support of other individuals. It has highlighted the importance of cooperation, planning and having clear and concise goals.

There have been personal triumphs as participants have become ambassadors of the programme and more schools and parents have requested similar training programmes to be delivered in their schools. This is supported by the literature review, which indicates that attachment theory has a central place in the academic setting and that knowledge of this subject is vital to the development of care and safety of children.
Chapter 6 Conclusion

At the time this research was completed, the LA has been undergoing financial and workforce cuts and has undergone a high level of restructuring. Although this has not directly affected the structure of the EPS, ASG and other teams within the LA have been affected by these changes. Funding and service delivery in schools continues to develop and there exists a high level of uncertainty to how these changes will affect continued support of SEN in schools.

The literature review highlighted gaps in the knowledge of parental and school staff support and training within adoption services and attachment theory. Most training support existing for parents within adoption is based on parenting developing an understanding of the child’s behavioural needs and parental support such as the Incredible Years training (Webster-Stratton, 2002). Similarly, school staff training focuses on topic and subject training without parent involvement. A best-fit training model was identified to evaluate the outcomes of the training model created for this research, which included the opportunity for EP involvement and support.

Participants rated their experiences as positive and contributed to the foundation of developing short-term and long-term strategies for the continued academic and social and emotional development of adopted children. It is hoped that the outcomes of the research will contribute to the unique contributions EPs, develop guidelines and strategies for partnership work with parents and schools for the safeguarding of vulnerable and adopted children. The outcomes and conclusions made by this research have been supported by research conducted by the University of Bristol (Selwyn, et al., 2014). The study shows that parental support and training continues to be inconsistent
and LAs do not prepare adoptive parents for the difficult needs of traumatised and neglected children. The study does not discuss the needs of schools or the disruption that might be caused by complex behaviour in the classroom. This research has attempted to highlight the need for effective and appropriate support of parents and school staff. The need to support and educate parents and school staff on the complex needs of adoptive children and attachment theory is essential. This support will empower parents and school staff to create supportive and safe environments for the safeguarding of these vulnerable children. It is hoped that this research will be supported and developed further by future studies indicating long-term interventions and holistic practices.
References


McLellan, E., MacQueen, K. M. & Neidig, J. L., (2003). Beyond the Qualitative Interview: Data Preparation and Transcription, Field Methods, 15, 63-84


Wetz, J. (2010). *Is initial teacher training failing to meet the needs of all our young people?* Centre for British Teaching Report, Perspective, London


Appendices

Appendix A: Example Pages of Previous Parent Evaluation Report

QUESTIONNAIRE TO ADOPTIVE PARENTS
FEEDBACK REPORT

One hundred and fifty six questionnaires were sent out to Adoptive Parents and of these 63 were returned. Eight of these had pre-school children and felt unable to comment on all areas and one had no child placed as yet. One of these families did however feel that there should be a "support person" within schools for adopted children and believed that teachers need more information about the needs of adopted children.

Our aim in using this questionnaire was to establish the needs adoptive parents feel they and their children have regarding education. As professionals, we are aware of the various challenges adopted children face at school and it was seen as a valuable exercise to gather as much information as possible from families managing these challenges. At the same time, many adopted children manage well within the education system and being aware of what assists is an equally important part of the exercise.

Questionnaires from adoptive families were returned promptly and requests were made for extra questionnaires where families had more than one child. A request was also made by one adoptive parent to co-work on her research and an invitation to write an article for a magazine.

Does your child have a statement of Special Educational Needs?

Thirteen children have a statement of Special Educational Needs and these range from Educational Behavioural Difficulties, Moderate Learning Difficulties, Social Interaction and Moderate Learning Difficulties, Specific Learning Difficulties, Physical Disability plus Educational Behavioural Difficulties and Specific Learning Difficulties. Of these 13 children, 10 were considered as having other social/emotional/behavioural/learning issues.

In total, we received information about 51 school age children and of these 51, thirteen children have a statement of Special Educational Needs. Therefore 26% of the children in this survey have a statement. The national average of children having a statement is xxxxx%. Two of the families providing information on 3 children identified their children as having social/emotional/behavioural difficulty despite not being on the Special Educational Needs Register, or being statemented and that the children's behaviour had caused numerous difficulties at school.

There were a further 13 children who were on the schools' Special Educational Needs register, taking the percentage of adopted children into 50% needing support within the education system. Nine of the 13 were at School Action stage, three at School Action Plus and one at Request for Assessment. The reasons given for these children being at this stage were:

a) social skills
b) behaviour (including avoidance tactics)
c) poor concentration, very easily distracted
d) requiring an Individual Education Plan
e) organisation
f) learning
g) self-esteem
h) concentration and listening skills
i) mobility and speech
j) comprehension
k) emotional immaturity

In addition, a parent informed us that their child, whilst not having a statement, had been diagnosed with Amthorpe Drive and is functioning below her ability at school.

Exclusions

Eight children had received exclusions; two received 5 day exclusions, one received 3 days, two received 2 days 2 received 1 day and one received a half day. These exclusions had happened on more than one occasion for 3 children, one being excluded 3 times for 3 day periods. Another child narrowly avoided exclusion, but regularly receives other sanctions, eg regular detention, but also, pleasing to note, is that this child is on a "positive behaviour programme" – star charts with lots of praise and attention, all backed up with support from home.

Various sanctions are used. These are some examples of those shared by parents:

- excluded from specific subject classes
- monitoring cards
- 'phone calls home
- detentions
- lines
- loss of recreation
- isolation
- withdrawn from trips
- no PE (permanent withdrawal)
- not allowed to partake in extra curricular activities
- spoken to by Head, Deputy, Head of Student Services
- withdrawn from other children
- exclusion from Christmas party (upsetting to read)
- demerits (for failure to do homework – adoptive parent views this as child’s way of exerting control – knowing it causes annoyance).

It is acknowledged that schools have to operate sanctions for unacceptable behaviour. It would however be helpful to consider how the behaviour of these children might be managed positively.

Additional Support in School

Twenty-two of the children received additional support in school. This support is provided by:

- Special Educational Needs tutors
- Learning Support Assistants/Mentors
- Occupational Therapy in the form of assessments and report writing – no actual therapy.
- Booster group for Year 6 pupils
- Support with reading
- One to one with teachers and Learner Support
- Attention Deficiency Hyperactive Disorder Nurse
- Speech Therapist.

One parent who felt very agitated by lack of support wrote, “Support from Special Educational Needs, Social Services or Educational Psychologist is virtually impossible. They’re all off sick. It is lamentable and completely inept!”

All of the above services are funded by schools, LEA, NHS and the adoption service (local authority).

Sixteen families believed that their children would benefit from additional support and identified the following areas as significant:

- one to one classroom support
- more individual, small group intensive help. “My son still cannot read (age 7 years) and the National Curriculum is of no help”.
Adoption and Attachment Training for Schools and Parents

Participant Information Sheet
You are being invited to take part in a research study to explore and survey the impact of the development of a training programme created to develop an understanding the issues experienced of adopted children. The findings will be used to inform future research and working practices for adopted and fostered children in the borough.

Before you decide whether to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done 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. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?
The research will be carried out by J. Sohrabi-Shiraz, Trainee Educational Psychologist, Ellen Wilkinson Building, Oxford Road, University of Manchester, Manchester, M13 9PI.

Title of the Research
Creating an attachment theory and adoption psychology based training programme for parents and school staff.

What is the aim of the research?
To provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the training programme and investigate the outcomes experienced by the participants.

Why have I been chosen?
The borough has a high number of children in adopted families. As the focus of this research is to establish the level of work already carried out in schools and to identify possible impacts this programme might have in procedures, you have been identified as working closely with these children. A steering group will support this work by identifying gaps in established provision and areas, which need to be further developed.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?
Attend and take part in a steering group, which will take approximately 1 hour.

What happens to the data collected?
The researcher will facilitate the steering group and ask questions. The group’s discussions will be recorded and fully transcribed by the researcher. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained. The transcript of the steering group you attend will be analysed ‘thematically’ by the researchers (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Participants will be sent a summary of the thematic analysis and invited to provide any comment.
on how it reflects upon their recollection of the focus group discussion (member checking for validity).

**How is confidentiality maintained?**
The steering group meeting will be audio recorded and fully transcribed by the researcher and the transcript will be fully anonymised. All materials will be not be used to identify participants. All references to places, people and Local Authority will be changed to protect the participant’s identities. As soon as the full transcript is available, the audio recording of the focus group meeting will be permanently erased. A copy of each transcript will be stored for 5 years on an encrypted portable hard drive and in a paper form as part of the Thesis. Transcripts will only be shared with a supervisor as part of the research analysis. Confidentiality will continue to be maintained and no identities will be shared as part of the analysis.

**What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?**
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and 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 and without detriment to yourself.

**Will I be paid for participating in the research?**
There will be no financial imbursement but your support will contribute to a greater understanding of attachment theory and adopted children and will form the foundation of a more in-depth training programme for parents and school staff.

**What is the duration of the research?**
The steering group will last for no more than one hour. There may be a small additional time input (15 minutes approximately) if you choose to read, and give feedback upon, the thematic analysis summary.

**Where will the research be conducted?**
The steering group meeting will take place on the 28th of June at Cledford House commencing at 12pm.

**Will the outcomes of the research be published?**
Findings from this research will form part of Thesis, which forms part of my Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology.

**Contact for further information**
Jamin Sohrabi-Shiraz, Trainee Educational Psychologist, Ellen Wilkinson Building, Oxford Road, University of Manchester, Manchester, M13 9PI.
Tel: 01612753511

**What if something goes wrong?**
If something goes wrong please contact Professor Kevin Woods, Room A5.16, Ellen Wilkinson Building, Oxford Road, University of Manchester.
Tel: 0161 275 3511
Email: kevin.a.woods@manchester.ac.uk
Or
Dr Kath Tyldesley, Supervisor, Room A5.16, Ellen Wilkinson Building, Oxford Road, University of Manchester, Manchester, M13 9PI.
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If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with the researcher, please contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to 'The Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL', by emailing: Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk, or by telephoning 0161 275 7583 or 275 8093.
Appendix C: Invitation and Follow-Up Emails

Hello

My name is Jamin Sohrabi-Shiraz and I am the Trainee Educational Psychologist for Cheshire East. I am working with Cathy Moss and Hetty Verhagen from the Adoption and Special Guardianship Team. We are in the process of developing an attachment theory-training course for parent and school staff. We would very much like to invite you to take part in this course.

The training course consists of four sessions (three of which are in September) and will give the participants an opportunity to work with other adopter parents and school staff, sharing experiences and good practice. The training course will also give parents and school staff an opportunity to influence and trail blaze the way we work with regard to understanding, supporting and working with adopted children. There are no costs involved in this course and is offered to you with no financial implications.

Cathy has informed me you are interested in taking place in this process and be a part of this course.

The course will take place at Cledford House in Middlewich on 6th, 11th and 25th of September and the 4th of November 2013. Each session will start at 10.30am and will last for 2 ½ hours. Refreshments will be provided in the form of coffee, teas, juices and biscuits.

As this work will for part of my Doctoral research for my Thesis I have attached a consent form and official participation form. These are used to inform participants of the nature of the work, their rights as participants, what to expect and what is being asked of them.

I would be very grateful if you have a look at the paperwork and bring signed copies if you wish to take part in the process.

As you will be aware places on the course are limited and we have had a number of enquiries for potential participants. If you are not able to attend the course or are unable to attend due to other commitments please do let us know, as we might be able to offer this place to another family.

If you have any further questions or if anything is unclear please do not hesitate to get in touch. My contact details are below.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest and I look forward to meeting you in person in September.

Many thanks,

Jay

Macclesfield Town Hall, Market Place, SK10 1EA
Office: 01625374797 Mobile: 07717730192
Hello

This email serves as a reminder for those of you who have been invited to attend the attachment awareness training for parents and schools.

The course will take place at

Cledford House
Long Lane South
Middlewich
CW10 0DB

on 6th, 11th and 25th of September and the 4th of November 2013. Each session will start at 10.30am but please do come after 10am as we will be serving coffee, tea and some light refreshments. The session will last until 1.30pm. Do bring your lunch but we will provide drinks.

If your circumstances have changed and you are no longer able to attend please do let us know as soon as possible.

Many thanks and I hope you see you on Friday.

Jamin Sohrabi-Shiraz
Trainee Educational Psychologist

Macclesfield Town Hall
Market Place
Macclesfield
SK10 1EA

01625374797
07717730192
Appendix D: Letter

Dear__________

My name is Jamin Sohrabi-Shiraz and I am the Trainee Educational Psychologist for Cheshire East. I am working with Cathy Moss and Hetty Verhagen from the Adoption and Special Guardianship Team. We are in the process of developing an attachment theory-training course for parent and school staff. We would very much like to invite you to take part in this course.

The training course consists of four sessions (three of which are in September) and will give the participants an opportunity to work with other adopter parents and school staff, sharing experiences and good practice. The training course will also give parents and school staff an opportunity to influence and trail blaze the way we work with regard to understanding, supporting and working with adopted children. There are no costs involved in this course and is offered to you with no financial implications.

Cathy has informed me you are interested in taking place in this process and be a part of this course.

The course will take place at Cledford House in Middlewich on 6th, 11th and 25th of September and the 4th of November 2013. Each session will start at 10.30am and will last for 3 hours. Refreshments will be provided in the form of coffee, teas, juices and biscuits.

As this work will for part of my Doctoral research for my Thesis I have attached a consent form and official participation form. These are used to inform participants of the nature of the work, their rights as participants, what to expect and what is being asked of them.

I would be very grateful if you have a look at the paperwork and bring signed copies if you wish to take part in the process.

As you will be aware places on the course are limited and we have had a number of enquires for potential participants. If you are not able to attend the course or are unable to attend due to other commitments please do let us know, as we might be able to offer this place to another family.

If you have any further questions or if anything is unclear please do not hesitate to get in touch. My contact details are below.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest and I look forward to meeting you in person in September.

Many thanks,

Macclesfield Town Hall, Market Place, SK10 1EA

Office: 01625374797 Mobile: 07717730192
Appendix E: Steering Consent Form

Adoption and Attachment Training for Schools and Parents

CONSENT FORM

If you are happy to participate please complete and sign the consent form below and hand personally or by post to Mr J. Sohrabi-Shiraz, Trainee Educational Psychologist, Ellen Wilkinson Building, Oxford Road, University of Manchester, Manchester, M13 9PI.

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 focus group meeting will be audio-recorded

4. I agree to the use of anonymous quotes

5. I agree that anonymous transcription data collected may be shared with a supervisor as part of the research project

6. 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 ___________________________

Name of person taking consent: ___________________________ Date ___________________________ Signature ___________________________
Appendix F: Group Participation Form (Families)

Creating and evaluating the long-term benefits of an attachment theory and adoption psychology based training programme for parents and school staff

Participant Information Sheet
You are being invited to take part in a research study to explore and survey the impact of the training programme created to develop an understanding of the issues experienced of adopted children. The findings will be used to inform future research and working practices for adopted and fostered children in the borough. Before you decide whether to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done 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. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?
The research will be carried out by J. Sohrabi-Shiraz, Trainee Educational Psychologist, Ellen Wilkinson Building, Oxford Road, University of Manchester, Manchester, M13 9PI.

Title of the Research
Creating and evaluating the long-term benefits of an attachment theory and adoption psychology based training programme for parents and school staff

What is the aim of the research?
To provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the training programme and investigate the outcomes experienced by the participants.

Why have I been chosen?
The training offers an opportunity for adopter families to meet other families and members of school staff to share experiences and work together in the best interest of your children. As the focus of this research is to establish the level of work already carried out in schools and to identify possible impacts this programme might have in procedures, you have been identified as having a vital role in this.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?
Attend and take part in a training programme (4 sessions lasting 2 hours each) and answer two questionnaires at the beginning and end of the training programme. The last session will incorporate evaluations of the training programmes impact.

What happens to the data collected?
The researcher will administer the questionnaires. The evaluations during the last session will be recorded and fully transcribed by the researcher. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained. The transcript of the session you attend will be analysed ‘thematically’ by the researchers (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Participants will
be sent a summary of the thematic analysis and invited to provide any comment on how it reflects upon their recollection of the focus group discussion (member checking for validity).

How is confidentiality maintained?
The evaluation during the last session will be audio recorded and fully transcribed by the researcher and the transcript will be fully anonymised. All questionnaires will not be used to identify participants All references to places, people and Local Authority will be changed to protect the participant’s identities.
As soon as the full transcript is available, the audio recording of the evaluation meeting will be permanently erased.
A copy of each transcript will be stored for 5 years on an encrypted portable hard drive and in a paper form as part of the Thesis.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and 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 and without detriment to yourself.

Will I be paid for participating in the research?
There will be no financial imbursement but your support will contribute to a greater understanding of attachment theory and adopted children and will form the foundation of a more in-depth training programme for parents and school staff.

What is the duration of the research?
The questionnaire will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. The evaluation meeting (the last session) will last for no more than one hour. There may be a small additional time input (15 minutes approximately) if you choose to read, and give feedback upon, the thematic analysis summary.

Where will the research be conducted?
The training course and evaluation session will take place on the 6th, 11th and 25th of September and the 4th of November 2013 at 10.30 am.

Will the outcomes of the research be published?
Findings from this research will form part of Thesis, which forms part of my Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology.

Contact for further information
Jamin Sohrabi-Shiraz, Trainee Educational Psychologist, Ellen Wilkinson Building, Oxford Road, University of Manchester, Manchester, M13 9PI.
Tel: 01612753511

What if something goes wrong?
If something goes wrong please contact Professor Kevin Woods, Room A5.16, Ellen Wilkinson Building, Oxford Road, University of Manchester.
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Email: kevin.a.woods@manchester.ac.uk
Or
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If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with the researcher, please contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to 'The Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL', by emailing: Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk, or by telephoning 0161 275 7583 or 275 8093.
Appendix F: Group Participation Form (School Staff)

Creating and evaluating the long-term benefits of an attachment theory and adoption psychology based training programme for parents and school staff

Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research study to explore and survey the impact of the training programme created to develop an understanding the issues experienced of adopted children. The findings will be used to inform future research and working practices for adopted and fostered children in the borough. Before you decide whether to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done 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. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?
The research will be carried out by J. Sohrabi-Shiraz, Trainee Educational Psychologist, Ellen Wilkinson Building, Oxford Road, University of Manchester, Manchester, M13 9PI.

Title of the Research
Creating and evaluating the long-term benefits of an attachment theory and adoption psychology based training programme for parents and school staff

What is the aim of the research?
To provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the training programme and investigate the outcomes experienced by the participants.

Why have I been chosen?
The borough has a high number of children in adopted families. Your school has been identified as having children from these families. As the focus of this research is to establish the level of work already carried out in schools and to identify possible impacts this programme might have in procedures, you have been identified as working closely with these children.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?
Attend and take part in a training programme (4 sessions lasting 2 hours each) and answer two questionnaires at the beginning and end of the training programme. The last session will incorporate evaluations of the training programmes impact.

What happens to the data collected?
The researcher will administer the questionnaires. The evaluations during the last session will be recorded and fully transcribed by the researcher. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained. The transcript of the session you attend will be
analysed ‘thematically’ by the researchers (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Participants will be sent a summary of the thematic analysis and invited to provide any comment on how it reflects upon their recollection of the focus group discussion (member checking for validity).

**How is confidentiality maintained?**
The evaluation during the last session will be audio recorded and fully transcribed by the researcher and the transcript will be fully anonymised. All questionnaires will not be used to identify participants. All references to places, people and Local Authority will be changed to protect the participant’s identities.
As soon as the full transcript is available, the audio recording of the evaluation meeting will be permanently erased.
A copy of each transcript will be stored for 5 years on an encrypted portable hard drive and in a paper form as part of the Thesis.

**What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?**
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and 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 and without detriment to yourself.

**Will I be paid for participating in the research?**
There will be no financial imbursement but your support will contribute to a greater understanding of attachment theory and adopted children and will form the foundation of a more in-depth training programme for parents and school staff.

**What is the duration of the research?**
The questionnaire will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. The evaluation meeting will last for no more than one hour. There may be a small additional time input (15 minutes approximately) if you choose to read, and give feedback upon, the thematic analysis summary.

**Where will the research be conducted?**
The training course and evaluation session will take place on the 6th, 11th and 25th of September and the 4th of November 2013 at 10.30 am.

**Will the outcomes of the research be published?**
Findings from this research will form part of Thesis, which forms part of my Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology.

**Contact for further information**
Jamin Sohrabi-Shiraz, Trainee Educational Psychologist, Ellen Wilkinson Building, Oxford Road, University of Manchester, Manchester, M13 9PI.
Tel: 01612753511

**What if something goes wrong?**
If something goes wrong please contact Professor Kevin Woods, Room A5.16, Ellen Wilkinson Building, Oxford Road, University of Manchester.
Tel: 0161 275 3511
Email: kevin.a.woods@manchester.ac.uk
Or
Dr Kath Tyldesley, Supervisor, Room A5.16, Ellen Wilkinson Building, Oxford Road, University of Manchester, Manchester, M13 9PI.
Tel: 0161 275 3511
Email: k.tyldesley@blackberry.orange.co.uk

If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with the researcher, please contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to 'The Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL', by emailing: Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk, or by telephoning 0161 275 7583 or 275 8093.
Adopted Children Awareness Training Questionnaire

(The University of Manchester)

(All responses are fully anonymous and will be treated as confidential)

1. Which of the following best describes you?
   - Parent
   - Teacher
   - Other (Please Specify)

2. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?
   - The sessions and workshops will be relevant to my interests.
   - I am satisfied with my knowledge and understanding of adoption in education and prior to the training programme.
   - I am satisfied with the information provided prior to the training programme.
   - It is helpful to get an opportunity to work and share experiences with peers.
   - I am satisfied with the overall organisation of the training programme.

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<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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3. We would appreciate your feedback/comments for future development of the training course. Additional thoughts on what could be improved, or what worked well, will be most helpful (please continue on the reverse of this sheet if necessary).

Comments:

I have questions about...

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
Adopted Children Awareness Training Questionnaire

1. Which of the following best describes you?
   - Parent
   - Teacher
   - Other (please specify)

2. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neither Agree nor Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

   [Statements]

3. Additional thoughts on what could be improved, or what worked well:

   [Comments]

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
Appendix I: RREA Form Coversheets

RESEARCH RISK AND ETHICS ASSESSMENT

School of Education, University of Manchester

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 has 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.\(^6\)

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.

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

This form should be completed, in consultation with the School of Education Ethical Practice Policy Guidelines\(^7\), by School of Education students and their supervisors in all cases, except where a pre-approved assignment template currently exists\(^8\). There are six main sections to this document, with three additional sections for UG/PGT research (or Prof Doc Research Papers) seeking ethical approval for LOW risk studies from a supervisor/tutor:

\(^6\) A reasonable person would agree that the study includes no issues of public or private objection, or of a sensitive nature.

\(^7\) [http://www.education.manchester.ac.uk/intranet/ethics/](http://www.education.manchester.ac.uk/intranet/ethics/)

\(^8\) For courses with approved templates see: [http://www.education.manchester.ac.uk/intranet/ethics](http://www.education.manchester.ac.uk/intranet/ethics)
ANY student

- Section A – Summary of Research Proposal (page 1)
- Section B – Description of Research (page 2)
- Sections C.0-C.1 – Criteria for HIGH risk research (page 4)
- Section C.2 – Criteria for MEDIUM risk research (page 6)
- Section C.3 – Criteria for LOW risk research (page 8)

Where indicated

- Section D – LOW risk Fieldwork Declaration (page 9)

UG/PGT students and Prof Doc students completing Research Papers only

- Section E.1 – Criteria for LOW risk PGT/UG approval (page 11)

Supervisors and tutor approvals of LOW risk student research

- Section E.2 – Supervisor confirmation that research matches LOW risk criteria (page 12)
- Section E.3 – Minor Amendments to LOW risk study and supervisor approval (page 13)

It may be appropriate for supervisors and students to review and discuss responses to these questions together.

NB: A separate Fieldwork Risk Assessment form must be completed as indicated in this RREA, in order to plan how safety issues will be responded to during fieldwork visits. The Fieldwork Risk Assessment form is available on the School of Education ethics intranet. For all projects where this does not apply, a LOW Risk Fieldwork Declaration (Section D) must be completed. Instructions on this and subsequent stages of the RREA process are provided at the end of each following section.
## RESEARCH RISK AND ETHICS ASSESSMENT

School of Education, University of Manchester

*To be completed by QA administrator*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RIA reference</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date received</td>
<td>Date approved</td>
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</tbody>
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### 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>Jamin Sohrabi-Shiraz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2. Student ID (quoted on library/swipe card):</td>
<td>81939460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3. Email Address:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Jamin.sohrabi-shiraz@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk">Jamin.sohrabi-shiraz@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4. Name of Supervisor:</td>
<td>Kath Tyldesey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5. Supervisor email address &amp; contact phone no.:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Kathleen.Tyldesley@manchester.ac.uk">Kathleen.Tyldesley@manchester.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work: 0161 275 7282</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile: 07875219562</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6. Programme (PhD, ProfDoc, MEd, PGCE, MSc, BA etc):</td>
<td>Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology D.Ed.Psych</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A7. Year of Study</strong></td>
<td>Year 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A9. Course Code</strong></td>
<td>EDUC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A10. Title of Project:</strong></td>
<td>Creating an attachment theory and adoption psychology based training programme for parents and school staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A11. Participant Recruitment Start Date:</strong></td>
<td>On confirmation of ethical approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A13. Proposed Fieldwork Start Date:</strong></td>
<td>March 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A14. Location(s) where the project will be carried out:</strong></td>
<td>Cheshire East Local Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A15. Student Signature:</strong></td>
<td>![Signature]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A15. Assessed Risk Level**

- [ ] Low
- [X] Medium
- [ ] High
- [ ] NRES reqd.

**A16. Supervisor Signature**

K. Stylesley,

**A17. Date**

18th March, 2013

The following section to be completed by the SUPERVISOR
School of Education

Ethical Approval Application Form

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>Jamin Sohrabi-Shiraz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Supervisor:</td>
<td>Kath Tyldesey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme (PhD, Prof Doc, MEd, PGCE, MSc, BA etc):</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year of Study</strong></td>
<td>Year 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full/Part-time</strong></td>
<td>Fulltime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title of Project:</strong></td>
<td>Creating an attachment theory and adoption psychology based training programme for parents and school staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Start and End Dates:</strong></td>
<td>April 2013 – October 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location(s) where the project will be carried out:</strong></td>
<td>Cheshire East Local Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No risk, or acceptable levels of risk (measures documented)</strong></td>
<td>Rated as Acceptable Risk (Medium)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Signature:**

**Supervisor Signature:**

18th March 2013

** Supervisor signature confirms that the student has the relevant experience, knowledge and skills to carry out the study in an appropriate manner**
Appendix K: Examples of Steering Group Transcription

Steering Group Transcript

People present: Researcher and 5 participants

Research

So what I thought we would do first of all is maybe talk a bit about our experiences with adoption or with children with attachment difficulties, what is happening in the schools, in training that you have been a part of and to start from there really.

Participant Response

1

Is it may be easier if we start off? With our experiences and what not? As a team we have been aware of for many years that children who have experienced early trauma and abuse may have attachment issues. They have a particular challenges in school and I think as an adoption support service you see the themes coming through and that is backed up by research. So I think going into schools and have training in schools has been a big part of our work. We do this separately between schools and between parents. Either in the home or at training events.

And I suppose part of the interest for us is to bring them together. Because I don’t think we have done much of that. (Team member) has done a little since last summer and over the last couple of months. But as a service this has been a recent development.

2

I am quite passionate about that as I have come from education. I am quite used to seeing the value of working with the parents and school together. So when I came into this role I saw the value in training for schools and that was fantastic. It was giving us a chance to talk really without parents there about the challenges. I think that is very important and I think actually to look towards
strategies and behaviour that is happening at home and in school and to put
those two things together. That is very much and understanding and of
continuity and it can be very positive.

In my role as a parent would say as well that there is a genuine lack of
understanding within schools as the reasons behind the behaviour. And I think
that attachment and understanding of it is growing in terms of levels of
understanding within the education setting. But I would say very strongly that
early trauma and abuse and a legacy of that creates massive barriers to learning
but that could just pop up one day or at any time reflected across the whole term
or a whole year. And it’s almost about educating the educators. To take a step
back to you to see if they have adopted child with in their remit and almost
explore. And I would also say that attachment is the most important as lost and
grief which can have a massive effect on a child’s learning. We have had
particular experiences where we have used your service and in my son’s school
to a very successful level. In terms of him having his strategies in place but still
the level of education of the teacher wasn’t quite there. To me there is a bit of
(inaudible) service to this and I think it is pivotal to get them to understand it
from the very very beginning. And have a (inaudible).

Researcher

So what your experience of what has worked well or hasn’t worked as well as
you would like?

In terms of what has worked very well in this instance with my eldest son who
was drifting in class and was not focused. The constant message from him was he
had his half brother here looking at him in his imagination all through the day
and couldn’t get beyond that. And it is a half brother that he doesn’t see. And they
called the adoption services in and gave him strategies that would fit in for a
child who is physically on his brother on his shoulder overlooking him and not
looking at it. Simple strategies like that. They worked really well. And then
maybe using school nurse. That was another one. And she was involved in a lot of
the support work for this particular boy. That really helped him, being able to
talk.

Researcher
Something really individualised?

3
It's got to be tailored. I think that is the key for this. I mean, one of my other
children has ADHD and her needs are very different from my eldest, for him is
the loss and grief. For my middle whose issues are attachment. It is about looking
at the individual child and there is still a culture of blame. I think it's about
getting that into educators that there are genuine reasons for the behaviour and
that is long term. I think it is a misconception that I have heard in staffroom that
actually and successful placement is made and that must be it then. It's the end.
And I think, if we give it 12 months, and there is almost a feeling that people
want to timescale the support. And that's it then. And we're all done! It's fixed!
And we can just move on. But with a child who hasn't had a traumatic start are
actually, obviously the case when we are looking at a lifetime of support as and
when you need to get in and out of and who is to say that there might be periods
when, long sustainable periods where it isn't needed but as a parent you need to
know that it's still there. As a school, we need to know who to contact. It needs to
be quite obvious to school. Who to contact and when and maybe some of the
triggers and the things to look out for. Because you do forget in school
(inaudible).

4
You do forget for a long time what are these children have gone through
especially maybe when children have had our successful placement very early.
So you haven't seen so many issues as a constant. And then you do forget on a
day-to-day basis until something comes up. Because it could be major. Especially
in transition.

5
Appendix L: Transactional Analysis Colour Coding Pictures

Basic Themes Sorted in Organisation Themes and named.

Identifying notes and colourcoding Themes
Colour Coding to Identify Themes Within Text
Appendix M: Examples of Training Programme PowerPoint Hand-Outs

Attachment and The Brain
Session 1

Today's Session
- 10.30am Introduction (Who's who)
- Initial Questionnaire
- 10.45am A Range of Question activity
- 11.00am Attachment - Local and National Pictures, The Hidden Child etc.
- 11.30am The Generational Mix Activity
- 12.00pm Attachment Theory, Biological and Behavioral Outcomes including a Brain activity
- 12.30pm Lunch
- 13.30pm Attachment Theory cont.
- 13.50pm Detachment

Health and Safety

Who's Who
The Brain

A cross section of the brain

Baby Brain Development and Emotional Health

- Early experiences determine which parts of the brain grow and which do not.
- Lack of stimulation directly affects the development of a baby's young child's brain. By the age of 2 years the infant has as many neural pathways as an adult - the number of synapses in the brain increases by as much as 25% depending on levels of stimulation.
- Under conditions of stress and threat the cortex is bypassed and we rely on the quicker responses of the mid and limbic brain.

Effect of Early Experiences on Brain Development

- Stress release the hormone cortisol to enter the brain. When in a stressful situation, cortisol activates the sympathetic nervous system.
- A cross and short arc, to respond to stress, the hormones of the adrenal gland, the cortex reacts to the stress and releases, depending on levels of stimulation.
- Adrenaline response ("fight or flight") - child is stressed, select off, producer.
- Child moves closer to camera in reduced stress.
- Restriction and punishment is feared by responding to the child's probability.
- Perpetual stress overcomes rather than adults anxiety.

Nature vs. Nurture

This is a cross section of a 3 year old brain. One has suffered extreme neglect.
Appendix N: Session Plan

Session 1 – Attachment and the Brain
10.00am Coffee
10.30am Introduction (Who’s who)
    Initial Questionnaire
10.45am A Burning Question Activity
10.50am Adoption – Local and National Picture, The Hidden Child etc
11.00am The Gingerbread Man Activity
11.20am Attachment Theory – Biological and Behavioural Outcomes including Living Brain Activity
12.00pm Lunch
12.20pm Attachment Theory cont.
13.15pm Debrief

Session 2 – Challenges for the Child, School and Family
10.00am Coffee
10.30am Refresher and recap of last week
10.40am The Child – Challenges and Promoting Empathy and Understanding (including exercises and scenarios)
11.30am The School – Challenges for the School and what does the behaviour look like in the classroom (including strategies)
12.15pm Lunch
12.30pm Strategies
13.15pm Debrief

Session 3 – The Way Forward
10.00am Coffee
10.30am Refresher and recap of last week
10.40am The way forward for a nurturing school and family
    Development and continuous planning
    Transition
Good Practice and Resources
12.15pm Lunch
12.30pm Questions Answered? What have I learned?
    What do I/we need to do?
    Where do we want to be in 4/6/12 months time?
    Support network?
13.15pm Debrief and Final Evaluation Questionnaires
Appendix O: The Burning Question Picture

The burning Question exercise was used for participants to take responsibility for their own learning and ask what they might want to take away from the course. This was later revisited at the end of session 3 to see if the questions had been answered.
Evaluation Session Outcomes and Themes

What worked well in the training programme?

- Many of the strategies shared worked well within the school. This has helped to enlighten the school and support the parents.
- It’s no longer us against them
- A review took place for my child. The style of the teacher and school leadership seems to have changed. The situation hasn’t changed massively with my child but the attitude of the school management has.
- We as parents have felt that we have been banging our heads against a wall. We are now seeing that we are being listened to.
- Information packs shared in the training sessions have been shared with schools and have been helpful.
- The parents have become ambassadors for their children in the schools.
- There is still some confusion and ignorance with regard to adoption and attachment. Head Teacher has shared with a parent: “That was then and this is now and they (the child) should not have these problems. They have a good mummy”.
- Parents understand some of the issues experienced with the school in the classroom
- School staff still question on how biology has an effect on children’s development.
• The training should always be about solution focused and about sharing information, experiences and raising awareness of the participants.

• Parents and school staff participants valued working with the home and the school.

• Needed some more information and experiences from secondary schools.

• Sessions being spaced out and not time intensive was helpful for learning.

• We wanted more biology and spending more time in the development of attachment styles and brain chemistry rather than just overview and introduction.

• The Hidden Child activity was very helpful to raise awareness.

• Perceptions beyond the training need to be challenged and changed and this must be made explicit. Teacher: “Why don’t we know this in school?”

• Comparative image: Knowing that a car engine works but not knowing how the parts work together” – this is how we see this training.

• Although staff do come together for a child, it isn’t until that light bulb moment that they understand that this happens to more children in the school. The training provides that light bulb moment for parents and staff.

• Parents need to be supported by other agencies and to be taken seriously.
- Parent: “As an adopted parent, the hardest thing has been supporting the school and the classroom on how to support my child.”

- All the supportive networks have been taken away from parents when they become adoptive parents

- “Teach the Teacher”

- It can’t just be the class teacher that supports the child. It has to be the whole school.

- Pre-emptive is so much more important than Crisis Management.

- Still questions regarding what will happen in transition through the school?

**What needs to be done?**

- Lack of support in the LA is evident. We shouldn’t have to fight so hard to get this kind of support.

- We need to bring people together.

- We (parents and school staff) need to given toolkits to support our children.

- "My school is becoming more understanding and will to explore more areas than before."

- Supportive networks need to be developed.

- Continue to develop understanding (of the issues experienced by adopted children and those with attachment issues) rather than strict behaviour plans.

- It all still need to have a positive underpinning and a shift in language around adopted children.
Appendix Q: Interview Schedule for Focus Group and Evaluation Session

Interview Schedule (Steering Group)

1. Introduction of researcher and the aims of the research and what the aims of the steering group

2. Invite the participants to Introduce themselves
   Background (parent, schools staff, ASG etc)
   Child/School

3. What are your experiences with adoption and attachment?

4. What training and support have you received in this area?
   Who/what/where

5. What has worked will and what hasn’t worked as well as you would like?

6. What support and training have you received?

7. What support needs to be put into place?
   For Parents and Schools
   Training

8. What needs to be addressed in the training programme?

9. What could/should/might that look like?

Interview Schedule (Evaluation Session)

1. What worked well in the training programme?
   Enjoyed
   Has anything changed?
   Most useful
   Helpful

2. What needs to be done?
   To be address
   Next Steps

3. What is still lacking (in the training programme) and what needs to be developed further?
   What could we do better?
   Areas that need to be addressed?