EXPLORING THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAMS

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

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CHARLOTTE FIONA LOCKHART

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>AEP</td>
<td>Association of Educational Psychologists</td>
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<tr>
<td>BPS</td>
<td>British Psychological Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAMHS</td>
<td>Child And Adolescent Mental Health Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBT</td>
<td>Cognitive Behaviour Therapy</td>
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<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>Critical Incident</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIRT</td>
<td>Critical Incident Response Team</td>
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<td>CISD</td>
<td>Critical Incident Stress Debriefing</td>
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<tr>
<td>CISG</td>
<td>Critical Incident Support Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>CISM</td>
<td>Critical Incident Stress Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuing Professional Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>DECP</td>
<td>Division of Educational and Child Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSM-IV</td>
<td>Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMDR</td>
<td>Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing</td>
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<tr>
<td>EP</td>
<td>Educational Psychologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPS</td>
<td>Educational Psychology Service</td>
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<td>EWO</td>
<td>Education Welfare Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>HPC</td>
<td>Health Profession Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPA</td>
<td>Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Local Authority</td>
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<td>LEA</td>
<td>Local Education Authority</td>
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<td>NEELB</td>
<td>North Eastern Education and Library Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>NICE</td>
<td>National Institute for Clinical Excellence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>Psychological Debriefing</td>
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<tr>
<td>PEP</td>
<td>Principal Educational Psychologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTSD</td>
<td>Post-traumatic Stress Disorder</td>
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<td>RADIO</td>
<td>Research and Development in Organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCT</td>
<td>Randomised Controlled Trial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ</td>
<td>Research Question</td>
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<tr>
<td>SELB</td>
<td>Southern Education and Library Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEN</td>
<td>Special Educational Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENCO</td>
<td>Special Educational Needs Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>TACIT</td>
<td>Trauma And Crisis Intervention Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEP</td>
<td>Trainee Educational Psychologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>WAVE</td>
<td>Widows/Widowers Against Violence Empower</td>
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<td>WELB</td>
<td>Western Education and Library Board</td>
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ABSTRACT

Children sometimes experience loss and trauma through critical incidents such as unexpected bereavement through accidental death which can have negative psychological effects. In many countries, where there is a school psychology service, it would seem likely that an Educational Psychologist could be involved in order to mitigate such psychological effects. Support led by Educational Psychologists and others is often organised through Critical Incident Response Teams.

Since 1994 a range of support offered by Educational Psychology Services in England has been documented in the literature. There is information in the literature about the range of professionals involved and the type of support that is offered. However, it is not clear why some responses/teams are more sustainable and why they vary in structure. The literature broadly specifies critical incident responses, but this research aims to provide a more detailed specification, sharply focused on the process of developing a Critical Incident Response Team.

The present study involved a series of interviews at seven Local Authorities which have Critical Incident Response Teams all of which have been operational for at least five years. Multiple sources of evidence are used, namely semi-structured interviews with lead Educational Psychologists for critical incident support and other Educational Psychologists and professionals who are part of the Critical Incident Response Team. The transcriptions of all the semi-structured interviews were analysed using content analysis and thematic analysis.

The findings were used to propose a theoretical model, containing indications of context, personnel and process factors to consider for the development of a sustainable Critical Incident Response Team.
DECLARATION

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I want to thank my family and friends for their encouragement whilst working on this project. Finally I want to thank my husband for his continued support and encouragement throughout my training.
THE AUTHOR

Charlotte Lockhart has a Bachelor of Science (Honours) degree in Psychology from the University of Sheffield. She also has a Postgraduate Certificate of Education from Liverpool Hope University.
Chapter 1 Introduction

Children sometimes experience loss and trauma through critical incidents (CIs) such as unexpected bereavement through accidental death which can have negative psychological effects. In many countries, where there is a school psychology service, it would seem likely that an Educational Psychologist (EP) could be involved in order to mitigate such psychological effects. Support led by EPs and others is often organised through Critical Incident Response Teams (CIRTs).

Farrell, Woods, Lewis, Rooney, Squires and O’Connor (2006) undertook a review of EP contributions in England and Wales. They found CIRTs were reported as examples of distinctive EP contributions in multi-agency working. UK national health guidelines on post trauma have also recognised the role EPs may have:

‘[Following a major disaster] Educational psychology services in conjunction with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), social services and education are likely to coordinate the provision of social and psychological care to children’ (National Institute for Clinical Excellence, NICE, 2006, p.118).

The guidelines go on to state that ‘In order for their input to be effective this support should be evidence based and delivered in a pre-planned, coordinated manner that is integrated into the central disaster plan’ (NICE, 2006, p.117).

This research has been undertaken because the researcher, as Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP), was alerted to a local provision gap in her home1 Educational Psychology Service (EPS). The EPS does not currently have a model or guidelines for Critical Incident (CI) response. Discussion with EPs in the home Local Authority (LA) suggests that some have been involved in an ad hoc way following CIs. The TEP also met with two emergency planning officers who noted that, although there is an official Trauma And Crisis Intervention Team (TACIT), it does not appear to be operating effectively.

---

1 The TEP’s ‘home’ EPS/Local Authority relates to the service/Local Authority in which she was employed as a trainee EP in the period of this research.
The TEP wanted to find out how to develop a sustainable CIRT. Therefore the aims of the literature review are to develop understandings of:

- The history of CIs within the literature
- Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Prevalence of CI response within EPSs and how they respond
- Interventions following CIs
- How LA CI response services are set up
- What factors influence change in organisations
- How CI response services are evaluated

Chapter 2 of the thesis will present the current literature which shows there is a gap in the knowledge base relevant to the areas of enquiry above. This gap provided the research questions (RQs):

RQ(1) How have LAs developed current CI support in terms of support offered, inception and protocols?

RQ(2) How do LAs sustain and evaluate a CI approach?

The events discussed in the literature are termed, ‘crisis’, ‘critical incidents’ and ‘traumatic events’. McCaffrey (2004) defined a crisis as ‘a situation which is outside the range of normal human experience, which would be markedly distressing to anyone, such as the death of a colleague (or colleagues), a child (or children); or a traumatic incident which resulted in a near death experience for a member (or members) of staff and/or a child (or children)’ (p.110-111).

Looking back at the history of CIs within the literature it is clear that crises have been labelled and discussed since the 1970s. Historically school psychologists have been identified as having a key role in support offered following a CI. In the literature reviewed it has been acknowledged that children may witness traumatic events in and around schools and can suffer long-lasting effects (Tricky & Black, 2000; Yule, Bolton, Udwin, Boyle, O’Ryan & Nurrish, 2000). A range of research is reviewed which provides evidence for PTSD in children and adolescents (e.g. Mghaieth, Othman,
Bouden & Halayem, 2007; La Greca, Silverman, Vernberg & Prinstein, 1996) however it is important to note that there is variety in the trauma experienced, assessment used and time lapse. Cameron, Gersch, M’Gadzah and Moyse (1995) and La Greca (2007) draw attention to the issue of co-morbidity. The focus in research about interventions is Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) but Vickers (2005) noted that the ‘active ingredient’ of CBT programmes needs to be identified.

Information about support for CIs is also available within LAs. Since 1994 a range of support offered by EPSs in England has been documented in the literature. O’Hara, Taylor and Simpson (1994) solely describe the response of the EPS following a CI. Mallon and Best (1995) and Cameron et al. (1995) produced guidelines for EPSs involved or planning to be involved in CI work from their own experiences and McCaffrey (2004) reported a model for supporting schools in crisis. The only article which described how a CI service was set up in the UK was Carroll, Frew, Futcher, Ladkin, Morey, Price and Smith (1997) but there were several gaps in this description (e.g. capacity issues). It is clear from the literature that CI support exists within LAs and that often a range of professionals are involved. There is also information in the literature about the type of support that is offered, however it is not clear why some responses/teams are more sustainable and why their protocols and structure vary. For example, following a CI in Kent, McCaffrey (2004) reports that the crisis support coordinator informs the EPS and other agencies whereas Cameron et al. (1995) reports that in Waltham Forest the Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP) is a member of the crisis team but the team is led by social services. The literature broadly specifies CI responses, however the TEP wants a more detailed specification, sharply focussed on the process of developing a CIRT.

CI support within the home LA entails work across a large organisation and literature indicates that working at an organisational level can be complicated and difficult to successfully complete (e.g. Stobie, 2002). The literature has discussed the relevance of action research (Lewin, 1947; Elsey & Lathlean, 2006) and several ideas in terms of steps, prerequisites, facilitators and challenges to consider when working through a change process. Guimaraes and Armstrong (1998) and By (2005) report the lack of an empirically supported model. Several key factors which influence work at the organisational level were highlighted by Weick (2001) in his analysis of organisational literature. He notes that organisational theory is moving away from focussing on
rational systems and instead is developing ideas about how open and natural systems work. He notes that many traditional ideas which have developed about organisational change are based on theories of rational systems and may need alternations to fit more open systems.

Evaluation of services to date appears to have been through evaluation forms, anecdotal evidence and the use of the Impact of Events Scale (Horowitz, Wilner & Alvarez, 1979). McCaffrey (2004) reports surveying schools to find out what support they would want. Carroll et al. (1997) notes ethical dilemmas in formally evaluating the effectiveness of CI support. Posada (2006) comments that it is difficult to carry out research during the post impact phase of CIs and looks to simulations instead.

Chapter 3 of the thesis will present the methodology of the research project. The Research and Development in Organisations model (RADIO, Timmins, Shepherd and Kelly, 2003) is introduced and the steps taken under the first three stages outlined. The first three stages will be used to help ensure that the research fits the home LA’s aims and in a sense is the context for the research. Following the rationale and background, the chapter outlines the information gained from a preliminary fieldwork orientation which involved attending three seminars. The design of the study is explained, noting that it is a series of semi-structured interviews with lead EPs for CI, and other EPs or LA employees who are part of the CIRT. The data gathering methods are explained, e.g. semi-structured interviews with lead EPs for CI support and other EPs and professionals who are part of the CIRT. Content analysis and thematic analysis are described as the data analysis methods and the stages worked through are presented. The researcher presents the epistemological position which is adopted in this research. The chapter critically evaluates the research design, data gathering methods, analysis and reporting. The chapter closes by discussing the ethical issues raised by the current research.

Chapter 4 will present the findings, firstly, a LA by LA analysis looking at how LAs have developed current CI support (RQ1) and secondly a cross-LA analysis of the sustainability and evaluation of CI responses (RQ2). The data which described specific manifest details about the support offered, inception and protocol of each individual CIRT was separated and coded as ‘support’, ‘inception’ and ‘protocol’. Background information about the LA was also recorded. This information is presented for each
LA. The cross-LA thematic analysis is then presented with themes related to the sustainability and the operation of CIRTs.

Chapters 5 and 6 will discuss the integration of the findings to summarise the thesis contribution to knowledge, implications for theory and practice and EP role, implications for the home LA and for future research. Chapter 5 will summarise the main points raised from the content analysis, in terms of support offered, inception and protocol of the CIRTs, in relation to RQ1. A model (figure 5.1) is presented to illustrate this information. The chapter will then discuss the thematic analysis, in relation to RQ2. The chapter will end with a reflective summary to provide tentative answers to both RQs.

Chapter 6 will begin by discussing the implications for theory and practice, looking specifically at the LA where the researcher works. A theoretical model (figure 6.1), focussing on the development and sustainability of CIRTs is presented. This model is generated from the data collected from the series of interviews. The model proposed contains suggestions of factors, raised from the data, to consider when developing or sustaining a CI response, in the area of the context, the process of delivering a response and the people involved in its delivery. Key issues raised from the thematic analysis of data, which may have implications for the future development and refinement of the theoretical model, stimulated several questions, which are then discussed. These questions may, theoretically, be put to LA staff, (working within the model), who are either currently involved in a CI response, or who are planning on developing a CI response. The remainder of the chapter considers possible areas identified for future research, initially a development using the remainder of the RADIO model (Timmins et al., 2003) and then additional research opportunities and personal reflections.
Chapter 2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The aims of the literature review are to find out:

- The history of Critical Incidents (CIs) within the literature
- Information about PTSD in children
- Prevalence of CI response within EPSs
- How EPSs respond to CIs
- The range of interventions used to support children following a CI
- How LA CI response services are set up
- What factors influence change in organisations
- How CI response services are evaluated

2.1.1 History of CIs within the literature.

The TEP wanted to develop an overview of the history of CIs within the literature to find out when they were first discussed and when EPs were linked to the work. The PSYCINFO database was searched in February 2009 to access articles from the 1960s to the present. The search term, ‘critical incident support’ was matched to the keyword ‘crisis intervention’. Below the TEP presents a chronology of the literature found related to the history of CIs within the literature.

2.1.2 Literature on CIs from 1970s.

Literature, published during the 1970s, referred to a wide range of issues as crises, examples are listed below:

- sleeping epidemic (Show, 1972)
- severe homesickness (Hamdi, 1974)
- racist tension in a school (Mottola, 1971)
- grief (Parkin, 1972)
- an earthquake in Southern California (Blaufarb & Levine, 1972)
- a bus accident (Tuckman, 1973)

Schwartz (1971) identified three major categories of crises, namely psychiatric emergencies, developmental crises and accidental crises. Riscalla (1974) claimed that crime is a crisis due to the disruption of an adaptive pattern of an individual and/or society. Schulberg (1974) reported that the following areas had been referred to as a crisis namely, an environmental situation, how an individual perceives an event, a clinical disorder, interaction between someone’s subjective state and objective environmental event/and a role transition. Schulberg (1974) suggested that the key to most views is that a crisis has a time factor, involves a behavioural change, a sense of helplessness and the perception of threat.

Smith (1977) reviewed the status of crisis-intervention theory and practice in a number of areas, namely childhood and adolescent crises, marital, mental health, emergency hospitalisation, family conflicts and suicide prevention. Ballou and Rebich (1977) presented a model for crisis intervention and defined a crisis as a threat with which the person perceives they are unable cope. They went on to suggest that a crisis has identifiable stages with implications for intervention. Ballou and Rebich (1977) argue that perception and ability to cope are what determine whether or not an event is a crisis for an individual. Halpern and Schleifer (1978) discussed volunteer assistance when communities have a crisis, for example after floods, fires and war. Glenwick, Jason, Copeland and Stevens (1979) identified the need for community psychologists to act with caution, to specify and evaluate community services and take note of the competencies that, following a crisis, already exist within the community. Shotland and Huston (1979) discussed the factors that bystanders use to define an emergency and how this impacts helping behaviour.

2.1.3 Literature on CIs from 1980s.

Ray (1985) looked at the teacher’s role in crisis situations. Ray (1985) suggested that teachers are often the only available adults when a young person faces a crisis and therefore they need to be aware of appropriate interventions. Peterson (1984) discussed attribution theory and how it applies to four differing crisis situations (a student in distress, domestic violence, severe accidents and divorced men and women). Arena, Hermann and Hoffman (1984) described how a model of consultation was developed as
an intervention in cooperation with significant members of the community following the death of a student. The aims were to widen understanding of the situation, to encourage the expression of feelings and identify ways to cope. This appears similar to Mitchell’s Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) described by Morrison (2007). Mitchell developed the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) model for crisis intervention to use with emergency service personnel. CISD is the tool used in CISM to help groups after exposure to a crisis. Blom (1986) looked at aspects of group, community and individual interventions which followed a school disaster.

Collison, Bowden, Patterson and Snyder (1987) described the work of three counsellors, a school nurse and a school psychologist following a school shooting. They suggested that schools need to develop plans for these situations. Klingman (1988) presented a preliminary model for disaster intervention in schools based on experience in schools in Israel. Klingman (1988) noted that this model was a re-conceptualisation of the preventative model, developed by Caplan (1964), presented for community mental health intervention. Klingman (1988) describes that prevention in the field of mental health is typically viewed as interfering or inhibiting the development of a crisis. Klingman (1988) described the anticipatory stage of the model he proposed. He suggests that School Psychology Services in the USA need to study and analyse past school crises and interventions, write training simulations, draw up organisational procedures which can be used, coordinate the community services and train care-giving services. Klingman (1988) also refers to the importance of multi-agency working, suggesting that ‘there is a need for a prescriptive framework for emergency functioning within which the school psychologist, other professionals and paraprofessionals can effectively respond,’ (p.207).

Sorensen (1989) described an intervention programme which used a crisis team with members including counsellors, school psychologists and administrators. This was a hands-on approach which suggested that the crisis team should start with an assessment/intervention meeting.

2.1.4 Literature on CIs from 1990s.

Siehl (1990) developed a plan for schools when facing a suicide. Purvis, Porter, Authement and Boren (1991) described school intervention teams which were led by headteachers but that revolve around each individual school and highlighted the key role
of the school psychologist. Pitcher and Poland (1992) have written a practical handbook for school psychologists. They asked the question about how prepared ‘we’ are for fires in comparison to other personal and disaster-related crises.

Klingman (1993) discussed a school-based intervention, which was used by a mental health team, to improve a school’s ability to be a social support system during a disaster. Poland (1994) noted that school psychologists lacked training in crisis intervention despite the increase in frequency and severity of school crises. Poland (1994) suggested that school crises provide an opportunity for school psychologists to take leadership and broaden their role. Weaver and Wodarski (1995) drew attention to cultural issues in crisis intervention. Tehrani (1995) discussed how the UK Post Office developed a core trauma programme involving crisis management, manager debriefing, psychological debriefing (PD)\(^2\) and trauma counselling. Carll (1995) described the development of a national mental health disaster response for victims and on-site relief workers. The American Psychological Association and American Red Cross worked in partnership for this development.

Sandoval and Brock (1996) described school psychologists’ work in relation to suicide as being at three levels, namely, primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. Primary prevention referred to activities for example educating and screening pupils for suicidal ideation, secondary prevention involved working with at risk groups and tertiary prevention referred to providing treatment and referring on. Young, Poland and Griffin (1996) argued that in order to become indispensable the role of the school psychologist needs to expand to include crisis planning and interventions for crises impacting staff and students. They also proposed that implementing crisis interventions should be listed as a priority on job descriptions for school psychologists.

Fukui, Safoh, Yamagishi, Miyacuchi and Kanbayashi (1997) described how the Board of Education, of the City of Ichikawa, established a travelling educational guidance project to offer support for children who had fled from the disaster areas. Stein (1997) described how school psychologists in Israel influence crisis work at the community

\(^2\) PD is the general term for a semi-structured intervention which aims to prevent psychological difficulties after traumatic events. Emotional processing is promoted through ventilation, normalising reactions and preparing for events which may occur in the future (Bisson, Jenkins, Alexander and Bannister, 1997).
and national level. Stein (1997) described the organisation of school psychology services in Israel and how they are centrally organised within the ‘Ministry of Education’. A framework is provided which explains how multi-agency support is initiated following a crisis. Clouse and Riddell (1999) described how a comprehensive psychosocial crisis management model was developed for the corporate setting.

### 2.1.5 Literature on CIs from 2000 to the present.

Johnson (2000) discussed factors which limit the usefulness of community crisis teams to schools. Factors which limit the usefulness included unfamiliarity with school organisation, the culture and the procedures. Successful cross training was suggested for school-community partnership. Arthur and Ramaliu (2000) looked at crisis intervention for survivors of torture and suggested that, due to the complexity of the effects of torture, the intervention needs to be a multidisciplinary community effort.

Corcoran and Roberts (2000) identified that although crisis intervention has been used in many areas there is little empirical evaluation conducted. They note that the only areas that have studies are crime victimisation, child abuse, suicide prevention and psychiatric emergencies.

Brock (2000) described the initiation and implementation of a school district crisis intervention policy. The policy was developed mainly by a group of school psychologists however they were given little school change authority and therefore what is described could be considered a ‘bottom-up’ approach.

Brock, Sandoval and Lewis (2001) presented a guidebook for the development of school crisis response teams. They suggested that schools need to decide whether they will intervene at a regional, community, district or school level. A further recommendation was that teams have a leader (e.g. principal), counselling/intervention specialist (e.g. school psychologist, social worker or counsellor), medical team representative (e.g. school nurse), law enforcement, media representative, parent and teacher representatives. Sandoval and Brock (2002) discussed two categories of hazardous events that result in crisis responses in school, namely natural and man-made disasters and terrorist attacks or other acts of violence. La Greca, Silverman, Vernberg and Roberts (2002) identified that child-focused disaster research would grow following the September 11th terrorist attacks. They noted that empirically based treatments for victims needed to be developed and evaluated.
Morrison’s (2007) study into the social validity of the CISM model found that school-based professionals valued the structure, framework and common language which the CISM model provided. Morrison (2007) suggested that evaluation of crisis intervention services in school should be a large part of future crisis intervention planning.

Anderson (2008) proposed that school is an ideal location to provide prevention programmes for suicide and suggested that school psychologists may be asked to implement these programmes.

2.1.6 Summary of literature on CIs from 1970s to the present day.

Since the 1970s a wide range of events have been referred to as ‘crises’. Literature has attempted to categorise these crises (e.g. Schwartz, 1971; Schulberg, 1974) and to define a crisis (e.g. Ballou & Rebich, 1977). The resources present within communities are also highlighted (Blom, 1986; Arena et al., 1984; Halpern & Schleifer, 1978).

In the 1980s the teachers’ role was identified (Ray, 1985). Mitchell (cf. Morrison, 2007) proposed the CISM and developed CISD. There remain debates about the CISD approach today which are discussed within the intervention section of the literature review. The use of multi-agency support was also presented (Sorensen, 1989; Collison et al., 1987) and the need for schools to develop a plan (Siehl, 1990; Collison et al., 1987).

In the 1990s the key role for psychologists was identified (Purvis et al., 1991; Pitcher & Poland, 1992; Poland, 1994). Crisis management has been developed for the corporate setting (Clouse & Riddell, 1999) and the UK post office core trauma care programme is described by Tehrani (1995). In 2000, Johnson discussed the community crisis care teams and their limitations. Brock (2000) described a school district crisis intervention policy and the importance of change authority. Brock et al. (2001) produced a guidebook and La Greca et al. (2002) identified that empirically supported interventions are needed.

2.2 PTSD

As noted in the introduction, literature acknowledges the long-lasting effects which children can suffer following traumatic events. Randall and Parker (1997) report that childhood PTSD may be less obvious but is just as complex and harmful as adult PTSD. Randall and Parker (1997) suggest that EPs require an awareness of PTSD due to the
severely stressful events school-age children may have to endure. The PSYCINFO database was used to search for literature about childhood PTSD in March 2009 using the title search term ‘PTSD’.

Studies indicate a greater awareness that adolescents and children also experience PTSD (e.g. Mghaieth, Othman, Bouden & Halayem, 2007; Bal, 2008; Suliman, Kaminer, Seedat & Stein, 2005). The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV, American Psychiatric Association, 1994) identifies that ‘Posttraumatic Stress Disorder can occur at any age, including childhood’ (p.61). Five symptoms are identified within the DSM-IV, namely, experience of a traumatic event, persistent re-experiencing of the event, avoidance of associated stimuli, increased arousal and impairment of social or occupational abilities. Mghaieth et al. (2007) carried out clinical interviews with 15 patients, who had been victims of road traffic accidents, and found that the diagnosis of PTSD was given in 14 of the 15 cases after two months and in all 15 after six months. It is important to note however that this was a small sample and the loss experienced during the accident varied from being injured to losing a parent. Ehlers, Mayou and Bryant (2003) summarise that recent estimates following road traffic accidents suggest that between 14 and 24% of children will develop PTSD. Stein, Jaycox, Kataoka, Wong, Tu, Elliott and Fink (2003) note that the majority of children who have been exposed to violence show symptoms of PTSD and that a substantial minority will go on to develop clinically significant PTSD.

La Greca (2007) identifies two key aspects which are thought to contribute to PTSD in children, namely the presence or perception of threat to life and loss and disruption of normal everyday events. La Greca (2007) reported that community studies of children involved in traumatic events indicated that the most common symptoms were re-experiencing the event. La Greca, Silverman, Vernberg and Prinstein (1996) studied the symptoms of PTSD in children the year after Hurricane Andrew finding that although the frequency and severity of PTSD symptoms generally decreased with time a significant minority had continued difficulties.

La Greca (2007) draws attention to the variety in terms of the trauma experienced, assessment used and the time lapse in the studies which report the prevalence of PTSD. Rosen, Spitzer and McHugh (2008) argue that there are problems with the PTSD diagnosis. Rosen et al. (2008) noted that PTSD was defined as a disorder that developed after a specific set of traumatic stressors which created an assumption of a
specific aetiology (Criterion A). This assumption, however, has subsequently been undermined by the reports that PTSD can develop following a variety of non-life threatening events, for example, divorce and financial difficulties as noted by Scott and Stradling (1994). Rosen et al. (2008) reported that recent studies have shown frequent examples of PTSD symptoms among people who have depression and social phobias but who have not experienced Criterion A life stressors. Rosen et al. (2008) also reported that studies have found that pre-incident vulnerability factors (e.g. psychiatric history) and social support, available after the incident, have more impact on post-trauma morbidity than the severity of the presumed aetiological trauma. Rosen et al. (2008) summarised that, apart from their high magnitude, they are indistinct from the full range of stressors that can impact an individual and create risk of psychiatric morbidity.

Rosen et al. (2008) noted that without a specific aetiology, diagnosing PTSD would be based on the distinctiveness of the clinical syndrome, however a combination of symptoms of major depression and specific phobia fulfil the criteria. They noted that based on the DSM-IV, the diagnosis can be given to people who hear of the misfortunes of others. Rosen et al. (2008) noted the risk of labelling situation-based emotions and upsetting thoughts as symptoms.

The above concerns raise several issues for practice. When reviewing literature it is important to be aware that, although PTSD literature has been set apart from the general field of stress, there may be overlap. Professionals involved in diagnosis should ensure they consider alternative perspectives on the patient’s presentation of symptoms. Rosen et al. (2008) highlighted the risk of over-identification and narrowing analysis of causation to a single event, in the absence of looking at the broader context of the patient’s developmental history, personality and situational context. When working with children and young people following CIs, it is important to be aware of vulnerability factors and also the importance of social support.

Cameron, Gersch, M’Gadzah and Moyse (1995) note that PTSD is hard to research but that there may be overlaps between PTSD and other childhood stress factors. McClatchey and Vonk (2005) studied the incidence of PTSD amongst a sample of bereaved children and found two-thirds of children were experiencing moderate to severe levels of PTSD related symptoms (intrusion and avoidance). It is also important
to note, as highlighted by La Greca (2007) and Rosen et al. (2008), that PTSD may be co-morbid with difficulties such as anxiety disorders and depression.

### 2.3 Prevalence of CI Response within EPSs

Having been alerted to the gap in the home LA in terms of CI support the TEP searched for literature about the EPSs role in CI support for schools. The TEP had questions about the prevalence of CI response within EPSs and the type of support being offered. Hand searches of ‘British Journal of Educational Psychology’, ‘Educational and Child Psychology’, ‘Educational Psychology in Practice’ and ‘Journal of Clinical Psychology’ were undertaken in August 2009. The TEP used a process of reference harvesting to find further research. Houghton (1996) surveyed all EPSs and LA emergency planning services in England, Wales and Northern Ireland with a 76% response rate. A summary of the results indicated that:

- 65% of EPSs which replied had responded to a CI during the last three years
- Only 10% of all EPSs have a formal plan (many others are discussing or drafting a plan)
- The EPSs gave advice and generally supported school staff to manage and/or provided group and individual counselling
- 60% of EPSs with a planned response noted that some of the EPs had extra training
- More than half of services which had a plan, or were aiming to develop a plan of support, had a working party
- 46% of services had input into teaching about death and loss either through leaflets, classroom resources or in-service training
- Help was mainly requested from headteachers
- 80% of services responded within the first 72 hours

Surveys of school psychologists have also taken place in the USA. Wise, Smead and Huebner (1987) found that most school psychologists were being asked to help in these situations and about one quarter had not had any formal training. Allen, Jerome, Wiute,
Marston, Lamb, Pope and Rawlins (2002) concluded that suicide, violence and crisis plans were a high priority for future training. Nickerson and Zhe (2004) suggested future research to investigate psychologists’ knowledge of the empirical support for crisis prevention and intervention. Nickerson and Zhe (2004) suggested that this could include investigating the models of PD, theoretical approaches and counselling techniques used.

Adamson and Peacock (2007) extended previous surveys to investigate specific details of school crisis plansteams. Similar to Allen et al. (2002) and Nickerson and Zhe (2004), Admason and Peacock (2007) found most schools had crisis teams and plans. They found that the school psychologist and principal were nearly always members of crisis teams and that there was a gap, in terms of a parent or community representative, on the crisis teams. Another area highlighted was evaluation, where only half reported that they evaluated the impact of the crisis team. Particular activities undertaken by the majority of crisis teams included individual and group brief psychological services, PD and teacher/administrative meetings. It is important to note however that this survey only had a 50% response rate. This may indicate that only school psychologists heavily involved in CIs responded, biasing the results. The above surveys are either from the USA or they are dated. There is therefore a gap in knowledge about the prevalence of support currently being offered in the UK.

2.4 How do EPSs Respond to CIs?

2.4.1 EPS response within the UK.

O’Hara, Taylor and Simpson (1994) described how Salford EPS was contacted following a tragedy in a school. The support they offered involved counselling for families and teachers and group counselling using Mitchell’s (cf. Morrison, 2007) CISD approach. O’Hara et al. (1994) reported that the first session of CISD involved encouraging expression of feelings about the incident. The second phase involved more discussion about signs and symptoms of stress and the third session helped children to mobilise their own resources and normalise their feelings. They also undertook half hour sessions where parents asked about the support they should be giving their children. Although previously they had offered support for children suffering bereavement this was the first time they had dealt with a large group of traumatised children. In a discussion about whether this work should go to EPs, the PEP
commented that EPs have the skills and can develop the materials. The PEP did not think other agencies could provide the same sensitivity to needs of the community. The EP for the school commented that it enhanced her work in the school and the perceived value of the EP service.

Mallon and Best (1995) described how the PEP was contacted by the Local Education Authority’s (LEA) Advisor of Special Needs, following a traumatic incident in a girl’s secondary school in Birmingham. The EPS did not have procedures in place. At the time there were numerous agencies involved and Mallon and Best (1995) commented that ‘the effects of lots of well-meaning individuals offering their services to the pupils might well have prolonged the state of abnormality in the school’ (p.233). Skilled counselling was available immediately following the events.

Cameron et al. (1995) outlined how traumatic incidents were managed in Surrey, Kent and Waltham Forest. They produced guidelines and suggested different role options for the EPS involving different levels of time and energy. Carroll, Frew, Futcher, Ladkin, Morey, Price and Smith (1997) reported how Hertfordshire EPS has developed a crisis intervention service proactively, drawing from other services’ experiences.

Cameron et al. (1995), Mallon and Best (1995) and Carroll et al. (1997) produced guidelines to follow, when engaging in CI work, which can be summarised as:

- Develop a LEA policy which designates a coordinator, liaises with other relevant agencies and ensures training
- Develop an EPS policy in liaison with other support services. Develop links with clinical psychology and the psychiatric service to provide long-term follow up
- All EPs should have some training to prepare them
- The PEP needs to ensure that schools understand the nature of EP involvement (short-term). Long-term support can be offered through usual systems of EPS or by referring on.
- Maintain general principle to enhance school capacity
- Reduce other duties so a rapid response can be made
- The PEP has responsibility to coordinate the input from the EPS in liaison with the LEA coordinator and the headteacher.

- Ensure supervision

Cornish (1995) described two CIs and how systemic consultation was applied as opposed to traditional individual counselling. Cornish (1995) focussed on group interactions rather than solely on individual experience.

McCaffrey (2004) reported how Kent EPS has developed a model of consultancy to support schools (see model in Appendix 1). This development stemmed from a request for practical and emotional support following a CI. McCaffrey (2004) suggests that the EPS is in a good position to offer psychological support due to the relationship and also the understanding of systems. Surveys of headteachers in Kent indicated that they wanted advice rapidly, e.g. same day or within 24 hours. They commented on the suddenness of the publicity and the need to support both directly and indirectly affected; they also commented on staffs’ need for personal support. McCaffrey (2004) has found that initial contacts are with senior staff to develop a plan but then support is often given through a staff meeting. McCaffrey (2004) argues that the key role for EPs is to identify vulnerable pupils and work with teachers and form tutors to plan how they can be supported. McCaffrey (2004) reported that over the last year they had supported 45 incidents, averaging about 11 hours for each incident. McCaffrey (2004) noted that although there have been a number of traumatic incidents it has only been infrequently necessary to carry out psychological first aid in terms of a PD meeting.

Greenway (2005) took a different angle looking at staff reactions. She explains the range of grief reactions following different types of events. She has facilitated groups in schools and worked with senior management to assess health needs over time. Hayes and Frederickson (2008) discuss the importance of psychologists managing their own stress and the need for supervision.

More recently Posada (2006) proposes that EPs are well placed to become involved in wider community crisis work, having built up skills in supporting schools. Posada (2006) described the development of LA guidelines on psycho/social support following CIs and disasters.
Tracey and Holland (2008) compared how schools in Derry/Londonderry and Hull responded to and managed death and loss. They reported that the schools in Hull and Derry rated bereavement (and parental separation) as highly important. One secondary school in Derry is reported as stating that they had received training for dealing with CIs and had also developed a policy for bereavement and loss. Another school commented that there was a need to build on the training in bereavement, loss and CIs that had already been received. They noted that this would help the school construct a bereavement and loss policy which complemented their CI policy. When asked where they would initially seek help if a child in school is bereaved, the Hull schools reported that they would seek support from their own resources or the EPS; in contrast in Derry most sources of help mentioned were externally based, apart from the pastoral care or CI team within the school. The Derry schools reported primarily seeking external help from the Western Education and Library Board (WELB) Bereavement team and Cruse Bereavement Care but the psychological services were also mentioned. This study revealed that in both locations more work needs to be done to assist schools with training needs in bereavement and in setting up policies and procedures.

Seven LAs were found to have produced documents about CI support targeted for schools, using an internet search engine (full report in section 2.4.1.1). Education in Northern Ireland is organised at a local level by five education and library boards, serving different geographical areas. Two of these documents were from Northern Ireland Education Boards. The Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) leaflet, ‘Supporting Schools in Times of Crisis’ notes that the best preparation for schools would be to have their own CI team with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The school is encouraged to have their own CI policy and procedures. The leaflet notes that the CIRT can provide advice and support in the aftermath of a CI. It is a multi-agency team with personnel from a range of SELB support services (e.g. Behaviour support team, EPS and Education Welfare). The CIRT will provide training to help the school develop policies. The leaflet from the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB), ‘Managing Bereavement, Trauma and Loss, Critical Incident Support for Schools’ notes that where direct support and/or intervention is necessary a referral is made to the EPS. A range of support available is outlined in both leaflets, for example:

- Advice and support to senior management to manage the immediate situation
- Supporting school staff and giving information about effects of sudden bereavement, trauma and loss
- Assessing need
- Possible work with individual or groups of pupils or staff
- Referral to other services if required

2.4.1.1 Content analysis of leaflets.

Seven LAs were found to have produced documents about CI support targeted for schools. The documents were found using an internet search engine. Content analysis has been used to present this literature thoroughly as it is very close to the area of inquiry. A content analysis of this LA documentation was carried out to gain further background information about the CI response being offered within the UK. Graneheim and Lundman (2004) explain that the quantitative approaches to content analysis are often used in media research, whereas the qualitative approaches are often used in nursing research and education. They argue that text always has multiple meanings and therefore some interpretation is involved in any analysis. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) describe qualitative content analysis as a method for looking at the characteristic of language and communication based on the content or contextual meaning. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) explain that verbal, print or electronic data gathered through a range of methods, for example, focus groups, interviews or books can be analysed. Hara, Bonk and Angeli (2000) described the use of content analysis to analyse qualitatively the electronic discourse of an applied educational psychology course. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) note that content analysis enables large amounts of text to be classified into categories which have similar meanings. They comment that qualitative content analysis enables analysis to be performed at varying degrees of complexity. Content can be analysed close to the text, manifest content or advanced to interpret underlying meaning, the latent content.

Hsieh and Shannon (2005) identified three approaches to qualitative content analysis, namely conventional, directed and summative. Conventional content analysis tends to be used when the aim of a study is to describe a phenomenon and when existing theories and research are limited. The categories and names follow the reading of the data rather than being preconceived. Mayring (2000) has also described this as inductive category development.
In contrast, directed content analysis is appropriate when existing theories and research about a phenomenon are incomplete or need further description. This research can however allow predictions about variables and thus help derive the initial coding schemes. Mayring (2000) has referred to this as deductive category application. Summative content analysis starts by highlighting and quantifying particular words or content in order to understand its contextual use. It then moves on to latent content analysis where the content is interpreted to find the underlying meanings.

To analyse this LA documentation an inductive category application was applied (Mayring, 2000). In terms of Hsieh and Shannon (2005) it would also be described as conventional content analysis. This involved deciding what aspects of the textual material would be looked at and then working through the material, tentatively deducing categories with constant revision through re-reading the texts. It was decided that the whole of the texts would be analysed looking at the information they contained. The quantitative aspects, (the number of leaflets each code was found in), was analysed. Below the seven leaflets are listed, recording the title and whether they were documenting EPS or multi-agency support:

- SELB Critical Incident Response Team, ‘Supporting Schools in Times of Crisis’
  Multi-agency team

- NEELB, ‘Managing Bereavement, Trauma and Loss, Critical Incident Support for Schools’ EPS

- West Sussex, ‘No title’ EPS

- Hackney, ‘Critical Incidents’ EPS


- Devon, ‘Wise Before The Event? Support for schools in the event of a critical incident’ EPS

- Wiltshire, ‘The Role of the Wiltshire Educational Psychology Service in Critical Incident Management’ EPS

Table 2.1 below outlines each category, its definition, an example from the leaflets, the coding rule and the frequency. The coded leaflet for Devon can be found in Appendix 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Coding rules (highlighted and labelled with letter)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Definition of a CI</td>
<td>A sentence describing what is meant by CI</td>
<td>‘A CI is an event that has the potential to create significant human distress and can overwhelm one’s usual coping mechanisms’</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Contact details</td>
<td>Contact details listed</td>
<td>‘In an emergency contact the EPS on - 02088207518’</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Aims</td>
<td>States the aims of service</td>
<td>‘As a team our aim is to provide:</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Assessment of need</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Information and guidance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Advice and support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Training for school staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Immediate response</td>
<td>Identifies 24 hour time scale for visit</td>
<td>‘Initial visit, within 24 hours of your call’</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Telephone or direct advice</td>
<td>Report that the team/service offers advice over the telephone or in person</td>
<td>‘Telephone contact with the school to offer support and assistance’</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Support for pupils</td>
<td>Individual or group support for pupils is reported</td>
<td>‘Individual or group support for pupils’</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Consultation with staff</td>
<td>Meeting with staff, (could be senior management), to talk about what actions</td>
<td>‘Support at this level could involve discussion with Senior Management in school as to how’</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8) Emotional support for staff</strong></td>
<td>Offer emotional support for individuals or groups of staff</td>
<td>‘...emotional support for individual staff members or groups’</td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9) Needs assessment</strong></td>
<td>Report that the needs are assessed of the individuals who require support or of the situation as a whole</td>
<td>‘...assessment made of the support to be provided’</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10) Support for parents</strong></td>
<td>Support for parents identified e.g. advice</td>
<td>‘A drop-in session for parents’</td>
<td>J</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11) Follow up</strong></td>
<td>Follow up identified for longer term needs</td>
<td>‘Follow-up support if required’</td>
<td>K</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12) Information</strong></td>
<td>Note that EPS/Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) can provide information e.g. about bereavement either verbally or on information sheets</td>
<td>‘... advice (both verbal and written) on trauma, post-traumatic stress and bereavement issues.’</td>
<td>L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13) Signposting/referral to other specialist services</strong></td>
<td>Names and/or telephone details of other agencies, or a sentence explaining that referrals can be made</td>
<td>‘Signposting to other agencies if required’</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14) Schools own procedures</strong></td>
<td>Refer to plans which schools should have</td>
<td>‘The best preparation which schools can make is to have their own Critical Incident Policy and Procedures</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Training is available to support schools to develop their Critical Incident Policy and Procedures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Offer of guidance regarding Critical Incident management such as: management of the media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following codes were found in six leaflets:

- Definition of a CI (A)
- Telephone or direct advice (E)
- Consultation with staff (G)
- Information (L)
- Signposting/referral to other specialist services (M)

The following codes were found in four or five leaflets:

- Contact details (B)
- Support for pupils (F)
- Emotional support for staff (H)
- Follow up (K)
- Training (O)

The following codes were found in two or three leaflets:

- Needs assessment (I)
- Schools own procedures (N)
The following codes were only found in one leaflet:

- Aims (C)
- Immediate response (D)
- Support for parents (J)
- Help with media (P)

This data indicates that there were several similarities in the information recorded and therefore in the support being offered by the services represented. The differences in frequencies may have been caused by different styles of writing, length of leaflets and purposes which may not be clear from the hard copy. This information can be added to the literature found in the preceding section about EPS response within the UK. With the exception of one leaflet the services described are referring to support from EPSs. The leaflets focussed on what support was offered and did not give information about the inception or history of the development of the response and how it is sustained. The picture resulting from this literature is therefore not balanced.

2.4.2 EPS response within USA and Israel.

The following authors, mentioned briefly in section 2.1, have discussed support offered by school psychologists in the USA and Israel.

Collison et al. (1987) described how members of a pupil service team (school nurse, school psychologist and counsellors) agreed that there was a need to work together following a school shooting. An initial plan was quickly devised which involved organising a schedule to ensure a member of the team was always in school and identifying those children/adults most likely to require support. Teachers were given advice on sharing the news and resource materials were collated. Collison et al. (1987) described that following the initial plan the response given was a more intensive version of the team’s normal function of counselling (pupils, teachers and parents) and consultation with teachers. Collison et al. (1987) also noted that outside experts were invited to help or volunteered but unfortunately links were not made with the pupil service team, due to lack of time.

Sorensen (1989) described a pre-planned intervention programme which involved a crisis team implemented by the Easton, Massachusetts public schools. Sorensen (1989)
noted that the Easton crisis team had 12 members including guidance counsellors, school psychologists and administrators. The programme starts with the crisis team carrying out an assessment/intervention meeting. The following is a list of strategies the team has used:

- regular school schedule continues but counselling centres set up
- regular school schedule is suspended and class groups go to different large group meetings where pupils have the opportunity to listen and talk with the team or other consultants
- classroom discussion led by team members
- team members speak at staff meetings
- base created for staff support
- team members cover classes
- team helps teachers create classroom activities for exploring death and dying
- team helps individuals deal with their re-visited grief
- team holds meetings with parents
- help administrator produce a press release and strategy for working with the press

Stein (1997) illustrates an intervention programme in Israel describing the work of school psychologists following three suicide bombing attacks. He noted that the initial functions were to help in the rescue operation by setting up an information centre and telephone hotline for families to find out about victims. Stein (1997) also reported that the school psychologists accompanied victims when identifying the dead. Contact was established with the schools where pupils or teachers may have been related to victims to plan the next day of school. Other functions of the psychologist are reported, namely: being part of the municipal emergency committee, counselling, preparing teachers for classroom discussions, advice to parents and support handling the press.

Klingman (1988) proposes a school-based preventive intervention for disaster with five levels:
Anticipatory
Organisational emergency
Primary/early secondary
Secondary
Tertiary

Klingman (1988) notes that the model has been developed following experience and experimentation within schools in Israel. The anticipatory level is referring to advance organisation, for example, planning simulation exercises, the organisation and training of care-giving networks, working out organisational patterns which can be followed in emergencies and coordinating the community mental health services. Organisation involves an initial assessment of the situation which will be the basis of initial decision making and the coordination of professional labour between the primary and early secondary prevention teams. Primary prevention is described as supporting teaching staff and giving advice in terms of discussing the crisis, guidance to parents, coordinating agencies and screening. Early secondary prevention is provided simultaneously by another team to identify risk. Klingman (1988) notes that if there is a shortage of professional staff, paraprofessional staff who have been trained during the anticipatory stage can be activated. He states that the use of an external consultant can be desirable where they can give an outsider’s perspective, share new ideas, support coordination and mediate if disputes arise between agencies. Klingman (1988) describes that secondary prevention is targeted to meet individual needs; this may be delayed to allow spontaneous recovery through the primary prevention, natural support systems and emotional first aid. Tertiary prevention is looking at those pupils who are returning to school following treatment. The goals would be to help reintegration through recovery of social and academic competencies and modification of environmental features.

Klingman (1988) suggests that research is needed to look at children’s natural coping strategies. He proposes that looking at the children who function well under stress may help develop effective anticipatory guidance and primary prevention programmes which take account of preferred coping styles. Klingman (1988) also raises questions about
whether schools are differentially susceptible to different types of crisis and, if that is the case, whether a different type of delivery of school psychology will be required.

Information about CI support offered by psychologists is mainly dated and/or from the USA or Israel. For example, the literature found from the UK was mainly from the 1990s with the exception of McCaffrey (2004) and Posada (2006). Other literature was from the USA (e.g. Sorensen, 1989) or Israel (e.g. Klingman, 1988) and also dated with the majority in the 1980s. The leaflets documented further information about the support offered. However, with the exception of Lancashire, the dates of these leaflets were not given.

2.5 Interventions

The previous section has identified some general information about how EPSs respond to CIs. The TEP however wanted a greater understanding of the range of interventions used to support children following a crisis. The PSYCINFO database was searched in March 2009 using the keywords ‘crisis intervention’ AND ‘schools’.

Dyregrov, Wikander and Vigerust (1999) investigated adolescents’ perception of the support offered by their school, following the death of a pupil. The support involved having space to talk about their reactions, memories and feelings. They also visited the scene of the event and wrote letters to the pupil’s family. The adolescents reported the follow up support favourably. Persistent reactions however were experienced by some students and it was suggested that they would have benefitted from more help to integrate what had happened. Dyregrov et al. (1999) reported that one in five classmates were experiencing a high level of distress after nine months. Dyregrov (2004) suggests that on top of having procedures for how school staff can respond in a crisis there needs to be specialised support for those who are most severely affected. He also refers to the fact that there are obstacles to accessing mental health resources, for example, adolescents may not seek out help or think they need it.

Dyregrov (2004) highlights the school’s role, identifying that some schools will adjust school routines more easily than other schools. Dyregrov (2004) also draws attention to gender differences, suggesting that ‘talking therapies’ may require adaptations to include more practical activities for boys/young men.
Vickers (2005) notes that until the mid-1990s most of the literature on the treatment of PTSD in childhood and adolescence was a blend of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), psychodynamic and family-based interventions. Vickers (2005) notes that these interventions were difficult to replicate and stemmed from different views on the origin and maintenance of PTSD symptoms (e.g. Perry, 1995; Terr, 1989). Vickers (2005) reports that CBT interventions are the most widely studied and found to be the most enduring and effective treatments. Dyregrov (2004) indicates the lack of research on the efficacy of therapy for children who have suffered trauma. He notes however that CBT interventions e.g. exposure therapy, Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR), which have been evidenced as effective for adults, can be effective at reducing post-traumatic problems for children (e.g. Cohen, Mannarion, Berliner & Deblinger, 2000).

Cohen et al. (2000) reviewed the four main components of trauma-focused CBT for children and adolescents, namely exposure, cognitive processing and reframing, stress management and parental treatment. The studies reviewed indicated that although evidence for the efficacy of trauma-focused CBT is growing it is unclear which components are most effective at treating which specific symptoms or groups of traumatised children.

Kelly (2005) studied the efficacy of school-based treatment (cognitive-behavioural and psychodynamic) on children suffering from PTSD as a result of trauma in the home. The study highlighted the impact of the home environment and how it can positively or negatively affect children’s response to therapy.

Ehlers and Clark (2000) introduced a cognitive model which was developed to provide a framework for cognitive-behavioural intervention. They suggested that PTSD will become persistent, if a trauma is processed in a way that gives rise to a sense of threat, due to an excessively negative appraisal and disturbance of autobiographical memory. It is proposed that changes in these negative appraisals and trauma memories are prevented due to problematic behavioural and cognitive strategies. Ehlers et al. (2003) carried out a longitudinal study of children following a road traffic accident which supported cognitive predictors of PTSD in children. The longitudinal study found that cognitive factors measured straight after a road traffic accident were found to predict PTSD symptom severity at three and six months after the incident. Ehlers et al. (2003) reported that ‘nearly all of the cognitive variables showed significant correlations with
PTSD severity’ (p.7). A weakness noted by the author, however, was the use of single/few items with which to measure the constructs.

Common elements of CBT interventions which have been empirically validated are psycho-education, stress management, exposure and cognitive processing (Vickers, 2005). Stein et al. (2003) undertook a randomised controlled study to look at the effectiveness of a CBT treatment for school children, who were displaying PTSD symptoms, having lived in a violent community. They reported clinically significant improvements which were sustained at the follow up six months later. Vickers (2005) however suggests the importance of knowing what element of the CBT programme is the ‘active ingredient’.

Writing how you feel after loss or trauma has proved beneficial. For example, Bray, Lea, Patwa, Margiano, Alric and Peck (2003) document where it has been used successfully in schools with asthma sufferers.

Ross and Hayes (2004) described techniques used in a primary and secondary school to work with groups of bereaved pupils. The interventions worked in four areas, namely emotional awareness and the management of feelings, alleviating and gaining cognitive mastery over painful memories and thoughts, story-telling and solution focussed thinking. They indicated that not much research has been done in this area. They concluded that EPs have a key role to removing the ‘taboo’ of discussing issues around death in school.

Stallard, Velleman, Salter, Howse, Yule and Taylor (2006) note that one of the most common early interventions for trauma victims, which aims to prevent or reduce adverse psychological reactions, is PD (Mitchell, cf. Morrison, 2007; Dyregrov, 1989). The structured model which was developed by Mitchell (cf. Morrison, 2007) is known as CISD. This format was modified by Dyregrov (1991) to use with children and young people. Stallard et al. (2006) note that PD as a method to support trauma victims has been the subject of great debate. Hunt (2002) reviewed the clinical literature stating that ‘no firm conclusions can be drawn about the efficacy of PD with children. It is likely that, as in other populations, some children may benefit from a PD-type approach whereas others may be harmed’ (p. 62).

Litz, Gray, Bryant and Alder (2002) noted that there is a lack of agreement about the best way of delivering PD interventions and whether they reduce the incidence of
PTSD. Hunt (2006) referred to the disagreement about what constitutes PD, whether it is for groups or individuals, the methods used and how they can be evaluated. The efficacy of PD is called into question through the findings of systematic reviews, for example, Van Emmerik, Kamphuis, Hulsbosch and Emmelkamp (2002). Van Emmerik et al. (2002) carried out a meta-analysis with strict inclusion criteria but found that single sessions of CISD had no efficacy in reducing PTSD and other trauma symptoms. Van Emmerik et al. (2002) have suggested that this single-session CISD could sensitise traumatised individuals further and prevent them from accessing the natural social support networks to help them recover. This negative review does include the caveat that CISD was not designed to be a stand-alone intervention.

Stallard et al. (2006) conducted the first Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) of an early intervention using a PD format with child road traffic accident survivors. Apart from improvements on the child completed Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, children who received the PD intervention did not make any additional gains over those who received neutral discussion. Stallard et al. (2006) referred to RCTs conducted with adult road traffic survivors in which those who had received early single-session PD had poorer outcomes, leading the authors to conclude that these interventions could possibly be harmful. In an earlier meta-analysis Everly, Boyle and Lating (1999) concluded that CISD is useful as part of an overall CISM programme.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE, 2006) report draws attention to flaws in the studies that have given a negative review of CISD, for example, self-selection of participants, techniques applied to individuals rather than groups, techniques used outside the time scale recommended and the use of inadequately trained debriefers. Van Emmerik et al. (2002), however, commented on the limitations of the Everly, et al. (1999) study, noting that only studies of group PD were included, despite individual debriefings being the norm in clinical practice. The interventions in three studies were post six months and therefore could not have been preventative.

Prior to carrying out the meta-analysis, Van Emmerik et al. (2002) searched the PsychINFO database for journal articles, which included debriefing in the title, revealing that many interventions reported share only some elements or very little with CISD in its original form. These interventions were delivered by a range of professional and non-professional workers with different backgrounds and at different
time-intervals (sometimes months after a traumatic event). The interventions were also assessed with different instruments.

Van Emmerik et al. (2002) noted that prevention of later adverse psychological difficulties such as PTSD is only one aim of PD. They reported that other aims included the reduction of immediate distress and identification and referral of individuals at risk of developing longer term problems.

Litz et al. (2002) have warned against summarising the debate solely in terms of the effectiveness of PD in reducing symptoms of PTSD, as they note that there are many questions relating to PD which have not been subjected to scrutiny. For example, is PD just for those known to be at risk or for everyone? What types of incidents warrant PD?

Hunt (2006) has discussed the controversial area of providing PD for children and young people. He noted that a flexible approach to PD is used widely by educationalists in school settings. The approach taken being dependent on the incident and the children affected. This flexibility provides difficulty in assessing the efficacy of the interventions. Hunt (2006) highlighted the methodological and ethical issues which arise when studying PD, particularly with children, for example ethical issues with discussing trauma related matters. There is lack of agreement about techniques which should be used with adults. Furthermore techniques applied to adults may be inappropriate for children due to their levels of understanding.

Litz et al. (2002) suggested that, in light of the lack of support for using PD to prevent PTSD, a more appropriate intervention could be viewed in terms psychological first aid. This should be seen as supportive and non-interventionist, comprising group support and opportunity for people to discuss their experiences and review the events. Litz et al. (2002) highlighted the need for research into the components of PD that are most useful with short-term and long-term consequences of trauma.

It is important that those working with children and young people, following trauma, evaluate their practice in relation to the scientific evidence base for PD. In light of the debate about the effectiveness of PD, particularly with children, a more flexible approach may be required as outlined by Litz et al. (2002).

Yule and Gold (1993) have provided a structure to help schools support child survivors of crises. Randall and Parker (1997) state that the school EP can be the coordinator for
support. They go on to suggest that EPs could also help teachers in understanding which staff or children are most at risk of being affected in the longer term. They also argue that EPs should be directly or indirectly involved in school counselling.

La Greca (2007) reports that social support has been found to help mitigate the impact of trauma for children. For example, following severe abuse or disasters those children with more social support from significant others e.g. parents, teacher, classmates and friends have reported fewer symptoms of PTSD than those who have less social support. In line with La Greca (2007), Kasler, Dahan and Elias (2008) examined two factors which may contribute to resiliency in children following trauma, namely perceived social support and hope. A negative correlation was found between hope and PTSD but a positive correlation between family support and PTSD. McClatchey and Vonk (2005) identify coping strategies and attributions as areas for further EP contribution. Klingman (1988) also noted that research is needed to examine children’s natural coping strategies to help inform prevention programmes and guidance.

Gilligan (2006) notes that social support networks, which can provide protection from psychological distress, seem to have been affected by the ‘Troubles’, (sectarian conflict within Northern Ireland), and peace process. Gilligan (2006) explains that growth in community action and strengthening of community bonds occurred during the Troubles but the peace process was accompanied by a growth of alienation and a sense of community fragmentation. Manktelow (2007) reported that social psychologists identified three psychological coping mechanisms, denial, distancing and habituation which were adopted to preserve mental health during the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Manktelow (2007) reported that a study of two towns, which suffered different levels of violence, indicated that the perception of violence was crucial for people’s well-being. Manktelow (2007) investigated the needs of victims of the Troubles which revealed that the needs were left largely unmet by the statutory social work services for many years. Manktelow (2007) reports that, when disaster hits, social support is a protective factor against the development of mental ill-health. Manktelow (2007) reported the view that the key support that people relied on during the Troubles, was families and friends. Manktelow (2007) noted that specialist trauma services and training have only been identified in later years.
Peake (2001) discusses a community-based support group called WAVE, (originally known as Widows/Widowers Against Violence Empower), which supports children, young people and adults bereaved or traumatised following the Troubles. It was founded due to a lack of support services. Peake (2001) noted that a ‘business as usual approach’, adopted by schools throughout the Troubles in Northern Ireland, whilst providing a stable routine did not meet the needs of those worst affected. Peake (2001) comments on the central acknowledgement that bereavement programmes, which focused on supporting children bereaved through natural causes, were not necessarily appropriate, as the bereavement or trauma in relation to the Troubles had been due to violence. WAVE developed safe and caring environments where children and young people could tell their story and share their feelings with other young people who had similar experiences.

Croft (2006) argues that research examining the effectiveness of school crisis intervention is often written by the author or is simply a descriptive account.

2.6 How are LA CI Response Services Set Up?

Carroll et al. (1997) reported how Hertfordshire EPS developed a crisis intervention service proactively, drawing from other services’ experiences. A core group met initially to discuss what the EPS could offer and subsequent training which would be needed. Within this description however there are several gaps, for example it is not clear how decisions were made about what support to offer and any barriers that were faced during the development of the service. Furthermore there is no discussion of capacity issues.

The article aims to chart the development of the crisis intervention service. It sets off with five principles which were informed by work in other EPSs. However, with the exception of co-working it is not clear the evidence on which these principles were based. For example Carroll et al. (1997) note that EPs should co-work in line with O’Hara et al. (1994) but the other principles are just listed. The article describes how a core group met to determine services and training that would be offered. They report that a training need was identified and they opted for CISD training however it is not clear why they chose this specific training. Carroll et al. (1997) also report that they carried out role-playing exercises to test the proposed procedures but there is no detail about these exercises and how they fitted with other divisions within the Education...
Department. Carroll et al. (1997) merely state ‘Mock exercises with other divisions within the Education Department and within the EPS as a whole-county level tested out proposed procedures and support systems’ (Carroll et al., 1997 p.113). The article then jumps to describe what support is offered. The article clearly reports how the service is delivered but it does not fulfil its aims of charting the development of the service.

Brock (2000), as mentioned previously, described the initiation and implementation of a school district crisis policy (in USA). This article described a strategic development whereas Carroll et al. (1997) described an operational development. The policy was mainly developed by school psychologists. Detail is given about the stages involved in the policy development which are:

- initial research about crisis theory and interventions
- gaining support from direct supervisor, peers and then management
- sharing ideas with other services to develop a crisis intervention planning committee
- staff training.

Brock (2000) raised context issues and identified barriers due to the current levels of change the area was experiencing, reporting cynicism towards further change. In particular school principles had a negative attitude to change and they were key to the policy goals being implemented. Another barrier highlighted was the fact that crises are not a subject that people are keen to talk about. Brock (2000) noted the positive effect of the policy development being part of the EPs’ Continued Professional Development (CPD) and the importance of staff development and commitment to change. He also reported that they asked headteachers to review the policy.

Brock (2000) first implemented the policy by developing a crisis intervention team and plan at a school where he worked. He highlighted that the key complication in implementing the plan was the different perceptions about what the policy required. The aim was for schools to take responsibility for crisis interventions, however, the school psychologists were frequently called upon to help manage the crises. The operation of the policy is less clear and in particular the role of the psychologist. It is suggested that the school psychologist is involved in staff training however no other interventions are mentioned. The article does include steps for schools to implement the policy, however, they are very broad, for example: ‘form a committee of all interested
staff members to develop a site crisis intervention plan. This committee should include
the principal, vice-principal(s), school psychologist, school counsellor(s) and school
secretary’ (p.60).

Purvis et al. (1991), as mentioned briefly, proposes that one of the ways that schools
cope with crisis situations is by using crisis intervention teams. Purvis et al. (1991)
have described steps in establishing a crisis intervention team and drawn attention to
particular roles for EPs. Purvis et al. (1991) note that the EPs role is important because
most crises involve administering support for emotional needs. The steps outlined are,
‘determining goals, performing a needs assessment, finding model programs,
developing a membership pool, developing a training programme, preparing and
maintaining a resource list, establishing a communication network, designating a base
of operations, planning crisis team meetings, keeping records and implementing the
phases of debriefing’. When discussing the phases of debriefing they suggest that the
school psychologist is crucial in the feeling phase.

Detailed information is given for the first four steps. Under the step ‘developing a
training programme’ only broad topics are discussed, e.g. prevention strategies. The
school psychologist role is implicated in the instruction of intervention strategies and
supervision. It refers to the school psychologist providing advice in the ‘establishing a
communication network’ step in terms of sharing information with children and editing
media statements. In discussing the practical issues under ‘designating a base for
operations’ group counselling is mentioned; however it is not clear who would deliver
this. Furthermore it is not clear who should deliver the final step, ‘implementing the
phases of debriefing’. This article is written for schools to help them develop these
team which could be seen as CIRTs; however they are developed specifically within
one setting and the school psychologist is seen as one professional which would be
involved. In describing the use of a team in a scenario it is suggested that the school
psychologist would typically be the chair of the crisis team with the principal. This is
suggesting that each school would have a team but it does not describe how this would
fit organisationally within an EP service.

With the exception of Carroll et al. (1997), Brock (2000) and Purvis et al. (1991)
articles to date have been content focussed. How people set up (inception) and sustain
an organisational function related to CIs has been neglected. Carroll et al. (1997) is the
only article reviewed which aims to describe the process of specifically setting up a
CIRT within a LA/EPS. Both Brock (2000) and Purvis et al. (1991) are referring to crisis teams within individual schools. There is therefore a gap in knowledge about how CI services are set up (RQ1) and sustained (RQ2). The next section of the literature turns to organisational psychology. The aim is to identify important themes in the area of organisational change. Brock (2000) highlighted the importance of CPD, commitment to change, involving key personnel to review policies and having shared perceptions.

2.7 What Factors Influence Change in Organisations?

The PSYCINFO database was searched in October 2009 using the title search terms, ‘organisational change’, ‘children’s services’ and ‘local authority’. A second search was undertaken in December 2009 using the title search terms ‘policy’, ‘strategy’, ‘disaster policy’ AND ‘bereavement’ and ‘critical incident’.

Lewin’s (1947) action research has emphasised the relevance of group work and involving those affected to ensure change is effective. Elsey and Lathlean (2006) have highlighted the relevance of action research to organisational change within health services in the UK. Elsey and Lathlean (2006) refer to the National Health Service as complex and in a constant state of change with frontline workers being bombarded with new structures and methods of working. This would appear to mirror the TEP’s experience of the education system. Laffin (2008) reviewed the English Local Government Modernisation Agenda evaluation studies, which were commission by central government. Laffin (2008) concluded that LAs appear to be largely passive recipients of the central policy initiatives. He identified that members and officers reported that they were ‘following central government’s lead, rather than setting their own agendas’ (p.112). Elsey and Lathlean (2006) note that action research brings research and theory into practice and is an interactive process.

Armenakis and Bedcian (1999) reviewed research from the 1990s concluding that the success or failure of periods of change is dependent on the context and content but also the processes which have been used to implement the change. Kotter (1995) proposed eights steps for effective change (see Figure 2.1 below)
Figure 2.1 Eight Steps to Transforming Your Organisation

1. Establishing a Sense of Urgency
2. Forming a Powerful Guiding Coalition
3. Creative Vision
4. Communicating the Vision
5. Empowering Others to Act on the Vision
6. Planning for and Creating Short-Term Wins
7. Consolidating improvements and Producing still More Change
8. Institutionalising New Approaches (Kotter, 1995, p.61)

Guimaraes and Armstrong (1998) found the existing literature had little empirical evidence to support different theories/approaches of change management. Against this backdrop, By (2005) undertook a critical review of theories/approaches with the aim of encouraging research to construct a pragmatic framework of how to manage it. By (2005) concluded that ‘drawing on the reported poor success rate of change programmes in general, the lack of empirical research on change management within organisations, and an arguably fundamental lack of a valid framework for organisational change management, it is recommended that further research into the nature of change management is conducted.’ (p.378).

Edwards (2005) noted the absence of an integrative theoretical framework able to cope with the demands of researching and explaining the process of organisational change, across diverse domains. Edwards (2005) proposed a holonomic framework to use when studying organisational change. Edwards (2005) proposed the framework as a first step in accommodating the insights of ten key approaches to organisational change, looking at what can be learned from how they interrelate.

Watts and Leyden (1989) reported the change process in reorganising a school psychology service. The model presented emphasised the importance of staff access to information, staff contributions, and consensus decision making. They also reported learning that a reasonable time scale is key to maintaining momentum and the importance of consulting, discussing and negotiating.
Fox (2009) explores EPs’ traditions of working with systems and proposes that management and organisational psychology were key in the move away from seeing individual children. Stobie (2002) discusses the processes of change and continuity and how they apply to educational psychology. Stobie (2002) noted that ‘systems are bound together by their history, culture, shared beliefs, values, assumptions and work habits that influence the way people perceive, think and behave’ (p.207). Stobie (2002) identifies that if organisations (e.g. psychological services) are dependent on a more powerful system, which has legislative and political power (e.g. LEA), change will be harder to achieve. Figure 2.2 illustrates the prerequisites for change identified by Stobie (2002):

**Figure 2.2 Prerequisites for ‘Change’**

- it is supported internally and externally;
- the complexity of change can be understood by all;
- the change presents solutions to perceived problems;
- staff can accept that there may be unintended outcomes;
- it creates communities with whom the new paradigm can be shared, applied, evaluated and reflected upon;
- it recognises itself as a learning organisation for which ‘change’ may only be temporary as new paradigms emerge leading to further ‘change’;
- it permits dissent, uses it constructively and considers change as a personal and organisational matter;
- it perceives its existence in the context of other systems, which make transactional influences possible;
- it remains an ‘open’, purposive and goal-seeking system, adaptive both internally and externally, utilising both negative and positive feedback mechanisms to enhance its efficiency, but most importantly its effectiveness in relation to the microscopic and macroscopic problems it encounters.

(Stobie, 2002, p.210)
Suarez-Balcazar, Redmond, Kouba, Hellwig, Davis, Martinez and Jones (2007) described system change in lunch programmes and vending machines in Chicago Public Schools. Ely (1990) identified conditions that are likely to facilitate change in systems, namely dissatisfaction with how things are, new knowledge and skills, resources being available, high level of commitment and leadership from key people. Suarez-Balcazar et al. (2007) added networking and forming a task group to Ely’s (1990) conditions.

Several researchers have drawn attention to the resistance that is often faced during systems change (e.g. Ellsworth, 2000). Suarez-Balcazar et al. (2007) identifies that resistance is likely to come from those who oppose changing what is current because they have a vested interest in the situation staying the same. In the system change described by Suarez-Balcazar et al. (2007) the following challenges and limitations were faced:

- resistance to change
- differing stakeholder priorities
- lack of funding and resources
- bureaucracy from the institutions
- unrealistic expectations about speed of change from funders and others.

Elving (2005) presents a framework of how to study communication in organisational change and suggests that communication during organisational change could prevent resistance to change.

Literature above (e.g. Stobie, 2002) indicates that working at an organisational level can be complicated and difficult to successfully complete. The literature has discussed the relevance of action research (Lewin, 1947 & Elsey and Lathlean, 2006) and several ideas in terms of steps/prerequisites/facilitators and challenges to consider when working through a change process. Guimaraes and Armstrong (1998) and By (2005) report the lack of an empirically supported model. Several key factors which influence work at the organisational level were highlighted by Weick (2001) in his analysis of organisational literature. He notes that organisational theory is moving away from focussing on rational systems and instead is developing ideas about how open and natural systems work. He notes that many traditional ideas which have developed about
organisational change are based on theories of rational systems and may need alternations to fit more open systems. Within the view of rational systems it would seem that a stable group make decisions. Weick (2001) noted that ‘Our understanding of change against the backdrop of loose ties is underdeveloped because most models people use to think about change rely heavily on connections, networks, support systems, diffusion, imitation and social comparison, none of which are plentiful in loosely coupled systems’ (p.382). Assumptions of organisations as open, loosely coupled systems differ greatly from rational assumptions and focus on organisations complexity, the variability of individual component parts (individuals and subgroups) and the loose connections amongst them. The TEP argues that LAs could be viewed as loosely coupled systems.

Weick (2001) noted that despite the variation in newer proposals about organisations, six themes can be found in most of them:

- ‘There is less to rationality than meets the eye’
- ‘Organizations are segmented rather than monolithic’
- ‘Stable segments in organizations are quite small’
- ‘Connections among segments have variable strength’
- ‘Connections of variable strength produce ambiguity’
- ‘Connections of constant strength reduce ambiguity’ (Weick, 2001, p.34).

Weick (2001) notes that rationality can be viewed as an organisation taking action having perceived a problem, defined it, generated possible actions and then selected a course of action. Weick (2001) suggests that this process is unlikely to have happened. It is noted that appearing to act rationally can help deflect criticism and ensure resources continue to come in. Weick (2001) suggests that acting rationally as above could require a high level of control from a centralised authority. In terms of a CIRT within a LA, the organisation (LA) may not have a history of developing projects rationally and therefore it may be hard to find out how the CIRT was set up. Weick (2001) refers to retrospective justification, which may take place where reasons for action are invented. Information may be gained about the CIRT’s development using a process of
retrospective justification and this may have a beneficial function for the personnel involved in the process.

Weick (2001) notes that ‘organizations are seen as more unified actors than they are, operating in more homogeneous environments than exist...’ (p.37). In the context of a CIRT, organisations that are more segregated might incept, operate and sustain a CIRT differently. Some Children’s Services have multi-disciplinary teams whereas others have single discipline teams and are therefore more segregated. Perhaps CIRTs which have developed in more segregated environments would work differently. The inception of a CIRT within a multi-disciplinary children’s services may be easier as the structural links needed may already be in place. Weick (2001) notes that ‘new perspectives emphasize not only that organizations are segmented, but also that the segments are both small and stable.’ (p.40). ‘It is these simpler structures that become linked and supply the basic orderliness found in organizations’ (p.41). CIRTs may have developed amongst small and stable segments within a LA. Perhaps a working group approach, which may involve members of several different small segments coming together, is more difficult to achieve and less stable.

Weick (2001) notes that connections within organisations can vary in strength and be a mixture of loose and tight links. He suggests that the strength may vary due to frequent changes in management, unclear job descriptions and large spans of control. Weick (2001) proposes that the presence of variable connections means that ambiguity is likely to be high. He notes several ways to regain constancy when it has been lost through variable connections, namely language (e.g. labels), action and interaction. These processes could all be used when developing a CIRT response.

2.8 How are CI Services Evaluated?

To answer this question the TEP refers to the literature reviewed in the previous section ‘How do EPSs respond to CIs?’ In terms of evaluation Carroll et al. (1997) noted that the feedback from training offered to schools was good. Furthermore they gathered informal evaluation through letters and telephone calls expressing gratitude. Carroll et al. (1997) highlight the ethical dilemmas involved with carrying out formal evaluation and propose to sensitively seek parents, pupils and school views. Posada (2006) also draws attention to the serious ethical issues that could arise from research in the aftermath of CIs. Posada (2006) suggests simulations provide a way of researching
both the emotional and social support provided. Cameron et al. (1995) noted that after 
they have been involved a headteacher and EPS evaluation form is available for 
feedback. They also reported anecdotal evidence following a staff meeting (nursery 
staff felt positively supported). McCaffrey (2004) reported surveying Kent schools to 
find out what support they would want after a crisis. Furthermore after each CI 
supported, an evaluation sheet is sent to the school in the following half term. They 
reported that response has been overwhelmingly positive. Also prior to using CISD 
with secondary pupils data from the ‘Impact of Events’ response scale (Horowitz, 
Wilner & Alvarez, 1979) was collected. The scale was administered again six weeks 
after the intervention. The most significant change was in the area of intrusive thoughts 
and images. Mallon and Best (1995) also used data from the ‘Impact of Events’ scale 
(Horowitz et al., 1979). The data was collected soon after the incident and six months 
later. Mallon and Best (1995) reported a marked reduction in the intrusive and 
avoidance factors six months after the incident and they suggested that the skilled 
counselling may have had a significant effect.

Sorensen (1989) reported that administrators, teachers and parents gave their 
appreciation, noting that the support was valuable. Klingman (1988) discussed the 
importance of evaluation. He noted that structured interviews, self-report 
questionnaires and data looking at school functioning could be collected. He 
highlighted that repeated evaluation could help revise intervention strategies. He also 
noted the value of an outside consultant who may bring new ideas and an outsider’s 
perspective.

Evaluations reported appear limited and ethical issues have been raised. There appears 
to be a gap in knowledge about current evaluation methods being used (RQ2).

2.9 Literature Review Synthesis

The following section provides a critical appraisal and synthesis of the literature which 
has been described in Chapter 2. The following areas will be discussed:

- The quality of the evidence base for specific interventions for trauma
- CIRTs: the international perspective
- Key studies in evaluating the impact of CIRTs
Main theoretical influences upon CIRTs

Ingredients of an effective CIRT

The role of EPs in multi-agency CIRT work

2.9.1 The quality of the evidence base for specific interventions.

Four specific interventions for trauma are described and evaluated in section 2.5 above. The following section will look at the quality of the evidence base.

2.9.1.1 CBT.

Cohen et al.’s (2000) review of studies showed that although the evidence for the efficacy of trauma-focused CBT is growing there is insufficient data to clarify which CBT components are most helpful. It is not clear which components are best at treating which specific symptoms or populations of traumatised children. Stein et al.’s (2003) RCT evaluating the effectiveness of a group CBT treatment package for children living in a violent community did not indicate which element of a CBT intervention was the ‘active ingredient’. Stein et al.’s (2003) intervention aimed to increase resilience and build coping skills, however, the clinically significant improvements which were maintained to the six month follow up are only a measure of the short-term effectiveness. It was not clear whether the students (randomly assigned to the early intervention group) were exposed to new violence during this time. This information and a longer follow up is needed in order to determine the intervention’s long-term effectiveness and whether it builds resilience as the vulnerable children are faced with future traumatic events. The study was also only of one age group. The study did not have a control condition, for example general supportive therapy, but instead a waiting list delayed intervention. This meant that none of the informants (students, parents or teachers) were blinded to the treatment condition which could have affected the intervention or assessments; for example, school staff and parents could have given more attention and support to those students who were eligible for the programme whilst they were on a waiting list. Also respondents may have been more likely to report an improvement in symptoms for students they knew had had the intervention. Comparison to a general support and attention group could help control for the attention that children receive as part of the programme. However, these designs can be difficult in school settings as there is often a push to provide the same programme to all students.
and therefore randomisation to a placebo condition can be seen as insensitive to the
needs of families and children.

The cognitive model proposed by Ehlers and Clarke (2000) to provide a framework for
cognitive-behavioural intervention leaves many propositions untested. The model
proposes that in persistent PTSD, putting the trauma into the past requires change in
three areas, however a wide range of cognitive-behavioural interventions could be used
to achieve these changes and therefore research is needed to identify which
interventions would be most efficient. The model is also only based on a single trauma.

Ehlers et al. (2003) carried out a longitudinal study of children following a road traffic
accident and found that cognitive factors measured straight after a road traffic accident
predicted PTSD symptom severity at three and six months after the incident. A
weakness of this study was that they only used a few items to measure the constructs.

2.9.1.2 PD.

In his review of the clinical literature Hunt (2002) refers to the lack of agreement about
PD in terms of what it is, whether it is a group or individual treatment, the methods used
and how they are evaluated. In particular Hunt (2002) refers to the controversy
surrounding using PD with children who have experienced traumatic events and the
potential long-term problems. Hunt (2002) notes that there is difficulty in assessing the
long-term efficacy of PD because there are no long-term scientific studies in terms of
years and decades. Hunt (2002) highlights methodological and ethical issues when
studying PD with children. The ethical issues are centred around discussing traumatic
events with children due to the distress that might be caused. In terms of
methodological issues, randomised control studies are the best way of evaluating the
effectiveness of PD but these are difficult to conduct with children. Hunt (2002) refers
to the lack of appropriate measuring and evaluation tools for PD and that those available
for adults may not be appropriate due to the linguistic sophistication and the different
emotional responses that children have. Dyregrov (1991) revised the Impact of Event
Scale (Horowitz et al., 1979) for children but limited research has been carried out on
children.

More recently Stallard et al. (2006) conducted a RCT to study the effectiveness of early
psychological intervention with children involved in road traffic accidents. This was
the first RCT of an early intervention based on a PD format with child trauma survivors.
Self completed assessments and diagnostic status showed that children in both the trauma and neutral discussion groups made similar significant improvements. Improvements on the child completed Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire was the only area where children who received the PD intervention made additional gains over those in the neutral discussion group. Additional gains were not found at eight months but there would need to be repeated measures over time to find out if the intervention affected the speed of recovery.

2.9.1.3 Other therapeutic approaches to trauma interventions.

Bray et al. (2003) documented the use of writing therapy for asthma sufferers in school. They note that only one other investigation employed written emotional expression as a treatment for medical conditions. The writing therapy resulted in variable responses which may have been due to a range of factors. The researchers did not screen the content of the written exercises which means there is no way to verify whether the participants followed the directions. In order to include younger participants in the study it may have been useful to incorporate forms of non-verbal expression e.g. drawing. The present study only collected follow up data for one and a half weeks. Maximum benefits of expressive writing need to be assessed using long-term follow up after treatment cessation.

Ross and Hayes (2004) described the techniques used in two interventions with groups of bereaved pupils, one delivered in a primary school and the second in a secondary school. It was a small-scale study using 14 case studies. In the secondary school five of the group members completed part A of the ‘Pupils’ Feelings about School and School-Work Inventory’ the week before starting the course and one month after the course had finished. In addition to qualitative evaluation only the cognitive motivation domain showed significant difference between pre and post scores. Many areas of school life and psychological well-being are hypothesised to be impacted by the significant improvement in the cognitive motivation domain, but further long-term analysis would be needed to investigate this.
2.9.2 CIRTs: the international perspective.

The literature reviewed identified CI responses in the USA, Israel and the UK. The following section provides a discussion of the similarities and differences between the approaches.

The content of the support offered in the three countries is very similar. Klingman (1988) used experience in schools in Israel to present a preliminary model for disaster intervention in schools. Support is discussed in levels (Anticipatory, Organisational emergency, Primary/early secondary, Secondary and Tertiary). Tertiary is looking at those pupils who are returning to school following treatment. The goal is to help reintegration using the recovery of social and academic competencies and adaptation of the environment. Tertiary prevention has not been highlighted by the literature reviewed in the USA and UK. In the specific case of the suicide bombings in Israel, described by Stein (1997), an information centre and telephone hotline were set up. The EPs also reported accompanying victims when identifying the dead. This was a community disaster. Contact was established with schools where pupils or teachers may have been related to victims, to plan the next day of school. This type of community response is discussed by Posada (2006) in the UK.

The USA teams are reported to revolve around the school with the school taking responsibility (e.g. Purvis et al.; Authement & Boren, 1991). In contrast in the UK most teams are reported to stem from the EPS with attempts made to liaise with other agencies. The USA literature highlights the importance of teams being multi-agency. Brock et al., (2001) in discussing the development of school crisis response teams, recommend that teams are multi-disciplinary with a leader (e.g. principal), counselling/intervention specialist (e.g. school psychologist, social worker or counsellor), medical team representative (e.g. school nurse), law enforcement, media representative, parent and teacher representatives. Adamson and Peacock (2007), who extended previous surveys in the USA to investigate specific details of school crisis plans/teams, found that the school psychologist and principal were nearly always members of crisis teams and that there was a gap, in terms of a parent or community representative, on the crisis teams.
Much of the literature in the UK describes CIRTs being set up as a response to incidents (e.g. O'Hara et al., 1994; Mallon & Best, 1995; McCaffrey, 2004); this has also been the case in the USA (e.g. Collison et al., 1987).

In the UK the guidelines produced to follow when engaging in CI work (Cameron et al., 1995; Mallon & Best, 1995; Carroll et al., 1997) highlight the general principle of enhancing school capacity and in the literature in all three countries it is clear that the approach is to work through teaching staff. For example, Collison et al. (1987) note that teachers are given advice on sharing the news. Klingman (1988) outlines supporting and advising staff within primary prevention and Stein (1997) notes that EPS helped plan the next day of school. Houghton (1996) notes in the summary of the survey that EPSs gave advice and generally supported school staff to manage.

Cameron et al. (1995), Mallon and Best (1995) and Carroll et al. (1997) produced guidelines to follow when engaging in CI work, suggesting different role options for the EPS involving different levels of time and energy. McCaffrey (2004) highlighted the need for personal support for staff.

### 2.9.3 Key studies in evaluating the impact of CIRTs.

Studies reviewed above within sections, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 and 2.8 relate in varying degrees to the impact of CIRTs. Within these studies seven studies are highlighted as being particularly significant in the evaluation of the impact of CIRTs. O'Hara et al. (1994) documented the work of Salford EPS. This article was the first UK EPS to publish a documentation of support offered following a CI. It reports how the EPS set up a bereavement support service and proposes that this is a legitimate role for EPSs. It describes the use of CISD in detail and proposes that other EPSs could use the booklets, script and the planning framework outlined to deliver such a service. O'Hara et al. (1994) have subsequently been cited within the literature as a source of training for carrying out this type of work.

Dyregrov (1991) adapted the CISD model to use with children and young people and Hunt (2002) reviewed the clinical literature, raising the debate about its effectiveness with children who have experienced traumatic events.
The NICE report (2006) has highlighted the role of EPSs in the coordinated provision of social and psychological care to children following a major disaster. The report highlighted the need for an evidence based and pre-planned response which is part of the central disaster plan. As with Hunt (2002) the report discusses the debate about the efficacy of debriefing referring to meta-analyses. The Yule and Gold (1993) publication ‘Wise before the event’ provided a structure to help schools support child survivors of crises and was made freely available to schools in the UK.

Randall and Parker (1997) highlight that childhood PTSD, although perhaps less obvious, is just as complex and harmful as adult PTSD. In light of this Randall and Parker (1997) suggest that EPSs require an awareness of PTSD due to the severely stressful events school-age children may have to endure. Randall and Parker (1997) propose a role for the school EP as the coordinator for support. In keeping with a CIRT response they suggest that EPSs could also help teachers in understanding which staff or children are most at risk of being affected in the longer term and should be involved in school counselling either directly or indirectly.

Posada (2006) drew attention to the fact that CIS in schools has become part of the range of services offered by many EPSs across the UK and in the USA. Posada (2006) proposes that EPSs are well placed to become involved in wider community crisis work, having built up skills in supporting schools. She notes that USA school psychologists have already started to widen their remit. Posada (2006) describes the development of LA guidelines on psycho/social support following CIs and disasters.

2.9.4 Main theoretical influences upon CIRTs.

Attribution theory (Peterson, 1984), theory relating to social support (Klingman, 1993), and theory relating to natural coping strategies/coping styles (Klingman, 1988) appear to be significant in relation to the work of CIRTs.

2.9.4.1 Attribution theory with different crisis situations (Peterson, 1984).

Peterson (1984) discusses the use of attribution theory in crisis work and reports that there are certain characteristics of the attribution process that have relevance in understanding some behaviours, such as trying to assign a cause for important instances of the behaviour to self and others. This cause has important consequences for
subsequent feelings and behaviour. The major reason for using the attribution/reattribution process in crisis intervention is to examine what effect the particular attribution is having on the client. Important questions are: Is the attribution the client is making perpetuating the crisis and interfering with his or her coping skills? Have other attributions been considered which are less damaging to self-esteem? Peterson (1984) suggests that helpful attributions lead to growth in healthy coping skills and ultimately to positive crisis resolution. McClatchey and Vonk (2005) highlight attribution theory as an area for further EP contribution.

Ballou and Rebich’s (1977) model for crisis intervention defined a crisis as a threat with which a person perceives they cannot cope. Ballou and Rebich (1977) argue that whether an event is a crisis for an individual is determined by their perception and their ability to cope. Manktelow (2007) reported that a study of two towns with differing levels of violence, showed that people’s perception of violence has an impact on their well-being.

Ehlers and Clark’s (2000) cognitive model provided a framework for cognitive-behavioural intervention. They suggested that PTSD will become persistent if a trauma is processed in a way that produces a sense of threat. They note that problematic behavioural and cognitive strategies prevent changes in these negative appraisals and trauma memories. Ehlers et al.’s (2003) longitudinal study of children following a road traffic accident supported cognitive predictors of PTSD in children. The study found that cognitive factors measured straight after a road traffic accident predicted PTSD symptom severity at three and six months after the incident.

One stage of the CISD (cf. Morrison, 2007) approach is to normalise reactions to a crisis. This stage could have been informed by attribution theory.

2.9.4.2 Theory relating to social support (Klingman, 1993).

Klingman (1993) discussed the use of a school-based intervention which aimed to improve a school’s ability to be a social support system during a disaster. La Greca (2007) reported that social support has helped mitigate the impact of trauma for children. They note that following severe abuse or disasters those children who have more social support from significant others, e.g. parents, teacher, classmates and friends
have reported suffering fewer symptoms of PTSD than those who have had less social support. In line with La Greca (2007), Kasler et al. (2008) studied two factors, namely perceived social support and hope, which could build resiliency in children following trauma. A positive correlation was found between family support and PTSD. Gilligan (2006) and Manktelow (2007) refer to the protection provided by social support when disaster hits. Manktelow (2007) noted that support from families and friends was relied on throughout much of the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

There are other social support options within the community in addition to the school. Admason and Peacock (2007) found that the school psychologist and principal were nearly always members of crisis teams and that there was a gap, in terms of a parent or community representative, on the crisis teams. O’Hara et al. (1994) reported that the third session of CISD helped children to mobilise their own resources and normalise their feelings through discussion with fellow victims. Hermann and Hoffman (1984) developed a model of consultation in cooperation with significant members of the community following the death of a student. The aims of consultation were to widen understanding of the situation, to encourage the expression of feelings and to identify ways to cope. The CIRT responses discussed in the literature review refer to group counselling/sessions which could be seen as a form of social support and a safe place to express feelings (e.g. Houghton, 1996). Peake (2001) discussed a community-based support group (WAVE) and how they worked to set up environments where children and young people could tell their story and share their feelings with others who had had similar experiences.

2.9.4.3 Theory relating to natural coping strategies/coping styles (Klingman, 1988).

Klingman’s (1988) reconceptualisation of the tripartite prevention model (Caplan, 1964) is based on the premise that the priority for prevention in a disaster should be intervention within the natural setting, e.g. school or classroom. The intervention should be delivered by the people who are most familiar with this setting, e.g. school staff, through pedagogical and social means rather than through direct clinical interventions. Ray (1985) highlights the need for teachers to be aware of appropriate interventions as they are often the only available adults when a young person faces a crisis.
The five levels (mentioned earlier) of school-based preventive intervention fit with the CI response approaches documented in the literature. For example the anticipatory level is referring to the planning which is undertaken by services and LAs in general (e.g. Collison et al., 1987). Organisation refers to an initial assessment of the situation which is the basis of initial decision making (e.g. Sorensen, 1989). The Primary prevention refers to supporting teaching staff, for example to give advice on discussing the crisis, supporting parents and identifying risk (e.g. Sorensen, 1989; Collison et al., 1987). Secondary prevention is targeted to meet individual needs (e.g. Houghton, 1996). Finally, tertiary prevention is reintegration of those returning to school following treatment. The CIRTs discussed in literature vary between referring on for targeted support and offering it themselves (e.g. Mallon & Best, 1995; Carroll et al., 1997; Cameron et al., 1995 guidelines). Six of the seven UK leaflets reviewed noted signposting/referral to other specialist services.

In discussing secondary prevention Klingman (1988) notes that ‘a crisis is viewed as an opportunity for growth, since old coping patterns are found to be inefficient or insufficient and new ones must emerge or can be learned and adopted’ (p.212). Klingman (1988) suggests that treatment based crisis intervention can be delayed. He explains that many initial reactions to disaster will recover spontaneously or can be tackled through natural support systems, primary prevention and emotional first aid. Klingman (1988) suggests that research is needed to look into the ecological assessment of children’s self-generated coping strategies in a variety of disasters. Manktelow (2007) referred to three psychological coping mechanisms, namely denial, distancing and habituation, which were used to preserve mental health during the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Klingman (1988) proposes that building on the skills of children who appear to function optimally in stressful conditions may allow us to develop more effective anticipatory guidance and primary prevention programmes which use children’s preferred coping styles.

In many of the CI responses reviewed (e.g. Klingman, 1988 & McCaffrey, 2004) counselling is not offered initially, which arguably reflects an acknowledgement of the role of natural coping strategies in dealing with the psychological trauma of crises.
2.9.5 Ingredients of an effective CIRT.

The literature documents that CI support exists within LAs and that often a range of professionals are involved. The literature identifies the type of support that is offered, however it is not clear why some responses/teams are more sustainable and why their protocols and structure vary. Evaluations reported in the literature appear limited and therefore the effectiveness of the approaches documented remains unclear. The literature does not inform us about the ingredients of an effective CIRT and there is therefore a knowledge gap for this piece of research.

2.9.6 The role of EPs in multi-agency CIRT work.

School psychologists have historically been identified as having a key role in CI support offered (Purvis et al., 1991; Pitcher & Poland, 1992; Poland, 1994). The author argues several roles for EPs, in the context of multi-agency CI work, which are supported by the literature:

- Teaching about death and loss (e.g. Houghton, 1996; Ross & Hayes, 2004; Stein, 1997)
- Skills of working with children and young people who are traumatised (e.g. Houghton, 1996; Purvis et al., 1991; Stein, 1997)
- Good working relationships with schools and understanding of school systems (e.g. McCaffrey, 2004)
- Identifying those children and young people who are most vulnerable (e.g. McCaffrey, 2004; Randall & Parker, 1997)
- Training in research and the application of evidence based practice (e.g. Nickerson & Zhe, 2004; Vonk, 2005)
- Hypothesising and problem solving which would be valuable during planning meetings (e.g. Soresen, 1989; McCaffrey, 2004)

In addition to the above, EPs work to an ethical code, which is not necessarily the case for other workers within education. In light of this, an additional role for EPs working in education would be bringing this ethical code to the multi-agency group. O’Hara et al. (1994) report that, in a discussion about whether CI work should go to EPs, the PEP
commented that EPs have the skills to work directly with individual and groups of children in this context, bringing an understanding of group processes. The PEP did not think other agencies could provide the same sensitivity to needs of the community.

2.10 Summary of Literature Review and Rationale for the Present Research

It is clear from the chronology that crises have been labelled and discussed in literature since the 1970s. School psychologists have historically been implicated as having a key role in support offered. A range of research is reviewed which provides evidence for PTSD in children and adolescents (e.g. Mghaieth et al., 2007; La Greca et al., 1996) however it is important to note that there is variety in the trauma experienced, assessment used and time lapse. The issue of co-morbidity is raised (Cameron et al., 1995; La Greca, 2007). Much of the research about interventions focuses on CBT but Vickers (2005) highlighted the need to know which element of CBT programmes is the ‘active ingredient’. Dyregrov (2004) suggests that in addition to strategies to help school staff, specialised support is also required for those who are most affected. Writing therapy (Bray et al., 2003) and strategies for working with children and young people following bereavements (Ross & Hayes, 2004) are discussed. The importance of social support (La Greca, 2007; Kasler et al., 2008) and the EP’s role in developing attributions and coping skills is proposed (McClatchey & Vonk, 2005).

Since 1994 a range of support offered by EPSs in England has been documented in the literature. O’Hara et al. (1994) solely describe the response of the EPS following a CI. Mallon and Best (1995) and Cameron et al. (1995) produced guidelines for EPSs involved or planning to be involved in CI work from their own experiences and McCaffrey (2004) reported a model for supporting schools in crisis. CI leaflets from a range of UK LAs were found through an internet search, documenting what support is offered (see section 2.4.1.1). The only article which described how a CI service was set up in the UK was Carroll et al. (1997) but there were several gaps in this description (e.g. capacity issues). It is clear from the literature that CI support exists within LAs and that often a range of professionals are involved. There is also information in the literature about the type of support that is offered, however it is not clear why some responses/teams are more sustainable and why their protocols and structure vary. For example, following a CI in Kent, McCaffrey (2004) reports that the crisis support coordinator informs the EPS and other agencies whereas Cameron et al. (1995) reports that in Waltham Forest the PEP is a member of the crisis team but the team is led by
social services. The literature broadly specifies CI responses, however the TEP wants a more detailed specification, sharply focussed on the process of developing a CIRT.

The aim of the research is therefore to find out about the process of development. If more was known about the process this could lead to better practices in general. The utility for LAs is understanding the inception, operation and sustainability of CIRTs, informing the work of LAs interested in developing a CI response or modifying current practice. The research questions are therefore linked to the inception, operation and sustaining of CIRTs. The TEP has been made aware of a local gap in the home LA in terms of CI support offered by the EPS. It therefore seems important to undertake a thorough investigation of the process of developing a CIRT (RQ1) so that any model proposed would be fit for purpose and sustainable (RQ2).

Evaluation of services to date appears to have been through evaluation forms, anecdotal evidence and the use of the Impact of Events Scale (Horowitz et al., 1979). McCaffrey (2004) reports surveying schools to find out what support they would want. Carroll et al. (1997) notes ethical dilemmas in formally evaluating the effectiveness of CI support. Posada (2006) comments that it is difficult to carry out research during the post impact phase of CIs and looks to simulations instead. In light of these difficulties it seems important to find out how LAs currently evaluate the CI support they offer (RQ2, see section 2.8).

In view of the current gap in the home LA in terms of CI support, the TEP aims to use the findings to propose a model for the development of a sustainable CIRT. The steps, prerequisites, facilitators and challenges raised in section 2.7 of the literature review will be used to reflect on this process. Furthermore it is hoped that in addition to informing work in the home LA it will also inform other LAs who are interested in developing a CI response or modifying a current response.

2.10.1 Research questions.

RQ(1) How have LAs developed current CI support in terms of support offered, inception and protocols?

RQ(2) How do LAs sustain and evaluate a CI approach?
Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Rationale and Background

Since the 1970s crises have been labelled and discussed in literature, with school psychologists being implicated as having a key role in the support offered. EPSs in England have recorded the support they offer since 1994; however with one exception the literature focuses on what is offered and neglects how services were set up. The literature informs us about the type of support offered but it is not clear why the teams/responses vary in their sustainability, protocols and structure. The researcher wants a more detailed specification focussing on the process of developing a Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT). The researcher was made aware of a gap in terms of Critical Incident (CI) support offered by the EPS where she works. It therefore seems important to undertake a thorough investigation of the process of developing a CIRT (RQ1) so any model proposed would be fit for purpose and sustainable (RQ2). The literature also raises difficulties in terms of evaluation and therefore it seems important to find out about current evaluation methods used (RQ2).

The researcher aims to use the findings to develop a model to support the development of a sustainable CIRT. It is hoped that this would be used to inform practice in the home LA and also more widely to inform the work of other LAs who may be interested in developing a CI response or modifying a current approach.

The first three stages of the Research and Development in Organisations model (RADIO, Timmins et al., 2003) helped ensure that the research fitted the home LA’s aims, (see Appendix 3 for a summary of RADIO model phases and identified steps taken in phases 1-3). The researcher did not continue to pursue the remaining stages of the model for pragmatic reasons. The researcher wanted the model proposed to be useful to other LAs as well as the home LA and therefore wanted to step back from developing the work purely within this LA. However, further stages of the RADIO model will be outlined in Chapter 6 to ensure there is a clear explanation of how the work could be taken forward.

Timmins et al. (2003) describe an evaluation of a LA behaviour support initiative in which behaviour support teachers were re-located from a pupil referral unit into mainstream secondary schools, to work with pupils at risk of exclusion. Their design was informed by the RADIO model which provided a framework for negotiation and
the involvement of research sponsors and stakeholders. Timmins et al. (2003) reported that the RADIO approach was initially developed by Knight and Timmins (1995) to support TEPs in working through and managing school improvement work. Timmins et al. (2003) note that although steps are outlined there is often movement between phases as they have to be re-visited. Timmins et al. (2003) reported that it provides a means of inviting stakeholders in institutions to contribute to both the focus and processes that are involved in a school/service development. This in turn can help avoid negative responses to change and encourage ownership.

Schein (1992) gave insights into the way in which the culture of organisations could impact on relationships between an external research facilitator, research sponsor and the stakeholders. This is a reminder of how powerful an organisation’s culture can be in interfering with planned research and development. Timmins et al. (2003) note that the idea of the first four phases is to try to maximise the likelihood that the outcomes of the research will actually be taken on board by the organisation. Timmins et al. (2003) suggest that ‘although the overall application of the RADIO model can be viewed as fitting within a collaborative action research framework, the research design aspect accommodates both positivist and interpretive or qualitative approaches to research’ (p.234).

3.1.1 Research questions.

RQ(1) How have LAs developed current CI support in terms of support offered, inception and protocols?

RQ(2) How do LAs sustain and evaluate a CI approach?

3.2 Information Gathered from Conferences Attended in 2009

In order to inform the process of data gathering and analysis a preliminary fieldwork orientation took place. In addition to the information gained from the literature review, data relevant to the researcher’s inquiry was gathered from attending three seminars about CI support. The researcher found out that there are EPSs currently involved in offering CI support. The presenters were able to articulate rationales and strategic behaviour with some organisational perspective but those details are not available in a coherent academic form. Two seminars were attended in November 2009 at the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP) conference. EPs from Bridgend
(Silver, Morgan & Powell, 2009) described CI intervention and the ‘Choose Life’ Suicide Prevention website which has been developed. Silver et al. (2009) discussed the range of work the EPS is involved in. Examples included consultation, support for staff/pupils and joint work with other agencies. They were part of a bronze tactical group within the emergency response structure.

The Warwickshire Critical Incident Support Group (CISG) was described by Osborne and Midgen (2009). They noted how, following a lack of co-ordinated multi-agency support, links were forged between committed individuals from the EPS, CAMHS and school health. This led to the formation of the CISG in 2005. Currently there are nine members from CAMHS, the EPS and school health. Osborne and Midgen (2009) reported that the CISG leads on levels 1 and 2 crises but is also involved in community support following a major disaster. They gave the following advice to get started, namely to find others with an interest in or contacts in CI work within the LA, form an interest group, develop an action plan, get support from service managers and look at training needs.

The third seminar was attended at the North West CPD Conference in December 2009. Cook (2009) described the multi-disciplinary teams in Warrington and Halton. These teams include representatives from the youth service, education welfare service and inclusive learning service. Cook (2009) noted that a consultant had been used to set up the teams and that members from both teams share training. Each team covers its own area but if there is a large incident the team would work as one.

3.3 Design of the Study

In order to address the two research questions the researcher carried out a series of semi-structured interviews with staff from seven LAs which have CIRTS, to find out more about the CI support offered and how it has developed. The research is an in-depth survey design. One method used within surveys is interviews. The research strategy in this study is interview (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Surveys are used to gather data at a specific point in time in the attempt to describe existing conditions, identify standards which could be used to compare existing conditions or find the relationships which exist between certain events. Surveys therefore vary in their complexity from simple frequency counts to presenting relational analysis (Cohen et al. 2007). In this study the CIRTS were surveyed through the interviews. The
interviews are literal replications as the researcher looked at several currently operational CIRTS. The literal replications will provide analytically generalisable findings i.e. a sustainable CIRT needs parts of this and parts of that. There are multiple sources of evidence, namely semi-structured interviews with lead EPs for CI, and other LA employees who are members of the team who may or may not be EPs. Having found out that there had been an official Trauma And Crisis Intervention Team (TACIT) in the home LA it was important to learn about currently operational and potentially effective CIRTs before engaging in a development process. The design of the research is illustrated below in Figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1 Design**

![Diagram](image)

**Key:**

SOE – Sources of evidence from interview

i – individual interview

g – group interview

**3.4 Data Gathering Methods**

**3.4.1 Sampling and participant recruitment.**

The literature search and preliminary fieldwork orientation identified that EPSs have been/are currently involved in offering CI support (see section 3.2 above). The researcher planned to undertake an initial telephone survey of PEPs in LAs which had
currently operational CIRTS to find out if the EPSs were involved in CI support and if so whether they would be happy to take part in the research. To identify CIRTS that were currently operational the researcher planned to look at those which had been involved in CIs in the last 12 months and had been operational for at least five years. The researcher also wanted to know whether the CIRT operated as planned and whether feedback from stakeholders was consistent with the aims of the group. The researcher planned to access this information through the South West and North West CI core groups which she had been alerted to during the preliminary fieldwork orientation. The core groups are a collection of representatives from CIRTs within a geographical/regional area that meet regularly coming together to share experience and support/develop each other. Unfortunately the researcher was unable to make effective contact with these groups and therefore moved to using a snowballing approach. The researcher was alerted to three CIRTS during the preliminary fieldwork orientation that she subsequently contacted. Members of these CIRTS suggested other LAs that are currently involved in the work. Furthermore members of the home LA and the university suggested LAs which could be contacted. The researcher had to snowball and filter as the study progressed, for example, if she found out that a recommended CIRT was not accessible, she went back and moved to looking at another LA.

The researcher carried out semi-structured interviews in seven LAs which contrasted along relevant dimensions. Information gained through the literature search suggested that important dimensions were the people involved in the CIRT and the rationale/procedures for involvement. Examples of the relevant dimensions which created contrast in this study were the size of the LA, size of the CIRT and team membership (e.g. all EPs/multi-agency), thresholds for involvement, and whether work was viewed as part of generic EP role.

3.4.2 (RADIO model phases 1-2) Awareness of need and invitation to act.

The researcher’s supervisor who is a senior EP noted that currently the EPS in the home LA is not involved in CI support. Further exploration of the need took place by speaking informally to other EPs in the service investigating whether they were aware of or were involved in CI work. The EPs noted that they were not aware of an official team but had been involved in CIs on an ad hoc basis. The researcher also asked the Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) in schools she works in regularly what they would do and who they would contact in a crisis.
The researcher sent an e-mail to the Principal Officer of Special Educational Needs and Disability (member of the home LA Leadership Group) to inform her of the work planned and to gain her views. The reply received stated that it was an interesting area of research and that she would like to be informed about the findings. The researcher also had a meeting with two LA emergency planning officers, who identified the official TACIT and noted that it was not currently operating effectively.

3.4.3 (RADIO model phase 3) Clarifying organisational and cultural issues.

The researcher consulted the EPS team and training plans to look for any themes which were relevant to this project and for tensions (areas that were potentially problematic). The Training Plan had one relevant item, namely ‘ongoing Doctorate training’, training to support research and evidence based practice. Individual training needs were also identified but therapeutic techniques and CI support were not. The team plan does not include any areas related to this project, however the EPS is currently moving to work in a consortia model within different neighbourhoods. This is a big change for the EPS and other services within the LA and therefore may provide a barrier to developing a CI response, as people may be reluctant to embrace further change (e.g. Brock, 2000, section 2.6). On the other hand, the current move to work in a consortia model could be seen as a facilitator particularly in terms of setting up a multi-agency approach. In a sense it might be easier to break into a working group from this new model. The consortia are made up of a group of schools (approximately ten) and a range of different services working in that area e.g. behaviour and learning outreach teams, extended schools services and attendance officers.

Abrahamson (2000) proposed that multiple change processes can cause change fatigue. Meyer and Stensaker (2006) have discussed how organisations can develop change capacity and note that the successful implementation of one change initiative may have a harmful effect on subsequent change initiatives. Meyer and Stensaker (2006) define change capacity as ‘The allocation and development of change and operational capabilities that sustains long term performance’ (p.220). Meyer and Stensaker (2006) suggest that we need to view change as a series of interrelated changes rather than isolated events. They highlight that daily operations have to be maintained simultaneously whilst change is implemented and note that the potential for adverse effects of frequent large-scale changes on these daily operations has been neglected in the literature. Meyer and Stensaker (2006) suggest that extensive participation may
help create an understanding and ownership for one particular change initiative, but long-term can have risks on the next change process due to change fatigue. They also note that fast-paced change over a long period can lead to change fatigue.

The TACIT in the home LA is not currently operating effectively and EPs are involved in CI work in an ad hoc way.

3.4.4 Semi-structured interviews.

There are multiple sources of evidence, namely semi-structured interviews with lead EPs for CI, and other EPs or LA employees who are part of the CIRT. The sources of evidence are not the same in each LA. The researcher made contact with the EPs in the participating LAs, who were centrally involved in the CIRTs. It was possible that the lead person for the CIRT may not have been an EP however in the seven LAs visited contact was made with an EP. Having made contact, verbal or e-mail consent was given to taking part in the research and a time arranged to make a visit to carry out semi-structured interviews. Smith and Eatough (2007) note that semi-structured interviews are guided by the schedule, rather than dictated by it. This enables the interviewer to probe interesting areas. From the literature review the researcher developed questions and probes but wanted to maintain flexibility so the participants were free to tell their story about the development of the CIRT. Using semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to find out more about particular factors, facilitators or barriers linked to setting up a CIRT.

Participating LAs were sent an information sheet about the research (see Appendix 4). The participant was asked to sign a consent form prior to carrying out the interview (see Appendix 5). The interview questions were devised to find out about the CI support offered, how it developed and how it was evaluated (see Appendix 6). To avoid potential bias, at least two members of the CIRT were interviewed in each LA (LA1 was an exception due to illness). This included EPs/LA employees who had not been involved in setting up the CIRT but had become involved at a later stage. Therefore two sets of interview questions developed, one for lead CIRT employees who had been involved in the development of the CIRT and then questions for EPs/LA employees who were team members but had not been involved in the development. The interviews were a co-construction, informed and responsive. Although the interview process was equal for all participants the content developed over the series of interviews, in part
because the researcher brought more information. All interviews were audio recorded and fully transcribed verbatim by the researcher.

Individual and group interviews were used but not focus groups. Payne (2007) notes that group interviews are similar to individual interviews in that the researcher is directing the questioning and the participants respond to the researcher. Payne (2007) notes that, unlike focus groups, the participants are not encouraged to engage with each other through challenging, arguing and debating issues. Watts and Ebbutt (1987) looked at the advantages and disadvantages of group interviews, suggesting that an advantage is the potential for discussion, resulting in a wider range of responses. Arksey and Knight (1999) propose that by having more than one interviewee present two versions of events may be given, creating a cross check and a more complete and reliable record. They also note a range of disadvantages for example - does one interviewee dominate? - is a public line offered rather than an honest, personal response? In the present study the participants in the group interviews undertaken were both part of the same CIRT and were therefore seen to be able to give a group response. Nevertheless when carrying out group interviews the researcher needed to be aware of the following:

- Are there line management responsibilities or historical factors which might cause tensions?
- Do participants seem relaxed and forthcoming?
- Do participants stimulate each other and respond more fully?

The researcher was aware that if the above caused concern she might need to meet the participant again. In group interviews the issue of context is raised (Coyle, 2007). Table 3.1 below summarises the interview type and role of each participant within each LA.
Table 3.1 Outline of interviews undertaken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LA</th>
<th>Interview type</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 individual</td>
<td>• Participant 1a (i) - EP member of CIRT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 individual</td>
<td>• Participant 2a (i) - acting PEP leader of CIRT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 group</td>
<td>• Participant 2b (g) - EP member of CIRT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Participant 2c (g) - EP member of CIRT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 individual</td>
<td>• Participant 3a (i) - PEP leader of CIRT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Participant 3b (i) - senior specialist teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3 individual</td>
<td>• Participant 4a (i) - EP member of CIRT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Participant 4b (i) - County psychologist leader of CIRT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Participant 4c (i) - EP member of CIRT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 group</td>
<td>• Participant 5a (g) - EP member of CIRT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 individual</td>
<td>• Participant 5b (g) - EP member of CIRT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Participant 5c (i) - Retired leader of CIRT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1 group</td>
<td>• Participant 6a (g) - EP and joint leader of CIRT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Participant 6b (g) - EP and joint leader of CIRT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 group</td>
<td>• Participant 7a (g) - EP member of CIRT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Participant 7b (g) - Clinical Psychologist member of CIRT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key:**

(i) - individual interview

(g) - group interview
3.4.5 Continuation of RADIO model.

The information gained from the interviews was used to generate a theoretical model about the inception and sustainability of a CIRT. It is hoped that this model would then be suitable for use in continuing through the stages of the RADIO model within the home LA as well as for wider dissemination to other LAs where there is interest in developing a CI response or modifying a current response. The present researcher could be used in a process of action research within the home LA.

3.5 Data Analysis Methods

The transcriptions of all the semi-structured interviews were analysed using content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To analyse the specific data gathered relating to the support offered, inception and protocol of an individual CIRT (RQ1), a content analysis was undertaken. (Content analysis has been previously introduced in Chapter 2, section 2.4.1.1 above).

To analyse the specific data gathered relating to the evaluation and sustainability of an individual CIRT (RQ2), a thematic analysis was undertaken.

Table 3.2 below links the data gathering method and analysis to each research question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) How have LAs developed current CI support in terms of support offered, inception and protocols?</td>
<td>Visit other LAs and carry out semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) How do LAs sustain and evaluate a CI approach?</td>
<td>Visit other LAs and carry out semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>Thematic analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5.1 Analysing qualitative data.

Lyons and Coyle (2007) comment on the large range of research methods within the realm of qualitative research. Grounded theory is a method of theory generation, more
inductive than content analysis as the theories emerge through the analysis rather than existing prior to the analysis/data (Cohen et al. 2007). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) aims to undertake a detailed exploration of individual personal (lived) experience and analyse how the participant is making sense of both their personal and social world (Smith & Eatough, 2007). Discourse analysis views language as a means of constructing social or psychological reality rather than reflecting it. Therefore in this view ‘there are no objective truths existing ‘out there’ that can be accessed if only the appropriate scientific methods are employed. Instead, language in the form of discourses is seen as constituting the building blocks of ‘social reality’’ (p.99, Coyle, 2007). It is therefore a social constructionist approach examining how people use language to construct versions of their worlds and what can be learnt from them.

Lyons and Coyle (2007) discuss the argument that although IPA and narrative psychology share a commitment to the importance of language with discourse analysis, the analyses differ due to the status they give to the subjectivity and experience of the self and body. Lyons and Coyle (2007) report that discourse analysis tends to be wary of mapping individual’s ‘accounts’ onto an underlying subjective experience instead viewing verbal and written accounts as behaviours in their own rights. These behaviours are analysed in terms of the functions they are performing in certain situations. In contrast Lyons and Coyle (2007) report that IPA and narrative psychology assume a ‘chain of connection’ between what an individual says/writes and how they think, feel and reflect about themselves. It aims to understand how a person thinks or feels about what they are experiencing. Lyons and Coyle (2007) report the suggestion that IPA can be seen as based on realist assumptions together with narrative psychology (realist epistemology). Lyons and Coyle (2007) explain that narrative psychology is interested in the actual content of the narrative, unlike discourse analysis, and is interested in the process of identity construction and exploration.

Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as ‘a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data (p.79). Braun and Clarke (2006) note that thematic analysis can be used in both essentialist and constructionist psychological paradigms and should be considered as a distinct approach to qualitative analysis.

Braun and Clarke (2006) note that themes within data can either be identified using an inductive approach or a deductive approach. Braun and Clarke (2006) note that an
inductive approach means that the themes identified are closely linked to the data and are not driven by the researcher’s theoretical interest in the particular area being studied. They note that the data is coded without attempting to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame or analytic preconceptions held by the researcher. The specific RQs can evolve through the coding process. In contrast a deductive analysis is driven by the researcher’s theoretical or analytic interest in the particular area, perhaps coding for a specific RQ.

Braun and Clarke (2006) note that a decision needs to be made about the level at which themes will be identified for example at a semantic or latent level. Themes identified at the semantic level are based on the explicit surface meaning, In contrast the latent level involves going beyond the semantic content to exploring the underlying ideas theorised to be shaping/informing the semantic content.

IPA would not have been appropriate for this study as it is interested in how a person makes meaning of and feels about what they are experiencing and is premised upon idiographic and phenomenological assumptions; as such it does not attempt to produce statements about events or processes with any degree of ‘objectivity’ (Smith & Etough, 2007). The critical realist stance taken in this study is interested in people’s perceptions of effectiveness and sustainability, however it also proposes some potential objective indicators, for example, do the schools know who to contact if they need support in a crisis? Braun and Clarke (2006) note that thematic analysis can be used in both essentialist and constructionist psychological paradigms.

Grounded theory is aiming for theory generation and, as such, is purely an inductive approach as theories emerge through the analysis (Payne, 2007). The present study used both inductive and deductive techniques as the researcher approached the data with a theoretical interest in the area, and a degree of informedness but was open to evolving codes and themes. The aim was to provide a detailed description of the entire data set to establish the important themes in relation to the RQs.

A combined inductive-deductive thematic analysis was chosen as the method for data analysis because RQ2 was, to an extent, driving the analysis and the researcher was looking for themes related to RQ2, driven by a degree of theoretical knowledge. The researcher was looking for a particular approach to apply as the research needed to explicate some systematic process for interrogating the data using RQ2. Thematic
analysis is a qualitative process allowing flexibility and was used because the researcher did not know what she would find out, but the analysis was driven by RQ2. Thematic analysis allows for study at the semantic and latent level. In this study the semantic level will be used where the themes will be identified based on the explicit surface meaning, therefore the researcher will not be looking beyond what has been said. Within this approach the researcher will start by describing the data in its patterns of semantic content and then move onto interpretation, where the researcher will start to theorise around the significance of themes and their broader relevance and implications.

3.5.2 Content analysis.

Prior to carrying out a thematic analysis a content analysis was undertaken to analyse specific data gathered relating to the support offered, inception and protocol of an individual CIRT. A directed content analysis was undertaken (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This approach is also termed a deductive category application (Mayring, 2000). Existing theory or previous research allows key concepts or variables to be identified as initial coding categories. When collecting data mainly through interviews, targeted questions based on the predetermined categories may follow the open-ended questions. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) describe two strategies for coding which depend on the RQ being asked. If the goal of the research is to identify and categorise all examples of a particular phenomenon, then they advise reading the transcript and highlighting all of the text that, on first impression, appears to represent that phenomenon. The next step is to code all highlighted passages using the predetermined codes. Any text that cannot be categorised using the initial coding scheme is given a new code. The second strategy that can be used is to begin coding immediately with the predetermined codes. The data that cannot be coded is identified and analysed later to decide if it represents a new category or a subcategory of an existing code. This second approach can be used if the researcher feels confident that initial coding will not bias the identification of relevant text.

3.5.3 Thematic analysis.

Braun and Clarke (2006) note that the stages of thematic analysis are similar to those found in other qualitative research and are therefore not necessarily unique. As noted by Braun and Clarke (2006) the researcher was continually moving between the entire data set, coded extracts and the analysis which was being produced.
The following six phases written by Braun and Clarke (2006) were used when carrying out the thematic analysis (see table 3.3 below). It is important to note that the researcher moved back and forward between the phases and it was therefore not necessarily a linear process. The keyness of a theme does not necessarily refer to quantifiable measures but rather to how important it is in relation to the RQs (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the present study prevalence was counted at the level of each LA, e.g. did a theme appear anywhere in each set of interviews. It could have also been counted in terms of how many different participants articulated the theme or its occurrence across the whole data set.

Table 3.3 Phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.87)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description of the process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Familiarizing yourself with your data: Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Generating initial codes: Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Searching for themes: Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Reviewing themes: Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Defining and naming themes: Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Producing the report: The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 At this point the content analysis, relating to RQ1, was carried out before proceeding through the subsequent phases of thematic analysis.
3.5.4 Phase 1.

Initially the researcher transcribed all the interviews undertaken. As noted by Riessman (1993) this was helpful to familiarise the researcher with the data. Lapadat and Lindsay (1999) refer to it as an interpretive act. They note that ‘the primary difficulties surrounding transcription as a methodology have to do with the “big questions” about the nature of reality and how to represent it, the relationships between talk and meaning, and the place of the researcher in this interpretive process’ (p.82). They suggest that, with the assumption that a transcript is a 1-1 match with the ‘reality’ and the seeking of standard conventions, the flexible and interpretive features are lost. Braun and Clarke (2006) refer to the range of conventions which exist for transcribing spoken words into written form and note that ‘at a minimum it requires a rigorous and thorough “orthographic transcript” - a “verbatim” account of all verbal (and sometimes nonverbal - e.g. coughs) utterances.’ (p.88).

The transcriptions in this study were a verbatim account of all the verbal utterances but non-verbal information was not recorded. The researcher was careful not to add inappropriate punctuation which could change the meaning. The researcher chose to transcribe each interview as close to the time of recording as possible so she was most familiar with the data. Having transcribed the interviews the researcher immersed herself in the data so she was familiar with its content. The researcher systematically worked through all the interview data highlighting interesting features. A little of the surrounding data was kept to ensure that the context was not lost. Data from each LA was highlighted in a different colour.

3.5.5 Phase 2.

Codes were performed manually that identified a semantic feature of the data. The highlighted text was cut up into each individual piece of data (see figure 3.2 below).

3.5.5.1 Phase 2a content analysis.

The information required in relation to RQ1, i.e. about support, inception and protocol, is specifically predicted and so the researcher drove the analysis in relation to RQ1. The data which described specific details about the support offered, the inception and protocol of each individual LA was separated and coded as ‘support’, ‘inception’ and ‘protocol’ (see figure 3.3 below). This can be described as directed content analysis.
(Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) or a deductive analysis (Mayring, 2000). The researcher was interested in data relevant to the support offered by the CIRT, the inception of the CIRT and the protocol it follows. This deductive approach was informed through the thorough literature review. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) note that existing research can help determine and define the initial coding categories, in this case, support offered, inception and protocol. This can be seen as specific to RQ (1) ‘How have LAs developed current CI support in terms of support offered, inception and protocols?’

3.5.5.2 Phase 2b thematic analysis.

The remaining data items were then analysed using thematic analysis. The data items were grouped into similar content, e.g. ‘training’, ‘group work’, ‘future’, which was written on post-it notes (see figure 3.4 below). Once all the data had been grouped the researcher revisited each group, re-read the data to identify codes. The codes were written on further post-it notes (see figure 3.5 below). Some extracts were coded more than once. Once the researcher was happy the code abbreviation was written on each individual data extract. This part of the analysis can be described as a combined inductive-deductive thematic analysis because the researcher was looking for themes related to RQ2, driven by a degree of theoretical knowledge. There was however no pre-existing coding frame for this part of the analysis.

3.5.6 Phase 3.

The coded data were then grouped into potential themes. At this point there was movement of some codes from their original broad group to a more appropriate theme. The potential themes were written on envelopes and the codes (on the post-it notes) were grouped around them (see figure 3.6 below). Figure 3.7 shows a close up of one of the potential themes and the codes.

3.5.7 Phase 4 and 5.

At this stage the researcher re-read all extracts under each code to check they fitted and were internally coherent and consistent. During this phase there was some movement and re-naming of codes. The researcher also checked if the themes worked in relation to the coded data and spent time looking at the themes, reworking some and creating new ones. The researcher worked actively with her research supervisor to check the validity of the reviewing, defining and naming of themes. When the researcher was...
happy with the themes and codes, they were written on envelopes and the data for each theme was placed inside the envelope, grouped in its codes. Finally the researcher grouped the 26 themes identified into three super themes, namely, ‘Context’, ‘People’ and ‘Process’. The super theme ‘Context’ groups themes which relate to the context in which a CIRT operates or will be developed. The super theme ‘People’ groups themes relating to the people involved in delivering a CI response. The super theme ‘Process’ groups themes which relate to the process of delivering a CI response. Figures 3.2 – 3.7 are presented below and on the next three pages.

Figure 3.2 Individual data extracts from interview transcripts at phase 2
Figure 3.3 Content analysis at phase 2a

Figure 3.4 Grouping of cross-LA interview data extracts at phase 2b
Figure 3.5 Coding data within groups at phase 2b

Figure 3.6 Creating themes at phase 3
Braun and Clarke (2006) have produced a checklist of criteria for ensuring good thematic analysis, all of which were adhered to within the data analysis of the present study.

Table 3.4 A 15-point checklist of criteria for good thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.96)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transcription</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The data has been transcribed to an appropriate level of detail, the transcripts have been checked against the tapes for “accuracy”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coding</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Each data item has been given equal attention in the coding process. The themes have not been generated from a few vivid examples (an anecdotal approach) but instead the coding process has been thorough, inclusive and comprehensive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Themes have been checked against each other and back to the original data set.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>All relevant extracts for each theme have been collated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Themes have been checked against each other and back to the original data set.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Themes are internally coherent, consistent and distinctive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analysis</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Data has been analysed-interpreted, made sense of-rather than just paraphrased or described.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Analysis and data match each other-the extracts illustrate the analytic claims.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Analysis tells a convincing and well-organised story about the data and topic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>A good balance between analytic narrative and illustrative extracts is provided.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Enough time has been allocated to complete all phases of the analysis adequately without rushing a phase or giving it a once-over lightly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Written report</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>The assumptions about and specific approach to, thematic analysis are clearly explicated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>There is a good fit between what you claim you do, and what you show you have done-ie, described method and reported analysis are consistent.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The language and concepts used in the report are consistent with the epistemological position of the analysis.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The researcher is positioned as active in the research process; themes do not just ‘emerge’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.6 Epistemological Position

In carrying out this piece of research the researcher’s philosophical stance on knowledge generation is that of a critical realist. The researcher is looking at people’s variously ‘constructed’ perceptions of effectiveness and sustainability of CIRTs but also thinking that there are some potential ‘objective indicators’ e.g. do the schools know who to contact if they need support in a crisis? This therefore falls between the essentialist/realist approach in which a simple unidirectional relationship is viewed between meaning, experience and language and the constructionist perspective seeking to theorise the sociocultural contexts and structural conditions that enable the individual accounts. The structured interview provided a balance between open ended questions
seeking to elicit a detailed view of participants’ perceptions and more specific questions of objective indicators which might provide evidence of their perceptions. For example, if they reported that the CIRT was a great success but then different people turned up at each meeting and members did not feel supported this would have suggested a contradiction. On the other hand they may have said they have clear processes and been able to back this up by saying what happens, what they do and who does it. Johnson and Duberley (2000) note that ‘a central issue in critical realism is the active role of the human agent, but this is with reference to their interaction with an independent external reality which can constrain or facilitate human action’ (p.153). Trigg (1980) proposes that reality and our understanding of that reality differ, since our conception of reality is limited by our cognitive and linguistic capabilities. In terms of ontology the researcher is looking primarily from the perspective of the CIRT participants rather than from the LA managers’ or clients’ point of view.

From a constructionist position, in addition to the perspective of the CIRT participants, the perspective of the researcher needs to be taken into consideration. This is important because the researcher seeks to understand people’s variously ‘constructed’ perceptions of the effectiveness and sustainability of CIRTs. For example the follow up questions asked by the researcher depended on her understanding of the participants’ initial responses. This was one advantage of being flexible, interpretative and checking meaning. However a disadvantage was that the researcher and the participant may not have shared quite the same meaning and therefore the researcher’s understanding may have taken the questions down one particular avenue.

In terms of axiology there were three viewpoints which the researcher was aware of identifying with when approaching this research:

1) The assumption that people do not cope with CIs and the view that support/intervention is a worthy aim, rather than an attitude of ‘what does not kill you makes you stronger’.

The researcher agrees with viewpoint 1 which has partly motivated her to carry out this piece of research. It has meant that she has approached each interview optimistically, valuing the work which has been described. The researcher has not sought to challenge by investigating, for example, the cost effectiveness of the CIRT. The researcher did not find herself challenging the belief and assumption, during the research, that the
work is a worthy aim due to the positive feedback which was reported from some schools and the fact that help was sought.

2) Acknowledgement of a risk that a CIRT response is seen as an exciting, cutting edge area of work to be involved in, rather than work open to all EPs/LA employees.

This view prompted the researcher to ask questions about who is involved in the CIRT response and how the participant got involved. It prompted the researcher to explore the interface between personal and professional motivations and make a balanced consideration of the implications of different positions. There are a range of different motivations, which may be held by members of CIRTs, for example, some may have personal motivations (e.g. we needed to do something), others may be professional, (e.g. this is work worthy of doing), or disciplinary, (e.g. this is where psychologists can make a unique contribution). Other personal motivations may be, ‘I get a buzz from doing this work’ or ‘I am motivated due to an experience of a close relative’. In supervision, motivations for engagement could be considered alongside personal reactions. Some colleagues may only want to be involved in CI support for a year. If an employee’s motivation is personal gain it might prevent them from looking at the sustainability of the CI work or might encourage them to keep it to themselves rather than involving other colleagues. This viewpoint was challenged through the data gathering because of the way the participants referred to the work. Even in LAs where the work is carried out solely by CIRT members, involving other EPs was seen as positive. The work was not described as an exciting, cutting edge area, rather a need was described and the challenging nature of the work highlighted.

3) A further view which may be held by some people is that CIRTs do not bring significant benefits to the people involved in the CI but rather bring greater professional prestige or kudos to the CIRT.

The researcher does not hold this view, however she is aware that this may be the opinion held by some of her colleagues or some members of the services which the participants in this study belong to. The Health Professionals Council (HPC, 2008) standards of conduct, performance and ethics, standard 1, notes that ‘you must act in the best interests of service users’. There is therefore no reason to assume specific unethical practice in this context. If the researcher had believed that everyone who is involved in offering a CI response does it because they love it, she would have
investigated more searchingly the link between the process of the response and the outcomes. The researcher knew the LA CIRTs were effective in operational terms and, on ethical grounds, the researcher assumed self-evaluated effectiveness by the CIRT workers. The researcher’s epistemological position is linked into the validity and reliability within the project. It may or may not matter if this viewpoint is held. This viewpoint was reinforced during the course of data gathering when meeting the participants, by the dedication and the passion for the work which was contagious.

The researcher would argue that viewpoints 1 and 3 are the most salient as they refer to whether the work is a worthy aim and brings benefits to people involved in CIs. The process of carrying out this piece of research did not alter her viewpoints. Although the risk in viewpoint 2 was not actualised in this study it is still an important issue.

3.7 Critique of Method

3.7.1 Design.

A series of semi-structured interviews was chosen rather than a large scale questionnaire survey because interviews would enable a dynamic and detailed interaction. The researcher wanted to look at the development of CIRTs and therefore needed people to have time to explore and reflect. More information is needed on the process of developing a CIRT. A large scale survey could give basic information about who does what and when, which would be useful, but for this project this was achieved by completing the documentary analysis in chapter 2. The advantage of documentary analysis is that it does not depend on the response rate which is often poor with large scale surveys. There appears to be a dearth in the literature about organisational work. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken in seven LAs. Pragmatic considerations were uppermost in identifying the LAs studied due to time constraints of the project. If more time had been available a preliminary investigation would have allowed contrasting LAs to have been picked.

3.7.2 Data gathering.

A consistent application of semi-structured interviews helped maintain the reliability of data gathering. There was a basic standard of interview but the researcher’s insights and theoretical sensitivity became developed over the course of the interviews; that, however, does not mean that the first interview was unsatisfactory (Kvale & Brinkman,
2009). To ensure validity it was important that the interviews did not include leading questions. In terms of construct validity the interviewer and participants came to the study with a prior knowledge of CI work and therefore had a shared understanding of the terms used, for example ‘CI’ or ‘multi-agency’. The review with informants was ongoing throughout the interview process. The researcher reflected back and summarised during the course of interviews and at the end to ensure she had accurately recorded what the participant had reported. Multiple sources of evidence were used (Cohen et al., 2007). There is therefore less triangulation in LA1 but the data will still have elements which can to some extent validate data from other LAs.

In terms of internal validity the use of prompts within a semi-structured interview helped maintain the focus on the phenomena being researched. Furthermore, responsive follow-up questions to each main question or prompt were informed by the researcher’s reading of relevant CIRT literature and experience with previous LAs, and allowed the interviewer to develop the structure, meaning or specification of interviewees’ comments (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). In terms of ecological validity the TEP used a semi-structured interview technique and worked to allow the conversation to occur naturally rather than being manipulated. Researcher factors were considered, for example, attitude, dress, replies, questioning techniques and non-verbal communication (Cohen et al. 2007). The interviews took place in conventional LA settings. This helped minimise reactivity effects whereby the participants behave differently when in new situations, for example, the interview.

In terms of reliability the researcher wanted to ensure a fit between what is recorded as data (e.g. transcripts) and what actually was said during the interviews. Kvale (2007) discusses ‘interviewer qualifications’ for example, being knowledgeable about the subject matter to enable an informed conversation, being critical by checking the reliability and validity of what is said through questioning and remembering earlier statements to enable clarification and drawing links.

In terms of inter-rater reliability the interviews contained a mixture of open ended and closed questions. When transcribing the interviews the researcher was able to contact participants if there were queries (this permission was sought following each interview). During the interviews the researcher was working with each participant to construct the information rather than just observing, using skills noted by Kvale (2007). The researcher was able to put in loops to highlight things forgotten and it became a
reciprocal process. It was important that the researcher guarded against closing her mind between interviews and expecting particular responses. To maintain reliability the researcher documented all stages of the process.

The information gained about the process of developing a CIRT may not be complete, however, the approach used was the same. Some participants were not able to remember systematically or may have a different story if asked at a different time. The participants varied in how coherently they were able to discuss the CIRT. Some participants might have selective memory in line with interview data.

3.7.3 Data analysis.

To ensure validity during the data analysis stage the researcher e-mailed some participants to clarify the structure of the CIRT where there was ambiguity. When the interview transcripts were analysed, it was important that the researcher cross checked with her supervisor to protect against consistent unrecognised bias in the interviews. It may also be necessary for the researcher to go back to the participants with any unresolved problems or with hypotheses to gain their comments. One participant specifically asked to see quotes before they were included in the write up of the research. This participant was e-mailed all quotes included in the write up to check he was happy with them. Following submission of the thesis, all participants will be e-mailed a feedback summary of the analysis. The researcher could provide a content summary or draft of the write up for participants to check after the interviews. It was important to maintain descriptive validity and therefore the researcher carried out full verbatim transcriptions of the data and avoided selective use when analysing. To maintain interpretive validity the researcher transcribed and became familiar with the data immediately following the interviews.

3.7.4 Reporting findings.

It was important not to make inferences and generalisations which were beyond the capability of the data and to not use the data in a selective or unrepresentative way. As above it was important to maintain descriptive validity. Theoretical validity was derived from a thorough literature review which informed the deductive element of the inductive-deductive approach adopted within the thematic analysis relating to RQ2. This theory was used when reflecting on the findings. It is hoped that the theory/model
proposed will be generalisable i.e. useful in understanding other similar situations. The researcher will strive for evaluative validity.

Cohen et al. (2007) note that Consequential Validity argues that research data should be used in keeping with the intentions and capability of the research. In terms of consequential validity the model presented could be discussed with the PEP in the home LA. It will not be possible within the realms of this project to find out whether it is used in other LAs. The model proposed will contain suggestions of factors to consider in order to develop a sustainable CIRT rather than being prescriptive. The project is looking at what supports CIRTs’ sustainability and potential effectiveness, and the implications will be discussed as improvements and developments rather than alternatives. Cohen et al. (2007) identify that Catalytic Validity in its simplest terms strives to ensure that research undertaken goes on to produce action. The above comments would help to satisfy Catalytic Validity in this project.

Hammersley (1992) suggested that there needs to be clarity about the types of claims being made by research (e.g. definitional, descriptive, explanatory, theory generative). In this study descriptive and explanatory claims are being made. In terms of external validity, Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that researchers should provide sufficiently rich data for the readers and users to determine whether transferability is possible, and so in this research a detailed description of the process of setting up a CIRT was sought. From this, readers of the research should be better placed to determine, as espoused by Bogdan and Biklen (1992), the kinds of settings, people and situations to which the findings of this research might be generalisable.

This study employs methodological triangulation, using the same method (semi-structured interviews) on different occasions. More than one member of the CIRT was interviewed in six of the seven LAs allowing for several sources of evidence.

3.8 Time-line of Present Study

Table 3.5 below presents an overview of the timings of the study.
Table 3.5 Time-line of present study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Time Period</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Research stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November-December 2009</td>
<td>● Preliminary fieldwork orientation attending conferences</td>
<td>Preliminary orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2010</td>
<td>● Contact North West and South West CI core groups to find out about currently operational CIRTs</td>
<td>Participant recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2010</td>
<td>● Informal discussion with schools</td>
<td>Awareness of need and invitation to act (RADIO phases 1-2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2010</td>
<td>● Contact PEPs in LAs with currently operational CIRTs</td>
<td>Participant recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Send information sheet to participating LAs to allow informed consent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2010</td>
<td>● Consultation of EPS team and training plans</td>
<td>Clarifying organisational and cultural issues (RADIO phase 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June - July 2010</td>
<td>● LA visits and interviews</td>
<td>Data gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August-September 2010</td>
<td>● Transcribe interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October-January 2010</td>
<td>● Content analysis and thematic analysis of interviews</td>
<td>Data analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February-March 2011</td>
<td>● Reporting and interpreting results</td>
<td>Data analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Write discussion and develop model for the development of a sustainable CIRT</td>
<td>Writing up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.9 Risk Analysis

Table 3.6 below outlines the operational risks of the present study and contingency plans to address them.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Risk Level</th>
<th>Contingency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unwillingness to share information.</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>The project is dependent on other LAs being willing to share information about their practice. The researcher’s recent experience at conferences (AEP, 19.11.09 and North West CPD Conference, 10.12.09) indicated that there is a willingness to share good practice. The researcher will work hard to forge links with LAs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiting participants.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>It was expected that a minimum of five LAs would be visited. Attendance at the above conferences indicated that there was a willingness to share good practice. The researcher had already made contact with two LA EPs involved in CI support. Furthermore the tutor base at the university and visiting speakers create links with several EPSs which the researcher could approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing information with stakeholders.</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Support had already been gained from a senior EP and the Principal Officer of Special Educational Needs and Disability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-agency relationships within the LA.</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>The project focussed on finding out what was required to develop a CIRT. The model which is presented may suggest multi-agency links. The project is not dependent on the model presented being implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainee status.</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>The project has support from a senior member of the EPS and also a member of the LA Leadership Group (Principal Officer of Special Educational Needs and Disability).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.10 Ethical Good Practice and Considerations

Ethical approval was gained from the university ethics committee on 11th June 2010. The following is an outline of the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2006) ethical principles and HPC (2008) standards of conduct, performance and ethics that need to be considered for this project.

3.10.1 HPC (2008).

(2) **You must respect the confidentiality of service users.** On the occasion that records of EP involvement in CIs are shared or individual cases discussed, the information will be anonymised. All identifiers will be removed and ID numbers or pseudonyms used. If links need to be made at any point between data and individuals then participant identifiers would be kept securely on a data stick in a locked draw separate from the data.

(3) **You must keep high standards of personal conduct.** The researcher will need to maintain high standards of personal conduct during visits to participating LAs as she will be representing her LA LA1.

(7) **You must communicate properly and effectively with service users and other practitioners.** The researcher will strive to communicate the purpose of the project clearly. As a result of this research it will be important to share the knowledge and expertise gained with other members of the EPS in the home LA.

3.10.2 BPS (2006).

1.2 **Standard of Privacy and Confidentiality.** Audio recordings of the interviews will only be made after seeking permission from participants. Furthermore if individual cases are discussed in relation to a CI (as noted above in HPC, 2008 standard 2) they will be anonymised in the transcript produced.

1.3 **Standard of Informed Consent.** The participants will be given an information sheet about the research. This will ensure they have enough opportunity to understand the research and can give informed consent (see Appendix 5) (i and ii).

1.4 **Standard of Self-Determination.** When seeking consent, participants will also be alerted to their right to withdraw (ii). The researcher will comply if there is a request that data from which they may be identified is destroyed (iii).
3.3 Standard of Protection of Research Participants. Participants will be informed that they can decline to answer questions (vii).

3.4 Standard of Debriefing of Research Participants. The participants will be debriefed at the end of the interviews so they are aware of the potential outcomes of the research. Debriefing will also identify any unforeseen harm, discomfort, or misconceptions and assistance can then be arranged if needed (i). It will be important to take care when discussing outcomes to avoid any misconceptions (ii).

4.1 Standard of Honesty and Accuracy The researcher will ensure that all professionals worked with are aware of her qualifications (trainee) (i). The researcher will report research findings honestly and accurately, acknowledging the potential limitations (iii) and claim only appropriate ownership for the research (vi).

3.10.3 Ethical issues.

The interviewing was a recursive and developmental process. The researcher was able to ask more pertinent questions as she progressed through the interviews. It was important however that she balanced being informed by this knowledge of other services with compromising the anonymity of the participants and also protecting the participants from feeling vulnerable.

Another ethical issue raised at the data gathering stage of the research was informed consent. The researcher decided to get verbal or e-mail consent prior to interviewing and then gain written consent at the interview. However having travelled to a LA it would be difficult for the participant then, subsequently, to refuse to give consent. On the other hand administering a formal consent form prior to the interviews might have raised unnecessary anxiety about the nature of the research.

A further ethical issue may have been pressure felt by some participants to defend their CIRT. They may have felt a dilemma between defending it and accurately portraying information about it. Also ripples may be created in LAs if interviews are perceived as inspectoral.

Group interviews may have created added pressure. In LA 5 the researcher is aware that one of the participants was the line manager. This might have put added pressure on the other participant to respond in a particular way. Or a participant might have suffered consequences post-interview. This issue is discussed further when results
related to this LA are presented in Chapter 4. In the other group interviews the participants could have provided each other with peer support.
Chapter 4 Results

4.1 Introduction

A series of semi-structured interviews with staff from seven LA Critical Incident Response Teams (CIRTs) was undertaken to address the following research questions:

RQ(1) How have LAs developed current Critical Incident (CI) support in terms of support offered, inception and protocols?

RQ(2) How do LAs sustain and evaluate a CI approach?

The following chapter first addresses RQ1 by a LA by LA analysis and then the chapter addresses RQ2 with a cross-LA analysis. Some of the teams had different names, for example, ‘trauma team’ or ‘support team’. LA4 and LA6 promoted a more generic response to CIs. In LA6 the school EP takes the lead following a CI supported by another available colleague, so all of the EPs are part of the team. In LA4 there is a team of crisis coordinators. To avoid confusion for the purposes of this report, all of the CI responses will be referred to as CIRTs.

4.2 LA by LA Analysis of CI Support Currently Being Offered (RQ1)

The data which described specific manifest details about the support offered, inception and protocol of each individual CIRT was separated and coded as ‘support’, ‘inception’ and ‘protocol’. Background information about the LA was also recorded. In addition the Office for National Statistics website was consulted and data from the 2001 census used to record an indication of the ethnicity, social deprivation and school age population in each locality. The literature review indicated that with the exception of Carroll et al. (1997), Brock (2000) and Purvis et al. (1991), information had been content focussed with information about how people set up CIRTs (inception) neglected. The leaflets analysed focussed on what support was offered and did not give information about the inception or history of the development of the response. There is also information in the literature about the type of support that is offered, however it is not clear why some responses/teams are more sustainable and why their protocols and structure vary.

Because the three categories ‘support’, ‘inception’ and ‘protocol’ were clearly predicted this coding in relation to RQ1 took the form of a content analysis and did not require a
significant degree of interpretation (see section 3.5 above from methodology). This part of the analysis was driven by the researcher’s theoretical interest. Deductive content analysis codes for specific RQs through the use of ‘coding frames’ which in this case related to CIRT support, inception and protocol. Inductive analysis in contrast takes place where analysis is not driven by the researcher’s theoretical interest in the area and pre-existing coding frames are not used (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In inductive analysis the RQs evolve from the coding process. In relation to RQ2, the factors relating to sustainability and evaluation of CIRTs were not as easy to predict and therefore the analysis needed to be more exploratory and inductive. In terms of monitoring, if from the interviews the information about inception, protocol and support could not have been clearly distinguished, a deductive analysis would not have worked. In this event the researcher would have re-evaluated the approach and taken a more inductive approach to the analysis.

The following sections present this content analysis relating to RQ1 for each individual LA.

4.2.1 LA1.

This LA is a borough with 97.62% white British population. The school age population (5-19 years) is 25,057. An indication of the social deprivation is the percentage of long-term unemployed residents (16-74 years) which is 31.65%. The borough has eight secondary schools. In this LA one interview was undertaken with an EP who was a member of the CIRT (participant 1a (i)\(^4\)). The leader of the team unfortunately was unable to take part due to family illness. A further interview was arranged with another member of the team who had been involved for a long time but her job role changed and she was unable to be released to take part in the research. The EPS has six EPs working across geographical patches. Two of these EPs are involved in the CI work. There are five people in this CIRT, two EPs, an Education Welfare Officer (EWO), a Primary Child Mental Health team worker and a headteacher. Figure 4.1 below illustrates the structure of the CIRT.

\(^4\) Participant 1a (i) refers to participant 1a in LA 1 where data was gathered by interview, see section 3.4.4
4.2.1.1 Support.

Figure 4.2 below shows the modes of support offered in this CIRT.

**Figure 4.2 Modes of support in LA1**

- First day response (listening ear) in person or over phone
- Debriefing
- Leaflets about grief left in school
- Parent letter templates
- Signposting children/adults to other services if necessary

4.2.1.2 Inception.

Participant 1a (i) was not part of the team from the beginning because when he joined the EPS six years ago there was already a team. Participant 1a (i) noted that three people had been part of the team for quite a long time and had been involved in fairly high profile incidents (debriefing and first day response). Participant 1a (i) said that LA1 trained with LA3 and reported that there was a terrorist incident in 1993 when two children were killed in the town centre and there was also the gas work bomb. He reported that in LA1 and LA3 these incidents raised an awareness and there was a realisation that something needed to be done.
4.2.1.3 Protocol.

This LA forms a joint team with LA3 when large incidents occur. They share a consultant and train together. In the example given during the interview participant 1a (g) noted that the school just phoned him up.

4.2.2 LA2.

This LA is a shire/county with 94.5% white British population. The school age population (5-19 years) is 244,347. An indication of the social deprivation is the percentage of long-term unemployed residents (16-74 years) which is 26.52%. The shire/county has 77 secondary schools. In this LA two interviews were undertaken. The first was undertaken with the coordinator who has a lead role for the CI support (acting PEP, participant 2a (i)) and the second was a group interview undertaken with two EPs who are members of the team (participant 2b (g) and 2c (g)). The team is called a trauma team and consists of six CAMHS EPs including the coordinator, all of whom have relevant experience. These EPs are seconded to work for CAMHS (0.3 clinic based and 0.2 supporting mental health development). The EPS is organised within districts which each have about two full time EPs. Each district is part of an area of which there are four; north, south, east and west. Within the district the EP would have a patch of schools but there is flexibility in how the EP works as they could offer training across the whole district or work with a group of schools. The EPs go out to schools and meet fortnightly to discuss issues in the schools and talk about what type of work is being asked for/delivered. Figure 4.3 below illustrates the structure of the CIRT.

Figure 4.3 CIRT structure
4.2.2.1 Support.

Figure 4.4 below shows the modes of support offered in this CIRT.

**Figure 4.4 Modes of support in LA2**

- Consulting with staff in person or over phone (may just need containment)
- Debriefing to normalise anxieties (similar techniques to Critical Incident Stress Debriefing, CISD, but may go on to do more group work)
- Support school to support parents
- Contact link EP with aim to work together
- Flexibility (offer practical support if gap)
- Share information with social care if necessary
- Meet half termly to go through forms to check tied up

4.2.2.2 Inception.

Participant 2c (g) commented that one particular senior EP was really interested in the work and did most of it but when he left the EPs became aware of the level of work he did and that it needed more than one person. Participants 2b (g) and 2c (g) commented that the trauma group did exist prior to being involved in the CI response but it focussed on training EPs. Participant 2b (g) noted that the support has evolved with a protocol and is more explicitly spelt out. Participant 2a (i) noted that the behaviour service was previously involved as the senior EP was seconded to them but since this person resigned it has been harder to get a connection going. Participant 2a (i) reported that there was a working group when he joined which was made up of the CAMHS EPs. Participant 2a (i) reported that the group was involved in looking at research related to CI support.

4.2.2.3 Protocol.

Figure 4.5 below outlines the protocol of the CI response in LA2.
This LA is a borough with 96.13% white British population. The school age population (5-19 years) is 37,318. An indication of the social deprivation is the percentage of long-term unemployed residents (16-74 years) which is 28.17%. The borough has 12 secondary schools. Two interviews were undertaken in this LA, the first with the PEP (participant 3a (i)) who is the CI coordinator, and the second with a specialist teacher (participant 3b (i)) also employed as area and team manager, who has recently joined the team. The EPS has 6.4 full time equivalent EPs and is organised in four areas in multi-disciplinary teams. The service offers an eclectic mix of consultation and assessment, often starting with consultation. The team is called a support team rather than a response team and is multi-agency. The team has six team members: PEP, EP,
inclusion consultant, youth worker, parent partnership officer and senior specialist teacher. Figure 4.6 below illustrates the structure of the CIRT.

**Figure 4.6 CIRT structure**

![CIRT structure diagram]

4.2.3.1 Support.

Figure 4.7 below outlines the modes of support offered in this CIRT.

**Figure 4.7 Modes of support in LA3**

- School advisor contacts school and does first day response over the phone or in person (listening ear, consulting to problem-solve with headteacher or person responsible, letter home, direct to media centre)

- PEP follows up to explain group debriefing (version of Dyregrov, 1989 & Parkinson, 1997 psychological debriefing models)

- Signpost onto other agency, or to information

- Handouts given

- Flexibility of response by CIRT (dependent on knowledge of staff, their community and their contacts)

- Booklet ‘response to CI in schools’ distributed (contains example letters)
4.2.3.2 Inception.

Participant 3a (i) commented on the legacy of the terrorist incident in the 1990s. Participant 3a (i) noted that the team was not set up as a direct result as there was something already happening in a nearby LA. LA3 was part of this LA until 1997/1998. Participant 3a found records of a plan for setting up and managing incidents in schools in LA3 and LA1, replacing the other LA system. LA3 had identified the need for the continuation of CI support now that it was a unitary authority. A number of senior managers from education, the assistant director, PEP, senior psychologist, senior advisor, social services, school health, public relations and emergency planning personnel were recorded as being involved in setting this up.

4.2.3.3 Protocol.

Figure 4.8 below outlines the protocol of the CI response in LA3.
As noted by participant 1a (i) the CIRT has access to a consultant.

4.2.4 LA4.

This LA is a shire/county with 94.11% white British population. The school age population (5-19 years) is 257,456. An indication of the social deprivation is the percentage of long-term unemployed residents (16-74 years) which is 30.05%. The shire/county has 163 secondary schools. Three interviews were undertaken in this LA, the first and third with EP CI area coordinators (participant 4a (i) and 4c (i)) (six in total...
who cover the county) and the second with the county psychologist and county coordinator for CI (participant 4b (i)). The CI response is seen as a generic response in which all EPs are expected to be involved. There is a team of six CI area coordinators, however they do not respond to all the incidents but instead work with other EPs to offer the support. This LA has 600 schools in 12 areas. The crisis coordinators have area bases. The LA has previously been organised into 23 partnerships with 23 managers of services but from September 2010 they will move back to being organised in 12 districts. They will also be moving from a matrix management model to a more defined service management model. Participant 4c (i) noted that the situation for the last three or four years has been getting increasingly diverse in terms of how people work in those 23 different areas. Participant 4c (i) reported that it has been needs led which was the rationale behind it, so each partnership designed bespoke services for their needs. Participant 4c (i) said that in the area of training this approach has evolved quite well, but with the reductions in LA staffing with present cuts it is all at risk; it is being brought back to a much simpler model where they will all be working as a service again.

There are some partnerships where the single point of access is working, so most of the casework comes from a single point of access and a common assessment has already been completed before that. It varies hugely across the county. Participant 4c (i) commented that no one knows what it is going to be like in September. A partnership consists of about 20 people (ten schools). A time allocation model has not been used for about six or seven years so schools do not have an amount of time they are entitled to and they do not expect a particular amount of time. EPs respond to schools on a needs basis, so when referrals come in they decide how much time they are going to spend with individual teams and an action plan develops on a weekly basis. Figure 4.9 below illustrates the structure of the CIRT.
4.2.4.1 Support.

Figure 4.10 below outlines the modes of support offered in this CIRT.

**Figure 4.10 Modes of support in LA4**

- Support senior management to support children
- Consultation with parents
- Consultancy model for EPs to follow (information to get from initial phone call, sad event resources)
- If traumatic offer defusing (begin to tell logical story, fact, feelings and futures), similar to debriefing but several sessions
- Link EP asked to follow up children affected
- Not ongoing therapeutic intervention (capacity issue), have worked with individual children when knew school systems well
- Signpost children and staff onto other agencies for longer term therapeutic work
- Support to work effectively with press
- Work with other LA officers who become involved
- Establish a link with family member and school
- Written materials available on website
4.2.4.2 Inception.

All three participants noted the influence of a senior EP who started working to support CIs. This then grew into her gathering other interested colleagues to develop a group. Participant 4a (i) reported that a CD of resources was developed and the senior EP invited others to work alongside her until they felt comfortable to take a lead role. Participant 4a (i) also noted that at this time the EPS only helped schools who requested support and that there was no pressure to be involved; however, this has now changed. Participants 4c (i) and 4b (i) noted the senior’s role in driving forward a policy and framework. Participants 4b (i) and 4a (i) drew attention to large incidents that happened and 4b (i) noted that there was a significant number of large incidents within the county which highlighted the need for a systematic response. Participant 4b (i) also noted that a group of crisis coordinators was assembled to make sure their training was up to date and to make sure they responded to incidents in a way that was appropriate. Participant 4b (i) also noted that after a big incident people were organically invited to go and get training in debriefing, driven by curiosity. It was not clear when the crisis coordinator group formed and whether that was formed by the senior or came later. Participant 4a (i) reported that there are a few people who are quite experienced who could lead the work but they have not chosen to be coordinators. It is noted that sad events often fall to the link/school psychologist.

4.2.4.3 Protocol.

Figure 4.11 below outlines the protocol of the CI response in LA4.
It is noted that if the team are aware of an event they would tentatively ring the school to see if they are coping.

4.2.5 LA5.

This LA is a shire/county with 92.88% white British population. The school age population (5-19 years) is 225,609. An indication of the social deprivation is the percentage of long-term unemployed residents (16-74 years) which is 27.39%. The shire/county has 80 secondary schools. Two interviews were undertaken in this LA. One group interview with two EPs who are members of the team, one who is the team manager for the office base (participant 5a (g)) and (participant 5b (g)). A second interview was undertaken with the senior EP who set up the team who left the LA a year ago (participant 5c (i)). The team is made up of a Special Educational Needs (SEN) caseworker and EPs from three different area office bases. Participant 5a (g) noted that they work on a tight time allocation model. The team managers for the three office bases, who are senior EPs, act as CI team coordinators.
The group interview involved a line management responsibility in terms of the team manager being present (see section 3.4.4). There did not appear to be tensions during the interview and both participants appeared relaxed and forthcoming, stimulating each other in their responses. Furthermore the researcher was vigilant in data gathering, questioning participants sensibly. In analysing the data, the researcher was also conscious that she might not be getting a completely comprehensive picture; she was more likely to get true positives and avoid false negatives as participants are likely to leave out negative information. The data from this interview is therefore usable but the researcher is unlikely to get true negatives. The researcher was vigilant for false positives and false negatives during the analysis, for example, whether information did not appear to link with other data from the LAs or appeared implausible and internally inconsistent. Figure 4.12 below illustrates the structure of the CIRT.

**Figure 4.12 CIRT structure**

![Image of CIRT structure diagram]

4.2.5.1 Support.

Figure 4.13 below outlines the modes of support in LA5.

**Figure 4.13 Modes of support in LA5**

- File for team members (prompts for telephone call and visit)
- Consultation over phone, offer visit
- Channel information through one person (head or deputy in secondary school, head in primary school)
- Provide listening ear to talk through what done, action plan, children’s understanding, sharing news
- Four levels of support, immediate first aid, defusing, debriefing and follow up
- Debriefing rare (demobilizing as part of this - for big events pull all staff together at end of day to make sure they are ok)
- Teaching staff identify and monitor vulnerable children and then meet to discuss
- See individual children if particular issues
- Support staff to communicate with children and each other
- Advice to parents and leaflets on website
- Make sure people know they are being thought about
- Expect to withdraw after four-six weeks
- Follow up to ascertain who may have ongoing difficulties and need support
- School and parents most appropriate to support
- Signposting children/adults to other services if necessary
- 24 hour support
- Copy e-mail sent to schools to Local Safeguarding Children’s Board

4.2.5.2 Inception.

Participant 5c (i) noted that initially there were a couple of incidents which he and a colleague contacted the PEP about. Participant 5c (i) noted that the PEP wanted to start a PTSD team and an EP from another LA came to do some training. Then participant 5c (i) noted that a large incident happened and the PEP sent a message saying that the service could help. She reported that this shocked some of the EPs. This PEP then left and the new PEP asked this participant and a colleague (based in another office) if they
wanted to coordinate CI support, as they had a good relationship. This colleague died so left this participant developing the CI response. Participant 5c (i) noted that she used a common sense approach, i.e. decided what needed to be done, what was the best way of structuring it and in addition started seeking training.

4.2.5.3 Protocol.

Figure 4.14 below outlines the protocol of the CI response in LA5.

**Figure 4.14 CI response protocol in LA5**

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call from schools or other agencies (would not contact them first)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CIRT team leader takes the call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call passed onto area teams (sometimes does go to area teams automatically or might go through another area team and needs to be redirected so a clerical officer or whoever answers phone will take as many details on a form and then pass it on)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If area team manager (CI coordinator) or deputy not available would ring around the rest of the team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area team manager would then ring around to other members of team to see who is available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```
4.2.6 LA6.

This LA is a shire/county with 94.79% white British population. The school age population (5-19 years) is 105,059. An indication of the social deprivation is the percentage of long-term unemployed residents (16-74 years) which is 28.43%. The shire/county has 41 secondary schools. One group interview was undertaken in this LA with two EPs who are members of the team and joint team leaders, (participants 6a (g) and 6b (g)). It was noted however that neither of them have a senior role but have been involved in CI support since the beginning so would perhaps have more knowledge than other members of the team. The structure of the service is changing in September. The CIRT just consists of EPs. Following a CI the EP for the school takes the lead, supported by another available colleague so all the EPs are part of the team. Figure 4.15 below illustrates the structure of the CIRT.

**Figure 4.15 CIRT structure**

![CIRT structure diagram](image)

4.2.6.1 Support.

Figure 4.16 below outlines the modes of support in LA6.

**Figure 4.16 Modes of support in LA6**

- Initial contact is phone call to school
- Talk with school staff, reassuring them and encouraging problem solving approach
- Previously used debriefing but now share story, normalise reactions, discuss future plans and support available in the group (psycho-educational, give children understanding of how they might be feeling and a narrative of what happened)
- Only work with group of children if they have witnessed something traumatic
- Can meet directly with parents
- Support staff to talk to parents and give leaflets they can share
- Information about typical responses and leaflets for children
- Signpost to Winston’s wish for direct bereavement support
- Written materials to support EPs offering CI response

4.2.6.2 Inception.

Participants 6a (g) and 6b (g) both noted that the support had been driven by incidents occurring. Participant 6b (g) noted that EPs were involved in them by chance and were invited to support schools but that it was informal. Participant 6a (g) made a guess that someone in the LA decided that an approach was needed, so the EPS together with health and clinical psychologists trained in CISD (Parkinson, 1997 model). Participant 6a (g) noted that, following an incident where people went in and did debriefing, it was decided that a group was needed to do training for the whole team. Both participants referred to a time where the LA was asking for volunteers from different agencies to be part of the central emergency planning. Participant 6a (g) noted that, following a meeting, the agencies went separate ways when dealing with incidents but had at least annual meetings to talk about debriefing, until that was de-bunked. Participants 6a and 6b noted that they do not have a senior role yet but that they have been involved in CI support from the start, so know more about it than other staff. Participants 6a and 6b reported that they are part of a working group which is when they write the materials to support the work. They noted that another EP had joined the group last year so there are now three of them.

4.2.6.3 Protocol.

Figure 4.17 below outlines the protocol of the CI response in LA6.
4.2.7 LA7.

This LA is a shire/county with 92.77% white British population. The school age population (5-19 years) is 92,967. An indication of the social deprivation is the percentage of long-term unemployed residents (16-74 years) which is 26.29%. The shire/county has 36 secondary schools. One group interview was undertaken in this LA with two participants, participant 7a (g) (EP in team) and participant 7b (g) (clinical psychologist in team). This CIRT does not have a hierarchy, however participant 7a (g) was given the responsibility within the EPS to develop a CI response. The CIRT is a multi-agency team with health, education and CAMHS. The team comprises three EPs, two school health workers and two employees from CAMHS. Figure 4.18 below illustrates the structure of the CIRT.
4.2.7.1 Support.

Figure 4.19 below outlines the modes of support in LA7.

**Figure 4.19 Modes of support in LA7**

- Support the adults who are directly involved with the young people
- Talk to headteacher to gather details, who has been affected, what support is in place etc. (can be on phone but often go in)
- Can work with groups of children but not first response (advocate two meetings, the first focussing on normalising and the second about educating)
- Work with carers and parents (CAMHS)
- Signpost to other support if needed (e.g. expedite a referral to CAMHS)
- Useful resources left in school

4.2.7.2 Inception.

During the group interview participant 7a (g) stated that the response had evolved and that no one directed them to get together. Participant 7a (g) noted that people had come into the group through invitation. The participants were not sure what had happened in the LA before but seven years ago the PEP had obviously seen a gap so a specialist post was created (0.2 full time equivalent) and given to participant 7a (g). The line manager at the time suggested contacting the lady in CAMHS (participant 7b (g)) due to the bereavement support work she was involved in. CAMHS had already provided some support to schools so it was about not duplicating what was already being provided.

The participants explained that they then spoke to each other about aims, how to support bereaved children and CI support and realised what a large undertaking it potentially
was for two people, so participant 7b (g) suggested that the school health team got involved. This work is part of the CAMHS job description. CAMHS had provided some basic bereavement training to school nurses and as a result of this there was a small team of school nurses who took a specialist interest in bereavement. Two of the school nurses came on board after the participants had been meeting for a short while. Participant 7a (g) noted that twice a year they have a project day to complete tasks which have arisen after meetings.

4.2.7.3 Protocol.

Figure 4.20 below outlines the protocol of the CI response in LA7.

**Figure 4.20 CI response protocol in LA7**

Whoever takes call gathers basic facts about what has happened, key people to meet, school type

* Admin staff fully briefed, they have contact list so they promise the caller that they will get in touch with the team, they will keep going down list until they speak to someone

Can just support over the phone but often the team member who received phone call will link up with a colleague who is available and go into school
4.2.8 Summary of data from the seven LAs presented.

4.2.8.1 Overview.

RQ 1 was addressed through a LA by LA analysis of the seven CIRTs:

RQ(1) How have LAs developed current CI support in terms of support offered, inception and protocols?

The data has been presented to describe some background information, the support offered, inception and protocol of each CIRT.

4.2.8.2 Background.

LA 1, 3, 5 and 7 have multi-agency teams. The remaining LAs teams are all EPs with the exception of LA 2 which has CAMHS EPs. The CIRTS vary from about 5-7 members with the exception of LA 4 and 6 where it is seen as a generic role for all EPs.

4.2.8.3 Support.

The following bullet points summarise the main areas/features of support described. The frequency is recorded in brackets:

- Initial telephone conversations/visit to gather information and problem solve (7/7)
- Debriefing/group work (7/7)
- Leaflets/written materials (6/7)
- Signpost to other services (6/7)
- Support for parents (4/7, direct or supporting school to support parents)
- Link person in school (4/7)
- Support the adults directly involved with young people (3/7)
- Follow up (3/7)
- Materials to guide CIRT members (3/7)
- Letter templates (2/7)
• Media (2/7)
• Flexibility (2/7)
• 24 hour support (2/7)
• Inform safeguarding (2/7)

4.2.8.4 Inception.

Four of the seven LAs reported that setting up CI support was driven by incidents in the LA. Two LAs reported the influence of a senior EP. LA 4 noted that a senior EP got involved with supporting CIs and gathered other interested colleagues. LA2 noted that one senior EP, who was interested in the work, did most of it and then left leaving a gap. In LA7 it was reported that a gap was identified leading to the development of CI support. LA4 referred to a change in terms of the expectation to support schools.

Several of the LAs refer to seeking training as an initial step. LA7 refers to a 0.2 post being created specifically to develop the work and in LA5 an EP was asked to coordinate the support by the PEP. In LA4 it is the CAMHS EPs who have a specific role in this area. LA6 refers to a working group who are involved in writing the materials but offering support is seen as a generic role for all EPs. LA2 also refers to a working group who are involved in looking at research related to CI support.

4.2.8.5 Protocol.

As all the teams vary in composition it is difficult to summarise some areas of the protocol, but the researcher has tried to pull together common themes. All seven LAs begin with a telephone call from school either to someone from the LA or a CI team leader. LA4 notes that if the team are aware of an event they would tentatively ring the school to see if they are coping. Whoever takes the telephone call then contacts a CI coordinator/team leader/PEP/senior who then contacts a team member/EP. LA4 has a separate approach as it is the school advisors who carry out the initial first day response and the CIRT is only involved if debriefing is offered. If an advisor is not available then the CIRT coordinator does get involved in the first day response. In three of the protocols it is noted that the people who receive the call are asked to take basic details. Once the information has filtered to the correct people e.g. the CIRT, the members then
get in contact with school to arrange/offer the support. Some of the LAs also refer to keeping senior members informed.

4.3 Cross-LA Analysis of Sustainability and Evaluation of CI Response (RQ2)

4.3.1 Introduction.

The following sections present a cross-LA thematic analysis addressing RQ2.

RQ(2) How do LAs sustain and evaluate a CI approach?

The researcher will be looking at themes related to sustainability and the operation of CIRTS. Please refer to table 4.1 below which has recorded all the codes and themes and the LAs in which they were found. From the seven LAs 110 codes were yielded and organised into 26 themes. These 26 themes were then grouped into three super themes, namely, ‘Context’, ‘People’ and ‘Process’. The super theme ‘Context’ groups themes which relate to the context in which a CIRT operates or will be developed. The super theme ‘People’ groups themes relating to the people involved in delivering a CI response. The super theme ‘Process’ groups themes which relate to the process of delivering a CI response.

When analysing the data the researcher thought that it was significant that some codes, by dint of frequent reference within the interviews, were strongly identified within one LA. In order to reflect different levels of identification of codes, LAs in which a code appeared four or more times and also LAs where a code only appeared once are highlighted within table 4.1.

If a code has a high occurrence it indicates that it was a prominent aspect in the thoughts of those participants. The researcher acknowledges that if it only occurred once it does not mean that it is insignificant as there was a difference in the coherence of the accounts. This is linked to epistemology, in that you never know everything, some things surface and some things do not. The researcher’s epistemological position acknowledges that a direct link between code prevalence and significance may not exist, since the interview data will be subject to influences that privilege certain types of content rather than others, e.g. selective recall, attentional capacity and interaction factors (e.g. “oh I forgot to tell you”). The researcher wants to get the participant’s perspective that they were able to communicate. The process is inextricable from the content but as far as possible the researcher wants to get their point of view. In order to
get their viewpoint the researcher asked open ended questions, showed interest and emphasised confidentiality. There is still a reliability issue even if the researcher is almost getting their true ideas as would be expressed in the home. These methods are valid for this ontology (true expression) but there may be different answers given on different occasions or different parts attended to by the researcher. Furthermore in some LAs two or three individual interviews were undertaken and in others only one group interview. The issue of differential code prevalence is highlighted below.

Referring to table 4.1, LA5 and LA6 both yielded 53 codings. LA4 yielded 72 which was the most codings, however it is important to note that this LA involved three interviews. The fewest codings made was in LA3. All of the LAs had codings in the three super themes which confirms the researcher’s sense of the usefulness of the data. It confirms the coherence of the analysis and the usefulness of each of the LAs to that analysis (no outliers or the reverse). Across all LAs the most codings were made for the super theme ‘process’ and this super theme had the most codes. Of the 26 themes, 16 had a frequency of ten or more. The remaining ten had frequencies ranging from three-nine.

**Table 4.1 LA by LA codings and themes**

**Key:**

Coded four times or more: √+4  
Coded two or three times: √  
Coded once: √1  
Not coded: blank

**Super themes:**

- **Context**
- **People**
- **Process**
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<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
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<th>Local Authorities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived reluctance to take part</td>
<td>PR1 - other services</td>
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<td></td>
<td>PR2 - managers committing time</td>
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<td>CP2 - connection with management</td>
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<td>LAP1 - easier in large LA</td>
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<td>LAP2 - CIRT members prioritise over other work</td>
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<td>LAP3 - grateful for quick response</td>
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<td><strong>Outside pressure</strong></td>
<td><strong>PI1 - the need to be seen to respond</strong></td>
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<td>for CIRT to respond</td>
<td><strong>PI2 - people are watching their backs</strong></td>
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<td><strong>PI3 - school and LA going through the motions</strong></td>
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<td>MA6 - suits EP role</td>
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<td>WL2 - pulling together personnel resources</td>
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<td>WL4 - CIRT and school links with other agencies</td>
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<td>Confusion about counselling</td>
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<td>BM2 - relies on interest</td>
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<td>Working together in CIRT</td>
<td>WT1 - paired working</td>
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<td>WT2 - advantages of same background/approach</td>
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<td>Plan versus reality</td>
<td>PVR1 - in practice do not follow procedure</td>
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<td>PVR2 - use system they think and know of</td>
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<td><strong>Think and reflect</strong></td>
<td>TR1 - gauging priority to attend school</td>
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<td>TR2 - talk to colleague</td>
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<td>TR3 - CIRT role in encouraging school to think and reflect</td>
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<td>IP1 - relationship with school and understanding of school systems</td>
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<td>IP2 - hypothesising and joint problem solving</td>
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<td>IP3 - scientific approach using psychological theories</td>
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<td>School ability</td>
<td>SA1 - level of school risk</td>
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<td>SA2 - simply reassurance needed</td>
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<td>SA3 - incidents build skills</td>
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<td>SA5 - consequences of CIs for school</td>
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<td>T2 - opportunity to use skills</td>
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<td>CR2 - expectations</td>
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<td>CR5 - school exposure to CIRT</td>
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<td>E7 - ethically sensitive</td>
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<td>E8 - triangulation</td>
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<td>FD3 - using special school expertise</td>
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<td>FD5 - CIRT liaising with other services</td>
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<td>FD6 - training for schools</td>
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4.3.2 Theme: perceived reluctance to take part.

Under the theme ‘perceived reluctance to take part’ three codes were identified:

**Figure 4.21 Codes within the theme ‘perceived reluctance to take part’**

- PR1 - other services
- PR2 - managers committing time
- PR3 - EPs

**4.3.2.1 ‘Perceived reluctance to take part’ - other services (PR1).**

The following findings may be of significance to the development and sustainability of a multi-disciplinary approach: it was coded in three LAs that other services and the LA are pleased that someone else is offering a CI response and do not want to get involved, for example:

‘A very difficult area and people gradually realised that if there is a team that can be relied upon to do that then in whatever weird and wonderful financial way they will try to sustain that and make sure it carries on’ (participant 5c (i)).

In this LA the strategic responsibility for the CIRT operation became disproportionately allocated to the psychology service and particularly the lead EP. This is a paradox of development as projects need a leader, particularly in soft systems.

It may also be of significance in LA 6 that, following a reorganisation, a member of the CIRT spoke to the PEP suggesting that multi-disciplinary groups would want to get involved and the PEP replied:

‘No that isn’t the expectation she reckons people will be very wary of doing it.’ (participant 6a (g))

**4.3.2.2 ‘Perceived reluctance to take part’ - managers committing time (PR2).**

PR2, managers committing time, was only coded in one LA:

‘In 2003 the PEP and I arranged a meeting to get heads of services there and to talk it through with them and they were all very interested....but when it came to the crunch,
can any of the services allow any of the members to drop what they were doing, it was no we can’t ... so I failed miserably throughout the whole time to get any other service to help.’ (participant 5c (i)).

This links to the issue of time allocation for EPs, BM5, under the theme, ‘becoming a member of a CIRT’. Not having sufficient flexibility to carry out CI work may have a significant impact on the development and sustainability of a multi-disciplinary approach.

4.3.2.3 ‘Perceived reluctance to take part’ - EPs (PR3).

PR3 is coded in two LAs and is linked to the confidence of EPs to be involved:

‘We are still working on developing the breadth of confidence in the service. There is still a tendency for about half the colleagues in our service to feel reasonably confident and often be involved in this work, but I would say that the other half don’t get involved very often’ (participant 4c (i)).

The perceived challenging nature of the work may also be a significant factor for the perceived reluctance of other services to be involved in addition to EPs.

4.3.3 Theme: CIRT position within LA.

Under the theme ‘CIRT position within LA’ three codes were identified:

Figure 4.22 Codes within the theme ‘CIRT position within LA’

- CP1- senior management support
- CP2- connection with management
- CP3- raising the profile

4.3.3.1 ‘CIRT position within LA’ - senior management support (CP1).

La1, senior management support, is coded in five of the LAs, e.g.:

‘And because we have been very fortunate that our managers have seen the need and supported us in doing that work and been very valuing and positive about it’ (participant 5c (i)).
As this quote illustrates the support has been in terms of seeing a need, valuing the response and thinking it is something that the LA needs to respond to. It was also noted that a manager had been involved in offering community support. It is interesting that the following quote suggests that it is valued as it takes pressure off the LA, which is a point raised in a previous theme ‘perceived reluctance to take part’:

‘I think it is valued by managers in the authority because it takes the heat off them’ (participant 4a (i)).

**4.3.3.2 ‘CIRT position within LA’ - connection with management (CP2).**

CP2 is coded in three LAs and is looking at connection to management, with some participants reporting that members of the CIRT are part of the LA management, whilst other participants commented on how they keep management informed, e.g.:

‘We partly have taken responsibility to keep our managers fully informed through inviting them to the meetings and I have to produce quarterly reports’ (participant 7a (g)).

LA2 and LA4 refer to the value of members of the team being in management, e.g.:

‘We were quite insistent that anyone who became the county coordinator should have quite a lot of seniority in the service and be part of the county management team’ (participant 4a (i)).

A link is made in LA7 to time allocation (BM5):

‘We are trying to keep a record and thinking how much time does it actually take and in terms of our managers, making sure we get the right amount of time allocated to the service’ (participant 7a (g))

The quotes coded indicate that senior management support and connection is significant in developing and sustaining a CIRT.

**4.3.3.3 ‘CIRT position within LA’ - raising the profile (CP3).**

CP3 is coded in two of the LAs; it discusses how the support of senior management, and the connection, positively influence the profile of the work, e.g.:
‘That linked in with the psychological welfare group and I think that is another strength having those very clear links with that group adds weight’ (participant 7b (g)).

It is important to note that in LA7:

‘...unfortunately we have to justify our existence’ (participant 7a (g)).

### 4.3.4 Theme: CIRT as LA priority.

Under the theme ‘CIRT as LA priority’ four codes were identified:

**Figure 4.23 Codes within the theme ‘CIRT as LA priority’**

- LAP1- easier in large LA
- LAP2- CIRT members prioritise over other work
- LAP3- grateful for quick response
- LAP4- no complaints

#### 4.3.4.1 ‘CIRT as LA priority’ - easier in large LA (LAP1).

LAP1 was only coded once in LA4 noting that it is easier to make CI support a priority in a large LA because there is a larger number of incidents. Some cases are more likely to require a strategic response. Perhaps the EP is referring to discussions with management and how it will be easier to negotiate the need for a CIRT.

#### 4.3.4.2 ‘CIRT as LA priority’ - CIRT members prioritise over other work (LAP2).

LAP2 codes the priority that CI support takes, e.g.:

‘There is an expectation that if something comes up it takes priority over everything’ (participant 6b (g)).

This is coded in six of the seven LAs.

#### 4.3.4.3 ‘CIRT as LA priority’ - grateful for quick response (LAP3).

LAP3 is coded just in LA2 by participant 2c (g) discussing the quick response. One quote notes the quick response being appreciated by the schools and the other by the LA.
4.3.4.4 ‘CIRT as LA priority’ - no complaints (LAP4).

LAP4 is coded in two LAs and notes that there have been no complaints as a result of CI support taking priority. This theme raises the positives of CIRTs being a LA priority in terms of giving a quick response. In terms of evaluation schools are reported to be grateful and to not complain.

4.3.5 Theme: outside pressure for CIRT to respond.

Under the theme ‘outside pressure for CIRT to respond’ four codes were identified:

Figure 4.24 Codes within the theme ‘outside pressure for CIRT to respond’

- PI1- the need to be seen to respond
- PI2- people are watching their backs
- PI3- school and LA going through the motions
- PI4- media influence

4.3.5.1 ‘Outside pressure for CIRT to respond’ - the need to be seen to respond (PI1).

PI1, the need to be seen to respond, is coded in four LAs, e.g.:

‘...so it can be quite difficult to deal with these management type persons who want you there immediately, sometimes we have to give in a little bit on that’ (participant 4a (i)).

It is interesting that in LA5 it is noted that the original principle would be to let schools contact the team but:

‘...because I am the manager, calls might come through to me first and sometimes it has been a suggestion that a school should be contacted...someone from safeguarding board thinks it’s the LAs responsibility to discharge a particular role and that compromises your position. So there have been occasions where I have been requested to phone up a head teacher’ (participant 5a (g)).

These issues could be seen to relate to the theme discussed later, ‘plan versus reality’.
4.3.5.2 ‘Outside pressure for CIRT to respond’ - people are watching their backs (PI2).

PI2 is coded in two LAs indicating the fear of not responding, e.g.:

‘...everybody who works in administrating part of LA are watching their backs all of the time’ (participant 4a (i)).

‘Damned if you do damned if you don’t, if you don’t do something the LA may well be taken to task or sued’ (participant 6a (g)).

4.3.5.3 ‘Outside pressure for CIRT to respond’ - school and LA going through the motions (PI3).

PI3 is coded in three LAs referring to the tick box mentality of schools and also LA staff. In particular there is confusion about rushing in and counselling (a theme discussed later), e.g.:

‘...there is this notion at the moment that people say counselling has been offered as they think this is the done thing to say’ (participant 5a (g)).

4.3.5.4 ‘Outside pressure for CIRT to respond - media influence (PI4).

PI4 is coded in two LAs and refers to the influence of the media, e.g.:

‘I think we finally got it through to the local press after several years not to say that the counsellors are going in’ (participant 5c (i)).

Against the backdrop of needing to communicate the role of the CIRT this theme acknowledges the outside pressure which a CIRT may face. This pressure may influence the support which is given despite protocols in place. This outside pressure therefore may have significance for the evaluation of the CIRT response.

4.3.6 Theme: impact of media.

Under the theme ‘impact of media’ there are three codes identified:

Figure 4.25 Codes within the theme ‘impact of media’

- IM1- creates hype
- IM2- CIRT role to steer media away
4.3.6.1 ‘Impact of media’ - creates hype (IM1).

IM1 was coded in two LAs, e.g.:

‘The media involvement determines whether it is critical or not, we have had incidents that are very high profile in media and that has raised the significance’ (participant 6b (g)).

The media influence on the pressure for involvement was also raised in PI4 - media influence, under the theme ‘outside pressure for CIRT to respond’.

4.3.6.2 ‘Impact of media’ - CIRT role to steer media away (IM2).

IM2 was coded in two LAs indicating that the school is encouraged to divert the press away, e.g.:

‘...we have linked the headteacher with our central press people and we managed to steer the press away, as initially the press were all over the school’ (participant 1a (i))

4.3.6.3 ‘Impact of media’ - helps sustain the team (IM3).

IM3 was coded once:

‘...also what I think has helped 5 is high profile cases where the media have been involved’ (participant 5c (i)).

It is interesting that the media involvement has been linked to both positive and negative effects. It has been identified as significant to the sustainability of the team in LA5. The CIRT has been identified as having a role to protect the school from the media. This theme also raises the question of whether a positive relationship with the media is important to the development, sustainability and evaluation of CIRTs.
4.3.7 Theme: factors affecting multi-agency ability.

Under the theme ‘factors affecting multi-agency ability’ eight codes were identified:

Figure 4.26 Codes within the theme ‘factors affecting multi-agency ability’

- MA1 - scattergun approach of schools and infrequency of CIs affects coordination
- MA2 - type of incident
- MA3 - agency capacity
- MA4 - existing links between agencies
- MA5 - specific roles enhance joined up thinking
- MA6 - suits EP role
- MA7 - benefits
- MA8 - personal contacts

4.3.7.1 ‘Factors affecting multi-agency ability’ - scattergun approach of schools and infrequency of CIs affect coordination (MA1).

MA1 is coded in two LAs and refers to the fact that schools will often contact lots of agencies making it difficult to offer a coordinated response. It is suggested that the coordination is also affected by the infrequency of the events:

‘...the schools still have a scattergun approach, if something happens they will ring everybody and it is quite difficult to coordinate that response’ (participant 6b (g)).

4.3.7.2 ‘Factors affecting multi-agency ability’ - type of incident (MA2).

MA2 is coded in two LAs and draws attention to the impact of size where a large incident is more likely to need a multi-agency team of professionals:

‘...because the incidents were never of such significance that they were huge incidents that would need a multi-agency team of professionals’ (participant 6b (g)).

4.3.7.3 ‘Factors affecting multi-agency ability’ - agency capacity (MA3).

MA3 was coded in two LAs referring to the impact of the agency’s capacity:
‘I know the name of a clinical psychologist, we used to have several but they are empty posts a few years ago all gone but not been replaced, not because of funding but because they can’t get people’ (participant 1a (i)).

4.3.7.4 ‘Factors affecting multi-agency ability’ - existing links between agencies (MA4).

MA4 is coded in five LAs referring to existing links between agencies:

‘Historically it was also because the senior EP, who was involved in that work, had managed that behaviour team at the time so included some of those people in that work and it just hung over from that really’ (participant 2c (g)).

It would be interesting to find out if these links to other agencies are historical. It may be significant to the sustainability of CIRTs if such historical links are linking to personal (worked together for years) or structural (sit next to each other) factors.

4.3.7.5 ‘Factors affecting multi-agency ability’ - specific roles enhance joined up thinking (MA5).

Refers to specific roles e.g. school nurse and CAMHS EP enhancing joined up thinking and was coded in two LAs:

‘And there is quite a lot of joined up thinking. It is unusual to have CAMHS EPs’ (participant 2a (i)).

4.3.7.6 ‘Factors affecting multi-agency ability’ - suits EP role (MA6).

MA6 is coded in four LAs noting that the work suits the EP role:

‘Immediately went to us just doing it I think, just EPs involved’ (participant 6a (g)).

‘...EPs were the only ones who regularly had contact with schools’ (participant 6b (g).

4.3.7.7 ‘Factors affecting multi-agency ability’ - benefits (MA7).

MA7 was coded in two LAs looking at the benefits of multi-agency working:

‘I think it needs to be multi-disciplinary absolutely, absolute dire need, you don’t need to be an EP to do the first visit or you don’t need two EPs to do the first visit. If people are well trained by EPs, who have a lot of training in the area, then I think a team that has lots of different perspectives in it would offer an awful lot more’ (participant 5c (i)).
4.3.7.8 ‘Factors affecting multi-agency ability’ - personal contacts (MA8).

MA8 is coded in one LA referring to the impact of personal contacts:

‘...what I did try to do was, when I knew we were really busy, was try to make direct approaches to people I knew, please can you help and that worked and at that point I was just getting CAMHS interested in 5 and I am hoping that will continue, but I don’t know ... I have a feeling it goes on personal contacts’ (participant 5c (i)).

It is interesting that the benefits of multi-agency working were only discussed in two LAs. The remaining codes in this theme have discussed the range of factors which affect multi-agency ability. Code MA6, ‘suits EP role’, may be of significance in that most interviews involved EPs which could in part explain the limited multi-agency work.

4.3.8 Theme: wider links.

Under the theme ‘wider links’ five codes were identified:

Figure 4.27 Codes within the theme ‘wider links’

- WL1- sharing information with other LAs
- WL2- pulling together personnel resources
- WL3- attendance at regional groups
- WL4- CIRT and school links with other agencies
- WL5- wider impact of CIRT

4.3.8.1 ‘Wider links’ - sharing information with other LAs (WL1).

WL1 was coded in five LAs:

‘...someone who was in a similar position to me when I started this role and I think he wanted to get a policy going for his service and invited us to talk to the service’ (participant 7a (g)).

‘When it first set up I remember going down to Salford to Min O’hara and that was years back and then we picked up stuff from other authorities and mixed and matched it’ (participant 5a (g)).
4.3.8.2 ‘Wider links’ - pulling together personnel resources (WL2).

WL2 was coded in three LAs (1, 3 and 6). LA1 and LA3 identified coming together to work as a joint team:

‘It seems good when larger group as you have got resources to pull together’ (participant 1a (i)).

Whereas the code in LA6 commented that:

‘we invited everyone who bordered with us but actually we all came from similar points of view, we worked out didn’t we that actually whichever the school was that had the bus crash would be the one that the EPS covering that school would cover and then we were just sharing materials’ (participant 6a (g)).

It is interesting that LA 6 is relatively small (in comparison to LAs2, 4 and 5) so one might expect that they would need to pull resources together.

4.3.8.3 ‘Wider links’ - attendance at regional groups (WL3).

When attending conferences the researcher was made aware of regional groups. WL3 was coded once in five of the LAs. Two of the coded statements refer to attending the North West regional group; however the other three coded statements refer to difficulties with attendance or to the fact that the group withered.

4.3.8.4 ‘Wider links’ - CIRT and school links with other agencies (WL4).

WL4 was coded in five LAs. It discusses CIRT links with other agencies, e.g.:

‘...we have spoken to foster carers and provided training for foster carers’ (participant 7b (g)).

In addition schools may get support from other agencies, e.g.:

‘...a number of CIs where we haven’t been asked to do it and they have decided they have got other support, for example, they may be a church school so have other people from the church who can support them’ (participant 3b (i)).

4.3.8.5 ‘Wider links’ - wider impact of CIRT (WL5).

WL5 is only coded in one LA looking to the possible wider impact of CI work:
‘...you are actually meeting a lot of adults who are going to spread the word about bereavement really and our society hasn’t in the past dealt very well with it, bereavement and trauma, and I always think in a small way that we are spreading the word to a huge number of people who can spread the word to a huge number of children and families’ (participant 5c (i)).

Perhaps the wider impact is an area which could link to the evaluation of CI work.

Within this theme, sharing information with other LAs, attending regional groups and pulling together resources may have a significant impact on the development of CIRTS. This sort of support may give encouragement to LAs which are small and may feel CI support is too big a task to take on.

4.3.9 Theme: confusion about counselling.

Under the theme ‘confusion about counselling’ two codes were identified:

Figure 4.28 Codes within the theme ‘confusion about counselling’

- CC1- counselling not initial response
- CC2- can create instability and anxiety

4.3.9.1 ‘Confusion about counselling’ - counselling not initial response (CC1).

CC1 is coded in four LAs e.g.:

‘...there is a place for counselling but not in initial response’ (participant 2a (i)).

4.3.9.2 ‘Confusion about counselling’ - can create instability and anxiety (CC2).

CC2 is coded in one LA:

‘...schools have gone very quickly for counselling and that has created a huge atmosphere of instability and anxiety, which then doesn’t make the school a containing place, it makes it very worrying, so we try to eliminate that, that is why we do initial response on the telephone and say don’t involve counselling yet, if you are really worried we can come in tomorrow’ (participant 2a (i)).

This theme could be linked to CN1, LA staff promises, under the later theme ‘communication networks’. Misunderstanding the role of counselling could then lead to
further difficulties in terms of promises. This theme may be significant to the development of a CIRT emphasising the value of time spent clarifying the role, in particular the role of counselling.

### 4.3.10 Theme: emergency planning.

Under the theme ‘emergency planning’ two codes were identified:

**Figure 4.29 Codes within the theme ‘emergency planning’**

- E1 - CIRT role clarity
- E2 - part of the team

#### 4.3.10.1 ‘Emergency planning’ - CIRT role clarity (E1).

E1 was coded in six LAs. Eight of the fourteen quotes coded refer to lack of clarity:

‘What is interesting is that it was never made clear how we were actually going to work together, so we all went off to do the joint training but when asked what are we all going to do together, how do we fit in, I remember talking, it wasn’t a set plan?’ (participant 6a)

whilst six indicate a clear understanding of the role, e.g.:

‘...we are the secondary line to advise people manning the rest centre if there are children and then further back than that supporting the schools who are supporting the children’ (participant 4a (i)).

#### 4.3.10.2 ‘Emergency planning’ - part of the team (E2).

E2 is coded in three LAs:

‘I belong to the emergency planning group, the actual group is called the humanitarian assistance group’ (participant 4b (i)).

The clarity surrounding the CIRT’s role in emergency planning therefore differs. Some LAs identified that they offer training and are part of the team. It may be that the size of the LA would have an impact on this. It would seem appropriate however not to limit the CIRT’s involvement to incidents in schools and to instead be part of the team supporting larger community events. This is raised by Posada (2006) in the literature.
review. Being part of the emergency planning team may help forge links with management.

### 4.3.11 Theme: consultant role.

Under the theme ‘consultant role’ two codes were identified:

**Figure 4.30 Codes within the theme ‘consultant role’**

- C1- provision of advice and support
- C2- specialist background

#### 4.3.11.1 ‘Consultant role’ - provision of advice and support (C1).

C1 was coded in two LAs (1 and 3). Participants from LA1 and LA3 noted that they share the same consultant. This consultant used to be the PEP in LA3.

‘...we use the consultants for advice, practical support, professional advice’ (participant 3a (i)).

#### 4.3.11.2 ‘Consultant role’ - specialist background (C2).

C2 was coded in one LA:

‘...provide that theoretical background and ground work to what we offer’ (participant 3a (i)).

Consultants were only used in two LAs (1 and 3). This raises the question as to why they were not used in the development of other CI responses.

### People

### 4.3.12 Theme: becoming a member of a CIRT.

Under the theme ‘becoming a member of a CIRT’ six codes were identified:

**Figure 4.31 Codes within the theme ‘becoming a member of a CIRT’**

- BM1- disagreement about involvement amongst EPs
- BM2- relies on interest
- BM3- identify a gap in provision
4.3.12.1 ‘Becoming a member of a CIRT’ - disagreement about involvement amongst EPs (BM1).

This code was found in one LA. Two interviews from LA4 noted that there can be disagreement amongst EPs as to whether CI work is something EPs should be involved in:

‘...many barriers, there are some colleagues who don’t necessarily agree it is an appropriate thing to be doing’ (participant 4c (i)).

CI support is an area that EPs might not think they should be involved in; however, there are no further comments to give an indication of why. It might be that respondents think that someone else in the LA is better placed or that despite CI support being a LA priority they are not skilled. Alternatively EPs may not work in a demographic area of risk where CIs are happening.

This raises the issue of defining CIs and how these definitions may affect arguments about involvement. Whether CIs are defined may therefore be of significance at the development stage and also impact sustainability and evaluation.

4.3.12.2 ‘Becoming a member of a CIRT’ - relies on interest (BM2).

It was noted in several interviews that being involved often stems from an interest in the area of CIs. BM2 was coded in five of the LAs:

‘You wouldn’t stick at it if you weren’t interested in keeping it going’ (participant 6b (g)).

This quote raises the issue of whether having an interest is significant to the sustainability and maintenance of the work.

4.3.12.3 ‘Becoming a member of a CIRT’ - identify a gap in provision (BM3).

It was coded in two LAs that another reason for becoming involved was a gap or need in a service:
'I got into it by default because there was a need' (participant 4b (i)).

Farrell et al. (2006) in light of the legislation ‘Every Child Matters’ (Department for Education and Skills, DfES, 2004) reviewed the contribution made by EPs in England and Wales. In terms of the distinctive role, they reported that many of the respondents commented about the distinctive nature of the EPs’ contribution in relation to their role and status within the LA: ‘typically, EPs have a detailed knowledge of the range of resources that exist in and outside the LEA, the procedures that are needed in order for pupils to access these, and of the role and function of other professional groups who work in the local authority...this knowledge ... places EPs in an excellent position to work with others in identifying gaps in services for children and in planning and evaluation of new initiatives’ (p. 101).

4.3.12.4 ‘Becoming a member of a CIRT’ - previous involvement in CI work (BM4).

BM4 was coded in two LAs. In LA2 it was noted that the member of the team had been involved in a previous LA:

‘Yes I was, in my previous authority they were far ahead’ (participant 2a (i)).

This would therefore raise a question as to whether this EPs previous experience has had a significant impact on the development of the CI response in LA2. It is important to note that participant 2a (i) is the acting PEP and leader of the CIRT.

4.3.12.5 ‘Becoming a member of a CIRT’ - time allocation (BM5).

The issue of time allocation and capacity was coded in two LAs. The difficulty of not having time allocated was raised in LA5:

‘We were very thin on the ground and some years it was really difficult because we hadn’t any time allocated for it at all’ (participant 5b (g)).

It may be particularly significant to the issue of sustainability that only two LAs identify time allocation as a salient issue. For example, it could be that job descriptions are structured in such a way that CIRT time can be absorbed within contingency, whereas another job structure may allow flexibility at the time but afterwards allocated tasks would still need to be carried out.
4.3.12.6 ‘Becoming a member of a CIRT’ - personal bereavements (BM6).

BM6, personal bereavements, was coded in two LAs:

‘We would certainly be wary of people who had suffered a bereavement in their own lives getting directly involved and would give people an opportunity to say that I can’t be involved directly at the moment because of something in my personal life’ (participant 4b (i)).

In LA4 it is actually part of all the EPs’ job description but it is still noted that there are circumstances when EPs would not be expected to be involved. Being psychologists one might think that it is particularly important that the team are aware of each others’ emotional capacity to be involved. This awareness would be important in other areas of EPs’ work, not solely CI work.

4.3.13 Theme: personnel issues.

Under the theme ‘personnel issues’ seven codes were identified:

Figure 4.32 Codes within the theme ‘personnel issues’

- PI1- low numbers
- PI2- capacity
- PI3- generic EP role versus specialist team’s responsibility
- PI4- good relationships in the core
- PI5- developing expertise
- PI6- continue in role by default
- PI7- committed

4.3.13.1 ‘Personnel issues’ - low numbers (PI1).

PI1 is coded in four LAs (1, 2, 3 and 4). It is worth noting that LAs 1 and 3 form a joint team, if they reach capacity, and they share training. The low numbers are discussed in relation to managers not releasing staff:
‘...people will come to the initial taster session we have occasionally and they will express an interest and because of the time commitments their managers withdraw consent for them to continue’ (participant 3a (i)). This is linked to, PR2, managers committing time under the theme ‘perceived reluctance to take part’.

The low numbers are also discussed in relation to the impact of reorganisation:

‘...at present two or three aren’t attending due to reorganisation’ (participant 1a (i)).

Also just generally referring to staffing difficulties:

‘...the big problem is getting enough people, the team does feel very much under threat’ (participant 1a (i)).

4.3.13.2 ‘Personnel issues’ - capacity (PI2).

PI2 refers to capacity and is coded in three LAs. Three quotes coded noted that so far demand has not outweighed capacity but one quote noted that they were getting to the point of warning people:

‘...and it got to a point where we were warning people that sometimes we wouldn’t be able to respond because there weren’t enough of us and that actually there was no one left ... we were getting to that stage at certain points in the year where if we had one more thing we wouldn’t have been able to do it’ (participant 5c (i)).

4.3.13.3 ‘Personnel issues’ - generic EP role versus specialist team’s responsibility (PI3).

PI3 is coded in four LAs (4, 5, 6 and 7). Nine of the 13 quotes coded are from LA4, with codes in each of the three interviews. Quotes coded in LAs 4 and 6 refer to the generic role whereas LA5 notes that:

‘...ideally the school psychologists would be part of the team so that they could carry it on later’ (participant 5c).

And 7 notes that the team would inform colleagues:

‘...if they are not involved in terms of the direct CI support work we would as a matter of course inform our colleagues, so if I am working in a school where I am not the EP,
obviously the EP for that school would need to be aware and we would encourage the EP of that school to ask about the child’ (participant 7a (g)).

At this point the EP goes on to note that ‘if I am honest it is something they are happy for me to do’ (linking to the earlier theme ‘Perceived reluctance to take part’).

‘Everybody has it in their job description, they all have support for crisis in it but that doesn’t have to be direct support, they are all expected to support crisis work but doesn’t mean we are putting people in a situation with distressed children or staff if they are not personally ready to do that’ (participant 4c (i)).

There is also reference in LA4 to the fact that although it is seen as generic role, there are coordinators and there is a risk that they get relied upon:

‘...one of the things that we would have to be mindful of is making sure that the coordinators don’t become a displacement of responsibility for other folks’ (participant 4c (i)).

It is also raised in LA6 that having a specialist team may be linked to the possible thrill of being involved in this work. Whether CI support is seen as a generic role or a specialist team’s responsibility would have an impact on other areas of the delivery and training. Furthermore if it is seen as a generic responsibility perhaps this would help alleviate some of the issues of low numbers and capacity. A generic role perhaps would benefit the sustainability of the approach as the work is then not dependent on key members of a team and whether they continue to be involved.

4.3.13.4 ‘Personnel issues’ - good relationships in the core (PI4).

Code PI4, referring to the core relationships, is coded in three LAs:

‘I think the two of us work well together’ (participant 6a (g)).

These core relationships may be of significance to the sustainability of the teams.

4.3.13.5 ‘Personnel issues’ - developing expertise (PI5).

Code PI5 is coded in two LAs and refers to the development of expertise within CIRTs:

‘...neither of us have a senior role, yet we have done it all the way through so it is an area that perhaps we know more about’ (participant 6a (g)).
It is also suggested that this may make it hard for others to join.

4.3.13.6 ‘Personnel issues’ - continue in role by default (PI6).

PI6 is only coded in one LA:

PI6 ‘I just continued with it but there would be a case to not do it now, but it’s by default I have continued’ (participant 4b (i)).

This raises the question about what other areas of the work are continuing by default and what evaluation is taking place.

4.3.13.7 ‘Personnel issues’ - committed (PI7).

PI7 is only coded in one LA:

‘...it is the commitment of the members of the group and their expertise’ (affecting the sustainability).

In addition to other difficulties raised in terms of involving more people, good relationships in the core, growing expertise, a strong commitment and continuing by default may also make it difficult for new people to become involved. However these issues may also be significant to the sustainability of the work.

4.3.14 Theme: working together in CIRT.

Under the theme ‘working together in CIRT’ four codes were identified:

Figure 4.33 Codes within the theme ‘working together in CIRT’

- WT1- paired working
- WT2- advantages of same background/approach
- WT3- support from leaders
- WT4- debrief

4.3.14.1 ‘Working together in CIRT’ - paired working (WT1).

Six of the seven LAs refer to paired working. This appears to have a function for observations, debriefing and planning.
4.3.14.2 ‘Working together in CIRT’ - advantages of same background/approach (WT2).

WT2 is coded in four LAs and gives examples of advantages of having the same background/approach:

‘...for that latest suicide you had to think on the spot, how can we adjust this and it would take people from different backgrounds a long time to try and get there’ (participant 6a (g)).

This would suggest an advantage to not being a multi-agency team. Six of the nine codes were from LA6.

4.3.14.3 ‘Working together in CIRT’ - support from leaders (WT3).

WT3 is coded in four LAs:

‘I mean that is the bottom line, if you are in doubt ring the coordinator and have a conversation’ (participant 4a (i)).

4.3.14.4 ‘Working together in CIRT’ - debrief (WT4).

WT4 is coded in five of the LAs:

‘...we recognise that our own emotional first aid is very important as well, I don’t think that it is right to leave someone with it’ (participant 4b (i)).

This is linked to an earlier point made about personal bereavements, BM6, under the theme ‘becoming a member of a CIIRT’. The above codes looking at paired working, support from leaders and debriefing may all have a significant impact on the sustainability of a CIRT as they will affect how supported the members would feel. One could hypothesise that if members feel supported they may be more likely to continue to be involved. Sustaining the team is just one area which will affect the overall sustainability of the work.
4.3.15 Theme: impact.

Under the theme ‘impact’ two codes were identified:

**Figure 4.34 Codes within the theme ‘impact’**

- I1 - emotional impact for CIRT and school
- I2 - CI work remains challenging

4.3.15.1 ‘Impact’ - emotional impact for CIRT and school (I1).

I1 was coded in six LAs referring to the emotional impact on team members and also on school staff, e.g.:

‘...harrowing stuff, it’s all kind of painful but some of it has more, potential consequences, guilt and other things’ (participant 5a (g)).

Three quotes noted the impact of training:

‘I remember one EP was particularly upset about the whole thing, found the whole training really, really upsetting, triggered something’ (participant 6a (g)).

4.3.15.2 ‘Impact’ - CI work remains challenging (I2).

I2 was coded in three LAs, e.g.:

‘...it actually doesn’t happen to an individual psychologist very often so it’s not something you ever feel confident with or fluent with’ (participant 4c (i)).

‘...when you get the call, it doesn’t really get a much easier as so unique’ (participant 5b (g)).

This theme provides evidence of the challenging nature of CI work suggested under the earlier theme ‘perceived reluctance to take part’. The challenging nature of the work may threaten the sustainability of the team in terms of staff recruitment and maintenance.
Process

4.3.16 Theme: plan versus reality.

Under the theme ‘plan versus reality’ two codes were identified:

**Figure 4.35 Codes within the theme ‘plan versus reality’**

- PVR1 - in practice do not follow procedure
- PVR2 - use system they think and know of

4.3.16.1 ‘Plan versus reality’ - in practice do not follow procedure (PVR1).

PVR1 is coded in two LAs, e.g.:

‘...so there is a procedure but there are lots of things and schools have copies of it but the reality is that people pick up the phone’ (participant 1a (i)).

‘We have a little booklet which we have and something for group members so even though there is a procedure people don’t tend to follow it’ (participant 1a (i)).

4.3.16.2 ‘Plan versus reality’ - use system they think and know of (PVR2).

PVR2 is coded in two LAs, e.g.:

‘Well they are meant to get in touch with a lady who is a senior manager but what seems to happen quite often is that people know people who are in the team. So I can relate a lot of incidents where we have been involved where they have thought of the psychologist’ (participant 1a (i)).

This is an interesting point if LAs are designing a policy and CIRT system as to whether it is actually used in practice. However, as mentioned earlier, even if the plan is not used the author would argue that it is beneficial to have thought through the process prior to an event. Perhaps this has significance for the development of a CIRT, suggesting that a simple structure should be employed with sufficient flexibility to cope with the varied methods of seeking support. This point however was only raised in LA1 and LA4.
4.3.17 Theme: think and reflect.

Under the theme ‘think and reflect’ three codes were identified:

**Figure 4.36 Codes within the theme ‘think and reflect’**

- TR1- gauging priority to attend school
- TR2- talk to colleague
- TR3- CIRT role in encouraging school to think and reflect

### 4.3.17.1 ‘Think and reflect’ - gauging priority to attend school (TR1).

TR1 was coded in four LAs, e.g.:

‘...there have been a couple of situations more recently when I have been on the end of the phone and the school have been very anxious and almost causing quite a big drama out of what actually then didn’t become a big drama and having to think I don’t need to go in here, I just need to give them a bit of time and think about what kind of response is needed’ (participant 5b (g)).

In contrast within the same code:

‘Occasionally you know straight away that it is something that people need to attend’ (participant 4c (i)).

This links to the earlier discussion looking at whether it is a sad event or CI. Whether an incident is a sad event of a CI could also be linked to the theme ‘school ability’ discussed below.

### 4.3.17.2 ‘Think and reflect’ - talk to colleague (TR2).

TR2 is coded in two LAs:

‘...it is easy to say you will rush in but what you really need to do is to get facts, get the information and step back from it. I think what I would often do and they do it to me, say to person on the other end, yep that’s great I’ll get back to you and put the phone down and call my coordinator colleagues and say this is how I am feeling, this is how I think I need to be reacting and this is what I have got so far, can we talk about this’ (participant 4b (i)).
4.3.17.3 ‘Think and reflect’ - CIRT role in encouraging school to think and reflect (TR3).

TR3 is coded in four LAs, e.g.:

‘...the initial impact of an event like that is that we don’t want to rush in so we are not, shining suits-need them to think and reflect...contained space for them to think and reflect’ (participant 2a (i)).

Effectively gauging priority, talking to colleagues and encouraging schools to think and reflect may be significant to the sustainability of a CIRT. This process may prevent CIRT members attending crises unnecessarily and therefore help stop them from reaching capacity. Furthermore, as with other EP work, if the aim is joint problem solving, mentioned below under the theme ‘impact of Psychology’, initially working together over the phone would seem to support this approach.

4.3.18 Theme: impact of psychology.

Under the theme ‘impact of psychology’ five codes were identified:

Figure 4.37 Codes within the theme ‘impact of psychology’

- IP1- relationship with school and understanding of school systems
- IP2- hypothesising and joint problem solving
- IP3- scientific approach using psychological theories
- IP4- need to communicate psychologist’s role
- IP5- watch and assess to identify the vulnerable

4.3.18.1 ‘Impact of psychology’ - relationship with school and understanding of school systems (IP1).

IP1 was coded in five LAs, five of the quotes coded were referring to EPs in general, e.g.:

‘And we know the schools and how they work even if not the school you work in and others may not’ (participant 6a (g)) and two of the quotes were referring to knowing the school in relation to getting the link EP involved, e.g.:
‘...the link EP has links with schools’ (participant 2a (i)).

4.3.18.2 ‘Impact of psychology’ - hypothesising and joint problem solving (IP2).

IP2 is coded in three LAs referring to the hypothesising and joint problem solving, e.g.:

‘...only a few people perhaps be able to work with the principals we work with in the joint problem solving approach rather than just telling them what to do’ (participant 6a (g)).

4.3.18.3 ‘Impact of psychology’ - scientific approach using psychological theories (IP3).

IP3 was coded in all seven LAs with examples of using psychology in the work or researching ideas, creating resources, training, e.g.:

‘...it brings with it the theory and the knowledge and our understanding. And if you go into the theory and the papers normalisation about feelings you have got, this is an ordinary reaction to an extraordinary event, it is about emotional first aid, it is about understanding of how children react in terms of their ages and developmental terms, it is about what the school can do in order to support and it is also about what we need to give in terms of accurate information and only give what we know is the facts ... but it’s a lot of psychological stuff we bring to it in terms of theory so when people say why are we doing it this way, you can say actually we know from research, we know from theory that this is what happens’ (participant 4b (i)).

4.3.18.4 ‘Impact of psychology’ - need to communicate psychologist’s role (IP4).

IP4 is coded in three LAs:

‘When I go to CAMHS meetings I can actually argue why it is a psychologist doing it, why not tier 2’ (participant 4a (i)).
4.3.18.5 ‘Impact of psychology’ - watch and assess to identify the vulnerable (IP5).

IP5 was coded in three LAs, e.g.:

‘Usually our advice about that (whether children should see counsellor or be referred to CAMHS) is that it could take weeks or months before that is apparent and advised to watch and wait and give staff some sense of confidence about dealing with some of the issues’ (participant 5c (i)).

‘...a key part of what we try and offer is an audit of needs, emotional needs of children and young people in school after an incident’ (participant 4c (i)).

There is an issue of how good staff are at passing on information if they are monitoring children. In order to watch and assess, the team will require information from school and will need to work together with the school.

The impact of psychology may be significant in the development of CIRTs as it argues a role for EPs in this area of work. The issues raised could be presented to people in management if one is trying to develop a CI approach within an EPS.

4.3.19 Theme: school ability.

Under the theme ‘school ability’ six codes were identified:

**Figure 4.38 Codes within the theme ‘school ability’**

- SA1- level of school risk
- SA2- simply reassurance needed
- SA3- incidents build skills
- SA4- self-sufficient
- SA5- consequences of CIs for school
- SA6- being prepared
4.3.19.1 ‘School ability’ - level of school risk (SA1).

SA1 is coded in two LAs e.g. in LA6 the participant is discussing whether an event is a CI or a sad event:

‘...depends what is happening with that school so if it is in a vulnerable place because it is in special measures or something, might be on top of everything’ (participant 6a (g)).

4.3.19.2 ‘School ability’ - simply reassurance needed (SA2).

SA2 is coded in four LAs noting that the school sometimes just wants to be reassured that what they are doing is on the right lines, e.g.:

‘A child had died in a primary school and head phoned for advice but because of the support already in place they were just checking what they were doing was ok’ (participant 5b (g)).

4.3.19.3 ‘School ability’ - incidents build skills (SA3).

SA3 is coded in four LAs and notes that having incidents can build skills in that area, e.g.:

‘...some local special schools work with children who have terminal illnesses and they have to deal with that on a fairly regular basis and they have skills’ (participant 2b (g)).

4.3.19.4 ‘School ability’ - self-sufficient (SA4).

SA4 is coded in four LAs and notes that schools can be self-sufficient, e.g.:

‘...you ring the school to say that we have heard that this has happened and they will say “actually no we are doing just fine, we are prepared, we don’t think there is any cause for you to become involved”’ (participant 4b).

It is also noted in the other quote that it depends if the incident is critical, ‘Some schools, depending on the incident, don’t actually request any further involvement so always initial contact depends what the incident is whether it is critical or whether it is bereavement’ (participant 6b (g)).

Again this links to the issue of who makes the decision as to whether an incident is critical. Would it be better to see it as dependent on the school’s ability and whether it is at risk rather than a specific definition?
4.2.19.5 ‘School ability’ - consequences of CIs for school (SA5).

SA5 is coded in five LAs and looks at the consequences of CIs for example accusations, criminal investigations and staff divisions. This could be seen to link to the challenge of this area of work.

4.3.19.6 ‘School ability’ - being prepared (SA6).

SA6 is coded in four LAs and suggests that there is:

‘...no substitute for being prepared when horrible things happen’ (participant 5c (i)).

This also links to T5, prepare and empower school staff, under the later theme ‘training’. One quote links to the CIRT being prepared.

This theme indicates that the schools’ ability affects the support which will be needed/requested. This would imply that the team needs to be sensitive and to work flexibly. School ability could have significance in the development of a CIRT, for example, it may not be seen as a need, if the schools in the area already have a level of expertise through experience and are not at risk. School ability may also be significant to the sustainability of the team as perhaps as schools build skills they will become more self-sufficient; this would question the need for a CIRT response or suggest that the CIRT could divert into training.

4.3.20 Theme: partnership.

Under the theme ‘partnership’ three codes were identified:

Figure 4.39 Codes within the theme ‘partnership’

- P1 - school maintains ownership
- P2 - aim to develop self-sufficiency
- P3 - encourage school about their role

4.3.20.1 ‘Partnership’ - school maintains ownership (P1).

P1 is coded in two LAs and relates to school involvement in general and when running groups. A warning is also raised about making sure CI support does not become the responsibility of one member of staff, e.g.:
‘...what we are going to try and do from next year is to have an awareness raising training through the SENCO but we are concerned that it doesn’t just became something that the SENCO does but that a whole school system does. When we have gone in we have insisted that we meet people from the school. If we do a group in school the expectation is that school provides a teacher for us to work alongside with the children’ (participant 2a (i)).

4.3.20.2 ‘Partnership’ - aim to develop self-sufficiency (P2).

P2 is coded in one LA:

‘I think we have increasingly seen the role as enabling schools to be self supporting’ (participant 6b (g)).

‘...to make schools more self-sufficient, self supporting is the aim but I think they will always need support, depending on the incident’ (participant 6b (g)).

The second quote is interesting as it is suggesting that however well equipped a school is they will always need support from a CIRT, which appears contradictory. This may be relevant for evaluation as if schools become self-sufficient, having engaged previously with a CIRT, this could be seen as a positive evaluation. In this case the CIRT’s sustainability may be linked to diverting resources into training to develop self-sufficiency within schools.

4.3.20.3 ‘Partnership’ - encourage school about their role (P3).

P3 is coded in five LAs looking at how well placed the school is to offer support and how CIRTs can liaise and support them to offer support, e.g.:

‘...it is really encouraging the teaching staff to appreciate that they are very well placed to help the child and that they provide structure, routine and lots of praise and attention, the kind of ingredients that help the child work through their grief’ (participant 5c (i)).

‘It would be wrong to offer something that you knew required medium to longer term involvement. Having said that, I have passed things like therapeutic writing on to quite a few people, I have done workshops, I have talked to Teaching Assistants, teachers and parents and given them the basics and I have got handouts. This is a technique that literally anyone can do...but always follow up myself’ (participant 5c (i)).
Working in partnership is an issue raised in all areas of EP work and may be easier in some LAs where this way of working is already established.

### 4.3.21 Theme: training.

Under the theme ‘training’ five codes were identified:

**Figure 4.40 Codes within the theme ‘training’**

- T1- training for the team
- T2- opportunity to use skills
- T3- modify CI response
- T4- develop specialisms
- T5- prepare and empower school staff

#### 4.3.21.1 ‘Training’ - training for the team (T1).

T1 is coded in all seven LAs. A range of training for those involved in the work is discussed. It varies from external training, to in-house training, to discussing cases as part of a team meeting. There were two of the quotes which referred to cut backs suggesting that the training would be one of the first things to go. A specific training model used in LA4 is discussed. There were also examples in two LAs where a team trains the remainder of the service.

#### 4.3.21.2 ‘Training’ - opportunity to use skills (T2).

T2 was coded in two LAs:

‘...the other barriers are about opportunities to be involved and develop skills which are quite sparse for most people’ (participant 4c (i)).

#### 4.3.21.3 ‘Training’ - modify CI response (T3).

T3 is coded in two LAs discussing how training can modify what is offered and also how adaptations can be made as a result of experience, e.g.:

‘...when we have been on courses one of us will go and then feed back from that and modify what we are doing’ (participant 6b (g)).
This is obviously good practice in all areas of work. It is linked to the scientist practitioner role in terms of using up to date evidence when making decisions about practice.

4.3.21.4 ‘Training’ - develop specialisms (T4).

T4 codes another issue which is whether to train all team members of staff in everything or develop different specialisms. This could be within a CIRT or across the whole service if seen as a generic role:

‘...so you have groups of people who can do things with a lot of confidence and they can be moved around within the service and the whole organisation as they are needed’ (participant 4c (i)).

There were three codes in this interview and two in LA5. It is interesting that in LA5 this approach was taken from the outset whereas in LA4 it was proposed as a way forward. This links well in considering the issues raised above about the difficulty getting people released, PR2, under the theme ‘perceived reluctance to take part’.

4.3.21.5 ‘Training’ - prepare and empower school staff (T5).

T5 was coded in six of the LAs. There were some issues raised about capacity to offer training or not having done it for a long time, e.g.:

‘We had a big rolling programme but it hasn’t happened for 5 or 6 years’ (participant 5a (g)).

‘...provide training for deputy heads, for heads and also for governors but having said that, that is in an ideal world and the only training we have offered in the last 12 months has been to newly appointed deputies’ (Participant 3a (i)).

A question is raised as to whether training has reduced the requests for the CIRT service:

‘...if you are being hugely naive and optimistic you might think that doing the bereavement training for schools may have made them feel that they can cope without needing to ring but at the same time I am not sure of that and we don’t have any evidence of that’ (participant 2e (g)).
This is a pessimistic view of the training. Perhaps data could be collected as a method of evaluation. This theme is of particular significance to developing a CIRT. How training is tackled appears to vary and T4 raises a key question as to whether you train everyone in everything. T2 highlights that there can be few opportunities to then practise skills once trained.

4.3.22 Theme: debriefing group work.

Under the theme ‘debriefing group work’ six codes were identified:

Figure 4.41 Codes within the theme ‘debriefing group work’

- D1 - divided view
- D2 - time consuming training
- D3 - infrequent use
- D4 - problem with definition
- D5 - offered by other agencies
- D6 - highly skilled

4.3.22.1 ‘Debriefing group work’ - divided view (D1).

There are differences in opinion regarding when to offer debriefing, appropriate size for groups and also whether it should be used at all, e.g.:

‘And we went in and did debriefing using the model and there was some dissent amongst us about whether it was appropriate’ (participant 6a (g)).

D1 was coded in five LAs. LA6 referred to the fact that the issue was raised nationally.

4.3.22.2 ‘Debriefing group work’ - time consuming training (D2).

D2 was coded in two LAs where it was commented that most of the training was on debriefing:

‘I think we do too much on it and should do more first day response because that is what we do in 1 but we still do a lot on debriefing’ (participant 1a (i)).

‘that is most of what the training is’ (participant 1a (i)).
4.3.22.3 ‘Debriefing group work’ - infrequent use (D3).

D3 is coded in three LAs, six times in LA3 and only once in LA5:

‘...one of the key things we offer which isn’t often taken up is debriefing’ (participant 1a (i)).

and

‘...we tend to find that those CIs do not very often involve support from the team to give the debriefing, so although it is offered, very often it is not taken up’ (participant 3a (i)).

It is interesting that in LAs 1 and 3 debriefing is the main support they offer and it takes up most of their training time but is not used often by schools. LAs 1 and 3 work in a joint team when larger capacity is needed and for training purposes.

4.3.22.4 ‘Debriefing group work’ - problem with definition (D4).

D4 is coded once in two LAs. It identifies that some of the concerns around debriefing depend how you define it and exactly what you do, for example, to avoid disagreement:

‘...call it something else, it is difficult, dangerous to use if at wrong time with wrong set of people and without follow up, but if you do your ground work and look carefully at what the issues are and what the potential dangers of re-traumatising might be, if you look at all that and map it all out and you have your support networks in place it is a very good thing to do.’ (participant 5c (i)).

4.3.22.5 ‘Debriefing group work’ - offered by other agencies (D5).

D5 was only coded once in LA5:

‘...and some (debriefing) done through other agencies, we had a prison one a few years ago, a juvenile centre, and we were involved in supporting staff in that one, although they were due to have some debriefing from their own colleagues’ (participant 5a (g)).

This may just be unique to this area; however, it would not be surprising if other agencies offer debriefing in many areas of the country.
4.3.22.6 ‘Debriefing group work’ - highly skilled (D6).

D6 was coded once in four LAs (1, 3, 4 and 5). It refers to the skill required to offer debriefing. This may partly explain the time invested in training particularly in LAs 1 and 3. Furthermore it adds to the debate about whether debriefing should be used, e.g.:

‘I have had the opportunity to get to a level of understanding about the issues surrounding debriefing from lots of different perspectives. I think it gets a lot of bad press because it is offered commercially and that’s because the structure is so well set out people look at it and think “oh we can do that”, when really you do need to have a lot of experience’ (participant 5c (i)).

Understanding the debate about debriefing and deciding a viewpoint would appear significant when developing a CIRT. This theme has raised several issues in terms of how debriefing group work should be delivered, the cost of delivering it, whether it is used frequently and whether it can be offered by other agencies. In defence of debriefing, code D4 suggests the problem arises in terms of how it is defined and code D6 identifies that it is a skilled approach which may explain the costly training.

4.3.23 Theme: communicating CIRT role.

Under the theme ‘communicating CIRT role’ five codes were identified:

Figure 4.42 Codes within the theme ‘communicating CIRT role’

- CR1- publicity
- CR2- expectations
- CR3- when to support
- CR4- affected by restructure
- CR5- school exposure to CIRT

4.3.23.1 ‘Communicating CIRT role’ - publicity (CR1).

CR1 is coded in six of the LAs discussing a range of publicity, e.g. leaflets, speaking to school staff and other agencies during conferences and planning meetings.
4.3.23.2 ‘Communicating CIRT role’ - expectations (CR2).

CR2 discusses the expectations of what the service can do and is coded in two of the LAs, e.g.:

‘...we had to be quite strict with boundaries in terms of what we could and couldn’t do, in terms of setting up false expectations’ (participant 4b (i)).

The importance of clarity in publicity is raised in LA2, e.g.:

‘...one of the slight side effects of the red leaflet was that we had one or two schools ringing up for support that wouldn’t have fitted our remit’ (participant 2c (g)).

Communication is important in all areas of EP work.

4.3.23.3 ‘Communicating CIRT role’ - when to support (CR3).

CR3 discusses when to support in terms of an event being sad instead of a CI and is coded in three of the LAs, e.g.:

‘Issues from colleagues, should we be involved if this clearly isn’t a CI? A bereavement/really sad event surely doesn’t need anything in addition to what the school might be providing?’ (participant 6b (g))

This raises the question, ‘who should decide whether an incident is a sad event or a CI?’

‘...who are we to say what is sad, so it is again about contact with the school and finding out where they are at’ (participant 6b (g)). This point is raised under the theme ‘school ability’ discussed earlier.

The issue of capacity (P2, theme ‘Personnel issues’) is raised in terms of responding to all events, e.g. bereavements, which may not be critical but best described as sad events, e.g.:

‘I think we determined that there is a difference between a trauma and a loss, other than a traumatic incident, in terms of child abuse because otherwise we could have more work than we could manage’ (participant 2c (g)).
4.3.23.4 ‘Communicating CIRT role’ - affected by restructure (CR4).

CR4 is coded once in two LAs referring to communicating the CIRT role within a restructure. If a LA has gone through or is going through a restructure the role of the CIRT may need to be explained again due to changes in personnel. Communicating the role of a CIRT may be more of an ongoing process rather than a one off event.

4.3.23.5 ‘Communicating CIRT role’ - school exposure to CIRT (CR5).

CR5 is coded in one LA referring to the issue of exposure, e.g.:

‘Some schools are more inclined to call you once you have been there as they know they can get you’ (participant 6a (g)).

This appears to be in contrast to an earlier code under the theme ‘school ability’, SA3 - incidents build skills.

Communicating the role of the CIRT may be significant in developing the CIRT but can also be important following a restructure. When carrying out work as an EP in general it is important to negotiate shared targets at the beginning of the work which links to the importance of expectations.

4.3.24 Theme: communication networks.

Under the theme ‘communication networks’ two codes were identified:

Figure 4.43 Codes within the theme ‘communication networks’

- CN1- LA staff promises
- CN2- clear messages

4.3.24.1 ‘Communication networks’ - LA staff promises (CN1).

CN1 is coded in two LAs, e.g.:

‘...often telephone calls go to level above and they cascade it down, but what they say is not always that helpful because they give an impression that we will do things’ (participant 6b (g)).

This is linked to PI3, school and LA going through the motions, under the theme ‘outside pressure for CIRT to respond’.
‘Other incidents occur where things are a bit greyer and therefore other LA officers may volunteer our services on our account, but they haven’t checked it out with us first and that gets a little bit more difficult’ (participant 4b (i)).

This links to CR3, when to support, under the theme above ‘communicating CIRT role’.

4.3.24.2 ‘Communication networks’ - clear messages (CN2).

CN2 is coded in three LAs and refers to the importance of clear messages, particularly when a lot of people are wanting to be involved, e.g.:

‘...things go from the school right to the Director of Children, Families and Educational Services in a millisecond and then everybody wants to stick their paw in to make sure it is all done. So I do a lot of trying to get messages straight’ (participant 4a (i)).

This theme may be significant in the development of a CIRT, highlighting the importance of communicating the role of the CIRT prior to its operation; also once in operation all parts of the structure need to be clear and convey a clear consistent message.

4.3.25 Theme: structural changes.

Under the theme ‘structural changes’ three codes were identified:

Figure 4.44 Codes within the theme ‘structural changes’

- SC1 - changing structure impacts provision
- SC2 - changing structure gives single LA/service focus
- SC3 - change is a challenge

4.3.25.1 ‘Structural changes’ - changing structure impacts provision (SC1).

SC1 is coded in four LAs:

‘They have been restructured so much and I think the key people who were involved have gone to do other things’ (participant 2b (g)).
4.3.25.2 ‘Structural changes’ - changing structure gives single LA/service focus

SC2 is coded in two LAs:

‘Certainly our area and others have been through change and I know from talking to other PEP colleagues that their own counties have also found that and that doesn’t help very much... you then focus on your own business somewhat’ (participant 4b (i)).

It is suggested that if there are structural changes within the LA as a whole or within different services/agencies within the LA, staff are likely to become inward looking.

4.3.25.3 ‘Structural changes’ - change is a challenge (SC3).

SC3 is coded in one LA:

‘...organisational changes around us have been a challenge’ (participant 7a (g)).

This theme identifies the challenge that structural changes in LAs can create for CIRT work. These changes could perhaps be seen as a barrier and significantly impact the development and sustainability of a CIRT. Having a single LA focus would mean that the LA is unlikely to look at work in other areas or attend regional groups.

4.3.26 Theme: evaluation.

Under the theme ‘evaluation’ nine codes were identified:

**Figure 4.45 Codes within the theme ‘evaluation’**

- E1- appropriate timing of evaluation
- E2- review meetings
- E3- formal
- E4- anecdotal
- E5- action from evaluation
- E6- CI work not linked to EP service
- E7- ethically sensitive
- E8- triangulation
- E9- logged incidents
4.3.26.1 ‘Evaluation’ - appropriate timing of evaluation (E1).

E1 is coded in three LAs:

‘I think it is difficult to evaluate in any sort of meaningful way too close to the event’ (participant 6b (g)).

4.3.26.2 ‘Evaluation’ - review meetings (E2).

E2 was coded in three LAs:

‘...those coordinators then come together on a regular basis and review the support being given to schools, so we talk about incidents we have been involved in’ (participant 4c (i)).

4.3.26.3 ‘Evaluation’ - formal (E3).

E3 was coded in four LAs. Evaluation forms for schools are discussed but they differ as to whether they are sent out or completed over the phone. In LA5 a formal evaluation for a doctorate was conducted. LA7 also refers to self-evaluation, e.g.:

‘...self-evaluation, we don’t always use these but it is helpful if you just jot down a few personal reflections’ (participant 7b (g)).

4.3.26.4 ‘Evaluation’ - anecdotal (E4).

E4 was coded in six LAs. In LA3 the issue was raised about asking for immediate feedback:

‘...what we do have embedded into the model is that we use some form of immediate feedback but that is asking people who were there whether they found the session useful or not and they are hardly likely to say no’ (participant 3a (i)).

4.3.26.5 ‘Evaluation’ - action from evaluation (E5).

E5 was coded in four LAs. LA4 refers to changing practice based on evaluation whereas LA6 notes:

‘...not sure we have evaluation that has affected what we offer’ (participant 6b (g)).

Data from LA3 raises issues noticed about the work but does not go on to say if the changes are made.
4.3.26.6 ‘Evaluation’ - CI work not linked to EP service (E6).

E6 is coded in one LA:

‘...a school received 100 hours of CI work and then complained that we don’t see enough of the psychologist’ (participant 5c (i)).

4.3.26.7 ‘Evaluation’ - ethically sensitive (E7).

E7 is coded in five LAs:

‘...it is ethically very hard to do research around it’ (participant 4c (i)).

Psychological intervention can be seen as remediation/amelioration, for example, following a reading intervention a child can now read, or following being a school phobic the child is back in school. On the other hand interventions can be seen as adaptations leading to acceptance, but there is always a chance that the new equilibrium will be destabilised. The latter, adaptations, is a strength based perspective that is solution focussed, however, within the realm of CI support the issues faced may be too sensitive for this approach. Victims of CIs may be likely to acknowledge that they have done well in terms of recovery but communicate that they will never be the same again. Perhaps the issue of evaluation could be broached at the time the support is offered. How to evaluate intervention/support following CIs is a dilemma.

4.3.26.8 ‘Evaluation’ - triangulation (E8).

E8 is coded in two LAs:

‘...because schools are giving good feedback there is a sort of triangulation of evaluations and feedback’ (participant 2a (i)).

Triangulation may be significant when looking at evaluating a CI response. It is good practice in evaluation research.

4.3.26.9 ‘Evaluation’ - logged incidents (E9).

E9 is coded in six LAs. A simple format is referred to in several LAs, e.g.:

‘There is a form we are required to fill in after an incident just to highlight where the incident was, what was involved, how much time we were required to spend on it, what we offered and when the case was closed’ (participant 2c (g)).
Some of the LAs identify that this information is pooled, e.g.:

‘...we send that off and that gets logged here and kept in a folder so that any statistics or records can be extracted, and increasingly that is electronically’ (participant 4c (i)).

In LA4 they identify that:

‘...if you were doing any direct work you record very carefully but we don’t usually set up a child file or set up the same recording structures that we would for other casework. It’s not a casework mode of working. We would keep records for a little while and then completely destroy them’ (participant 4c (i)).

Participant 5a (g) in LA5 notes that they log and inform the safeguarding board:

‘Good practice is that we tend to reflect the e-mail back to the schools and copy to safeguarding board’ (participant 5a (g)). (also coded as support)

The paperwork issue may be a significant issue raised by staff when developing a CI response, particularly if trying to work out the time commitments involved. It might be that logging the incidents is important in terms of speaking to managers in the LA about the work and sustaining it.

4.3.27 Theme: ideas for future development.

Under the theme ‘ideas for future development’ six codes were identified:

Figure 4.46 Codes within the theme ‘ideas for future development’

- FD1- widening support offered by CIRT
- FD2- transferring skills
- FD3- using special school expertise
- FD4- raising staff awareness of impact of bereavement
- FD5- CIRT liaising with other services
- FD6- training for schools
4.3.27.1 ‘Ideas for future development’ - widening support offered by CIRT (FD1).

FD1 was coded in four LAs. A range of examples of widening support offered are suggested, e.g. special schools, pre-school and hospices:

‘I think we all feel we would like to do more so that is perhaps a constant frustration ... so we can see what else that we recognise we haven’t at the moment got the time or resources to do’ (participant 7a (g)).

This may be an issue in several LAs.

4.3.27.2 ‘Ideas for future development’ - transferring skills (FD2).

FD2 was coded in three LAs (only once in two of them) referring to transferring skills:

‘Frankly you and your colleagues are the future of this and I think we need to make sure we have got to a point where we have transferred that confidence and skills over’ (participant 4b (i)).

‘I don’t think that it is a role that people flock to, in other words we probably do have to work fairly hard at keeping the whole thing alive within the service, making sure we have an eye on succession planning’ (participant 4b (i)).

This quote links to PR3, EPs, under the theme ‘perceived reluctance to take part’.

‘The third function is around empowering other psychologists within the services and B has taken forward the first contact group which is enthusing, raising awareness and empowering the other psychologists to be aware of the work and develop them as an additional resource to support the coordinators’ (participant 4b (i)).

4.3.27.3 ‘Ideas for future development’ - use special school expertise (FD3).

FD3 is only coded in one LA:

‘I think there is a training opportunity there in terms of enlisting support from them to other schools about those sorts of issues’ (participant 2b (g)).

So in addition to widening support to work more in special schools, the issue is raised in terms of specialists developing within schools, through experience:
‘Definitely, for example, some local special schools work with children who have terminal illnesses and they have to deal with that on a fairly regular basis and they have skills’ (participant 2c (g)). (also coded as SA3 ‘incidents build skills’)

4.3.27.4 ‘Ideas for future development’ - raising staff awareness of impact of bereavement (FD4).

FD4 is only coded in one LA referring to raising staff awareness of the impact of bereavement:

‘I think it’s something around owning up to the fact that grief and bereavement are real things, you don’t forget them, you need to mark them in some way. It is also a question of getting them to realise that if you look at statistics a lot of children who are excluded have had a bereavement. It doesn’t mean that bereavement leads to exclusion, I mean that somebody needed to be there in that bereavement and if we could put a system in place, if they look at year 7 intake or when they come back after September, you would have a clue’ (participant 2a (i)).

4.3.27.5 ‘Ideas for future development’ - CIRT liaising with other services (FD5).

FD5 is coded in two LAs referring to liaising with other services:

‘... I have attended the South of England CI conference and I think it would be nice to establish a central England one. (participant 7a (i)). (also coded as WL3 ‘attendance at regional groups’)

Other quotes mention liaising with police and social services.

4.3.27.6 ‘Ideas for future development’ - training for schools (FD6).

FD6 is coded in one LA:

‘...a long term aim of our group, we would love to have the capacity to do a rolling programme of training to all schools in 7 so they can take a file off the shelf with a bereavement support policy’ (participant 7a (i)).

Code FD2 within this theme may be significant to sustaining a CIRT response, thinking about succession planning. Within this theme LA7 refers to the frustration of not having the capacity and resources to develop in areas identified.
4.3.28 Summary.

This chapter has comprehensively discussed the 26 themes and three super themes drawn from the 110 codings of the data as depicted in table 4.1 (pp. 131-141). The following chapter in the thesis considers the integration of the findings and their practical significance.
Chapter 5 Discussion: development of Critical Incident Response Teams

5.1 Introduction

The researcher identified a provision gap in the LA where she is employed, in terms of Critical Incident (CI) support and a plan for how it is delivered. This led to the identification of the highlighted gap in publicised peer reviewed knowledge. The home LA has an official Trauma And Crisis Intervention Team (TACIT), however discussion with two LA emergency planning officers identified that is was not currently operating effectively and EPs reported that they were supporting schools, following CIs, in an ad hoc way. The literature review indicated that since 1994 a range of support has been offered by EPSs in England. Information is recorded in terms of the professionals involved and support offered, however, less is known about how the Critical Incident Response Teams (CIRTS) have been developed, sustained and evaluated.

The present study comprised a series of interviews in seven LAs with CIRTS which had been operational for at least five years. Each LA visit involved semi-structured interviews with lead EPs for CI and other EPs or LA employees who were part of the CIRT. Content analysis and thematic analysis were used to analyse all of the transcriptions of the semi-structured interviews in order to address the following two RQs:

RQ(1) How have LAs developed current CI support in terms of support offered, inception and protocols?

RQ(2) How do LAs sustain and evaluate a CI approach?

The researcher aims to use the findings to present a model illustrating factors to consider for the development of a sustainable CIRT. Following the analysis it would be the intention to take the model forward to see if it has a function to inform work within the home LA. It is hoped that in addition to informing work within the home LA this model will be useful for other LAs which are interested in either developing a CI response or modifying current work in the area.

This chapter will address each RQ in turn and then present a reflective summary providing tentative answers to the RQs of this study.
5.2 How have LAs Developed Current CI Support in Terms of Support Offered, Inception and Protocols?

A content analysis of the interview data from the seven LAs was conducted to find out about the support offered by CIRTs, the inception and their protocols. The LAs varied in size and locality. Five of the LA locations were shires/counties and two were boroughs. The school age population of LA locations (5-19 years) ranged from 25,057 to 257,456. The white British population ranged from 92.77% to 97.62%. In terms of social deprivation the indicator recorded was the percentage of long-term unemployed residents (16-74) years. This ranged from 26.29% to 31.65%.

The researcher had expected to gather detailed information about the historical development of the CIRTs, however, she gathered more information about how they work and sustain themselves rather than how they were set up. The researcher thought that there would be more practitioner knowledge and conviction about the prerequisites needed to develop a CIRT but instead participants focussed on its sustainability. One reason for the difficulty in elicitation of the data related to the historical development may be the participants’ difficulty with recollection. In addition there may have been staff changes. Furthermore CI work is very intense and it therefore may be difficult to reflect on this area of work, making it more likely that participants will focus on recent events. In order to gain more information about the historical development of a CIRT, ethnographic research may be required whereby the researcher works alongside the CIRT for a period of time (Cohen et al. 2007).

The main points raised from the content analysis are summarised below:

5.2.1 Support offered by CIRT.

There is a range of support currently being offered by CIRTs. An overriding support mentioned with each CIRT was initial telephone conversations/visit to gather information and problem solve. In addition all seven LAs reported offering some form of debriefing or group work if necessary. In six of the seven LAs the CIRT members provided leaflets/written materials to support understanding, e.g., about grief or children’s reactions following CIs. Six of the seven LAs reported that they would signpost to other services. The remaining areas of support mentioned were each found in four or less LAs.
5.2.2 CIRT inception.

In terms of the inception of the CI response the following reasons were given as drivers (the frequency is recorded in brackets):

- Driven by CIs occurring in the LA (4/7)
- Influenced by a senior EP who was interested in CI work (2/7)
- Gap identified in provision of support following CIs (1/7)

An initial step which was mentioned in several LAs was that of seeking training. In LA7 a specific 0.2 post was created to support the development of the work and in LA5 a senior EP was asked to coordinate the work by the PEP. It was interesting that in LA2 the team is comprised of CAMHS EPs which appears to be a unique job role. LAs 2 and 6 refer to a working group being involved in the development of the CI response. In LA2 the working group was involved in looking at research related to CI support. In LA6 the working group was involved in training the team and writing materials to support CI work.

5.2.3 CIRT protocol.

The protocol which has developed in each LA varies but the researcher has identified common themes which have been listed below:

- Telephone call from school to LA personnel/CI team leader
- LA personnel or CI team leader then contacts a CI coordinator/team leader/PEP/senior
- This employee then contacts team member/EP
- Team member/EP then contacts school to arrange/offer support

LA4 has a different approach as the school advisors carry out the initial first day response to the CI and the CIRT are only involved if debriefing is carried out. The CIRT coordinator will carry out the first day response if an advisor is not available. Three of the LAs report that the people who receive the initial telephone call collect basic details.
5.2.4 Summary of content analysis.

Semi-structured interview data was gathered from seven LAs across England. A model has been developed to present the information gained from the content analysis about the support offered, inception and protocol of the CIRTs within the LAs (see figure 5.1 below). The range of personnel who are identified as members of the CIRTs are also recorded on this model under the heading ‘structure’.
Figure 5.1 Summary of support offered, inception, protocol and structure of CIRTs studied

**DRIVERS FOR INCEPTION**

- CI in LA
- Interest of a senior EP
- Gap identified

**SUPPORT**

- Initial phone call/visit to gather information and problem solve
- Debriefing/group work
- Leaflet/written materials
- Signpost to other services

Team member/EP contacts school to arrange support

This employee contacts team member/EP

LA personnel or CI team leader contacts CI coordinator/team leader/PEP/senior

Telephone call from school to LA personnel/CI team leader

**STRUCTURE**

- PEP/EP
- EWO
- Learning Support Assistant
- Primary Child Mental Health Team Worker
- Headteacher
- CAMHS EP
- Inclusion Consultant
- Youth Worker
- Parent Partnership Officer
- Senior Specialist Teacher
- SEN Caseworker
- School Health Worker
- CAMHS

**PROTOCOL ELEMENTS**
5.3 How do LAs Sustain and Evaluate a CI Approach?

A detailed thematic analysis of the interview data was undertaken in addition to the content analysis presented above in section 5.2. From seven LAs, 110 codes were yielded and organised into 26 themes. These 26 themes were then organised into three super themes, namely, ‘Context’, ‘People’ and ‘Process’. As noted in section 5.2 the researcher had hoped for more detail about the historical development of a CIRT, however, the participants were more focussed on how they operated last time and how the team members ensure sustainability of the CIRT. Perhaps the participants were not able to access information about the process of developing the CIRT. The participants were very much concerned with how they sustain the CIRT now, not where they had come from. This may be because of the nature of CI work in terms of demanding forward thinking and planning rather than review. CIs tend to be sporadic so learning is perhaps more preconceived and possibly less accessible because of the variety of the incidents and their intensity, making it hard to refer to the learning. An informal comment was made during one of the interviews that the participant had enjoyed the rare experience of reflecting on the CI work.

The results gathered have indicated that the team has to be active to sustain the CIRT. Information was gathered in section 5.2.2 about the inception of the CIRTs. Some of the themes discussed below would also be useful to be aware of when embarking on developing a CIRT, in addition to informing the sustainability and evaluation. Below, data will be discussed in relation to the three super themes and individual themes identified.

5.3.1 Context.

An identified theme within the analysis was ‘perceived reluctance to take part’. This theme refers to the perceived reluctance of EPs and other services within the LA to take part in CI work. Identifying this context issue, namely being aware that it may be difficult to recruit personnel willing to take part in CI work, could help encourage a LA to invest time in developing support and interest amongst personnel before engaging further in the development process of a CIRT. It was also raised that there was a risk of the psychology service having a disproportionate strategic responsibility if other services within the LA are reluctant to take part. All of the CIRTs in this study involved the EPS and in four of the seven LAs it was solely EPs who were involved. A
further risk is that one person may be left with sole strategic responsibility, for example, the lead CIRT employee. This creates a paradox as projects need a leader, however, it is important that one person or service is not left with sole strategic responsibility. This is because, as identified by O’Toole, Galbraith and Lawler (2002), the person may not continue to be available, for example, if they leave their post. Sole responsibility will increase the vulnerability of the development, risking its sustainability.

Shared responsibility may be of particular importance in the area of CI work due to the emotionally challenging and demanding nature of the work. Perhaps having a deputy would help mitigate against these risks by offering support to the lead employee. If a working group approach was taken to the leadership, it would mean that the CI work would become the responsibility and job of everyone within the group, becoming in effect a joint leadership. If a leadership role is shared, however, those involved are then left with less kudos than they would have if leading alone. O’Toole et al. (2002) note that ‘perhaps more important than the division of tasks, co-leaders need to learn how to handle the division of credit.’ (p.78). If a leadership role has less kudos employees may be reluctant to take the role. A leader, however, may use a working group as a sounding board whilst retaining their kudos from being in charge. Working groups were only mentioned within LA2 and LA1 in this present study.

Within this theme, employees’ lack of confidence and difficulty committing time to the work are suggested reasons for the perceived reluctance to take part. Linked to the lack of confidence the author suggests that the challenging nature of the work, which is raised later in the theme ‘impact’ under the super theme ‘People’, may put people off. (The themes ‘impact’ and ‘perceived reluctance to take part’ are therefore linked by an arrow on the model, figure 6.1, presented below in section 6.1). This point raises the issue of preparing staff before engaging in this work, however, the fact that incidents are thankfully not normally frequent means there are few opportunities to practise skills. Posada (2006) reported a multi-agency project working to develop LA guidelines on social and psychological support following CIs and disasters. A simulation was carried out of setting up and running a LA reception centre for evacuees in order for social services personnel to practise skills within the LA setting.

The identification of the theme labelled ‘CIRT position within LA’ is referring to factors related to a CIRTs position within a LA. It points to the importance of having LA senior management support and a connection with them. It is suggested that by
having the support of management and connections with management within the LA that the profile of the CIRT is raised. Although reasons for this are not reported within the data, the author suggests that the management teams within organisations such as LAs have an influence over the work carried out by different services and have the opportunity to discuss the work (e.g. CI support) in large forums. The author has the opinion that raising the profile of the work may help to secure it in difficult times when there are competing priorities within the LA, for example, when cuts are being made to services or other large projects are being developed.

The identification of the theme labelled ‘CIRT as LA priority’ suggests that in addition to being high profile it is important that CI work is seen as a LA priority. The author proposes that in order for LA management to decide to invest capacity and resources into the work and allow it to take priority over other areas it would need to be a LA priority. Within the data it is identified that this may be easier in a large LA where CI incidents are more frequent and therefore it may be that more CIRTs have developed in large LAs where this is the case.

The theme ‘outside pressure for CIRT to respond’ draws attention to the context that a CIRT may be working in, for example, there may be outside pressure to jump in and offer counselling to staff and children following a CI. The CIRT may be under pressure to respond in ways that do not fit with their protocol. An example given in LA5 is that the area manager, who was a member of the CIRT, was contacted by a member of the safeguarding board within the LA and told that he must get in touch with school staff and offer support. This conflicted with the policy for this CIRT which was to wait for school staff to make contact. The author therefore proposes that it is important to be prepared for this pressure and decide how to respond as it is more difficult to respond appropriately when under pressure in the situation. Strong links with LA management, suggested above, could help overcome this as management would then be less likely to add pressure to respond in a way that is against the CIRTs’ protocol. (The themes ‘outside pressure for CIRT to respond’ and ‘CIRT position within LA’ are therefore linked by an arrow on the model, figure 6.1, presented below in section 6.1).

In addition to LA managers and the example from the safeguarding board, this theme identifies the media as another outside pressure. An example of when the media have claimed ‘counsellors are going in’ is found in the data and the author therefore suggests that good working relationships with the media may be important to protect against the
publication of misleading information. (The themes ‘impact of media’ and ‘outside pressure for CIRT to respond’ are therefore linked by an arrow on the model, figure 6.1, presented below in section 6.1). The impact of the media is also identified under the theme ‘impact of media’ as creating hype. An example is given in the data where an accusation of cyber bullying was made by the media and it is suggested that this determined how critical the incident was. The media can have a positive role following a CI in terms of communicating reassuring and supportive messages to the wider community about the LA response to the CI. This communication enables the wider community members to feel well served and could mitigate against any member of the media sensationalising any of the events or processes.

A further theme identified from the data is ‘factors affecting multi-agency ability’. This theme raises many factors which may influence the ability of a CIRT to offer a multi-agency response. Firstly, it is suggested that it is difficult for LAs to offer a coordinated response to CIs from a range of services because incidents are infrequent and also school staff often take a scattergun approach, phoning all of the agencies they know. The influence of the size of the incident is raised, for example, it is suggested that the majority of incidents are not sufficiently major to warrant a multi-agency response. On the other hand it is suggested that a large incident would automatically result in more agencies becoming involved. It is also suggested that the capacity of agencies impacts on whether they are involved in a multi-agency response, for example, LA4 notes that CAMHS are not well resourced and are therefore not involved. It is also suggested that links, which could be historical, may already be present between certain agencies within a LA which would make it easier for them to work together. For example, in LA2 it is reported that historically the senior EP, who was involved in CI work, had managed the behaviour team which enabled him to get members of that team involved. Specific roles which enhance joined up thinking are given, for example, CAMHS EPs and school nurses. Within this theme it is suggested that CI work specifically suits the EP role, which raises a question as to whether a multi-agency response is required.

Two LAs referred to the benefits of multi-agency working, for example, providing a range of perspectives to apply to CI work and facilitating referrals to other agencies e.g. CAMHS. In LA5 it is suggested that personal contacts with other agencies are needed in order to have success in developing a multi-agency response. The use of personal
contacts can also be identified within other areas of EP work, for example, in the home LA if the EP knows a speech therapist personally it is helpful when trying to carry out a joint piece of work; however, there are also set organisational structures to allow for this joint working. Farrell et al. (2006) reported that EPs have an extensive knowledge of the role of other professionals working within the LA and it is noted that ‘this knowledge is used to help agencies work together and to “oil the wheels” of joint working and decision making’. (p.101). The author argues that a very uneven pattern of multi-agency working would develop if it was solely based on personal relationships. The pattern within this project was that three of the LAs currently have a multi-agency response (1, 3 and 7). Of those that do not, LA5 refers to actively seeking to develop a multi-agency response. In LA2 the CI response used to involve the behaviour support team in addition to the EPS, however, this is no longer the case due to restructure within the behaviour service. LA6 reports that the EPS got together for training in debriefing with health services as part of the county’s emergency planning, however, they have not worked together since. LA4 reported that the CIRT works with school counsellors who support a large number of schools doing collaborative projects and opportunities are being explored for coordinated and joint responses to CIs.

The identification of the theme labelled ‘wider links’ is looking at links that exist within CI work but which are beyond the individual CIRT. It is identified that, in addition to wider links for the CIRT in terms of sharing with other LAs, school staff in some LAs may have links with other agencies who can provide support following a CI. Some schools may have denominational affiliation and active links with other support mechanisms e.g. clergy. An example is given in LA5 where it was noted that one school has a Chaplain who had undertaken some bereavement training with eight members of staff. This could be an advantage in that these agencies may have greater capacity than the CIRT; also, a local agency such as a church may have stronger relationships with the school and the community than members of the CIRT. Disadvantages might be in terms of quality control or conflicting advice from these agencies and the CIRT. This theme suggests that the links the LA and schools have may be an important factor to investigate within the context that a CIRT is operating or being developed. Glenwick et al. (1979, section 2.1.2) noted, following a crisis, that community psychologists need to take note of the competencies that already exist within the community.
LAs 1 and 3 reported that the CIRTs pull together their personnel resources if they do not have capacity to cover a CI. LA6 reports an attempt to work with other EPSs bordering the LA. Following meetings however, it was decided that the EPS which covered the particular school where an incident occurred was best placed to respond. Nevertheless the opportunity was taken to share written materials. These LAs are relatively small, (in comparison to LAs 2, 4 and 5), and perhaps, therefore, suggests that, if working in a small LA it could be advisable to share personnel resources with neighbouring LAs. Advantages of pulling together resources in terms of personnel might be that capacity to deal with large incidents is increased. Furthermore training could be shared which happens in LAs 1 and 3.

The links between the LAs might have further impact on other areas of work where a joint response could be investigated. Perhaps the reason LAs 1 and 3 work together is because they have a particularly positive relationship which may not be the case in LA6. There may be some disadvantages to pulling together resources in that members of the CIRT may not be so familiar with the school staff they have to work with and they may also have to work alongside CIRT personnel they do not know. The importance of working relationships is raised as an issue later when discussing whether the role of CI support should be generic or specialist under the theme ‘personnel issues’. If it is seen as a generic role it may be difficult to foster the good working relationships which could develop in a team, due to the range of personnel likely to be working alongside each other.

LA5 suggests that CIRTs are having a wider impact in terms of spreading the word about how to deal effectively with bereavement and trauma. This leads to one of the ideas for future development which was raised in LA2. In this LA a participant noted the importance of raising staff awareness about the impact of bereavement on children attending schools. The importance of identifying children who have suffered a bereavement is raised. Children could be identified from the year 7 intake or from all year groups when they return to school in September.

Another idea for future development raised in two LAs was liasing more/building closer links with other services including CIRTs within other LAs. Examples of where this is already happening are identified in five of the LAs. The picture that emerges from the data is the importance placed on sharing with other LAs.
The identification of the theme labelled ‘confusion about counselling’ is referring to the confusion which may exist about the role of counselling within CI support offered. The theme draws attention to the general issue about communicating the role of the CIRT and whether people have preconceived ideas or expectations about what the work undertaken should involve. (This theme is therefore linked by an arrow to the themes ‘communicating CIRT role’ and ‘communication networks’ under the super theme ‘Process’ on the model, figure 6.1, presented below in section 6.1). Confusion about counselling could lead to false expectations being set up about the work which will be carried out by a CIRT and a lack of overall understanding of what support has and has not been offered. The theme ‘confusion about counselling’ is perhaps identifying a wider issue about understanding the nature of trauma and bereavement and the sort of support that is appropriate. Work could be done in preparation for setting up a CIRT in terms of communicating to school staff and the wider LA about trauma and bereavement and appropriate ways to offer support, as noted above under the theme ‘wider links’.

The identification of the theme ‘emergency planning’ is referring to a LAs wider emergency planning procedures. Each LA has to have an emergency plan for when wider community disasters occur, for example, a plane crash. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2011) produced a document titled ‘a detailed guide to roles and responsibilities in humanitarian assistance’. The document states that ‘In emergencies, Local Authorities co-ordinate the provision of welfare support to the community; lead the establishment of key humanitarian assistance facilities; and take on a key role in the recovery phase of emergencies’ and later that ‘departments should work closely with the various health agencies and other relevant organisations in all aspects of emergency planning response’ (pp.1 and 2).

The emergency plan often involves setting up rest centres within school buildings and community centres. From the literature reviewed for her research, Posada (2006) reports that, in the USA, the role for professionals such as psychologists has been emphasised in all levels of the emergency planning processes. In contrast CIRTs have generally been set up to provide CI support to schools. This theme, however, highlights that some also have an identified role within large scale disasters and input into the LAs emergency plan. Eight of the fourteen quotes coded within this theme referred to a lack of clarity in terms of how the CIRT is involved in wider community disasters, whereas
six of the fourteen quotes indicated a clear understanding of how they fitted with it. These quotes were spread over six of the seven LAs. Three LAs reported being part of the emergency planning team. The partial picture emerging from the data is around lack of clarity in the CIRT role within emergency planning and community disasters.

In the author’s opinion it could be useful for CIRTS to be part of the wider emergency planning and support offered following community disasters. This is because the experience and knowledge gained from offering support for CIs in schools could be transferred to support wider community disasters. Furthermore if the CIRT are not used then the county might train other personnel to offer support which could be offered by the CIRT who are already trained. Being part of the wider community response may also help build links with other services/agencies within the LA. One of the LAs referred to providing training for colleagues across the county; this links to the issue raised above about general understanding of trauma and bereavement and the sort of support that is appropriate. Posada (2006) argues that it makes sense for LAs to involve EPs to support them in this area of work for the following reasons:

- Fundamental understanding of the psycho-social processes which are involved
- Familiar with multi-agency working
- Likely knowledge of local area
- Skills and knowledge built through work supporting schools
- Fits with the new context of working within the community and being part of children’s services.

The identification of the theme labelled ‘consultant role’ refers to the CIRTS use of a paid external consultant which was mentioned in two of the LAs (1 and 3). It was reported that this consultant had a link to LA3 because he had previously been the PEP. The researcher is not aware of how many consultants for this area of work there are in the UK. The author questions whether the support offered by consultants e.g. advice, support and specialist background, could be sought from links with other more experienced LAs instead of employing a consultant, or could be gained from experienced members of the CIRT already within the LA. A disadvantage of using experienced members of the CIRT from within the LA is that these people are very busy
with their generic roles and CI is a specialist area of work which is only carried out on a short-term basis.

If consultants are not used the CIRT needs to think about how they are going to access a body of specialist knowledge, evaluate what they offer, identify training needs, keep up to date with research literature and get supervision. The Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP, 2010) Professional Supervision guidelines refer to specialist supervision, which may be needed in addition to professional supervision of generic practice, to cover work using a particular approach or within a specific area. The guidelines note that this will require specialist knowledge, experience and competence from the supervisor, who may or may not be an EP. The guidelines state, ‘It is important that EPs have access to specialist supervision and this may need to be negotiated, commissioned or bought in from specialist sources’. (p.9) The author argues that CI work appears to be a highly specialised area and therefore may require specialist supervision.

A further advantage of having the support of a consultant who is not directly part of the team would be an outside perspective (e.g. Klingman, 1988, section 2.8). A consultant may be able to bring wider experience from a different locality. Possible disadvantages of having a consultant include their lack of familiarity with the particular locality being supported. Also it may be a cost which the LA cannot manage and as you are less likely to share an office or be able to meet them informally, the support is likely to be largely over the phone except for specific meetings set up in advance.

5.3.2 People.

An identified theme within this super theme was ‘becoming a member of a CIRT’. This theme identifies issues relating to becoming a member of a CIRT. The theme highlights the importance of being aware that amongst EPs there is not a consensus that EPs should respond to CIs and therefore be part of a CIRT. The interviews did not reveal information to explain why EPs might not think they should be involved. The author proposes that respondents might think someone else in the LA is better placed to do this work or that despite the CI response being a LA priority where they work, they do not think they are skilled/qualified. Acknowledging a gap in provision is one area identified as a motivation for becoming a member of a CIRT. Farrell et al.’s (2006) findings noted that EPs are in a good position to identify gaps within services for
children. The development of CIRTs may be uneven depending on whether gaps have been identified or whether LAs are in a demographic area of high risk of CIs occurring.

Prior involvement in CI work and having an interest in the area are also identified as motivations under this theme. The author argues that having personnel with previous experience of supporting CIs and an interest in this area of work would impact the development of CIRTs, in particular recruiting team members. For example, if a LA has several employees who have an interest and/or prior involvement in a LA they may be more likely to develop a CIRT response as these employees are likely to be willing to take part. Furthermore, many of the quotes in this theme, which refer to prior involvement and interest, are from the team members who have a leadership role for the CI work. These factors may make it more likely that personnel would drive forward setting up a CIRT.

The identification of the theme labelled ‘personnel issues’ acknowledges a range of issues affecting personnel within a CIRT. Key issues raised under this theme appear to be low numbers of people involved/in the team and also whether carrying out CI work is seen as a generic role for all staff within a service or a specialist role for a team. Two of the seven LAs view the role explicitly as generic with the expectation that all EPs would be involved. Three of the LAs note that they would encourage the school EP to be involved alongside a member of the CIRT. The issue of low numbers would indicate the importance of gaining an idea of the interest, prior to setting up a CIRT, to ensure that there are people willing to be part of the CI response, (raised earlier as a context factor under theme, ‘perceived reluctance to take part’). Perhaps seeing the role as generic, as in LAs 4 and 6, would help mitigate against low numbers. In these LAs it is an expectation that everyone within the EPS should be involved, however, staff would not be forced to participate if they had valid reasons for not being able to, for example personal bereavements.

Another issue raised is that expertise is developed through being part of the team. This could be seen as a counter argument to having the work as a generic role, as if all staff are involved, the frequency of each individual being involved in a CI is likely to be much less and consequently this could prevent the expertise developing. LA6 appears to get round this by having a small working group, who already have the expertise, whom all staff can contact for support. Members of the working group have also developed supporting written materials. Again this raises the question above as to
whether an outside consultant is necessary if there is expertise within the LA. LA4 has CI coordinators with expertise who would work alongside the EPs. Good working relationships are also identified as important within the team. These relationships may be harder to develop if CI work is a generic role, as staff are likely to have to work alongside a whole range of different personnel.

Working in pairs is a consensus identified, (noted in all seven LAs), under the theme ‘working together in CIRT’. This theme identifies factors relevant to working together within a CIRT. Two advantages reported of working in pairs are that each can debrief the other and new things can be learnt from working alongside a different partner, which avoids getting into a set pattern of working. However working alongside new/different people referred to above is raised as a concern in relation to whether it affects building good working relationships when discussing the issues of pulling resources together and whether the CI response should be a generic role. It is noted in LA7 that they try and have a meeting in the pair before going into a school to plan the work they will do. It was noted that when they did manage to do this that it made a real difference.

In addition to working in pairs several LAs note the advantage of having the same background and approach as your colleagues. Examples are that when you are on the spot when carrying out CI work you are more likely to convey a coordinated response and check each other’s thinking. Furthermore you can engage in shared problem solving on the spot. This contrasts with the advantage of multi-agency working raised previously in terms of bringing different perspectives together. Debriefing each other after an incident is raised in this theme. In some LAs this debriefing is carried out by senior EPs. In other LAs it is carried out by the other colleagues you are working alongside (your pair) or by other colleagues in the service. The challenging nature of the work and the emotional impact raised below point to the importance of this process of debriefing.

The identification of the theme ‘impact’ refers to the personal impact of being part of a CIRT. The impact raised is in terms of the emotional impact and the fact that the CI work remains challenging despite experience, as the incidents are not frequent and are unique. This suggests the importance of acknowledging that, even if the role is seen as generic, there may be staff members who are not in a position in their lives where they can cope with the impact in terms of challenge and emotion. This is clearly identified in
LA4 where they do view the work as generic, for example, ‘We would certainly be wary of people who had suffered a bereavement in their own lives getting directly involved and would give people an opportunity to say that I can’t be involved directly at the moment because of something in my personal life’ (participant 4b (i)). Again in LA6 the same attitude is taken, ‘all be expected to go in unless reasonable reason’ (participant 6a (g)). Hayes and Frederickson (2008, section 2.4.1) noted the importance of psychologists managing their own stress.

5.3.3 Process.

The identification of the theme ‘plan versus reality’ suggests that in practice school staff do not follow the procedure set out by a CIRT but, instead, use a system that they think and know of. It is therefore suggesting that there is a difference between what is the planned, and the expected procedure that will be followed, and what actually happens in reality. Participant 1a (i), noted that people just think of the psychologist and ring them. If school staff just think of the psychologist when an incident happens it might suggest that all EPs should be able to respond and the support should be seen as a generic role. On the other hand, rather than widening the net to make the response more generic, the process and protocols could be made clearer so the set plan is more likely to be followed. This could be achieved by giving out posters regularly, reiterating the set procedure which should be followed. If the response changed from a specific role to a generic role perhaps the CIRT would need a back-up plan, for example, if a school rings their EP and the EP is on leave there would need to be a system of who would then get contacted. So a structure would still be required even though the role is generic, (as evidenced in LA4 and LA6).

Discussion of this issue raises the wider question of whether it is better to deal with the reality, (i.e. that procedures are not followed), or to change the plan, (i.e. make the role generic). Perhaps a process of noticing and adjusting would be appropriate here, in line with Barrett, Reason, Regan, Rooney, Williams, Woods and Stothard (2002) who explored this approach in relation to children’s literacy progress. Barrett et al. (2002), note that ‘the phrase “noticing and adjusting” can be useful in enabling educational psychologists and teachers to reflect on practices in the classroom’ (p.298). Not following the procedure may be caused by panic which highlights the importance of planning prior to an event, (see later theme, ‘school ability’).
The identification of the theme labelled ‘think and reflect’ describes what the author would suggest is a core skill of the team. It refers to the process of thinking and reflecting before responding, (by rushing in to support schools), following a CI. It suggests thinking and reflecting has a function to help gauge the priority of support needed. A role for the CIRT is identified in encouraging schools to also think and reflect following a CI.

The theme labelled, ‘impact of psychology’ identifies the impact of psychologists being involved in the work. It is proposed that hypothesising and joint problem solving are one of the impacts of psychologists being involved. In this way the school and psychologist can think and reflect together about the best course of action rather than making a rushed decision. (The themes ‘impact of psychology’ and ‘think and reflect’ are therefore linked by an arrow on the model, figure 6.1, presented below in section 6.1). It is identified that the process of watching and assessing the children and/or staff is another impact of psychology in order to identify needs following a CI. It is reported that doing this effectively is dependent on the school staff taking part. The school staff need to be watching the children/young people and communicating this information clearly to the CIRT, (see later theme ‘partnership’).

The skills mentioned above fit with the DECP (2002) framework for psychological assessment and intervention of children in a range of settings. Whilst acknowledging the complex and individualised nature of psychological assessment, the framework suggests the presence of some key under-pinning principles, which are relevant for all EPs. In particular the principles of ‘problem definition and initial hypothesis’, ‘problem clarification via consultation, assessment of cognitive, affective personal/social factors’ (p. 27) are identified as impacts of psychology within this study.

The identification of the theme ‘school ability’ refers to the ability of school staff to deal with CIs. Participants debated the issue of school self-sufficiency. This theme reports that some schools appear self-sufficient following a CI and refers to specific skills, e.g. sharing the news and supporting other staff members, that schools are very capable of doing themselves. Perhaps a CIRT’s role could be to work with school staff to help them develop this self-sufficiency. Cameron et al. (1995), Mallon and Best (1995) and Carroll et al. (1997), guidelines for engaging in CI work, referred to the general principle of enhancing school capacity (section 2.4.1). One of the objectives of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) report by Farrell et al. (2006) was
focussed on how EPs work with schools to support children and their families in the area of strategic work and capacity building. It was reported that ‘evidence from all respondents indicated that EPs are making an increasing contribution in this area, both in schools and elsewhere’ (p.9). In addition it was reported that ‘...respondents were able to provide a large number of examples of EP work in relation to strategic work and capacity building...’ (p.54).

Within this theme it is reported that incidents build skills. This poses the question of how schools could be supported to develop self-sufficiency without having to experience several CIs. Posada (2006), as noted previously, reports using simulations to practice skills. The importance of school being prepared prior to an event is also raised. The Yule and Gold (1993) publication ‘Wise before the event’ addressed this issue and was made freely available to schools in the UK.

The theme labelled ‘partnership’ refers to the partnership that is required between the CIRT and the school staff when carrying out CI support. Previously it was discussed that a CIRT relies on the school giving them information when watching and assessing those who may be at risk. In this theme a participant suggests that, although the aim of the CIRT is to make schools more self-sufficient, however well equipped a school is they will always need support. The theme below labelled ‘communicating CIRT role’ refers to communicating the role of a CIRT and identifies that if school staff have been exposed to the work of the CIRT, following a previous CI, they are more likely to call on the support of a CIRT in another incident. Both the above points provide a counterpoint to the idea of building self-sufficiency. The issue of developing self-sufficiency in schools may remain a dilemma due to the competing elements. The theme labelled ‘ideas for future development’ outlines ideas suggested for future development of the CIRT work raised in the different LAs. It is suggested that CIRTs could look at expertise which has developed within special schools, (having experienced frequent bereavements), and how it could be used to support other schools.

The identification of the theme ‘communicating CIRT role’ discusses the issue of who makes the decision as to whether an incident is critical, ‘...who are we to say what is sad, so it is again about contact with the school and finding out where they are at’ (participant 6b (g)). The question could be raised as to whether it would be better for the CIRT to adopt objective thresholds in response to schools’ desire for support. If thresholds were adopted this would enable the CIRT to manage resources and structure
responses more predictably. On the other hand it may leave a school unsupported when its level of ability to cope, following a disaster, puts the children and staff at risk. If a CIRT decides to respond to all requests for support from schools it may create a capacity issue and it may also prevent school staff developing their ability to manage certain incidents, for example, bereavements.

Given the evidence within the present study of real resource constraints, the author might be in favour of having a low level threshold below which the CI response would not be generated, e.g. following a single natural death of a relative, friend or close associate of children or staff. On the other hand, the ability of a school to cope could be seen as the determining factor as to whether an incident is deemed critical, (raised under the theme ‘school ability’). Perhaps rather than seeing the decision as either based on a threshold or the schools’ ability, within the threshold, the ability of the school could be taken into consideration. In addition, the preparation of the victim could also be taken into consideration, as there may be cases where a child’s parent dies and the child may not have been well prepared for it. This could in turn affect their perception of the event which Ballou and Rebich (1977) argued is a factor determining whether or not an event is a crisis for an individual (section, 2.1.2). Cohen and Ahearn (1980) have described four core factors that they propose mediate the impact of a CI:

1) The type and severity of the incident
2) The degree of the loss
3) The victim’s role, coping skills and support system
4) The survivor’s perception and interpretation of the event

Points 1 and 2 would fit with an objective threshold describing the type and severity of the disaster. The support system noted in point 3 could be viewed as referring to the schools’ ability. Point 4 links to the comment above about an incident for which a child is not well prepared. Klingman (1988, section 2.4.2) raised the question as to whether schools are differentially susceptible to different types of crisis and whether this would mean a different approach would need to be taken to the support given.

Communicating the role of a CIRT may be better seen as an ongoing process, rather than a one off event, due to the restructures and changes in personnel which occur in LAs.
The identification of the theme labelled ‘training’ looks at issues of training for the CIRT and school staff. The question, as to whether all CIRT members need to be trained in all methods of CI support or whether different specialisms could be developed within the team, is raised. Developing EP specialisms linked to specific multi-agency services, initiatives or projects was reported by Farrell et al. (2006) as highly facilitative of effective practice of EPs. Developing specialisms would seem to particularly fit a generic role where different staff could be approached for different support requirements and is raised in LA4 as a way forward. In LA5 this approach of developing specialisms was taken from the outset although staff operate as a CIRT. It is important to note however that LA5 is relatively large (in comparison to LAs 1, 3, 6 and 7) so the CIRT has more members.

One participant reported that the CAMHS team did not recognise that he had developed a specialism in Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR). A recommendation (4b) of the Farrell et al. (2006) report was that, ‘EP services should actively seek to extend the number of specialist EP posts and this should be accompanied by the promotion of clear negotiation of respective roles with professionals working in related services’ (p.12). As the cost of the training required for debriefing, in terms of time, has been raised, developing specialisms would mean that not all team members would require such training. The debate about the optimum size of LAs was raised in the Farrell et al. (2006) report. The advantage of large teams, in terms of enabling members to develop specialisms, was raised. On the other hand the benefit of smaller LA structures, in terms of enabling closer working relationships with other agencies, was highlighted.

A future development is raised in one of the LAs in terms of having capacity to do a rolling programme of training to all schools. The question could be raised as to whether training and empowering school staff would help develop self-sufficiency and whether this is an aim that is currently sought by CIRTs. The author argues that, in the light of predicted capacity difficulties in terms of responding to all CIs, if school staff develop self-sufficiency in dealing with some lower level incidents this would appear to be positive. Working as an EP in a consultative way is based on the idea of building staff skills rather than treating the EP as the ‘expert’. Wagner (2000) discusses consultation in relation to EP work and suggests that one of the key principles is to work with others as equals, which in turn means seeing teachers as skilled professionals. Wagner (2000)
explored how it is known that consultation works, reporting findings of research on the impact of consultation in the USA. Wagner (2000) reported that two indications of a USA survey were:

- ‘teachers’ problem-solving skills were enhanced
- teachers reported increased professional skills’

(p.17 Wagner, 2000)

The LAs refer to problem solving over the phone which could be linked to building self-sufficiency and a consultative approach.

The identification of the theme ‘debriefing group work’ identifies several issues related to the delivery of debriefing, following CIs, in terms of time consuming training, infrequent use of debriefing and that it can be offered by other agencies. Hunt (2002) reviewed the clinical literature stating that ‘no firm conclusions can be drawn about the efficacy of Psychological Debriefing (PD) with children’ (p. 62). Understanding the debate about debriefing and deciding a viewpoint would appear significant when developing a CIRT. Despite this debate, it is interesting that one participant has suggested that the problem boils down to how it is defined and considers that the skill required to deliver debriefing could justify the time consuming training. In all of the LAs a version of debriefing type group work is offered if deemed appropriate.

In addition to future developments, which have already been referred to above, a range of examples of widening support offered by CIRTs are suggested under the theme ‘ideas for future development’, e.g. working with special schools, pre-schools and hospices. LA7 refers to a frustration that CIRT members have with the lack of capacity or resources to expand their work. ‘I think we all feel we would like to do more so that is perhaps a constant frustration so we can see what else that we recognise we haven’t at the moment got the time or resources to do that.’

An important issue, raised in three LAs within this theme, is transferring skills to other members of staff. One participant noted that the EP profession is polarised demographically, resulting in a large group, who are experienced, retiring and therefore it is important to ensure that the experience is passed on. LA4 appears to have developed a strategy for empowering other colleagues within the EPS to get involved in
the work, through the first contact group\(^5\). The issue that skills need to be passed onto the next generation of staff is another argument for the role being generic. If the role was generic it would help prevent pockets of expertise developing leaving the remaining staff unskilled. One LA refers to using special schools’ expertise at managing bereavement, to support other schools. This would fit with the idea that incidents build skills.

The identification of the theme ‘evaluation’ pulled together the following issues surrounding evaluation:

- How long after a CI is it appropriate to evaluate the support given?
- Different approaches taken within the LAs (e.g. review meetings, formal evaluation forms, doctoral research and anecdotal comments)
- Is evaluation used to influence the support offered?
- Ethically sensitive nature of the work
- Triangulation of evaluation
- Logging incidents

One participant in LA6 gave an example, when discussing the timing of evaluation, ‘because it was some time later I went back, it was strong enough in minds to remember, but far enough away not to be too painful’. A range of approaches to evaluation were described within the LAs. One example was the use of review meetings with members of the CIRT to check everything is tied up and to talk through incidents and the support which was offered. In terms of formal evaluation it is noted in LA2 that after two weeks (if the case is closed) someone from admin rings up to fill out a questionnaire over the phone. In LA4 an evaluation form is automatically sent by a support officer after about six to eight weeks. LA5 indentified a piece of doctoral research which had been carried out involving interviews. It was reported that there were two schools where the feedback was not brilliant and it had been challenging for

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\(^5\) A group of EPs who come together to talk about the support offered to schools doing table top scenarios which involve how one would respond and the sort of questions one would ask. Members are encouraged to gather a range of experience. When CI work comes up it is e-mailed to members to see if they want to be involved or shadow other staff offering the support.
the researcher to do those interviews. On reflection it was suggested, when planning the research, that the CIRT should have understood that there would be some cases where emotions would be revived and that there could be negative unresolved issues. The CIRT could then have prepared the researcher in advance. LA7 notes the use of self evaluation forms for team members to encourage reflection.

A key issue when looking at evaluation is whether the information gathered feeds back into the work to influence the support that is offered. This would appear to be an important function for the evaluation and questions its purpose if it does not influence the support offered.

The ethically sensitive nature of the work was an issue raised by Posada (2006) who suggested that simulations could provide a way of researching both the emotional and social support provided in the aftermath of CIs. Psychological interventions could be seen as having a function for remediation/amelioration or as leading to adaptation and acceptance. Aiming for adaptation and acceptance following CIs would be a solution focussed approach. The issues that arise following CIs, however, may be too sensitive to adopt this aim.

Triangulation is a key issue raised within evaluation research (Patton, 2002). This issue is only discussed in two LAs. In LA3 it is suggested that the support is well regarded by managers, school staff and advisors. Six of the seven LAs refer to keeping a simple log of the incidents to which the CIRT responded. Some of the LAs note that this information is pooled and one LA notes that they use the log to inform the safeguarding board. LA4 notes that when they work directly with children they do not set up a child file but keep records for a short time before completely destroying them.

5.4 Reflective Summary

The content analysis and thematic analysis carried out on the data gathered allowed tentative answers to be given to the RQs.

5.4.1 RQ1: How have LAs Developed Current CI Support in Terms of Support Offered, Inception and Protocols?

Firstly the content analysis allowed tentative answers to be given to RQ1. LAs offer a range of support but central to this support is an initial telephone conversation/visit to gather information and problem solve. Other common areas of support are:
some form of debriefing or group work, providing leaflets/written materials to support understanding about children’s reactions following CIs and signposting to other services.

The researcher had expected to gather detailed information about the historical development of the CIRTs (inception), however, she gathered more information about how they work and sustain themselves rather than how they were set up. Several reasons have previously been suggested for the difficulty in elicitation of the data related to the historical development/inception. Despite the difficulty with this data three different drivers were found for setting up CIRTs.

- CIs occurring in the LA
- Influence of senior EP who was interested in CI work
- Gap identified in provision of support following CIs

In addition to identifying the above drivers the research showed that several LAs sought training. Some LAs reported use of a working group and others noted that someone had the role of coordinating the work.

The protocol of each CIRT varied but the following common themes were identified:

- Telephone call from school to LA personnel/CI team leader
- LA personnel or CI team leader then contacts a CI coordinator/team leader/PEP/senior
- This employee then contacts team member/EP
- Team member/EP then contacts school to arrange/offer support

**5.4.2 RQ2: How do LAs Sustain and Evaluate a CI Approach?**

The results gathered have indicated that the team has to be active to sustain the CIRT. The combined inductive-deductive thematic analysis gathered information related to the context of CIRT work, human resourcing and operational processes. Each of these main aspects are considered in turn to provide tentative answers to RQ2.
5.4.2.1 Context.

In terms of context some LAs reported a perceived reluctance of EPs and other services within the LA to take part in CI work. The reluctance of other services may be particularly significant to the sustainability of a multi-disciplinary approach. Reasons suggested for the perceived reluctance to take part are employees’ lack of confidence and difficulty committing time to the work. In light of this it would appear that preparing staff before engaging in this work and managers planning how the time will be accounted for, e.g. absorbed within contingency time, is important to the sustaining of CIRTs.

In some LAs the support and connection with LA senior management is important for sustaining the CIRT. It is suggested that by having the support of management and connections with management within the LA the profile of the CIRT is raised. Raising the profile of the work may help to secure it in difficult times when there are competing priorities within the LA, for example, when cuts are being made to services or other large projects are being developed. In addition to the work being regarded as high profile, most of the LAs suggest the importance of the work being seen as a LA priority.

The impact of the media is raised in some of the LAs as having both a positive and negative role. Good working relationships with the media are important to protect against the publication of misleading information. Positive media involvement has been identified as significant to the sustainability of one of the LA teams.

All LAs discussed the wider links that exist within CI work but which are beyond the individual CIRT. These links can help increase capacity and the CIRT may benefit from the stronger relationships that a local agency may hold with the school. CIRTs have generally been set up to provide CI support to schools however all but one LA highlighted an identified role within large scale disasters. Having an identified role within the emergency plan would increase the sustainability of the CIRT.

5.4.2.2 People.

Some LAs highlighted the importance of being aware that amongst EPs there is not a consensus that they should respond to CIs and therefore be part of a CIRT. It was identified that being involved often stems from an interest in the area of CIs and previous experience of supporting CIs. This would suggest that having personnel with
previous experience of supporting CIs and an interest in this area of work would impact the ability to recruit team members and therefore the sustainability of the work.

Key personal issues raised were the low numbers of people involved in the team and also whether carrying out CI work is seen as a generic role for all staff within a service or a specialist role for a team. Seeing the role as generic could help mitigate against low numbers and issues around capacity which would help sustain the work. The importance of good working relationships and commitment of team members was also raised by some LAs. Most LAs identify the emotional impact of being part of a CIRT. The challenging nature of the work may threaten the sustainability of the team in terms of staff recruitment and maintenance. Some LAs raised the issue of personal bereavements and identified care taken to ensure that members are in a stable emotional state and able to engage. Paired working, support from leaders and debriefing for team members are important to sustain the team.

5.4.2.3 Process.

Some LAs highlighted the following issues: effectively gauging the priority for the CIRT to attend a school following a CI, the importance of colleagues talking to each other within the CIRT and the CIRT encouraging schools to think and reflect. These processes are important for sustaining the CIRT as they prevent CIRT members attending crises unnecessarily and therefore help protect the team from reaching capacity. Some LAs discussed the issue of who makes the decision as to whether an incident is critical. If a CIRT decides to respond to all requests for support from schools it may create a capacity issue and it may also prevent school staff developing their ability to manage certain incidents, for example, bereavements. Incorporating thresholds could be one way of managing this.

All seven LAs referred to the ability of school staff to deal with CIs and participants debated the issue of school self-sufficiency which could question the need for a CIRT response. In this case the CIRT’s sustainability may be linked to the diversion of resources into training to develop self-sufficiency within schools. Some LAs give examples of widening support offered by CIRTs, for example, working with special schools, pre-schools and hospices.
All LAs raised the issue of training. Some LAs suggest developing specialisms rather than training all CIRT members in all methods of CI support. As the cost of the training required for debriefing, in terms of time, has been raised, developing specialisms would mean that not all team members would require such training. Developing specialisms may therefore help sustain the team as it would provide less strain on resources. An important issue raised by some LAs is the transfer of skills to other members of staff. One LA already has a strategy for this. If the role was generic it would help prevent pockets of expertise developing leaving the remaining staff unskilled.

Against the backdrop of the ethically sensitive nature of evaluating CIRT work and the difficulty surrounding the timing, a range of approaches are currently being used to evaluate the work. Some CIRTs carry out review meetings to check that there are no outstanding concerns and to talk through the incidents and support offered. Some LAs use questionnaires/evaluation forms which are sent out or completed over the phone. The use of interviews and team self-evaluation forms were also reported. Most LAs reported receiving anecdotal evaluation. Logging basic information about CIRT work is noted in most LAs with some LAs pooling this information.
Chapter 6 Discussion: future development of Critical Incident Response Teams

This chapter will begin by discussing the implications for theory and practice looking specifically at the LA where the researcher works. The chapter will conclude by looking at the implications of this present study for future research and discuss some personal reflections.

6.1 Implications for Theory

It is clear from the chronology that crises have been labelled and discussed in the literature since the 1970s. School psychologists have historically been implicated as having a key role in the support offered. Since 1994 a range of support offered by EPSs in England has been documented in the literature. O’Hara et al. (1994) solely describe the response of the EPS following a Critical Incident (CI). Mallon and Best (1995) and Cameron et al. (1995) produced guidelines for EPSs, involved or planning to be involved in CI work, from their own experiences and McCaffrey (2004) reported a model for supporting schools in crisis. CI leaflets from a range of UK LAs, documenting what support is offered, were found through an internet search. The only article which included some description of how a CI service was set up in the UK was Carroll et al. (1997) but there were several gaps in this description (e.g. capacity issues).

It is clear from the literature that CI support exists within LAs and that often a range of professionals are involved. There is also information in the literature about the type of support that is offered, however it is not clear why some responses/teams are more sustainable and why their protocols and structure vary. The literature broadly specifies CI responses, however the TEP wanted a more detailed specification, sharply focussed on the process of developing a Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT). Evaluation of services to date appears to have been through evaluation forms, anecdotal evidence and the use of the Impact of Events Scale (Horowitz et al., 1979). McCaffrey (2004) reports surveying schools to find out what support they would want. Carroll et al. (1997) notes ethical dilemmas in formally evaluating the effectiveness of CI support. Posada (2006) comments that it is difficult to carry out research during the post impact phase of CIs and looks to simulations instead. In light of these difficulties it seemed important to find out how LAs currently evaluate the CI support they offer.
The utility of this present study for LAs will be in understanding the inception, operation and how to sustain CIRTs. The LAs can then use this information to inform the work of developing a CI response or modifying current practice. The research questions are therefore linked to the inception, operation and sustainability of CIRTs.

The literature reviewed, as outlined above, indicated that currently we do not have a theory about how CIRTs are developed, sustained and evaluated. Figure 5.1, presented in section 5.2.4 above, summarises the data collected in relation to RQ1 from the content analysis, in terms of the support offered, inception and protocol of the CIRTs. In addition to this model a theoretical model was generated from the data collected from the seven LAs, focussing on the development and sustainability of CIRTs. The data gathered from the seven LAs points to having a working model rather than a prescription of what is needed to set up a CIRT. In a sense the participants in the study appeared interested in who was ‘here’ and available, (not whether you needed to have a CAMHS worker or a fireman). The 110 codes yielded were organised into 26 themes and these themes were grouped into three super themes, namely, ‘Context’, People’ and ‘Process’. The 26 themes have been integrated within the model. The model proposed contains suggestions of factors (26 themes) to consider when developing and sustaining a CIRT rather than a prescription of who is needed and for what purpose. Figure 6.1 below presents the model developed:
Figure 6.1 Theoretical model to support the development and sustainability of CIRTs
Referring to figure 6.1, the outside section of the model contains the themes under the super theme ‘Context’ which relate to the context in which a CIRT operates or will be developed. The next set of themes are organised within the circle and relate to the process of delivering a CI response, (those themes under the super theme ‘Process’). Within this super theme the theme ‘evaluation’ is written in capitals because this is a key part of RQ2. Also within this super theme the theme ‘ideas for future development’ is placed on an arrow indicating that these issues are moving forward in time. The themes within the rectangle are those under the super theme ‘People’ and refer to factors relating to the people involved in delivering a CI response. In summary, the model presents key factors, raised from the data, to consider when developing or sustaining a CI response, in the area of the context, the process of delivering a response and the people involved in its delivery. Arrows have been used to indicate where themes are closely linked. These links have been identified in section 5.3 above.

6.2 Using the Model

Section 5.3 above discussed a number of key issues that may have implications for the future development and refinement of the theoretical model (figure 6.1). These issues have stimulated several questions for practitioners which are discussed below. These questions may be theoretically put to LA staff, (working within the model), who are either currently involved in a CI response or who are planning on developing a CI response.

Context

6.2.1 Is the leadership of the CIRT/CI response going to be shared?

In relation to the super theme ‘Context’, particularly with regard to the theme ‘perceived reluctance to take part’, the risk of a service within a LA or a lead CIRT employee having sole strategic responsibility, due to the reluctance of other personnel to engage, was raised. Staff members working within the model would need to address this risk and think about the model of leadership that is chosen. It raises the issue of whether shared leadership could be sought either through the use of a deputy or a working group. Leadership brings kudos and therefore the staff would need to consider whether taking a shared approach to leadership, (where the kudos of the role could be lost), may make it harder to get a leader to come forward.
6.2.2 Is a multi-agency response required? Do the services within the LA already have pre-existing links with each other?

Under the super theme ‘Context’, the theme ‘factors affecting multi-agency ability’ would merit consideration by staff working within the model. If a multi-agency response is being sought it may be easier to establish if links already exist between some of the services within the LA. Two LAs referred to the benefits of multi-agency working, for example, providing a range of perspectives to apply to the work. In contrast, in the theme ‘working together in CIRT’, the advantage of having the same background and approach as your colleagues is raised. A decision therefore needs to be made as to whether a multi-agency response will be sought taking into consideration possible advantages and disadvantages. When discussing a multi-agency project to develop LA guidelines on the psycho/socio support offered following CIs, Posada (2006) reports that ‘the project has involved a large amount of data gathering on the services already provided within the borough’ (p.204). Part of the decision process could take a similar approach to Posada (2006) in terms of investigating what services already exist and whether there are links between them.

6.2.3 Do schools within the LA have wider links with other agencies?

The theme ‘wider links’ raises the issue of whether schools have links with other agencies and would merit consideration by staff members operating within the model. Identifying the wider links that school staff already have may help identify where there are gaps in provision for schools and therefore help focus any subsequent support offered. This process may also identify areas where a CIRT could link up to work with other agencies already supporting schools. This information could also help inform the decision about offering a multi-agency response as raised above.

6.2.4 Do members of the CIRT/CI response have opportunities to share with other LAs who have a CI response?

The picture that emerges from the data is the importance that members of CIRTs place on sharing with other LAs who also have a CI response. Under the theme ‘wider links’ the issue of whether the CIRT has opportunities to share with other LAs, offering a CI response, is reported. This sharing could be in terms of pulling together personnel to enable a response to large scale incidents or sharing information and resources. Sharing personnel with neighbouring LAs may particularly merit consideration by staff if the
LA is small, as this may result in the CIRT having less capacity to respond to large scale incidents. Sharing with other LAs may help foster partnership relationships which could spill over into other areas of work. Opportunities to share would therefore merit consideration from those working within the model as other LAs are a resource which could be tapped into, (if it is not already). Regional groups were mentioned in five of the LAs where CIRTs in a geographical area all meet together. Perhaps attendance at regional groups could be an area to start the process of sharing resources.

6.2.5 Does information about the impact of bereavement and best practice to support those impacted by CIs need to be disseminated to the LA as a whole?

In relation to the super theme ‘Context’, particularly with regard to the theme ‘confusion about counselling’, general understanding about best practice, to support those who have been bereaved or who have experienced trauma is raised. Staff working within the model would need to consider what their understanding on the best ways to support victims is and whether this information needs to be disseminated to school staff, other agencies and personnel within the LA. Acknowledging that there may be confusion and mixed messages being communicated about support offered, following a CI, may motivate staff to input into this wider understanding and communication. The wider impact that a CIRT can have in this area is noted under the theme ‘wider links’ and is also suggested as an area for future development. Following a simulation of setting up and running a LA reception centre for evacuees after a community CI Posada (2006) recommends that, when developing a LA response, multi-agency training needs to be set up ‘to ensure that agencies have information about each other’s roles and responsibilities, a collective awareness of trauma, the needs of those affected and how best to support them.’ (p.210).

People

6.2.6 Are you seeking to set up a specialist CIRT or a generic response including all members of a service?

Where a service (e.g. an EPS) has involvement in a CIRT, the question of whether that role should be generic or specialist within that service will merit consideration for staff operating within the model. This issue is raised in the super theme, ‘People’ and particularly in relation to the theme ‘personnel issues’. Advantages of being a member
of a CIRT are raised in terms of building good working relationships and expertise. If the response is seen as generic, a working group (as in LA6) could still be used to offer the support and expertise to the general staff members delivering the CI response. Another approach, for example within an EPS, could be to use a CIRT but to encourage school EPs to work alongside the team.

Within the theme the issue of low numbers of staff is raised and therefore having a generic response might help prevent difficulties with recruiting. Having a generic response could be seen as an advantage, as employees would get to work with a range of different staff within the service and participant 6a (g) noted that this could prevent developing a set pattern of working. This may therefore provide opportunity to widen staffs’ learning experiences. On the other hand a generic response might make it more difficult to embed protocols and skill set and to develop local knowledge. If a generic approach is taken, consideration would need to be given to staff members who are not able to be involved due to personal circumstances, for example, recent bereavement.

The theme ‘plan versus reality’ identifies that school staff think of contacting the psychologist or of using a system with which they are familiar, rather than following the set procedures, suggesting that even if the CI support is not set up as a generic response, school staff may still view it as one.

6.2.7 Do different viewpoints exist within the LA about whether staff should be involved in CI support?

Under the super theme ‘People’, the theme ‘becoming a member of a CIRT’ is represented. Within this theme it has been reported that there is disagreement as to whether EPs should be involved in CI support. The author argues that it is important that the staff are aware that there may not be a consensus that it is a worthy aim for EPs and something staff should be involved in. If this is the case finding out the reasons why will be important to direct the next steps. It was hypothesised previously that it might be because staff think that someone else is better placed to do the work and they do not feel skilled/qualified to undertake it. In contrast a CIRT might find that they have several employees, who have an interest or prior involvement in CIRTs and may be particularly keen to be involved, perhaps taking a leadership role.
6.2.8 When would a CI response be given: after all sad events or just those deemed ‘critical’? Should CI response be dependent on the school’s ability? Who should decide? Is a threshold needed?

In relation to the super theme ‘Process’, particularly in regard to the themes ‘communicating CIRT role’ and ‘school ability’, the issue of when to support and whether there should be a threshold, or if it should be dependent on school’s ability, would merit consideration. It would be important that LA staff have a clear position on this issue so that it can be communicated to schools. Adopting an objective threshold may help a CIRT to manage resources and structure responses particularly when there is high demand.

6.2.9 Are psychologists needed when offering a CI response?

Under the super theme ‘Process’ the theme ‘impact of psychology’ is presented. The issue of whether psychologists are needed, or have unique skills to offer within the area of CIs, would merit consideration by staff. Having a relationship with a school, understanding of the school (e.g. McCaffrey, 2004, section 2.4.1) and the practice of hypothesising and joint problem solving are suggested as impacts/benefits of having psychologists. The author suggests this links to the theme ‘think and reflect’ because hypothesising and joint problem solving are required when thinking and reflecting about appropriate action. It is also suggested within the data, that a scientific approach would be taken by psychologists, using psychological theories to support the work in terms of researching ideas, creating resources and training. It would be good practice for a CIRT to consider evidence for the approaches they are using. Furthermore it is suggested that watching and assessing, in partnership with school staff, is another skill of psychologists. Under the theme ‘factors affecting multi-agency ability’ the code ‘suits EP role’ is identified. The impacts of psychology, proposed above, would need to be considered when deciding who should deliver the CI response.

In relation to taking a scientific approach, Posada (2006), when discussing wider issues and conclusions from her research suggests, that ‘EPs are now well placed to become involved in planning for, and helping to deliver, a wider response and to use their skills as researchers to contribute towards the evidence base for the efficacy of this work’ (p. 211). Cameron (2006) discusses the distinctive aspects of educational psychology.
Cameron (2006) notes that CIs are one of the complex problem situations that occur where applied psychologists have to use psychology in an innovative and creative way in order to provide both a coherent and integrated perspective. Cameron (2006) proposes five distinctive factors which make the EP’s perspective different from that of other professional groups. Two of these are recorded below:

‘(d) Using information from the research and theoretical database in psychology to recommend evidence-based strategies for change.

(e) Promoting innovative concepts or big ideas, which are underpinned by psychological research evidence and theory and which can enable clients to spot potential opportunities for positive change.’

Cameron (2006, p.293)

Cameron notes that ‘distinctively, educational psychologists are one of the very few professional groups (and possibly the only one in LEAs) who have specific knowledge and skills in research design, are competent in statistical analysis and who are trained to take a constructively critical stance to research findings in general’ (p. 297).

6.2.10 What is your opinion on Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD, Mitchell, cf. Morrison, 2007)?

The theme ‘debrieﬁng group work’ appears in the model under the super theme ‘Process’. Scientiﬁc evidence and practitioner knowledge on this topic may change over a period of time. Staff would therefore need to evaluate their practice in relation to specific knowledge and scientiﬁc evidence in order to make claims about their policy on debrieﬁng. Lane and Corrie (2006) propose four main themes to describe the skills required of a psychologist today which they consider provide a useful framework in exploring what is meant by being a modern scientist-practitioner. The theme ‘the ability to critique our work in systematic ways’ is referring broadly to vehicles used to evaluate the psychologists themselves and their actions. Lane and Corrie (2006) note that ‘most significantly for scientist-practitioners, however, we would see this as a commitment to the use of scientiﬁc enquiry to guide and evaluate their work.’ (p.3).

Miller and Frederickson (2006) discuss issues faced by EPs working as scientist-practitioners. They note that for EPs aspiring to be scientist practitioners, interventions
need to link to evidence-based understandings and theoretical formulations about the problem situation.

Issues of the time consuming training required to offer debriefing have been raised in this study, however, perhaps it is justified by the skill required to deliver debriefing effectively. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE, 2006) refers to CISD (Mitchell, cf. Morrison, 2007) as one of the range of interventions which have been termed, generically, as debriefing. They refer to the lack of agreement about the best way to deliver these early interventions or whether they are able to reduce PTSD (e.g. Litz, Gray, Bryant & Alder, 2002). They discuss the debate about the efficacy of debriefing, referring to meta-analyses, e.g. Van Emmerik et al. (2002), which found that a single session of CISD has no efficacy in reducing PTSD and other trauma symptoms and that it could potentially cause significant harm.

On the other hand they noted that other reviews concluded that CISD is useful as part of an overall Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) programme (Everly, Boyle & Lating 1999). The NICE report (2006) draws attention to flaws in the studies that have given a negative review of CISD, for example, self-selection of participants, techniques applied to individuals rather than groups, techniques used outside the time scale recommended and the use of inadequately trained debriefers.

The British Psychological Society (BPS, 2002) suggest that early intervention and debriefing should be targeted at community/group support instead of individual treatment. The NICE report (2006) refers to the ethical difficulty of gaining non-intervention controls. From the studies reviewed, assessing the efficacy of treatments, the team found that brief, single-session debriefing interventions are unlikely to have a clinically important effect on subsequent PTSD and self-report measures. They note that there was no trial on CISD, as it was designed as a group intervention and CISM did not meet the methodological inclusion criteria. They conclude however that, ‘Notwithstanding these methodological reservations, given the evidence that there is unlikely to be a clinically important effect on subsequent PTSD, we do not recommend that systematic, brief, single-session interventions focusing on the traumatic incident are provided individually to everyone who has been exposed to such an incident’ (p. 84-85).
6.2.11 Is helping school staff to develop self-sufficiency following CIs the aim of the response?

In relation to the super theme ‘Process’ and particularly in relation to the themes ‘partnership’ and ‘school ability’, the issue of school staff developing self-sufficiency will merit consideration for the staff operating within the model. The theme ‘school ability’ indicates that some schools appear self-sufficient following CIs and examples are given in terms of sharing the news with children and supporting other staff members. It is also noted that incidents build skills, so it would be worth considering ways of developing skills in schools as, fortunately, CIs are rare. An example of this is that special school staff develop expertise in dealing with bereavements due to the frequency at which they occur. On the other hand under the theme ‘partnership’, despite seeing the role as enabling schools to become self-sufficient, one participant noted that however well equipped a school is they will always need support. Deciding if this is an aim will help direct resources, for example, if the aim is for schools to become self-sufficient, more time and energy may be inputted into training and preparing schools for CIs. Often support given on the phone to think and reflect about the situation could be seen as helping the school to develop skills in joint problem solving.

6.2.12 Are schools in the LA prepared for CIs?

In relation to the super theme ‘Process’, and specifically in relation to the theme ‘school ability’ the importance of school staff being prepared prior to a CI is raised. It would seem important for staff working within the model to be aware of how prepared school staff are within the LA. If there are gaps, in terms of preparation, time may need to be invested in supporting staff to develop their own policies and practices for coping with CIs. Farrell et al. (2006) reported the impression that EPs work at the systemic level for a significant proportion of the time to increase school and other organisations capacity. Farrell et al. (2006) reported a comment from a Director of EP training on both the uniqueness and value of EP work at systems level, ‘EPs remain/are at the core of the interacting systems of school, local authorities, children’s departments and families. Within the matrix of roles they have a privileged responsibility across these systems and are able to contribute to the lives of individual, children and groups and at policy level’ (p.75). In addition in Scotland, the Review of the Provision of Educational Psychology Services (The Currie Report, Scottish Executive, 2002) indicated that although the
traditional roles, for example, assessment and intervention remain in high demand, wider involvement in training, research and policy is expected.

6.2.13 Do all the staff involved in the CI response need to be trained to deliver all of the support offered?

Under the super theme ‘Process’ the theme ‘training’ is represented. The issue of whether one trains all staff responding to CIs in all techniques used or whether one develops specialisms would merit consideration for staff members operating within the model. If a generic response is chosen where all staff are involved in offering a CI response, it may be easier to develop specialisms as the total number of staff involved is likely to be more. Therapeutic techniques for example debriefing, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) and Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) require specialist training so it would be costly to train everyone. Furthermore these techniques require practice to develop expertise and, therefore, if everyone is trained in them most staff would never have the opportunities to use them regularly in order to develop expertise. Answering this question would therefore help staff to plan the training required. The general techniques used in terms of initial telephone conversations/visits to gather information and problem solve, could be seen as a core skill set with specialisms developed in therapeutic techniques.

6.3 Implications for Practice

The information gained from the LAs and previous literature was used to generate a theoretical model about the development and sustainability of a CIRT. Following the analysis, it would be the intention to use the model to continue through the stages of the Research and Development in Organisations model (RADIO, Timmins et al., 2003) within the home LA, with the present researcher having the role of an action researcher. The model presented is a generalisation based on evidence from the seven LAs and therefore using the model within the home LA could be seen as a test, with opportunities for further refinements to the model. The researcher would carry out a case study, to record the process of using this theoretical model to guide the development of a CIRT within the home LA. In addition it is hoped that the model would also be used for wider dissemination to other LAs, where there is interest in developing a CI response or modifying a current response. Staff within LAs could refer to the model and the questions raised in section 6.2 to guide the development and/or
sustainability of a CI response. A summary of the RADIO phases (Timmins et al., 2003) completed within this study and future developments proposed, with the researcher taking the role of an action researcher, are illustrated below in Figure 6.2. The proposed future action research using RADIO phases 4-12 is presented in detail below in section 6.4.

**Figure 6.2 Using the RADIO model**

**Key:**

Phases completed: green text

Future developments: red text
1. Awareness of a need
   - Senior EP noted EPS not involved in CI work
   - Informal conversations with other EPs indicated that some had been involved in an ad hoc way
   - Planning Officers reported that official TACIT not operating effectively
   - Asked SENCOs in schools who they would contact following a CI

2. Invitation to act
   - E-mailed Principal Officer of Special Educational Needs and Disability who expressed interest in the findings

3. Clarifying organisational and cultural issues
   - Consulted EPS team and training plans
   - TACIT reported not to be effective
   - EPs involved in an ad hoc way

4. Identifying stakeholders in area of need (establish a research co-ordinating group which represents major stakeholders)
   - Present theoretical model to management staff in home LA
   - Identify potential staff to form working group

5. Agreeing focus of concern (agree focus for research with major stakeholders, may involve further appraisal of organisational culture to ensure successful outcome)
   - Potential focus could be how to develop a sustainable CI response/how could a CIRT be seen as different/a modification of the TACIT.
6. **Negotiating framework for information gathering** (select appropriate methodology and research design, production of information is aimed at meeting the organisation’s development needs)
   - Record working group meetings and derive themes from the recorded discussions
   - Encourage home LA to evaluate the CI support, once developed, using self-evaluation

7. **Gathering information** (use agreed methods to gather information)
   - Gather information using methods identified above in phase 6

8. **Processing information with research sponsors/stakeholders** (share findings and discuss implications with stakeholders, encourage stakeholders to look at their development needs in light of the findings)
   - Share summaries of themes drawn from the development process and discuss implications in terms of current effective practice and areas for future developments

9. **Agreeing areas for future action** (plan, implement and evaluate development activities raised in phase 8)
   - Future developments could be agreed, implemented and evaluated based on the implications raised above in phase 8, the model could be used to identify areas where there are still gaps

10. **Action planning**
11. **Implementation/action**
12. **Evaluating action**
   - Phases 10-12 describe the processes of action planning, implementation/action and then evaluating action. Phases 9-12 would therefore manage the proposals for organisational change which have been stimulated through the information gathered in phase 7.
When discussing this model the recipients (e.g. the PEP in the home LA) would need to consider whether they might use it, the time scale and resources that would be required and the facilitators and barriers to implementing a CI response, based on the evidence presented. Perhaps the factors in the model could be discussed in turn. If a response is already operating within a LA, the model could be discussed in relation to the current operation to see if it will inform any developments/modifications to the current approach being offered. Within this present study 14 of the 16 participants were EPs however the model presented could be used with a range of LA personnel.

6.4 Overall Summary and Implications for Future Research

The present study used a series of interviews in seven LAs to gain information about the development, sustainability and evaluation of current CIRTs across England. A theoretical model of factors to consider when developing or modifying a current CI response was developed. Key issues raised when discussing the factors in this model have been highlighted. The implications of this theoretical model for the home LA and for wider dissemination have been discussed and its utility in terms of understanding the inception, operation and sustainability of CIRTs is proposed. The remainder of this section discusses possible areas identified for future research.

A future development, deriving directly from this current study, would be a piece of action research as discussed/illustrated briefly in section 6.3 and figure 6.2 above. This research would be informed by the researcher’s theory and model of sustainability and be used to test the model, as it is a composite based on seven LAs and may need adaptation when being implemented. For example, there may be local adaptations in terms of the order/prioritisation of elements within the model and where to start the process. Ashton (2009) describes the use of the RADIO model (Timmins et al. 2003) with five action research projects looking at transition processes. Ashton (2009) notes that action research was chosen due to the collaboration it promotes between the researcher and the participants and the focus on creating positive changes. Referring to section 2.7, Lewin (1947) also noted that action research emphasises involving those affected, to ensure change is effective and Watts and Leyden (1989) noted the importance of consensus decision making in the change process.

Steps 1-3 of the RADIO model namely, awareness of a need, invitation to act and clarifying organisational and cultural issues have already been worked through as part
of the present study. The theoretical model could be used to continue through the stages of the RADIO model within the home LA. The focus which generated this present study was an interest in setting up a CI response involving the EPS. Continuing through the model, there is a new focus in terms of how the home LA should go about developing a CIRT in order to make it sustainable. There may be questions raised about why the Trauma And Crisis Intervention Team (TACIT) has not been sustained. Within this piece of research staff in the home LA would be seen as the actors and the TEP would be the researcher. Timmins et al. (2003) noted the need for stakeholders to be involved and contribute to the focus of research to avoid a negative response to change and to encourage ownership. Ely (1990, section 2.7) suggested that new knowledge and skills are likely to facilitate change in systems. New knowledge could be contributed by the TEP from the information gained in the present study.

Before moving directly to phase 4 further clarification of organisational and cultural issues may be beneficial. Timmins et al. (2003) note that the existing formulation of the organisations needs or context and culture may need to be reconsidered at different times throughout the research process. Timmins, Bham, McFadyen and Ward (2006) note that ‘discovering how past and more recent change initiatives have been conceived, proposed and/or implemented and to what effect, offers opportunities to explore weaknesses in change management’ (p.308). Timmins et al. (2003) refer to the impact which an organisational culture may have on the relationship between the external research facilitator, the research sponsors and the stakeholders. The culture may interfere with planned research and development processes intended. For example, if there is a culture of strong leadership staff might not be used to diffusing responsibility in projects. There may not be a history of, or preference for, using working groups in development work. It would be interesting to observe how people use a model and what happens when they are asked to take part in action research in this area. Furthermore the issue of acceptability of using a model presented by a trainee may be raised. Several researchers have drawn attention to the resistance that is often faced during systems change (e.g. Ellsworth, 2000). Suarez-Balcazar et al. (2007, section 2.7) identifies that resistance is likely to come from those who oppose changing what is current because they have a vested interest in the situation staying the same.

The researcher will present the proposed idea for future research working through the remaining stages of the RADIO model. The researcher would need to be aware of
Weick’s (2001) themes noted in section 2.7 of the literature review and how they may affect the implementation of the model. For example, the LA may not be used to acting rationally and instead use a process of retrospective justification to explain action taken. The LA may be segregated, making it difficult to develop a multi-agency response, and these segments may be small and stable. If the organisation has had frequent changes in management it might mean that connections within the organisation have a variety of strengths leading to ambiguity.

6.4.1 (RADIO model phase 4) Identifying stakeholders in area of need.

Having undertaken a series of interviews in seven LAs to gather information about the CI support offered in other areas of the country, this information, in the form of the theoretical model, could be presented to management staff in the home LA at a meeting. Following this initial meeting the researcher could assess interest in the area of CI development work within the LA. Personnel who could form a working group could be identified. These personnel may not necessarily be involved in the CIRT that develops but will be involved in implementing the organisational change. Forming a working group fits with Kotter’s (1995, section 2.7) step 8 for effective change, namely, ‘forming a powerful guiding coalition’.

6.4.2 (RADIO model phase 5) Agreeing focus of concern (research aims).

This phase would involve agreeing a focus for the research. Having previously identified a need in terms of setting up a CI response, a new focus could now be sought in terms of how to go about it in order to make it sustainable. Previous discussion with EPs in the home LA suggested that some have been involved in an ad hoc way following CIs. The TEP also met previously with two emergency planning officers who noted that, although there is an official TACIT, it does not appear to be operating effectively. The working group could discuss how the CIRT could look different from the TACIT or be seen as a modification of the TACIT.

6.4.3 (RADIO model phase 6) Negotiating framework for information gathering.

Data gathering could take the form of the researcher recording the working group meetings which take place in the home LA throughout the development process. The researcher could derive themes from the recorded discussions. Ashton (2009) used a
process of focus groups which were recorded on audio tape and, instead of transcribing each session, the thematic analysis was undertaken whilst listening to the recordings and noting the topics covered. This method was chosen for pragmatic reasons to allow time-efficient analysis of data. This approach to analysing the data could be taken here, to enable timely feedback to the staff involved in developing the CI approach (working group). Ashton (2009) later used member checks to ensure the participants felt the themes accurately reflected the views expressed. Evaluation was a key part of the present study and therefore the researcher could also be involved in encouraging the home LA to evaluate the CI support offered, (once it is set up), by a process of self-evaluation. Questionnaires could be developed for this self-evaluation. In the present study participants in LA7 reported using self-evaluation forms.

6.4.4 (RADIO model phase 7) Gathering information.

Information would then be gathered using the methods described above. This would be a longitudinal piece of work as organisational development work takes time.

6.4.5 (RADIO model phase 8) Processing information with research sponsors/stakeholders.

Summaries of the themes that arose during different stages of the development process could be shared with the working group and the implications discussed. This may involve adaptations to the theoretical model. The working group could be used to look at the data which has been gathered, what it means and how it could be used in line with Heron’s (1996) Co-operative Inquiry Group process. Presenting the themes may help stimulate discussion of the CIRT practice taking place and areas for further developments. The model would be best seen as a working document which may be adapted further as the work in the home LA continues to develop. Processing the information gathered may stimulate proposals for organisational change which can then be managed through phases 9-12 of the RADIO model.

6.4.6 (RADIO model phase 9) Agreeing areas for future action.

There may be activities related to organisational development or improvement which have arisen from the previous phase. There may be a need for staff training or further development or refinement of a policy. Using the model, areas could be identified
where there are still gaps. Decisions could be made in the group regarding the future evaluation of CI work.

Steps 10-12 of the RADIO model describe the process of action planning, implementation/action and then evaluating action. Timmins et al. (2003) describes phases 9-12 as the model’s ‘organisational change feature’ to ensure that the work impacts the structures e.g. LA or school to develop their capacity to carry out further development work. This fits with Kotter’s (1995, section 2.7) step 7 for effective change, namely, ‘consolidating improvements and producing still more change’.

**6.4.7 Additional future research possibilities.**

Given the transparent data gathering and analysis within the present study, the researcher would claim a degree of analytical generalisability of this model; however its wider theoretical generalisability should be tested through data from a broader range of sources, for example, through the study of unsuccessful CIRTs to identify whether the converse of the model elements apply in such contexts (Kvale, 1996). The model could also be tested with different kinds of successful CIRTs. These could be other non-mandatory, professional, low incidence, rapid response type work teams where members have to work with a range of different people. It could be within other disciplines or voluntary services. Future research in this area would inform the extent to which the model can be used by LAs and be said to be more generally useful.

The theoretical model could be developed to include more about the inception of CIRTs, which as discussed earlier, was the silent part within this study. In order to gain more information ethnographic research may be required, whereby the researcher works alongside the CIRT for a period of time (Cohen et al., 2007). This approach might address the weaker part of the present study. This would be a longitudinal study in which the researcher would become part of the LA staff structure observing all activities relevant to the CI response, for example:

- Planning meetings
- Sharing with other LAs
- Training
- CI support given
• Decision making

In terms of new directions, perhaps new entrants to the EP profession could be trained in the model so they have the inspiration and the tools to contribute to the process of development, sustainability and evaluation of a CI response. Transference of skills and succession planning was mentioned by the participants interviewed within three of the LAs in this present study.

6.4.8 Personal reflection.

Several themes emerged for discussion upon reflection: willingness of EPs to share good practice, impact of LA size, factors influencing development work, communicating findings and possible adaptations to research. Carrying out this piece of research has confirmed the experience I have had in the home LA in terms of the willingness of EPs to share good practice with each other. All PEPs and EPs contacted were very willing to give up time at a busy time in the year to help with this project. Two particular participants commented that they had found the time to reflect on their CI work beneficial, which is an indication of the work load of the EP job and the demands of the role. Surveying LAs of varying size highlighted the different challenges they face and the different opportunities which they provide for EPs. For example one of the large LAs had set up a group specifically for developing interest in this area of work and equipping staff. There could be an advantage in large LAs in terms of enabling staff to develop specialisms.

The literature review identified a dearth in the literature about organisational work. The outcomes of this study drew my attention to the influence of people and to context factors on development work. This project has raised factors to consider when carrying out development work which I hope I can use to support development work in LAs where I work in the future. Factors affecting multi-agency work have been raised, for example, the capacity of agencies and existing links between agencies. It was interesting that the majority of the CI work in the LAs visited was carried out by EPs. I have found that having been totally immersed in the data as a researcher it was important to step back when reporting findings, to ensure that I had communicated clearly to readers who are not familiar with the data.

In addition to the future research opportunities discussed in section 6.4 it has been useful as a researcher to reflect on how I might have carried out the research differently,
if I were to start again. I had heard by word of mouth about the core groups which I had planned to use to help select research sites. Following investigation the groups did not appear to be easy to access; therefore it may have been beneficial to have had more evidence of contacts which could have been followed up at these groups, before planning to use them to select research sites. This would in turn have prevented the use of a snowballing approach. I was made aware that the TACIT in the home LA was not operating effectively, however I did not spend time investigating why this was the case. It would have been beneficial to explore this in more detail prior to gathering information to inform further development of CI work in the home LA. The inception of CIRTs was the silent part within this study, discussed in section 5.2. Many of the participants were not around at the start of the CIRTs and did not have access to the information. More may have been gained by interviewing other members of LA management who may have had access to the information, or been involved in the development of the CIRT.
References


Lapadat, J. C., & Lindsay, A. C. (1999). Transcription in Research and Practice: From Standardization of Technique to Interpretive Positionings. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 5, 64-86.


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Appendices

Appendix 1: McCaffrey (2004) model

Appendix 2: Coded leaflet ‘Devon’

Appendix 3: RADIO phases (Timmins, Shepherd & Kelly, 2003)

Appendix 4: Participant information sheet

Appendix 5: Participant consent form

Appendix 6: Interview questions
Appendix 1: McCaffrey (2004) model

Figure 2: Model for supporting school or schools in crisis (McCaffrey 2004, p.116).
Appendix 2: Coded leaflet ‘Devon’

For Urgent Support please contact:

Exeter: 01392 686300
Torres: 01803 863481
Barnstaple: 01271 388701

Other resources available from the service:

- Supporting children after traumatic Incidents: a leaflet
- ‘Children in Mind’ Distressing Events: a leaflet for teachers
- Lists relevant website addresses
- Lists of appropriate books for variety of ages
- Access to training on Loss and Bereavement (contact jenny.bathe@devon.gov.uk)
What is a Critical Incident?

A single incident or a sequence of incidents which are:
- Sudden and unexpected.
- Contain real or imagined threats to a person.
- Overwhelming of usual coping mechanisms.
- Cause severe disruption.
- Are traumatic to anyone.

Critical Incidents affecting educational establishments may include the following:
- The death of a pupil or a member of staff.
- A serious accident involving pupils or other members of the school community.
- Violent attacks or intrusions onto premises.
- A ‘disaster’ in the school or the local community.

The Educational Psychology Service is regularly involved in supporting Devon schools that have experienced a critical incident.

LET US KNOW IMMEDIATELY IF YOU THINK THAT WE COULD HELP YOU

As soon as we are informed we can offer:

E  • Immediate phone contact to discuss support.
D  • A school visit within 24 hours.
K  • Follow-up support if required.

Immediate support may include:

G  • Support for senior members of staff in the practical aspects of managing the incident.
H  • The introduction of a 'self-care' checklist for staff.
    • Practical and emotional support for individual staff members or groups.
J  • Advice and information for parents and carers on how to support children and young people who have experienced a traumatic event.
F  • Individual or group support for pupils.
K  • Follow-up support, if appropriate, may include:
H  • Debriefing with senior management and staff.
L  • Advice on the management of grief and loss in schools, including coping with strong emotions such as anger and post-traumatic stress.
K  • Further work with pupils
M  • Signposting to other agencies if required.
### Appendix 3: RADIO phases (Timmins, Shepherd & Kelly, 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RADIO phases</th>
<th>Typical RADIO activities</th>
<th>Activities and outcomes in present study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Awareness of a need</td>
<td>EP’s contact with school/LEA/teacher/pupil may result in identification of potential need for research or ‘systems’ work</td>
<td>• Senior EP noted that EPS not involved in CI work&lt;br&gt;• Spoke informally to other EPs&lt;br&gt;• Met with emergency planning officers&lt;br&gt;• Asked schools who they would contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Invitation to act</td>
<td>EP contacts research sponsors/stakeholders in a position to approve and resources the research/development work and negotiates the role. Here, the EP as LEA worker may need to press for an invitation to act because of professional or ethical considerations</td>
<td>• E-mail sent to Principal Officer who replied noting she would be interested in the findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Clarifying organisational and cultural issues</td>
<td>Initial exploration of factors likely to support or impede the initiative</td>
<td>• EPS team and training plans consulted&lt;br&gt;• EPS in period of change, moving to work in a consortia model&lt;br&gt;• TACIT team not currently operating effectively&lt;br&gt;• EPS involved in an ad hoc way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Identifying stakeholders in area of need</td>
<td>The identification and involvement of major stakeholders in the research In this phase, it is useful to establish a research coordinating group, representative of major stakeholders, in order to give them a strong role in research-related decision-making (to help focus and clarify research questions,</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Secure resources, co-ordinate research activities, maintain communication with other stakeholders and to ensure take-up of research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Agreeing focus of concern (research aims)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Negotiating framework for information gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Gathering information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Processing information with research sponsors/stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Agreeing areas for future action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and improvement may stem from the previous phase. For example, there may be a need for staff development through training, mentoring or coaching; or policy and related procedure and practice development. These activities will require planning, implementing and evaluating.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Action planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Implementation/action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Evaluating action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4: Participant information sheet

Exploring the development of Critical Incident Response Teams

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Who will conduct the research?
Charlotte Lockhart (Trainee Educational Psychologist, TEP)

Title of the Research
Exploring the development of Critical Incident Response Teams

What is the aim of the research?
The aim of the research is to find out about the process of setting up a Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) from Local Authorities (LAs) which currently have effective CIRTs. This information would be used to propose a model for setting up a CIRT that would be fit for purpose and sustainable in Liverpool where the investigator/TEP works. It is also hoped that it would be useful for other LAs who are interested in developing a response or modifying a current response.

Why have I been chosen?
You have been chosen because you are involved in an effective LA CIRT.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?
You would be asked to take part in a semi-structured interview where you would be asked about critical incident support offered, how it developed and how it is evaluated.

What happens to the data collected?
The interview would be recorded and transcribed. The information gained from the interview would be used to propose a model for developing a sustainable CIRT which I hope will be useful for LAs involved in this work.

How is confidentiality maintained?
All identifiers will be removed and ID numbers or pseudonyms used. If links need to be made at any point between data and individuals then participant identifiers would be kept securely on a data stick in a locked draw separate from
the data. Electronic data will be password protected and stored in a secure location.

The analysis of data will take place in a private study area by the student researcher.

The student researcher (TEP) and also the supervisor will have access to the anonymised data in order to guide and help with the analysis. Some of the anonymised data will be appended in the final thesis which will be shared with other Educational Psychology Services and LA. The data will be stored for 2 years. After this time the data will be shredded.

**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 or without detriment to yourself.

**What is the duration of the research?**

Your participation will require one interview which will last a maximum of two hours.

**Where will the research be conducted?**

The research will be conducted at your place of work in the LA Children’s Services.

**Contact for further information**

Charlotte Lockhart,

Educational Psychology Service, [redacted]

Charlotte.lockhart@[redacted].gov.uk

**What if something goes wrong?**

If you want to make a formal complaint about the conduct of the research you can contact the Head of the Research Office, Christine Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL.
Appendix 5: Participant consent form

CONSENT FORM

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

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

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

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

4. I agree to the use of anonymous quotes

I agree to take part in the above project

Name of participant    Date    Signature

..............................................  ..............  ..........................................
Appendix 6: Interview questions

Semi-structured interview for lead CIRT employees

1) When did the LA first become involved in critical incident support?

2) Can you explain the process by which you implemented it?
   Prompts
   - A team of professionals (working group), which ones and why?
   - Example of recent management activity and operational activity, what goes on to organise it?
   - Did people go off and research things?
   - Impetus and experience of similar, previous knowledge of CIRT, what if they are not the initiator but the inheritor, more about maintenance and development
   - In liaison with schools?
   - Involving management within children’s services?
   - Are you part of the emergency plan?
   - Can you explain how decisions were made?
   - Were there any barriers?
   - Were there any drop out/capacity issues?
   - Were modifications needed?
   - CIRT structure
   - What is your theory of its sustainability?

3) Can you talk through a recent example of its operation?
   Prompts
   - Is that the way it always works?
   - Are those the people who are normally involved?
   - A team of professionals (which ones, why)?
   - Just the EPS?
   - What support is offered (consultation, training, CISD)?
   - Long/short-term support?
   - Documentation distributed?

4) How would you like to develop in the future?
   Prompts
   - Any areas that you think need further research?
   - Working in special provision?

5) How is the service evaluated?
   Prompts
   - Questionnaires/simulations/anecdotal
Semi-structured interview for CIRT members

1) When did the EPS or LA first become involved in critical incident support?

2) Can you talk through a recent example of its operation?
Prompts
- Is that the way it always works?
- Are those the people who are normally involved?
- A team of professionals (which ones, why)?
- Just the EPS?
- Are you part of the emergency plan?
- What support is offered (consultation, training, CISD)?
- Long/short-term support?
- Documentation distributed?

3) How would you like to develop in the future?
Prompts
- Any areas that you think need further research?
- Working in special provision?

4) How is the service evaluated?
Prompts
- Questionnaires/simulations/anecdotal