An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis exploring Educational Psychologists' experiences of the Channel Panel and working with young people who have been identified as being at risk of "radicalisation"

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Abstract

Over recent years, there has been an increase in young people becoming identified as being at risk of "radicalisation" (Home Office, 2023a). There is limited research exploring the psychological factors underpinning the development of adopting "extremist" views. The systematic review highlighted several psychological aspects which could contribute to young people developing "radicalisation" (Brown et al., 2021; Gaudette et al., 2022; Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023). Current literature recognises the importance of psychology and the potential role Educational Psychologists (EPs) have to provide support in this area (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016; Lee & Woods, 2017; D'Lima, 2019). Since the introduction of the Prevent Agenda (2011) and subsequent development of the Channel Programme (2012), there has been an increased number of referrals made by professionals to support young people who are at risk of "radicalisation" (Home Office, 2023a). The Channel Panel consists of a range of professionals that aim to provide support to young people who have been referred due to concerns regarding "radicalisation". Currently, there is no requirement for EPs to be present at panel meetings (Home Office, 2023a; Cook & Schneider, 2024). However, in some authorities, EPs have regularly attended panel meetings and supported with discussions of cases bought to panel involving young people (Augestad Knudsen, 2017). At present, there is no research into EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel.

Therefore, this study aimed to explore EP experiences of the Channel Panel as well as considering how they could provide support for young people identified as being at risk of "radicalisation". The research aimed to gain an understanding of the lived experiences through an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Five UK based EPs were recruited and data was gathered using semi-structured interviews. Four interconnected Group Experiential Themes were interpreted as being key to EPs' lived experiences: the contribution of psychology is essential, encouraging others to consider a different perspective, the importance of developing professional relationships and the personal impact of EP involvement. These interpretations are explored in relation to pertinent literature and research. A methodological review follows where limitations of the study are considered. The implications for the Channel Panel, EP practice and the local authority which indicate the importance of EP contribution to Channel Panel discussions, particularly when cases involve young people with additional needs, are presented.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter will introduce the focus area of the thesis. Background information relevant to the present study will be outlined, including the current context. The chapter will then introduce the researcher's professional and personal interests in the topic area and an overview of the structure of the thesis will be presented.

1.2 Defining Terminology

Since the attacks on the World Trade Centre in the United States of America (USA) on September 11th, 2001, the topic of "radicalisation" has regularly appeared in the media in the United Kingdom (UK); the Manchester arena bombing in 2017, the London Bridge attack in 2019 and the attack in Reading Park in 2020 to name a few. The term "radicalisation" has been defined differently across various contexts. In the nineteenth century, the term was adopted to refer to individuals whose ideology sat with the "extreme end" of a political party (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016). There was an increase in the use of the term between 2001 and 2007 following a reported increase in terrorist attacks in Europe and the USA (Sedgewick, 2010).

When defining the term, there is debate regarding the inclusion of violence in addition to the presence of "radical" views. Some academics include both the existence of thoughts as well as the intention to participate in action (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2014), whereas other researchers such as Marret et al. (2013) differentiate between "pervasive radicalism, […] the holding of radical views and violent radicalisation which is acting on radical views" (p. 345). Current policy defines "extremist" views as "the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values" (HM Government, 2018, p. 1). Furthermore, Mandel (2009) and Sewell and Hulusi (2016) promote that an individual's adoption of extreme views are considered the opposition to the majority, and this alone is sufficient criteria to define a person as being "radicalised" (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016).

Sewell and Hulusi (2016) highlight the psychological interpretation of the term and draw attention to the consideration of "radicalisation" in relativist terms. Horgan (2008) refers to the social and psychological factors underpinning the process of adopting "extremist"

political or religious views. According to the research, “radicalisation” is widely accepted as the precursor to an individual pursuing acts of terrorism. It is important to note that not all individuals who possess views considered “radical” act upon these (Lynch, 2013). Silke (2008) highlights the conceptual and chronological immaturity of the term, stating that “radicalisation” has been interpreted as a causal factor of terrorist behaviour. The Prevent Agenda (2011) is based on a fixed stage model (see section 2.5) to prevent the progression of an individual from the non-violent stage to terrorism. Sedgewick (2010) argues that this is not a linear process and promotes caution when viewing the development of “radicalisation” as a causal relationship. Moreover, Sedgewick (2010) provides an alternative perspective by promoting the use of an increasing continuum when considering the concept. This continuum recognises that the development of “extremist” views may not lead to violence and an individual may have “radical” views but not commit violent acts (Sedgewick, 2010). Furthermore, the continuum acknowledges the range of severity with some individual’s viewpoints referred to as “moderate” (Sedgewick, 2010). However, due to the range of legislation and varied definitions used to define “radicalisation” there is ambiguity regarding language used to describe the severity of views.

With regards to the present study, “radicalisation” is defined as the “motion towards an extreme position that may or may not involve the possibility of a violent resolution” (Lynch, 2013, p. 242). It is a two-stage process; the first stage is where an individual begins to hold “extremist” views and the second stage focuses on behaviours, where “extremist” beliefs turn into violent actions (Department for Education, 2017). “Extremist” views are defined as “the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs” (HM Government, 2018).

It is important to exercise caution when considering terminology such as “radicalisation” and “extremism” as these are labels that those referred may not identify with (Lynch, 2013). These are constructs that are being placed on the individuals involved and sensitivity is required when using this language (Lynch, 2013). For the sake of this study, both “radicalisation” and “extremism” will be presented in inverted commas to reflect that this a social construction and a label placed on individuals who may not resonate with this phraseology (Horgan, 2008; Sewell & Hulusi, 2016).

The phrase “radicalisation” has assumptions and connotations that are frequently attached to it. According to research by Kundnani, (2012) and Lynch (2013) there has been an emphasis on the association of “radicalisation” with British Muslims, specifically those who are male adolescents since the early 2000s. The use of the term in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the backdrop of the ‘War on Terror’ has led to the problematic association being adopted in policy and being perpetuated by some academics and the media (Lynch, 2013). This resulted in the association and generalisation of British Muslim adolescents, by some, as being aligned with the process of “radicalisation” (Lynch, 2013). It is argued by some that policy underpinning “radicalisation” has a “relentlessly monocultural focus on Islam, meaning that radicalisation encourages the identification of Muslims as monolithic communities of inherently suspect individuals” (McGlynn & McDaid, 2016, p. 5). Furthermore, “radicalisation” is not limited to a particular political and/or religious belief, and it also incorporates moral views such as misogyny, etc (Lynch, 2013).

1.3 The Current Context in the United Kingdom

This section will present the current context in the UK. Between March 2022 and March 2023, a total of 6,817 referrals were made to Prevent from various avenues, this was an increase of 6.4% in comparison to the previous year (Home Office, 2023a). Individuals aged between 15 and 20 years old accounted for the largest proportion of referrals; a total of 2,203 equating to 32% (Home Office, 2023a). Young people aged 14 years and younger accounted for the second largest population; 2,119 referrals equating to 31% (Home Office, 2023a). An article published in ‘The Independent’ in 2021 stated that more than one in ten suspects that are arrested for offences linked to terrorism in Britain is a child (Dearden, 2021). Specifically, 13% of arrests made under terrorism laws were aged under 18 years of age (Dearden, 2021). This figure has since increased by 5% and it is speculated that this figure is due to rise further in the coming years (Dearden, 2021). The increase is attributed to access to online platforms and exposure to material (Dearden, 2021). The article stated the coronavirus lockdown, unsupervised time online and the increase availability of material as specific reasons for the increase (Dearden, 2021).

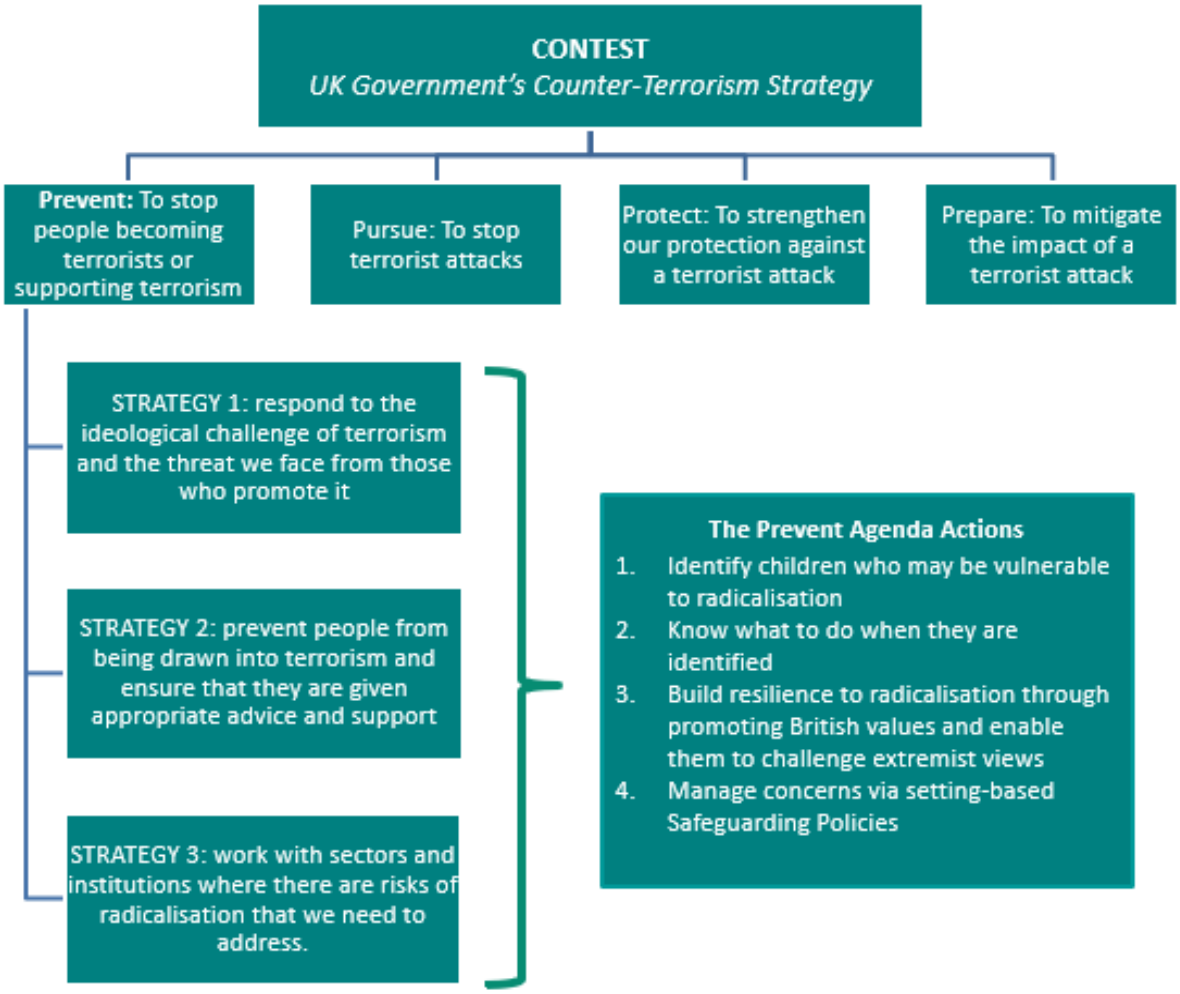
As part of ‘The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act’ (2011; updated in 2015 and in 2018) and due to a reported increase in terrorist attacks across the UK, the counter-terrorism

strategy 'CONTEST' was developed (HM Government, 2021). The primary aim of this legislation was to reduce the risk of terrorism and consists of four strands (HM Government 2011; HM Government 2021; see Figure 1.1). These include:

- Pursue: to stop terrorist attacks
- Prevent: to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism
- Protect: to strengthen protection against a terrorist attack
- Prepare: to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack.

Figure 2.1

The UK Government's National Counter-Terrorism Strategy CONTEST and the Prevent Strategy (HM Government, 2011; HM Government 2021)



The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2018) mostly focuses on aspects of domestic security. However, 'Part Two', introduces the Prevent Agenda and 'Section 26' places responsibility on local authorities (LAs) which includes educational settings such as schools, early years provisions and childcare services (HM Government 2011; HM Government 2021). The policy is underpinned by the assumption of a causal relationship between having "extremist" views and pursuing acts of terrorism, which is disputed by several researchers (Silke, 2008; Sedgewick, 2010; Lynch, 2013). In keeping with other research (Kundnani, 2012; Lynch, 2013; McGlynn & McDaid, 2016), there has been critique of the Prevent element of 'CONTEST' which has been criticised for perpetuating the stigma of Muslims and evoked feelings of increased suspicion amongst certain communities (Augestad Knudsen, 2017).

1.4 Personal and Professional Interest

Since studying for my undergraduate degree in International Relations, I have had a growing interest in "radicalisation" and why individuals adopt "extremist" views. This interest developed further as I acquired a greater understanding of psychology; initially through my conversion course and then pursuing the doctorate. I am particularly interested in the psychological process, the interaction of factors and potential underlying unmet needs that may lead to a person adopting "extremist" views. Personally, I do not have any firsthand experience of this and am aware that I am pursuing research in a topic from a position of privilege; I do not belong to a minority group and had a stable and supportive upbringing. Whilst I recognise that anyone is susceptible to developing "extremist" views, research has suggested that individuals who have faced negative life experiences and marginalisation may be at increased risk (Simi et al., 2016).

Originally, I had planned to explore young people's experiences of the Channel Panel process. Currently, there is no research in this area and interviews where participants recounted their experiences could have allowed for their views to be captured. However, despite getting ethical approval and receiving support from various professionals in this field, additional approval required from the Home Office to pursue this was rejected. Therefore, an alternative focus was pursued; the experiences of Educational Psychologists (EPs) involved with the Channel Panel. This provided an opportunity to develop understanding of EPs

experience of working with young people within the Prevent programme's Channel Panel process.

1.5 Overview of Thesis

The thesis consists of five chapters. This introductory chapter is followed by *Chapter 2.* Here, in the literature review, theoretical perspectives pertinent to the development of "radicalisation" will be discussed. The systematic literature review will present current research relating to the psychological factors underpinning the development of "extremist" views. General discussion regarding the role of the EP will then follow before considering the position of the EP in relation to the Channel Panel. This chapter will also state the rationale and research questions.

Chapter 3 will present the methodological approach and methods used to gain an insight into the experiences of EPs. This includes the research paradigm, ontological and epistemological stance as well as the rationale for adopting an Interpretive Phenomenological Approach (IPA). Further consideration of aspects relating to IPA will also be discussed. Qualitative methods will be presented in relation to gaining an understanding of the lived experiences.

Chapter 4 will present the findings of IPA through the development of Personal Experiential Themes (PETS) and subsequent interpretation of Group Experiential Themes (GETs).

Chapter 5 will discuss the findings regarding relevant literature within this area. The quality of the study will be evaluated; the strengths and limitations will be considered. The unique contribution will be discussed and implications of the present research for practice as well as future research presented before final conclusions drawn.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Overview of Chapter

The present study focuses on EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel and working with young people who have been identified as at risk of "radicalisation." This chapter will present relevant literature and theory in relation to the present study. The present study focuses on EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel and working with young people who have been identified as at risk of "radicalisation." This chapter will present relevant literature and theory in relation to the present study. This chapter will include a systematic review of current literature exploring the experiences of individuals who have developed "extremist" views, experiences from family members who have observed this process are also included.

2.2 Theoretical Perspectives: The Development of "Radicalisation"

This section will present several theoretical perspectives that literature has attributed to the development of "radicalisation". This includes the Personal Uncertainty and Reactive Approach Motivation theory, Ecological Systems Theory, and resilience as a protective factor.

2.2.1 The Personal Uncertainty and Reactive Approach Motivation theory

The model of Personal Uncertainty (Hogg et al., 2013) suggests that the "adoption of ideological extremes functions as an antidote to the ubiquitous human experience of personal uncertainty" (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016, p. 347). The model of Reactive Approach Motivation (RAM; McGregor et al., 2013) "conceptualises personal uncertainty as an impediment of goal pursuit which in turn gives rise to anxiety" (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016, p. 348). Sewell and Hulusi (2016) attempted to combine the models as an explanation for how the adoption of "extremist" beliefs can manifest. Personal uncertainty refers to the events experienced throughout an individual's life, including personal relationships and wider "macro pressures" (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016, p. 347) such as the political context or austerity. These experiences can increase a person's feelings of anxiety and uneasiness; it is believed that the adoption of "extremist" ideologies is able to subdue these feelings (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016). The RAM theory, underpinned by neuropsychological research conducted by Gray (1982), is believed to reduce anxiety, and increase motivation (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016). The RAM theory consists of

three parts which corresponds to specific functions (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016). These include the 'front-end' representative of motivational conflict, the 'middle end' includes the Behavioural Inhibition System (BIS) responsible for regulating motivational processes and the 'back-end' representative of the compensatory domain and motivated with goal resolution (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016). The theory assumes that when goal pursuit is interrupted, personal uncertainty is increased which is believed to be accompanied by feelings of anxiety (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016). This BIS regulates processes required for motivation when goal pursuit is interrupted and could lead to a state of motivational conflict (McGreggor et al., 2010; Sewell & Hulusi, 2016). The BIS "initiates an aroused and vigilant state, which persists until goal conflict is resolved or an alternative means for the original motivation for the goal has been found" (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016, p. 348). The compensatory domain seeks to resolve the goal and it is suggested that "extreme ideologies offer a compensatory domain for the original goal motivation [as it is] serving the function of reducing the anxiety that resulted from goal conflicted personal uncertainty" (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016, p. 349).

Studies have provided support for the use of personal uncertainty and RAM in relation to "radicalisation". A study by McGregor et al. (2008) noted an increase in individuals' development of intense, critical opinions regarding religious or political views that were different to their own, when personal uncertainty was present. These ramifications are that "uncertainty induced defensive zeal processes can bias religious convictions" (McGregor et al., 2008, p. 4) and individuals may resort to this to ease anxiety that is caused by unresolved conflict and uncertainty (McGregor et al., 2008). It is important to acknowledge that research into the efficacy of these models may not be reflective of the relationship between motivational conflict and personal uncertainty (D'Lima, 2019). This theory does not account for the wider context that could lead to individuals adopting "extremist" views (D'Lima, 2019). Overall, the research supports the view that individuals are likely to adopt "extremist" ideologies, both religious and socio-political, as a response to primed personal uncertainty (McGreggor et al., 2010; Sewell & Hulusi, 2016).

2.2.2 Ecological Systems Theory

The process of developing "radical" views is complex and therefore, a more holistic approach that considers the role of the individual, their environment and wider societal and

cultural factors is required (Lynch, 2013; Sewel & Hulusi, 2016). Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) proposes that an individual's experiences are shaped by the different systems within their environment. The microsystem which refers to family and peer relationships, the ecosystem indicative of the wider political, cultural, social, and economic factors and the macrosystem representative of societal attitudes and culture (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). This eco-systemic model could be used as a potential framework to explore the development of "extremist" views and provide further understanding of the influence of numerous factors at the various systemic levels (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The model could also be used to inform preventative and supportive programmes for individual identified as at risk of "radicalisation". Research conducted by Ghosh et al. (2023) directly applied Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) to "radicalisation" when exploring the educational and social context of two females who left Canada to join ISIS in Syria. The study used the theory as a conceptual framework to identify push and pull factors that contributed to this (Ghosh et al., 2023). Key findings from the study include socio-ecological challenges specifically their experiences and interactions at school, their family and with peers appeared to influence "radicalisation" (Ghosh et al., 2023). This research highlights the need to adopt a holistic eco-systemic model to understand the development of "extremist" views to provide a broader explanation. This corresponds to critiques of the use of Personal Uncertainty and RAM theory stating that this does not account for the individual's environment (D'Lima, 2019).

The limitations of applying Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) to understanding "radicalisation" include the specificities of how particular events directly affect the developmental outcomes of a young person (Cook & Schneider, 2024). Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) does not provide precise details of the specific factors and experiences that can lead an individual to develop "extremist" views (Elliott & Davis, 2020).

A systematic literature review by Taylor and Soni (2017) investigated individual's lived experiences of the Prevent Strategy (2015) in educational settings. The review considered the role of eco-systemic factors in the prevention of "radicalisation" (Taylor & Soni, 2017). The review concluded that the current culture of surveillance is reflected in the experiences of young people and important critical discussion is deterred in schools, primarily due to a sense of fear from school staff feeling ill-equipped to respond (Taylor & Soni, 2017). According to Taylor and Soni (2017) this perpetuates possible existing feelings of alienation for some young people which could result in negatively impacting their sense of belonging which could lead

to intergroup conflict. The review supports the need to use Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) to view "radicalisation" holistically and the influence of the individual's environment in contributing to the development of "extremist" views.

2.2.3 Resilience as a Protective Factor

Within the literature (Masmoudi et al., 2022; Sklad & Park, 2017), there is a reoccurring theme of resilience as a factor for preventing the development of "extremist" views and supporting intervention. Resilience is defined as "capacity to cope with adversity and to recover and bounce back after a significant or critical crisis, challenge or event" (Masmoudi et al., 2022, p. 303). A systematic literature review published by Masmoudi et al. (2022) presented factors categorised under three areas: individual resilience factors, family resilience factors and community resilience factors. The individual factors encompass a plethora of sub themes including a sense of identity, empathy, cognitive resources, educational achievement, self-control, and a sense of belonging (Masmoudi et al., 2022). The family resilience category refers to family members and involvement in violence and parenting behaviours (Masmoudi et al., 2022). Community resilience includes connection and engagement; an individual having social support which was concluded as key to contributing to developing resilience (Masmoudi et al., 2022). It includes aspects such as social and political empowerment, agency, collective identity, providing a safe space and community cohesion (Masmoudi et al., 2022). The theme of community, particularly developing of relationships, appeared frequently throughout the research and has a role in preventing "radicalisation" (Masmoudi et al., 2022). Therefore, it is suggested by Masmoudi et al. (2022) that resilience is key for prevention and intervention. It is "related to a community's capacity to identify radicalisation risks, prevent the recruitment and polarisation of individuals […] and recover after recruitment or involvement in violent extremism acts through reintegration, learning and adaptation" (Masmoudi et al., 2022, p. 303).

A study that supports the importance of resiliency as a protective factor was conducted by Sklad and Park (2017). Sklad and Park (2017) developed on this by exploring how "radicalisation" can be prevented in educational settings. The study presented further psychological mechanisms that could underpin the process of adopting "extremist" reviews: seeking acceptance, positive social identity, conforming to group norms, frustration linked to

deprivation, sense of a lack of legitimate means, in group/out group differences and dehumanisation of victims (Sklad & Park, 2017). The study concluded that preventative strategies should aim to build resiliency, eliminate discrimination of 'out group' members, and seek to increase self-efficacy (Sklad & Park, 2017).

2.3 Additional Factor Contributing to the Development of "Radicalisation"

This section will present an additional factor highlighted by the literature as contributing to the development of "radicalisation", childhood adversity and trauma.

2.3.1 Childhood Adversity and Trauma

When considering research on the specific factors that impact on an individual developing "extremist" views, there is a reoccurring theme of trauma and childhood adversity in the literature (Simi et al., 2016; Masmoudi et al., 2022). An American study conducted by Simi et al. (2016) developed on this by using in-depth interviews with 44 participants to gain an insight into first-hand experiences of factors contributing to the development of "extremist" views that align with white supremacy. The study involved participants who had adopted an "extremist" view as well as their family and friends (Simi et al., 2016). The research concluded that negative life events, financial instability, mental health specifically related to trauma or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and marginalisation were factors that led to people becoming "radicalised" (Simi et al., 2016).

There are, however, limitations to the application of this research. Although the study suggests recommendations for prevention and intervention, it does not solely focus on "radicalisation" taking place during adolescence (Simi, et al., 2016). Furthermore, the recommendations in this study (Simi et al., 2016) are specific to the USA laws, policy, and systems for preventing "radicalisation" and so may not be generalisable to the UK.

2.4 Systematic Literature Review

This section will present the rationale for the systematic literature review, discussion regarding the chosen methodology, the criteria for studies and search strategy. The process of

developing themes and interpretations will then follow. After this, the rigour of the findings will be explored and the quality appraisal to ensure plausibility is established will be presented.

2.4.1 Rationale for conducting a Systematic Review of the psychological theory underpinning the process of "radicalisation" for adolescents.

Research into "radicalisation" defines it as a "psychological phenomenon" (Augestad Knudsen, 2017, p. 39) due to the psychological factors (individual and wider context) responsible for the development of "extremist" views. To discover what previous research indicates about the psychological processes underpinning the process of "radicalisation" for adolescents, a systematic search and review of the current literature is required. The aim of the systematic review is to explore the experiences of young people that have been identified under the guidelines of the Prevent Agenda (2011) or equivalent. It is hoped that this will provide an insight into the psychological processes underpinning the development of "radicalisation".

2.4.2 Systematic Review Methodology

The extraction of data from the studies, the synthesis and presentation depend on the type of data; the purpose of the synthesis is to present the outcomes as well as identifying issues relating to the approach and research quality (Major & Savin-Baden, 2010). Although quantitative methods of synthesis are well established, the nature of the review question and the focus of the review, a qualitative synthesis was selected as the most appropriate way to draw together the evidence.

Qualitative Synthesis

The purpose of qualitative synthesis is to review the literature through collating studies and extracting themes, promoting theory development and transferability (Savin-Baden, 2010). A qualitative synthesis enables the development of understanding, in this case, the psychological processes of "radicalisation", allowing for a more comprehensive view and insight into the topic (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009).

There are various types of qualitative synthesis including thematic synthesis which involves sourcing recurrent themes within selected studies to address the review question (Drisko, 2020). This contrasts with a meta-ethnographic synthesis which involves developing interpretations through the analysis process (Noblit & Hare, 1988; Savin-Baden, 2010). Meta-ethnographic synthesis requires the selection of papers to include 'rich' descriptions, this may entail quotations and wider contextual information in relation to the study (Savin-Baden, 2010). This allows the researcher to consider the interpretations made within the context of the research (Savin-Baden, 2010; Major & Savin-Baden, 2010). Other qualitative methods of synthesis such as refutational synthesis were considered. Like meta-ethnography, refutational synthesis seeks to adopt a holistic view of the research (Savin-Baden, 2010). However, it places greater focus on the contradictions between the research rather than generating interpretations (Savin-Baden, 2010). As the present review focuses on developing interpretations regarding the psychological factors underpinning the process of "radicalisation" for young people, a meta-ethnographic synthesis was selected. The interpretive nature of meta-ethnography is consistent with the interpretivist stance of the present study, discussed in *Chapter 3*.

Method Overview and Rationale

Noblit and Hare (1988) proposed meta-ethnography as an alternative method to meta-analysis, building on Strike and Posner's (1983) view of synthesis as bringing sources together to form a 'whole,' thus, providing greater understanding of a particular area (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009).

Meta-ethnography focuses on similar topic areas within the literature and seeks to direct the researcher to identify similarities and categorise common traits by extracting second order themes (Major & Savin-Baden, 2010). From this, interpretative analysis guides the researcher to extract third order interpretations (Noblit & Hare, 1988; Major & Savin-Baden, 2010; see Table 2.1 for phases of meta-ethnography). The benefit of using a meta-ethnographic approach is the acknowledgement of how the wider context (such as the individual's environment, factors surrounding them and how these interact) influences the data (Savin-Baden, 2010). This method recognises the role of the researcher and their interpretation of the literature as part of the synthesis process (Savin-Baden, 2010). Meta-ethnography stipulates that the studies explored can vary in design and are scrutinised

through the generation of second order themes, overarching themes and third order interpretations (Savin-Baden, 2010). The value of using meta-ethnography is that it directly addresses the critique that it is less robust by offering a multi-stage process to guide the extraction of themes (Savin-Baden, 2010).

Nevertheless, meta-ethnography is not without criticism. The review question can limit the information gathered and interpretations made (Savin-Baden, 2010). To address this, the research question has been carefully considered to ensure that it does not limit the search process. For example, the use of the intentionally broad phrasing as to exclude relevant research, see Table 2.3 for search terms. The inclusion and exclusion criteria, outlined below in Table 2.2, were devised to ensure that they allowed for papers relevant to the question to be identified as part of the process. Another criticism of this synthesis method is the lack of plausibility of the interpretations (Savin-Baden, 2010). To overcome this, the multi-stage process of generating themes developed by Noblit and Hare (1988) will be adhered to (see Table 2.1 for phases of meta-ethnography). The researcher will ensure transferability through presenting the process of developing the second order themes, the subsequent generation interpretations, as well as reflecting on this process to reduce the risk of researcher bias (Savin-Baden, 2010).

Process of a Meta-ethnography

Table 2.1

The phases of a Meta-ethnography (Noblit & Hare, 1988)

Phases of a Meta-ethnography	Description
Phase 1: Getting started	The researcher identifies the area of interest and the focus of the synthesis.
Phase 2: Deciding what is relevant to the initial interest	The researcher considers what is being learned from the process and boundaries to which studies will be included need to be established.
Phase 3: Reading the Studies	The process of repeatedly reading the papers and making notes of any findings. This includes metaphors, concepts, and themes (patterns across the data set.
Phase 4: Determining how the studies are related	The researcher identifies similarities and differences between the studies, making a list of the key metaphors, phrases, ideas and/or concepts and their relations for each study. They are then juxtaposed by the researcher.
Phase 5: Translating the studies into one another	This stage involves comparing the meaning of the findings systematically whilst considering their contexts.
Phase 6: Synthesising the translations	The process of comparing any common or translated concepts highlighted in the previous phase. This is done to determine whether concepts can incorporate other studies. This provides an opportunity for the researcher to access new interpretations and understandings of the data.
Phase 7: Expressing the synthesis	This refers to the adaption of findings of the synthesis to a wider audience.

2.4.3 Research Question for Systematic Review

A meta-ethnographic synthesis was chosen to answer the following review question: *What does previous research indicate about the psychological processes underpinning "radicalisation" in young people?*

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

When conducting the search, the following inclusion and exclusion criteria were used to determine which studies would be included.

Table 2.2

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Feature	Inclusion	Exclusion	Rationale
Publication	Peer reviewed articles	Articles that are not published or are theses were excluded.	This increases the likelihood of higher quality research as papers have been assessed by experts within the field, giving them further credibility. The decision was made not to include grey literature due to it not being subject to a peer-review process.
Publication date	Published in the last 13 years, dated between 2011 and 2023.	Papers were excluded if they were published before 2011.	This ensures that research papers are relevant to the introduction of pertinent legislation such as the Prevent Agenda (2011). Limiting the search to the last 13 years allows for the most recent research to be included.
Study design	Studies with qualitative research designs or mixed methods.	Papers were excluded if they were solely quantitative studies.	The current review focuses on developing understanding of the psychological processes underpinning the development of "radicalisation" therefore, only studies that contained at least some elements of qualitative design which sought subjective and individual views were included in this review. Whilst it is acknowledged that quantitative research could provide a valuable insight, it was felt that this type of data can restrict a person's experiences. In contrast, qualitative research offers 'rich data' which would allow for interpretations regarding the psychological factors underpinning the process of "radicalisation" to be made. Furthermore, this aligns with the

			researcher's theoretical stance which focuses on interpretivism and the importance of understanding individual experience.
Geographical location	Studies conducted in the UK, Europe, and North America.	Papers were excluded if the research was conducted in geographical locations other than the UK, Europe, and North America.	Due to the limited amount of literature in this area, the geographical locations where the research was conducted needed to be broadened to the UK, Europe, and North America. This corresponds with the formation of the Radicalisation Awareness Network, a forum for European practitioners to develop practices to address "extremism" (Migration & Home Affairs, 2024) In the USA, the Countering Violence Extremism Strategy and subsequent development of a community-based approach to empower local partners to support with the prevention of "extremism" were both established in 2011 (Ingham, 2018). In Canada, the Anti-terrorism Act had been reviewed in 2007 which essentially mirrors the Prevent Agenda (Department of Justice Canada, 2021).
Language	Studies written in English.	Papers were excluded if they were written in other languages.	The researcher is limited to understanding English therefore, papers written in English were selected to reduce the risk of translation errors.
Sample	The papers need to include young people in the age range from 15-30 years old.	Papers were excluded if they focused entirely on individuals who were outside this age bracket.	This incorporates the target age range and is supported by the statistics which state adolescents, followed by young adults account for most of the referrals (Home Office, 2023a). The age range purposely does not include young people younger than 15 years old. Whilst it is possible that young people below the age of 15 years old may be in the process of being radicalised, they would not meet the threshold for Channel Panel involvement until behaviours relating to "extremist" views had been exhibited. Due to the limited research available, the age range was

			expanded to 30 years of age. The Channel Panel meetings include discussions of adults and young people and individuals aged 21-30 years of age make up the third largest proportion of referrals. Because of this, and the fact that research is limited, these studies were included.
Focus of the study	The focus of the research needed to be on individual's experience of "radicalisation".	Papers were excluded if the focus did not include details of individual's experiences of "radicalisation."	The focus of this review is to explore the experiences of adolescents in order to develop interpretations regarding the psychological processes. Due to the lack of research published in this area, it was decided that research involving 'individual's' experiences which included the family members of young people who had developed "extremist" views would also be reviewed. Therefore, studies that do not focus at all on the experience of individuals (young people directly or family members) will be excluded.

2.4.4 Search Strategy

According to Savin-Baden (2010) a search strategy is required; this increases the credibility of the review and ensures the process can be replicated. An inclusive search of the literature in relation to the research question was conducted between 02.02.2024 and 03.02.2024 and repeated on 14.05.2024, with the focus of finding the most relevant papers for all the databases searched.

Initial Exploratory Searches

The search terms were developed from the inclusion and exclusion criteria Table 1. Initial exploratory searches were manually conducted using internet search engines and University library databases (such as Google Scholar, Google and NuSearch) to explore the key concepts relating to the psychological theory of the research evidence. Due to the limited number of papers generated by this terminology, it was decided that the focus would remain on research involving those who had experienced "radicalisation" during adolescence and interpretations would be made on the psychological process underpinning their experiences. The following search terms used are listed in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3

Search terms for Systematic Review

Search Terms	Alternatives	Truncations
Young people	Teenagers, adolescents	Young pe*, teen*, adolescen*
Experiences	Views, perceptions, participation	Experienc*, participat
Radicalisation	Radicalization, Extremism	Rad*, extremi*
Psychology *Later removed*	Theory	Psych*

Systematic Searches using Databases

A total of three databases were used in this literature search: Psych INFO (OVID), ProQuest (access to over 54 databases) and Scopus. These databases were searched using a range of terms (see Table 2.3). A range of synonyms were also considered using Boolean operators to broaden the search and to allow for additional terminology to be considered (e.g., young people, adolescents; see Table 2.3). The searches were exported to Excel, which was used to support the selection and organisation of the saved articles. The researcher also performed hand searches of the reference lists contained in the relevant literature to locate the most relevant studies to address the review question.

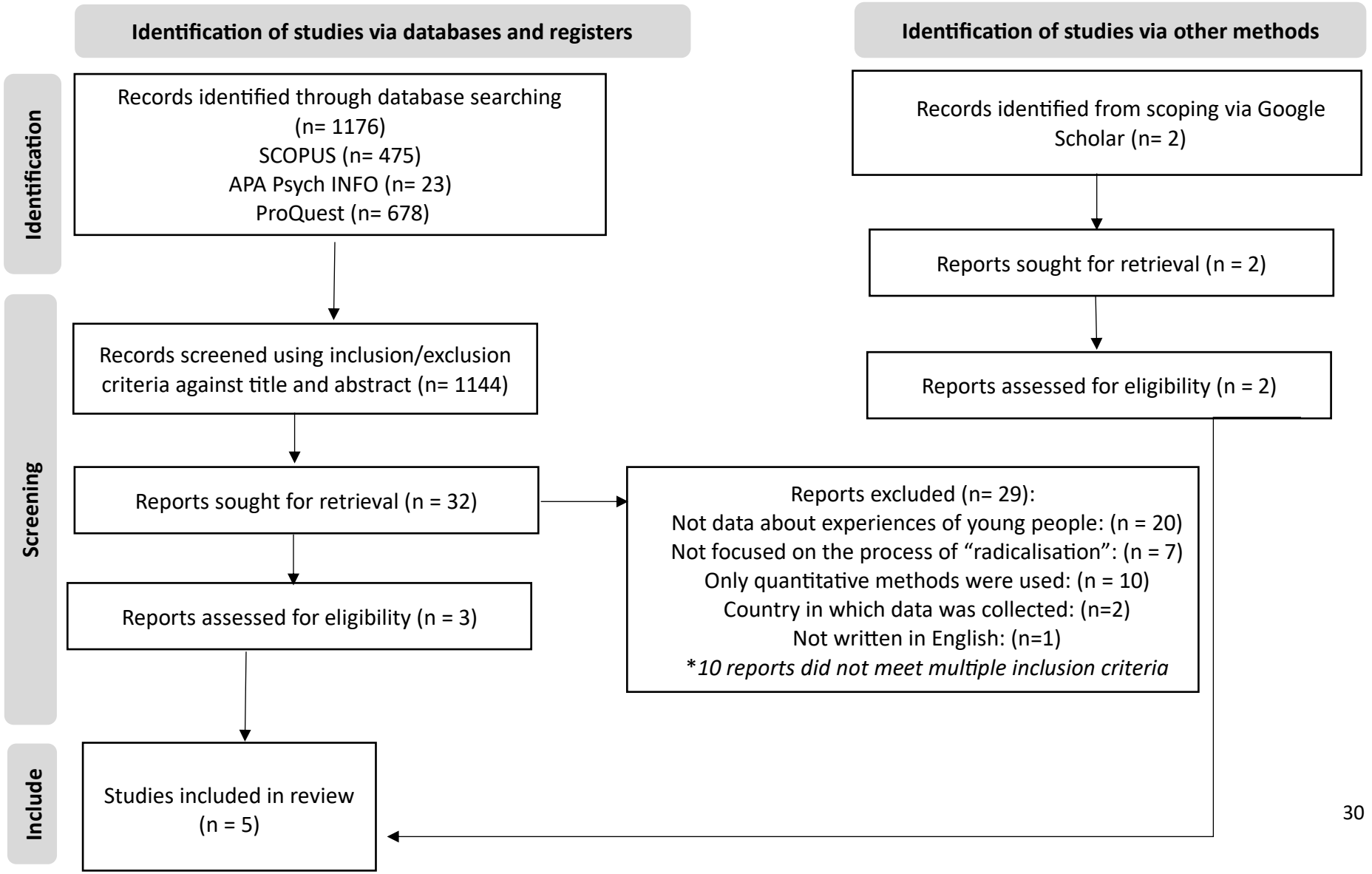
2.4.5 Database Search and Screening

Selecting the studies

Initial screening of study titles and abstracts in relation to the inclusion and exclusion criteria resulted in 1,144 reports being removed primarily because they did not focus on the process of "radicalisation", were written in a language other than English, and/or they were conducted in a country that was excluded. This was followed by a full reading of the remaining 32 articles in full text to ascertain relevance in line with the inclusion criteria (see Figure 2.1). At this point, 29 reports were excluded, the principal reasons for exclusion were the study not focusing on the process of "radicalisation", the focus was not on experiences of individuals or only quantitative methods were used (see Appendix 1). An additional two papers were sought via a scoping search on Google Scholar using the same search terms as documented in Table 2.3. These, combined with those selected from the database search, led to five studies being selected for the current review.

Figure 2.1

The process of screening and selecting records for the systematic review



2.4.6 Summary of Included Studies

A total of five studies were included in this systematic literature review. All five of the studies were found through searches of the databases, and all are peer reviewed journal articles. A summary of the included studies has been provided in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4

Summary of Included Studies

Details of the study				
Publication details *including author, year, & country*	**Research Aim**	**Sample**	**Method of data collection**	**Method of data analysis**
Gaudette, Scrivens & Venkatesh (2022) Canada	To provide an in-depth account of former "extremists'" use of the Internet and the connection between their on- and offline worlds during their involvement in violent "extremism".	10 former (8 males; 2 females) "right-wing extremists", participants were aged between 27- 44 years.	Semi structured interviews	Thematic analysis
Pilkington & Hussain (2022) United Kingdom	To understand what enables and what might 'prevent' "radicalisation" and how this relates to current academic, policy, and practice.	39 participants (all male); 20 participants had previously aligned with far-right ideology and 19 had previously aligned with "Islamist extremism". Participants were aged between 19 – 33 years old.	Semi structured interviews Field diaries Mediated dialogue events	Ethnography
Ellefsen & Sandberg (2022) Norway	To explore the process of "radicalisation," particularly the everyday aspects such as relational approaches that can result in the development of "extremist" views and how this can be prevented.	26 participants; 7 previously aligned with "Islamic extremism" and 19 were family members of those who had experienced "radicalisation".	Semi-structured interviews	Thematic analysis

		Participants were aged between 18-30 years old.		
Brown, Helmus, Ramchand, Palimaru, Weilant, Rhoades, & Hiatt (2021) United States of America	To understand why individuals, develop "extremist" views and gain further understanding to how this can be prevented.	36 participants; 24 were former "extremists", 10 were family members and 2 were friends (8 female; 16 male). Most cases regarded participants who had previously aligned with right-wing white supremacy groups and the remainder had aligned with "Islamic extremist" groups.	Semi structured interviews	Thematic analysis
Ghosh, Tiflati, Dhali, Mahmut & Chan (2023) Canada	To explore the socio-ecological circumstances that may have led the two women featured in the case studies towards "radicalisation".	A total of 8 participants were interviewed and this comprised of family, friends and professionals who had worked with two females who had joined ISIS and subsequently travelled from Canada to Syria aged 17 years old.	Semi structured interviews and focus groups	Jacksons (2011) interpretive approach Promotes analysis of representation, interpretation, and self-reflection Themes extracted from data

Publication

The journals were published between 2020 and 2023. Despite the study by Ghosh et al. (2023) being published in 2023, the data collection took place in 2017 and so any interpretation of its findings will need to consider this.

Sample & Setting

The samples size ranged between 8 to 39 participants. Two studies involved participants who reside in Canada, the remaining three involved participants from various geographical locations namely, the UK, Norway, and the USA. The inclusion of four studies situated outside the UK is justified as "radicalisation" applies across cultures. The countries also have legislation that resembles that of the Prevent Agenda (see Table 2.2 for Inclusion Criteria).

All except one of the studies involved interviews with individuals who had previously been involved with "radicalisation" (Brown et al., 2021; Gaudette et al., 2022; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022; Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022). All studies included within their samples young people under the age of 30. However, due to lack of information in some studies it was not possible to distinguish between the views of those over and under 30. It is recognised that this represents a considerable limitation of this review. With regards to Gaudette et al. (2022) and Pilkington and Hussain (2022) it was not possible to distinguish the views of those over and under 30, the decision was taken to include this paper to ensure a valuable insight was not lost in an otherwise small pool of research. One of the studies (Ghosh et al., 2023) does not speak to those who have experienced "radicalisation" but involves family members as well as friends and professionals that were related to/worked with the two individuals. A limitation here, is the nature of the data; this secondary data does not focus on the lived experiences of those who have firsthand involvement but nevertheless it provides a valuable insight into the psychological processes underpinning "radicalisation". The study by Ghosh et al. (2023) was included because it was felt that the accounts of those who have observed the process can help to develop an insight into the psychological processes that are underpinning the development of "extremist" views (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016). Furthermore, the focus of the study by Ghosh et al. (2023) remains on the experience of these two young people and the factors surrounding their involvement, satisfying the inclusion criteria.

Focus of the studies

All the studies in the systematic literature review explored the experiences of those who had adopted "extremist" views either directly or indirectly via family members and close friends. The studies considered a range of different ideologies; it was important that the sample reflected a range of ideologies to avoid perpetuating stereotype-related narratives previously highlighted (Lynch 2013; McGlynn & McDaid, 2016). Four of the five studies focused on factors that contributed to individuals experiencing "radicalisation" (see section 1.2 for *Defining Terminology* for the definition adopted by the researcher) as well as the factors associated with ''de-radicalisation'' (Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022; Brown et al., 2021; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022). One of the studies, Gaudette et al. (2022) presented a deeper focus on the role of the internet played in the process of "radicalisation".

Interestingly, the studies differed in how they conceptualised "radicalisation"; research by Ellefsen and Sandberg (2022) and Gaudette et al. (2022) stipulates the requirement of violence specifically to achieve political or ideological goals, whereas Ghosh et al. (2023) includes the use of violence but does not specify this as a defining feature of "radicalisation", focusing more on the individual's belief systems. The variance in definition has implications for the research; it will have impacted on each study participant eligibility criteria and as such on their data collection, analysis, and findings.

2.4.7 Methodology, Data Collection & Analysis

All the studies adopted a relativist paradigm, however there are nuances between the methods; a constructivist grounded theory approach used by Gaudette et al. (2022) seeks to develop understanding of a topic area whilst an ethnographic lens adopted by Pilkington and Hussain (2022) focuses more on the individual's interaction within their environment. The interpretative methods advocated by Ghosh et al. (2023) are concerned with how individuals make sense of their experiences whereas research by Ellefsen and Sandberg (2022) focus on a relational approach, exploring the individual's relationships. The study by Brown et al. (2021) uses a life-course approach, aiming to understand the interaction between the individual and social change. Whilst these approaches to the nature of reality are similar, their approach to how knowledge is acquired varies.

All the studies used qualitative research methods with the main method being one-to-one semi-structured interviews; one study used field diaries to complement data from interviews (Pilkington & Hussain, 2022) and another used focus groups (Ghosh et al., 2023; see Table 2.4). Thematic analysis was the most selected method for data analysis with one using an ethnographic approach; an inductive method which involves "direct and sustained contact" with participants within their day-to-day context (Pilkington & Hussain, 2022, p. 8).

The timeliness of data collection in relation to the phenomenon varied amongst the studies; participants in the research conducted by Gaudette et al. (2022) had been interviewed after their association with "extremism"; the timelapse between involvement and interview ranged from four to 22 years. The longitudinal nature of the interviews has implications for findings as how participants made sense of their experience could have been affected by their stage of life compared to participants who have not had as much time to reflect on their experiences (Gaudette et al. 2022). Furthermore, data was collected six years prior to publication which could have repercussions for the analysis, specifically, the interpretations made by the researchers.

Overall, the studies adopted a relativist approach; the view that multiple realities exist, and so ontological and epistemological stances reflected this (Moon & Blackman, 2014). They ranged from a constructivist approach (Gaudette et al., 2022), the belief that meaning is created by the individual and subjectivity (Brown et al., 2021), the belief that meaning exists within the individual (Moon & Blackman, 2014).

2.4.8 Quality appraisal of studies

The quality of the five studies included in the review were critically appraised using Gough's (2007) Weight of Evidence framework. Each study was reviewed individually. The framework includes three areas: methodological quality, methodological relevance, and topic relevance.

Weight of Evidence A is a generic assessment of the coherence and integrity of evidence (Gough, 2007). As qualitative research can be difficult to appraise, the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP; 2018) a scoring framework consisting of 10 questions was used to guide appraisal of Weight of Evidence A (CASP, 2018; Appendix 3). The use of

structured checklists to support the Weight of Evidence (Gough, 2007) to appraise a meta-ethnographic approach has been supported by Dixon-Woods et al. (2007). The framework required 'yes' or 'no' answers (CASP, 2018). All papers scored above seven, and all papers except Brown et al. (2021) were judged highly for methodological quality (see Appendix 2 for Weight of Evidence A).

Weight of Evidence B focuses on the appropriateness of the evidence for responding to the review questions. This includes the methodological relevance of the research design (Gough, 2007). This part of the framework focuses on determining the methodological relevance of the studies (Gough, 2007). As the inclusions/exclusion criteria directed which papers were included, all studies were rated 'high' for methodological relevance (see Appendix 3).

Weight of Evidence C assesses the topic relevance of the focus of the evidence for the review question (Gough, 2007). The current review focused on the individual experiences of the development of "extremist" views. As the focus of the review was young people's experiences; Brown et al. (2021), Ellefsen and Sandberg (2022) and Ghosh et al. (2023) were given a rating of 'medium' due to participants being family members and/or professionals. Gaudette et al. (2022) and Pilkington and Hussain (2022) were rated as 'medium-high' as they were deemed to have greater relevance due to the inclusion of young people within the selected age range (see Appendix 4).

Weight of Evidence D determines the amount to which the included studies contribute evidence to answer the review question (Gough, 2007). This element of the framework provides an overall rating in terms of the studies in relation to the review question (Gough, 2007; see Appendix 5).

Weight of Evidence

The Weight of Evidence ratings for the studies in the review are presented, along with explanations in Appendices 2-5. The five studies were given an overall rating (low-high) based on the Weight of Evidence D (Table 2.5).

Table 2.5

Overall scores from the Weight of Evidence quality appraisal (Gough, 2007)

Study	WoE A	WoE B	WoE C	WoE D
Brown et al. 2021	Medium	High	Medium	**Medium**
Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022	High	High	Medium	**Medium-High**
Gaudette et al., 2022	High	High	Medium- High	**High**
Pilkington & Hussain, 2022	High	High	Medium- High	**High**
Ghosh et al., 2023	High	High	Medium	**Medium-High**

2.4.9 Synthesis of Data

As directed by Noblit and Hare (1988) Phase 3 involves repeatedly reading the studies and making notes of any findings as well as similarities and differences between them. Using reciprocal translation to determine the likeness and contradictions of the studies, the themes were noted across the studies to identify initial themes (Appendix 6-8 for process of developing second order concepts and third-order interpretations). A total of eight second order concepts (also referred to as themes) emerged; initial themes were noted, and translations were generated by comparing and contrasting data. These were then synthesised into third-order interpretations which allowed for new insights which may not have been evident in the individual studies (Noblit & Hare, 1988).

Table 2.6

A table showing the third-order interpretations developed from the initial themes and then second order concepts across the studies (Noblit & Hare, 1988)

Second-order concepts	Third-order Interpretations
Lack of positive social connections and relationships	**Vulnerability**
Social, emotional, mental health difficulties	
Developing a negative sense of self	**Resiliency**
Lack of positive sense of belonging	
Group dynamics	**Connection & Community**
Lack of exposure to others	
Risk factors	**Wider systems**
Context surrounding the young person	

2.4.10 Expressing the Synthesis

Noblit and Hare (1988) directed that the final phase of conducting a meta-ethnography involves adapting the findings of the synthesis for a wider audience. This section will present the third-order interpretations and corresponding themes.

Third Order Interpretation 1: Vulnerability

The themes *social, emotional, and mental health difficulties* and *lack of a positive social connections and relationships* led to the development of this third order interpretation. The studies in the review suggested a shared experience amongst participants of feelings of isolation (both from their family and community) and a lack of sense of identity. It was

interpreted that this could lead to individuals seeking connectedness with others (Gaudette et al., 2022; Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022; Brown et al., 2021; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023). From this, a further interpretation that some participants who joined organisations and aligned with "extremist" views seemed to be vulnerable, was developed. This interpretation reflects the situation several of the participants reflected across multiple studies prior to them adopting "extremist" views (Gaudette et al., 2022; Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022; Brown et al., 2021; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022). This could suggest a link between those who are experiencing a sense of *vulnerability* and seeking connection from others. This interpretation also encapsulates the *vulnerability* of individuals who may be targeted and subsequently recruited by existing members of organisations (Brown et al., 2021; Gaudette et al., 2022). There was a sense that, for some individuals, membership with an organisation and the development of "extremist" views enhanced participants' connectedness and relatedness with others (Brown et al., 2021; Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022; Gaudette et al., 2022). It appeared that membership compensated for feelings of *vulnerability* such as rejection and/or earlier childhood experiences (Brown et al., 2021; Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022; Gaudette et al., 2022).

Theme 1: Social, emotional & mental health difficulties

The importance of *social, emotional, and mental health difficulties* was evident across four studies (Brown et al., 2021; Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022; Gaudette et al., 2022; Ghosh et al. 2023). This reflected the commonality across the literature regarding a lack of connection with others and a feeling of rejection from friends and family (Gaudette et al., 2022; Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022). This is echoed in Brown et al. (2021) where participants had shared feelings, predominantly from earlier childhood of feeling lonely at school, and difficulties with developing relationships. In addition, participants in research by Ghosh et al. (2023) shared feelings of isolation, *"everything was negative for her"* (Ghosh et al., 2023, p. 17). It was interpreted that these feelings could contribute to a sense of *vulnerability* which some participants appeared to attribute to making them susceptible to developing "extremist" views; *"as for the recruiters themselves,* […] *a lot of the time they will go after that kid who is isolated, feels alone and…like, they want someone who's isolated and who will trust them immediately"* (Gaudette et al., 2022, p. 1344).

Theme 2: Lack of positive social connections and relationships

A reoccurring feature of young people's experiences emanating from the research was a sense that *a lack of positive connections and relationships* appeared to contribute to the development of "radicalisation". There appeared to be a link between a lack of positive social connections and difficulties with familial relationships; *"I would say that her relationship with her father had deteriorated"* (Ghosh et al., 2023, p. 17) and *"when youth have problems at home, they want to leave faraway to feel better"* (Ghosh et al., 2023, p. 17). There was a sense that some participants may have concealed relationships to maintain negative friendships; "*my family doesn't want me to be with her"* (Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022, p. 8). It was interpreted that a lack of positive connections with others could lead to strained relationships with family members (Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022). Within the studies (Brown et al., 2021; Gaudette et al., 2022), there was a sense that developing connections with others with "extremist" views allowed individuals to feel a sense of connection; *"they listened to me"* (Brown et al., 2021, p. 3) and *"that's where I first connected with people who were local"* (Gaudette et al., 2020, p. 24). Furthermore, maintaining relationships and forming emotional attachments appeared to be key factors to supporting the intervention process (Brown et al. 2021; Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022). This suggests that, for those who develop "extremist" views there could be an absence of developing positive social connections and relationships, reaffirming the possibility that a lack of positive connections can contribute to the development of "extremist" views.

Third Order Interpretation 2: Resiliency

This third order interpretation was developed from the following themes: *developing a negative sense of self* and *lack of positive sense of belonging*. The data seemed to suggest that the absence of *resiliency* was an important factor contributing to individuals being identified as at risk of "radicalisation". This refers to an individual being able to overcome challenges and the ability for them to adjust (Masmoudi et al., 2022; Sklad & Park, 2017). Participants in research by Ellefsen and Sandberg (2022) and Pilkington and Hussain (2022) highlighted resiliency as a potential protective factor for preventing the involvement with organisations. Throughout all five of the studies, there was a sense that participants who had experienced "radicalisation" appeared to have a difficulty with developing resiliency and it was interpreted that this was a contributing factor to the adoption of "extremist" views

(Brown et al., 2021; Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022; Gaudette et al., 2022; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022; Ghosh et al. 2023). This interpretation reflects elements which seemed to be shared by participants with feeling different, a sense of loneliness and misrepresentation (Gaudette et al., 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023; Brown et al., 2021; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022).

Theme 3: Developing a negative sense of self

The theme was evident across three studies (Gaudette et al., 2022; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023). Participants in Ghosh et al.'s (2023) study referred to feeling 'different' and like an outsider which appeared to result in difficulties with developing a sense of identity: "*there are a lot of different people that think differently about this. I am a Quebecer and so are you, we are both Quebecers. When we talk about Quebecers, we talk about whites"* (Ghosh et al., 2023, p. 15). It was interpreted that developing a negative sense of self could impact an individual's ability to be resilient and could lead them to developing "extremist" views as a means of them making sense of who they are (Gaudette et al., 2022; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023). For some participants, there was a sense that denial of being able to practice religious beliefs openly and feeling marginalised were possible contributors, *"I feel that there is always a fear to practise our religion"* (Ghosh et al., 2023, p. 12). There was also a sense that a misrepresentation of an individual's faith could lead them to feeling isolated; those *"deemed to be vulnerable to be radicalised because they live in a certain area and they've come from a certain background and they practise a certain faith, it's not helpful. It can just have the opposite effect"* (Pilkington & Hussain, 2022, p. 20). There was a sense that the notion of 'Britishness' was problematic and the need to not implicate oneself as not 'un-British' was key when considering identity (Pilkington & Hussain, 2022). This theme highlights the importance of identity and the difficulties some individuals experience with feeling misunderstood which, according to the literature, connects with *developing a negative sense of self* (Gaudette et al. 2022; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022; Ghosh et al. 2023).

Theme 4: Lack of positive sense of belonging

The overarching theme of *lack of positive sense of belonging* incorporates feelings shared by participants regarding integration with a social group, for example, joining an organisation that shares "extremist" beliefs (Gaudette et al., 2022). Gaudette et al. (2022) interviewed former "extremists" who shared that they developed a sense of connection, a

feeling of 'brotherhood' and a sense of belonging when joining "extremist" organisations. Participants described *"wanting to be part of something"* (Gaudette et al., 2022, p.1345) and "*a person that was looking for direction"* (Gaudette et al., 2022, p. 1345). In addition to Gaudette et al. (2022) studies by Brown et al. (2021) and Pilkington and Hussain (2022) reflect participant's feelings of gaining support and a sense of being valued by others:

The main thing he did was give me belonging and he promised me that, "hey, if you come and hang out and I'll introduce you to more of these guys." And I always wanted to belong to something because I had failed at sports (Gaudette, 2022, p. 17-18).

It was suggested that feeling a sense of belonging acted as a maintenance factor as it appears to contribute to participants remaining part of potentially "extremist" organisations (Brown et al., 2021; Gaudette et al., 2022; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022). The remaining studies Ellefsen and Sandberg (2022) and Ghosh et al. (2023) promote the importance of developing commonality with other non-radicalised individuals in the community as a means of supporting a sense of belonging.

Third Order Interpretation 3: Community and Connections

This theme was interpreted from the following subthemes: *group dynamics* and *a lack of exposure to others*. Some participants reported that their association with "extremist" groups allowed them to develop a sense of connectedness with others (Brown et al., 2021; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022; Gaudette et al., 2022; Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022). There was a sense of alignment amongst the research with the development of "extremist" views and association with others that seemed to create a feeling of community (Pilkington & Hussain, 2022; Gaudette et al., 2022). For participants, shared values appeared to create a means for connection and thus, the sense of community (Brown et al., 2021; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023). It was interpreted that the feeling of being part of the community appeared to be a key element contributing to the development of "extremist" views and engaging with "radicalisation" could have been a means of maintaining a sense of connectedness. There was a sense that a lack of challenge from others also contributes to this interpretation as the connection between individuals appears to be built on their shared identity and "extremist" views (Gaudette et al., 2022; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022). Some participants suggested that support from others appeared to evoke feelings of empowerment (Gaudette et al., 2022). Moreover, the persistent exposure to materials and engagement with

others, particularly through online forums, appeared to develop a sense of connection and belonging, whilst also reaffirming the feeling of community (Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022; Gaudette et al., 2022; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022).

Theme 5: Group dynamics

This theme was present in all five studies. The research indicated the importance of developing unity as a group for young people, particularly in relation to the 'other' groups. Some participants reflected on their experiences and indicated a sense of in-group rhetoric and being unified against the 'other', *"they have different value systems* […] *they despise facets of western culture"* (Pilkington & Hussain, 2022, p. 16). For others, there was a sense of community amongst individuals aligning with the same ideology and experiences (Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022; Ghosh et al. 2023). For some this was their shared perception of injustice and religious persecution, *"when you see that you have to defend who you are all the time, and you want people to accept you and your religion"* (Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022, p. 13). The data indicated that the sense of unity seemed to be perpetuated through polarisation, active dehumanisation of the 'other', the pursuit of joint enterprise and de-individuation (Brown et al. 2021; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022).

Theme 6: Lack of Exposure to others

All studies contributed to the development of this theme. This theme captures the lack of contact participants had to people from backgrounds that differed from their own demographic (religious, cultural, social, etc). The data indicated that lack of exposure could result in an absence of challenge; *"looking back on it, we enabled each other quite a bit* […] *whenever we would ever see a problem* […] *they'd always find a way to twist it around and blame it on somebody else"* (Gaudette et al., 2022, p. 1346). This appeared to suggest an 'echo chamber' effect as "extremist" groups were shared which seemed to reaffirm the participant's own beliefs (Gaudette et al., 2022).

The overexposure to information, particularly the unlimited access to online resources appeared to reaffirm views by some participants (Gaudette et al. 2022; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022; Brown et al. 2021; Ghosh et al. 2023). Moreover, this theme captures the development of misconceptions regarding people of different religious and/or ethnic backgrounds; particularly if these have been engrained over time whilst simultaneously developing a lack of

tolerance, reflected by some participants (Brown et al. 2021; Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022). Furthermore, some participants reflected on being involved in interventions which included challenging ideologies and subsequently increasing an individual's exposure to others with differing demographic characteristics, *"I get sources* […] *to prove them wrong, their way of thinking and ideology"* (Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022, p. 11). This is reiterated by a participant who reflected *"we've challenged each other, and we've come to some sort of reconciliation"* (Pilkington & Hussain, 2022, p. 32).

Third Order Interpretation 4: Wider systems

The development of this interpretation encapsulated the two themes: *risk factors* and *context surrounding the young person*. Participants reflected on the difficulties experienced in early childhood, particularly in the child's immediate environment, and it seemed there was a connection with the development of "extremist" views (Brown et al., 2021; Gaudette et al., 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023). The data indicated an interaction between the systems around the child, such as how their parents interacted with school and support services, particularly if these interactions were negative (Brown et al., 2021; Ghosh et al., 2023). There was also consideration of the wider context, such as the geographical position of the young person, the resources that are available to them and the political landscape (Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022). Within this, aspects of societal discourse and media portrayal were considered as factors which some participants attributed as contributing to the development of "extremist" views (Pilkington & Hussain, 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023).

Theme 7: Risk Factors

Four studies contributed to the development of this theme; Brown et al. (2021), Pilkington & Hussain (2022), Gaudette et al. (2022), and Ghosh et al. (2023). This theme represents the experiences that some participants appeared to believe contributed to the development of "extremist" views. This includes the exposure to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs; Brown et al., 2021; Gaudette et al., 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023), special educational needs and disabilities (SEND; Gaudette et al., 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023), trauma (Brown et al., 2021), and conflict (Ghosh et al., 2023). For some participants, there was a sense that negative experiences in early childhood led to them feeling a sense of exposure and a lack of safety (Brown et al., 2021). For some individuals, it appeared that difficulties in early

childhood contributed to them being at increased risk of developing "extremist" views; *"I think she had negative experiences at school* […] *maybe she also experienced stuff in her community, people not from the same religion"* (Ghosh et al., 2023, p. 12). When considering this in relation to child development, it is possible that experiences like trauma may lead to specific developmental and emotional difficulties that could lead an individual to being at increased risk of developing "extremist" views (Gaudette et al. 2022; Ghosh et al. 2023).

Theme 8: Context surrounding the young person

This theme reflects the factors surrounding the young person; this includes their familial environment as well as the wider systems such as the geographical sphere and political landscape that surrounds them (Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023). Three studies contributed to the development of this theme (Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023). It was acknowledged by some participants that the beliefs of family members, particularly relatives within the young person's home, were influential (Ghosh et al., 2023). It could suggest a connection between family members who had "extremist" views and young people developing "radicalisation" (Ghosh et al., 2023). This theme also reflects the interacting systems around young people such as their family's negative perceptions of school and other agencies (Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023). Some participants reflected on their social network; there was a sense of needing to be represented and the importance of societal discourse surrounding them (Pilkington & Hussain, 2022). The studies (Pilkington & Hussain, 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023) appeared to suggest the importance of political representation as there was a sense that a lack of political voice contributed to the development of "extremist" views; *"I am still convinced that it is politics that is primarily responsible for radicalisation and violence"* (Ghosh et al., 2023, p. 16).

2.4.11 Review Summary

The aim of the current review was to explore what existing literature presented regarding the psychological processes that underpin the development of "extremist" views. The review focused on the experiences of individuals who experienced "radicalisation." Although some of the studies in the review included family members, friends and

professionals, there is still relevance in the findings as it provides an understanding of the processes that contributed to the development of “extremist” views. The review included five peer reviewed qualitative studies that were quality appraised using Gough’s (2007) Weight of Evidence. The reports were rated ‘medium’ (Brown et al., 2021), ‘medium-high’ (Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023) and ‘high’ (Gaudette et al., 2022; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022) showing that the research was of sound quality (Gough, 2007).

The current systematic review highlighted several aspects that relate to the psychological processes underpinning “radicalisation”. The third order interpretations indicated the range of areas that could contribute to the development of “extremist” views; *vulnerability, resiliency, connection and community and wider systems.* It was interpreted that *vulnerability* captured the sense that difficulties with maintaining relationships and feelings of isolation appeared to contribute to individuals developing “radicalisation”. *Resiliency* was interpreted to be a psychological process underpinning the development of “radicalisation”; the absence of which appeared to contribute to individuals developing “extremist” views. Moreover, the interpretation *connection and community* acknowledged the development of relationships with other “extremist” individuals which appeared to be important as it seemed it was through group affiliation that many individuals in the studies found themselves developing “radicalisation”. There was also an indication of the *wider systems* which include: relationships with family, the societal discourse, political landscape, and other environmental factors that underpin the development of “radicalisation”. From the third order interpretations, it transpired that there are a range of psychological processes, both individual and environmental, that underpin the development of “extremist” views. This suggests that there is a link between the development of “radicalisation” and psychological processes. Whilst current guidance (Home Office, 2023a; Home Office, 2023b) does not require an EP to be present on the panel, this provides support for exploring the experiences of EPs who have experience of attending.

When considering the conclusions drawn from the review in relation to the theoretical perspectives previously discussed, there are several links. The Personal Uncertainty model and RAM theory (Hogg et al., 2013; McGregor et al., 2013; Sewell & Hulusi, 2016); the theory postulates that “radicalisation” may lead to reduced anxiety relating to personal uncertainty and could increase motivation. This is echoed in the studies presented in the systematic review where participants recall feelings of community and connection (Brown et al., 2021;

Pilkington & Hussain, 2022; Gaudette et al., 2022; Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022). When combined, the Personal Uncertainty model and RAM theory suggest the development of "extremist" views can reaffirm the feeling of having a common goal and a sense of identity (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016). The participants in some of the studies referred to rejection from family and friends as a factor leading to the development of "extremist" views (Brown et al., 2021; Ghosh et al., 2023). Some of the studies also shared the importance of close bonds with family and friends as being integral to supporting "deradicalisation" (Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022). There are links to Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) which account for the role of the wider context, particularly the systems around the individual, their interaction, and the impact this can have. This is reflected in the subthemes: *risk factors* and *context surrounding the young person* (see Table 2.6) and pertains to the influence of key individuals, the political landscape, societal discourse, and geographical factors (Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023). The importance of resiliency was presented as a preventative and protective factor that had implications for individuals developing views. The third order interpretation of *resiliency* encompassed aspects including a sense of agency and collective identity as well as emotional stability and connection with others. Within the included studies, there was an acknowledgement of the impact of childhood adversity and trauma, particularly the impact of developing connections and secure emotional attachments in childhood.

2.4.12 Limitations of the Systematic Literature Review

Some of the limitations for this review have already been highlighted. These include the inclusion of two studies being problematic as the age of when individuals were involved with "extremist" groups was not clear (Brown et al., 2021; Gaudette et al., 2022), the lack of clarity regarding deciphering the viewpoints of young people compared to adults (Gaudette et al., 2022) and the longitudinal nature of another study (Gaudette et al., 2022; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022). This section will consider those that have not been previously discussed. Furthermore, research from the USA (Brown et al., 2021), Canada (Gaudette et al., 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023), and Norway (Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022) is not necessarily representative of the socio-economic and cultural landscape in the UK.

Qualitative synthesis has been critiqued for comparing research of varying theoretical assumptions and methods and it has been questioned whether it is appropriate to combine their findings (Duden, 2021). Despite all studies adopting a relativist approach, there were differences regarding the assumptions pertaining to the acquisition of knowledge.

Although the development of overarching themes from second order codes followed the specific approach promoted by Noblit and Hare (1988); ultimately, the interpretations were made by one researcher and so would have been influenced by their experiences.

Moreover, there are only a total of five journals included in this review and so it could be argued that a greater number of papers would have increased the credibility, dependability, and the transferability of its findings.

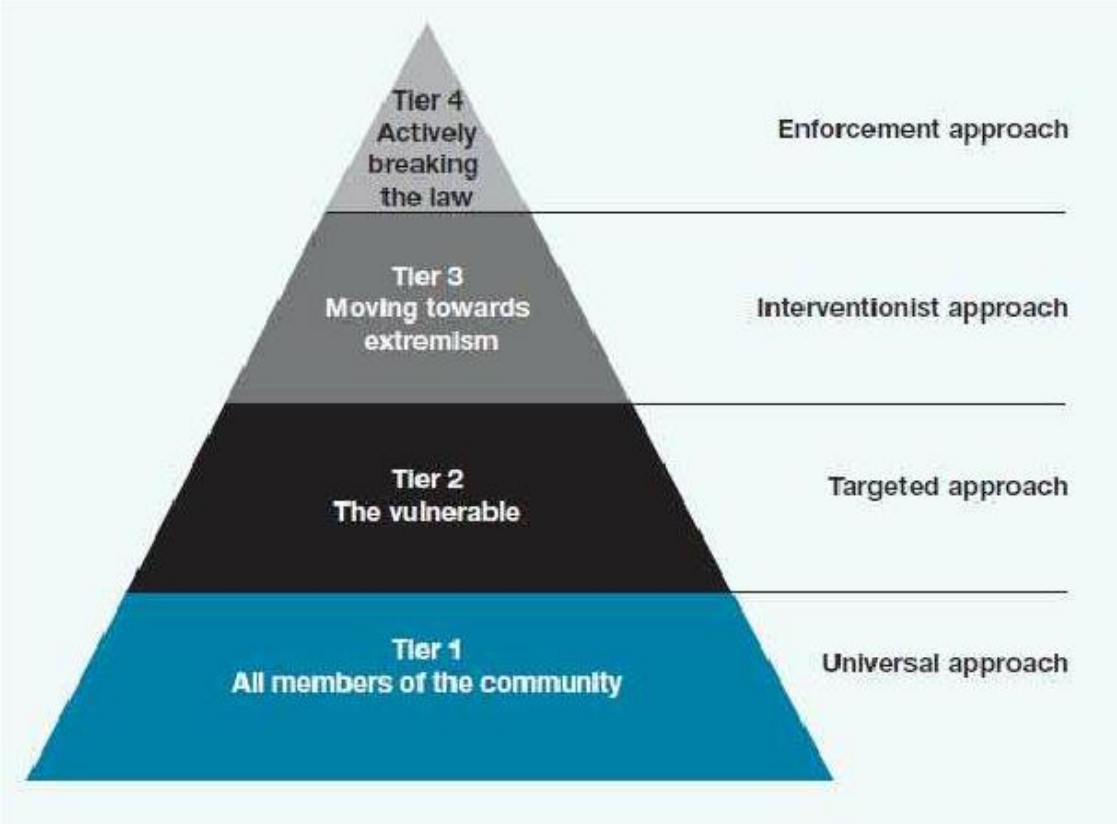
2.5 The Prevent Agenda and the Channel Panel

This section will discuss what is known in relation to the Prevent Agenda (2011) and the Channel Panel (2012), the current context and pertinent literature.

Originally introduced in 2007 by the Labour government, the Prevent Agenda (2011) is a government strategy aimed at preventing and deterring individuals from adopting "extremist" views. The development of the Prevent Agenda (2011) was underpinned by a model presented by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO; Figure 2.2). The model conceptualises "radicalisation" as developing over tiers, the first tier refers to all members of the community, indicated by the 'universal approach' (Christmann, 2012). The second acknowledges those who are believed to be 'vulnerable' to possessing "extremist" views. This group of people are those who are targeted by the Channel Panel, introduced later in this section (Christmann, 2012). The third tier refers to those who are believed to be not actively involved in violence but are supportive of those who are and are involved in recruitment of those in the second tier (Christmann, 2012). The final tier actively in breaking the law where "radical" views have developed into violence (Christmann, 2012).

Figure 2.2

The ACPO tiered model of intervention to address Prevent (Christmann, 2012)



The model has been criticised as being oversimplified as it assumes that the process of adopting "extremist" views is a linear process (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). Furthermore, the ACPO model does not account for the complexities of this process and the inter-relating factors that contribute to an individual developing "extremist" views (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). Research by McCauley and Moskalenko (2008) promotes an alternative method of understanding the process of developing "extremist" views, recognising that it can occur over three different levels: individual, group and mass-population level. According to McCauley and Moskalenko (2008) the pathway of developing "radicalisation" involves different 'mechanisms' that can influence the process. This involves factors such as personal victimisation, political grievance, and within-group competition. The 'mechanisms' are not designed as an extensive list of factors, and it designed to recognise some of the psychological processes that could underpin the adoption of "extremist" views (McCauley & Moskalenko,

2008). This research presents the process of developing of “extremist” views as complex and contrasts the linear nature of the ACPO model presented in Figure 2.2.

The Department for Education published guidance in 2015 placing greater responsibility on schools to identify children and young people who may have adopted “extremist” views. The legislation outlines four areas including a responsibility to:

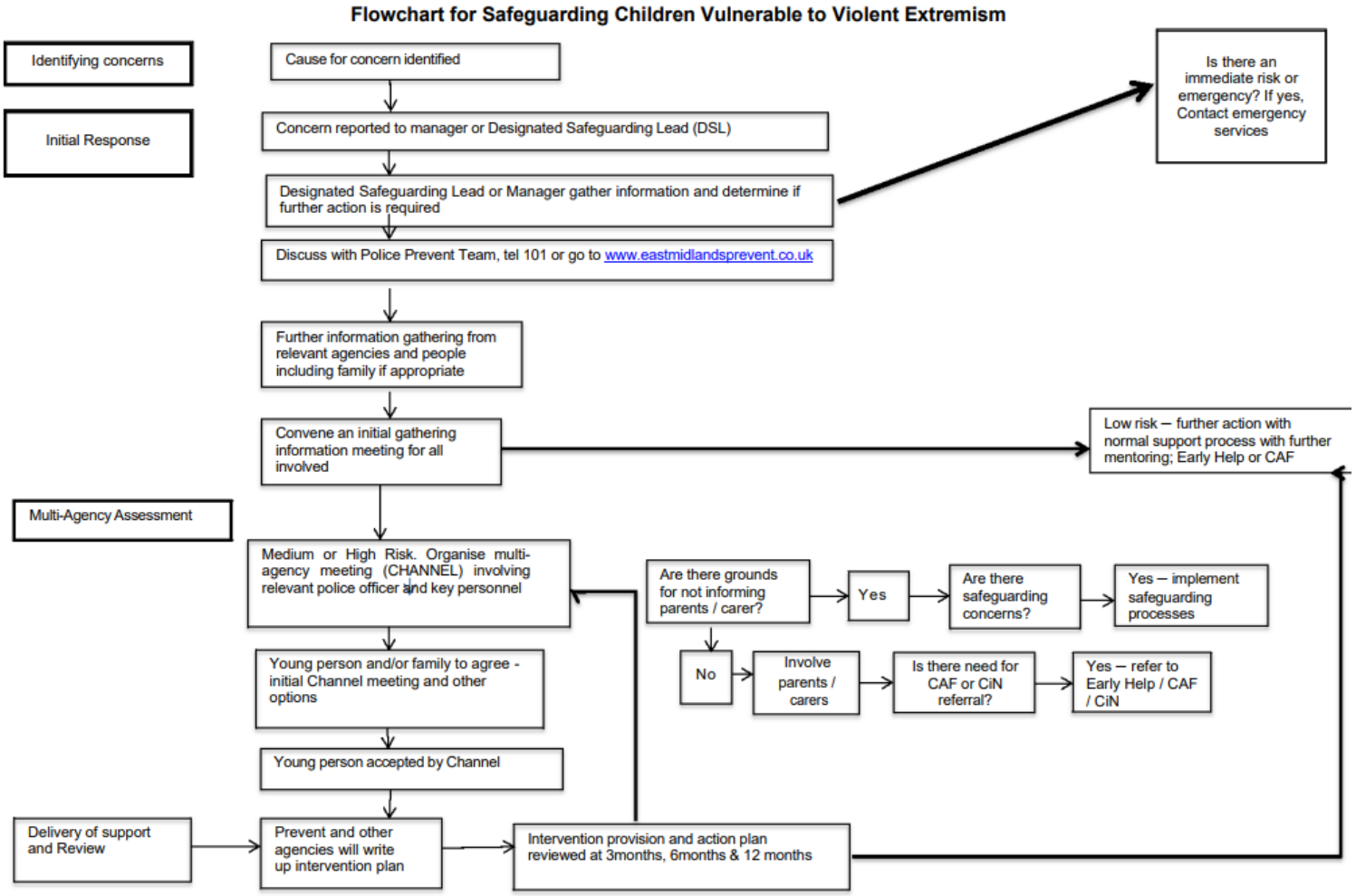
1. Identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation.
2. Know what to do when they are identified.
3. Build resilience to radicalisation through promoting British values and enable them to challenge extremist views.
4. Manage concerns via setting-based Safeguarding Policies.

2.5.1 Updated Prevent Agenda: The Current Approach

The Prevent Agenda involves public services such as education, health and social care and the referral process is overseen by the police (HM Government, 2011). The updated Prevent Agenda (2023) aims at preventing people from becoming involved in “extremism” (Home Office, 2023a). Currently, “radicalisation” is considered a safeguarding concern and so, some of the responsibility of supporting the identification of children and young people who are at risk is placed on educational settings (Home Office, 2021a). The statutory guidance stipulates that school staff are required to complete annual Prevent training to protect children from the risk of developing “extremist” ideas (Home Office, 2021a). The training encourages staff to recognise the signs that a child or young person may have developed “extremist” views and informs them of the subsequent referral process (Home Office, 2021a). This is reflected in the current LA referral process, see Figure 2.3 for an example.

Figure 2.3

Safeguarding Children Vulnerable to Violent Extremism (PREVENT) Referral Process for Leicester and the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership (Leicestershire County Council, 2022)



The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2018) outlined further responsibility of LAs to provide support to individuals identified as at risk, this includes the introduction of the Channel Panel. The Channel Panel was first piloted in 2007 and then formally introduced across England and Wales in 2012 (HM Government, 2012). The panel promotes multi-agency working to protect those who are considered 'vulnerable'. The Channel Panel has three main functions (HM Government, 2012):

1. Identifying individuals at risk
2. Assessing the nature and extent of that risk
3. Developing the most appropriate support plan for the individual concerned.

The panel consists of representatives from the LA such as education, health, and social care. There are differences between LAs to whether educational psychology is represented; for example, in some services, there is an EP who regularly attends panel meetings which contrasts to the majority of LAs which do not have an EP on the panel (Augestad Knudsen, 2017). Children and young people are referred to the Channel Panel Practitioner and those who meet requirements are discussed at the panel (HM Government, 2012). The referral is reviewed, and a 'Vulnerability Assessment Framework' (VAF) is completed (HM Government, 2012). This ascertains the individuals' ability/risk to cause harm based on three areas; engagement, intent, and capability (HM Government, 2012; Augestad Knudsen, 2017).

Figure 2.4

Channel: Vulnerability Assessment Framework characteristics (HM Government, 2012)

Engagement	Intent	Capability
- Feelings of grievance and injustice - Feeling under threat - A need for identity, meaning and belonging - A desire for status - A desire for excitement and adventure - A need to dominate and control others - Susceptibility to indoctrination - A desire for political or moral change - Opportunistic involvement - Family or friends' involvement in extremism - Being at a transitional time of life - Being influenced or controlled by a group - Relevant mental health issues	- Over-identification with a group or ideology - 'Them and Us' thinking - Dehumanisation of the enemy - Attitudes that justify offending - Harmful means to an end - Harmful objectives	- Individual knowledge, skills, and competencies - Access to networks, funding, or equipment - Criminal Capability

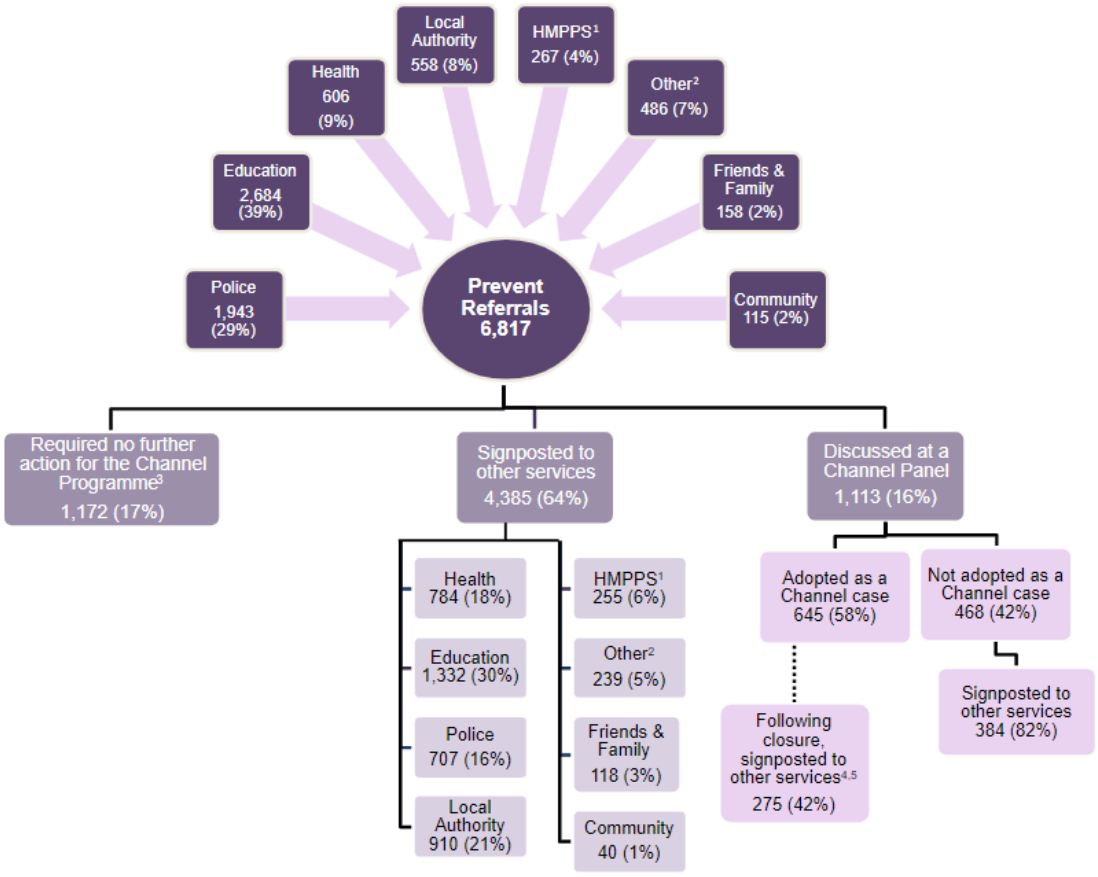
The 'engagement' element refers to the "psychological hooks" (HM Government, 2012, p.2) which include "needs, susceptibilities motivates and contextual influences and together map the individual pathway into terrorism" (HM Government, 2012, p. 2). The 'intent' indicator recognises that not all those who develop views may not intend to adopt to cause harm and aims to recognise individuals who may wish to cause harm (HM Government, 2012). This juxtaposes legislation underpinning the Prevent Agenda (2011) which states that there is a causal relationship between the development of "extremist" views and individuals pursuing acts of terrorism (Silke, 2008; Sedgewick, 2010). The 'capability' element refers to

an individual's competence to cause harm which requires ability, resources, and networking (HM Government, 2012). The VAF is completed alongside further information gathering and is discussed as part of the multi-agency panel meetings. If professionals consider the young person 'vulnerable,' can identify a level of susceptibility, and if the case could benefit from Channel Panel involvement, then intervention is agreed (HM Government, 2012; Augestad Knudsen, 2017). Whilst risk assessment models provide a useful tool to recognise the early signs of "radicalisation", the underpinning elements of the VAF have been criticised for lack of transparency (Augestad Knudsen, 2017). The referral process is predominantly overseen as part of police case management. The police assess the case referred for 'genuine vulnerability' and screen it to determine whether it is appropriate for the Channel Panel (HM Government, 2012; Augestad Knudsen, 2017). This process includes checking if the case is under police investigation, if the individual is considered vulnerable and if that is related to counter terrorism, it is at this point that the case is referred for discussion at the Channel Panel (Home Office, 2023a; see Figure 2.5).

A total of 2,305 referrals were referred through educational settings (Home Office, 2023a). This was the highest number of referrals received through educational settings since the introduction of the Prevent Agenda (2011; Home Office, 2023a). A total of 1,486 cases were discussed at the panel meetings, equating to 23% of the total referrals made. Out of these, a total of 54% which equated to 645 cases were adopted by the Channel Panel (Home Office, 2023a). The number of cases adopted by the panel had increased by 145 compared to the previous year (Home Office, 2023a). The youngest age of individuals referred from educational settings was 14 years of age, which is a decrease compared to the previous year (Home Office, 2023a). For LA referrals, the median age was 17 years of age (Home Office, 2023a). Young people aged between 15 and 20 years of age accounted for the largest proportion of referrals (Home Office, 2023a). A total of 39% of referrals were then signposted to education and the LA for support (Home Office, 2023a).

Figure 2.5

Sector of referral and subsequent journey, year ending 31 March 2023 (Home Office, 2023b)



2.5.2 Literature pertaining to the Prevent Agenda

Mythen et al. (2017) explored the efficacy of the Prevent Agenda (2015) and highlighted it as being outdated, particularly the understanding of "radicalisation" and how this is constructed in policy and then operationalised. The Prevent Agenda suggests that "it is adherence to misguided ideas and values that renders individuals susceptible to violent "extremism" (Mythen et al., 2017, p. 186). The emphasis on religious ideology appears to be misplaced as research (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2012; Schmid, 2013) suggests that this is not the precursor to violent "extremism" (Mythen et al., 2017). The focus on religious ideologies as the main contributor to the development of "extremism" could result in more prevalent factors, such as psychological, etc. being missed (Mythen et al., 2017). The focus on religious ideologies in policy suggests that individuals seeking identity, meaning and community are

driving factors and whilst this may be motivators for some, to frame this within a religious focus is problematic as research suggests it is not the case for most individuals (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2012; Schmid, 2013). The emphasis on religion, particularly Islam, "reproduces erroneous essentialist assumptions that discriminate against Muslims" (Mythen et al., 2017, p. 195). It transpires that little is known about why young people turn to "extremist" ideologies which is problematic given the Prevent policy underpins the Channel Programme (Mythen et al., 2017).

In 2016, a House of Commons Home Affairs Committee Report called for a greater understanding of the complexities of "radicalisation" and addressing the knowledge gaps and described the adoption of a "broad-brush approach" (p.9) as being "counter-productive" (p.9). Despite this, there has been no research in this area and minimal updates to policy in which religious ideologies appear to remain the focus.

2.5.3 Literature pertaining to the Channel Panel

According to the Prevent Agenda (2018), there is a legal responsibility for those working in public institutions to identify signs of "radicalisation"; concerns have been raised regarding the pressure this requirement places on professionals (Mythen et al., 2017; Thornton & Bouhana, 2017). It is important to question how qualified and confident professionals feel to report signs of "radicalisation" (Mythen, 2017). Thornton and Bouhana (2017) examined the effectiveness of the Channel Panel, specifically the knowledge base of professionals attending. The study used semi-structured interviews with six individuals who either organised interventions or were intervention providers and had firsthand experience of Channel Panel meetings (Thornton & Bouhana, 2017). The study highlighted positive aspects of the panel; building partnerships with schools, the holistic approach taken and the ability to tailor interventions to meet the needs of young people (Thornton & Bouhana, 2017). Limitations included the group dynamics of the professionals when opinions differed. Additionally, some interventions were unsuccessful which could suggest an incorrect formulation which may have directed professionals to recommending an intervention that was not suitable (Thornton & Bouhana, 2017). The study highlights a need for professionals with an understanding of development, expertise in socio-cognitive factors and knowledge of how these elements may manifest in young people (Thornton & Bouhana, 2017).

The threshold for Channel Panel involvement is discretionary and differs between LAs, in some authorities, associations with a known “extremist” is enough to warrant referral (Thornton & Bouhana, 2017). Thornton and Bouhana (2017) raise questions around the appropriateness of referrals and the suitability of panel referrals for individuals with known additional mental health and/or learning needs.

2.6 Role of Educational Psychologists

This section will discuss the role of the EP and consider this in relation to their contribution to the Prevent agenda, channel Panel and addressing radicalisation.

2.6.1 Special Educational Needs and Radicalisation

The research has highlighted that individuals with SEND may be more vulnerable to developing “extremist” views (Caton & Landman, 2021). This could be due to additional difficulties with aspects such as misunderstanding social cues, feeling they should do as others say and a possible need for friendship (Caton & Landman, 2021). Chadwick (2019) presented some of the factors that may lead individuals with SEND to develop “radicalisation”. This included loneliness, judgement, lack of experience and ability to detect deception (Chadwick, 2019). Allely et al. (2024) suggested that most neurodiverse young people referred to Prevent were found to not be a ’threat’ with a commitment to a particular ideology but rather driven by an “intense pre-occupying interest” (p. 3). For the majority, they were not being driven by an “operational intent” (Allely et al., 2024, p. 3) and the interaction with resources (such as viewing propaganda videos repeatedly) was perpetuated by obsession, repetition, and compulsion (Allely et al., 2024). Furthermore, individuals with autism may communicate in a way that involves describing content and ideas in a ‘matter of fact’ way with graphic detail which could be confused for a young person adopting “extremist” views (Allely et al., 2024).

2.6.2 Role of the Educational Psychologist

The role of EPs has been debated, fundamentally, EPs are "scientist -practitioners who utilise, for the benefit of children and young people, psychological skills, knowledge and understanding" (Fallon et al., 2010). In practice, this can take the form of consultation, assessment, intervention, research, and training (Fallon et al., 2010). EPs have the capacity to work at different tiers; organisational, group or individual levels and in a range of settings (Fallon et al, 2010). They are also bound by the British Psychological Society's *'Practice Guidelines'* (BPS, 2017) and the *'Standards of Proficiency'* set out by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC; 2023).

There has been discussion in recent literature (Ashton & Roberts, 2006; Lee & Woods, 2017) regarding the unique contribution of EPs. Ashton and Roberts (2006) used questionnaires completed by EPs and Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENDCos) to explore aspects of the role that were considered valuable. The study concluded that the following aspects were most valued by SENDCos: specialist knowledge of SEND and psychology, advice including intervention, consultation skills, systemic working, and problem-solving skills (Ashton & Roberts, 2006). This research highlighted the breadth of the EP role across a range of functions and contexts in which they work.

Lee and Woods (2017) used a mixed methods study to explore the role of the EP; one of the research aims was to examine the distinctive contributions EPs can make within the context of traded services. The research involved interviews with EPs, EPS leads and EPS commissioners (Lee & Woods, 2017). The study recognised that the unique contribution goes beyond cognitive and psychological assessments; commissioners valued the specialised psychological knowledge, experience, and skills such as consultation, collaboration, problem-solving and the alternative perspective they provide to problematic situations (Lee & Woods, 2017). It also highlighted that a substantial area of growth was the opportunity for larger commissions (Lee & Woods, 2017).

2.6.3 Educational psychology and "radicalisation"

Joyce (2018) explored teacher's beliefs, values and attitudes towards "radicalisation" and concluded that EPs have a role in supporting teachers to develop their understanding and

support, possibly through additional training. Furthermore, research by D'Lima (2019) used mixed methods to evaluate the use of RAM theory to support young people identified as being at risk of "radicalisation". The study reported that young people's perceptions of psychological flexibility, reflectiveness acceptance, and assertiveness could have benefits for developing resilience and thus preventing "radicalisation".

Milmine (2023) used a mixed methods study to explore multi-agency perspectives on the role of educational psychology in relation to supporting young people at risk of "radicalisation". The study concluded that there was confusion regarding the roles of multi-agency team members including EPs and about the Channel Panel process. Interestingly, the researcher highlighted inconsistencies with the support provided to young people (Milmine, 2023).

While previous research provides a valuable insight into the role of the EP and how they can contribute to multi-agency approaches, it does not explore the experiences of EPs in relation to the Channel Panel. This suggests that research exploring EP experiences of the Channel Panel could further current understanding of how EPs can contribute to this process.

2.6.4 Educational contribution to the Prevent Agenda and Channel Panel

The role of EPs has developed over recent years and continues to be reshaped as LAs are restructured and schools are under growing pressure to provide support in this area (Fallon et al., 2010; Lee & Woods, 2017). Therefore, this is a growing area of need where Educational Psychology Services (EPSs) may be required to provide support to settings. In some services, EPs sit on the Channel Panel, comprised of professionals from multiple agencies, where medium or high-risk cases are discussed (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016). Sewell and Hulusi (2016) argue that EPs attending the Channel Panel are well placed to support the process by offering advice on child development and using their consultative skills. Sewell and Hulusi (2016) advocates for EP support for children and young people at risk of "radicalisation" using therapeutic interventions that help individuals to recognise uncertainty and develop tolerance. They suggest that EPs work at different levels in support of the Prevent Programme whether this is providing advice and strategies to adults working with the young person to contributing to policy and practice development at a whole school level (Sewell & Hulusi,

2016). Furthermore, research by D'Lima (2019) also promoted EP delivery of group-based interventions as well as considering avenues of indirect support that EPs could provide, including training staff.

2.7 Rationale

2.7.1 Summary of Current Literature

The literature review has highlighted a range of psychological factors underpinning the development of "radicalisation". To further explore what EPs can contribute to supporting young people at risk of "radicalisation", this research will focus on EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel as this appears to be a gap in existing knowledge and research. This should help to gain further understanding regarding how EPs can contribute to the panel.

2.7.2 Rationale of the Present Study

UK Government statistics have shown an increase in the number of referrals to Prevent made in recent years (Home Office, 2021b). Furthermore, young people aged between 15- and 20-years old represent the largest proportion of referrals and this is consistent with the age range EPs work with (Home Office, 2023b).

The systematic literature review demonstrated some of the underlying psychological factors that may contribute to the development of "extremist" views and the following third order interpretations were developed; *vulnerability, resiliency, connection and community* and *wider systems* (Brown et al., 2021; Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022; Gaudette et al., 2022; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023). Despite the inclusion of several studies, there is however, limited research into this area. Therefore, exploration of EPs' experiences will provide further insights into how young people can be supported (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016; Thornton & Bouhana, 2017; Allely et al., 2024).

Research examining the role of EPs suggests that they have a unique skillset that could provide valuable support to the Channel Panel meetings (Ashton & Roberts, 2006; Sewell & Hulusi, 2016; Lee & Woods, 2017). EPs work with children and young people aged between 0-18 years, in some circumstances, this extends to 25 years old, in accordance with the 'SEND Code of Practice' (Department for Education, 2015; Ashton & Roberts, 2006; Fallon et al.

2010). This corresponds with the age of the highest proportion of referrals (Home Office, 2023a). The EP skillset extends to specific knowledge of need and how these may manifest (Fallon et al. 2010).

Within the current context of the Channel Panel, EPs are only present on a small selection of the panels across England. This, combined with the complex and varied psychological processes underpinning the development of "radicalisation", support the need for research into EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016; Lee & Woods, 2017; D'Lima, 2019). Furthermore, research could develop on current literature and provide a valuable insight into how to support young people who have been identified as being at risk of "radicalisation".

2.7.3 Research Questions and Aims

The primary aim of this study is to gain an understanding of EPs' experience of the Channel Pannel. It is hoped that this would provide a greater insight into the role psychology has within this forum. This could develop on existing knowledge about how to support young people who experience "radicalisation". From this, interpretations can be drawn to gain a greater understanding of how EPs could provide support to young people who have been identified as having "extremist" views and will be presented as implications for practice.

The research question for the present study is:

- *How do Educational Psychologists experience the Channel Panel?*

The subsidiary question for the present study is:

- *What implications does this have for Educational Psychologists when supporting young people indirectly through the Channel Panel?*

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Overview of Chapter

This chapter outlines the methodology and methods used for the present study. This includes the consideration of different paradigms, ontological and epistemological standpoints and the position of the current research. There are several methods of data collection including various forms of interviews and focus groups discussed. Furthermore, approaches to analysis will also be presented and justification is provided for the most appropriate method for exploring EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel. Consideration is also given to the importance of reflexivity and ensuring validity when conducting qualitative research. Aspects relating to the recruitment of participants are discussed. The research design of the present study will then be presented which includes details pertaining to the procedure such as the development of an interview schedule and process of analysis. Ethical considerations will also be addressed throughout.

3.2 Research Paradigm

The research paradigm refers to a set of beliefs and associated methods; the paradigm guides the philosophical assumptions and methodological position (Willig, 2013). The paradigm is guided by the researcher's ontological stance (Mertens, 2015). The research paradigm then directs the methodology and methods used to approach the research (Mertens, 2015).

The choice of which paradigm to align oneself to when conducting educational psychology research and practice is the subject of ongoing debate (Cohen et al., 2011; Willig, 2013). Research paradigms range from positivism, which promotes the use of deductive reasoning and mostly uses quantitative methods consistent with a procedural approach compared to inductive approaches endorsed by the post-modernist and interpretivist stances (Robson, 2011). Positivism has faced criticism for reducing responses to educational questions down to only the observable and measurable, whereas Eisner (1992) advocates that interpretations matter, and that value and fact are interlinked. In contrast, post-positivism

assumes that the social world is measurable and knowable, but acknowledges that this knowledge is imperfect (Kroeze, 2012). Therefore, Eisner (1992) rejects positivism based on the argument that educational psychology research is "not engaged in discovering mechanistic universal truths" (p. 9). The belief in one, single, external reality which can be objectively known does not allow for exploration into alternative viewpoints and is therefore, rejected by post-positivism as it is considered reductionist (Moon & Blackman, 2014; Mertens, 2015).

The postmodernist stance critiques the scientific method and therefore opposes causality, deductive reasoning and establishing relationships between variables (Moon & Blackman, 2014). Postmodernism places emphasis on language and social constructs in shaping knowledge (Kroeze, 2012). The interpretivist paradigm also rejects the notion of one, single, external reality (Willig, 2013). Interpretivism differs from postmodernism as it is concerned with understanding social reality (Kroeze, 2012). Whilst postmodernism objects the notion of one truth, interpretivism views individuals and institutions as being fundamentally different and seeks to understand phenomenon through individual experiences (Kroeze, 2012; Moon & Blackman, 2014). Interpretivism aims to explore how participants give voice and make sense of their experiences through qualitative methodologies (Moon & Blackman, 2014).

3.3 Ontology & Epistemology

The ontological stance: the assumption of the nature of reality guides the research paradigm adopted (Mertens, 2015). This then determines the epistemology; the nature of knowledge and what can be known about reality (Cohen et al., 2011). Several ontological and epistemological stances were considered by the researcher. These are discussed in the following subsection before the stance that best aligned to the present study is presented.

The realist ontological stance assumes the view that a single, external reality exists (Cohen et al., 2011). The epistemological assumption here is that "objective knowledge is possible, through experimentation and measurement of what could describe constant relationships between variables" (Mertens, 2015, p. 11; Robson, 2011).

In contrast, the ontological stance of critical realism merges positivism and subjectivity whilst adopting a realist view of the world (Taylor, 2018). Critical realism promotes the existence of an objective reality which exists independently of an individual's perception whilst recognising that there are also subjective interpretations of reality (Taylor, 2018). This paradigm is concerned with deciphering what is objective truth compared to what is subjective reality regarded as truth (Taylor, 2018). This stance assumes that truth cannot be observed and exists independently of human perception, theories, and construction (Groff, 2004). Critical realism accepts that the world is constructed from the 'observable'; individual perceptions and experiences (Groff, 2004; Zhang, 2023). Furthermore, the 'observable' events are caused by the unobservable structures and the social world can only be known through the understanding of these structures (Zhang, 2023). Critical realism maintains that individuals are connected by a real physical and social world, whilst promoting the use of relativism to support understanding and acquisition of knowledge (Groff, 2004; Burnham, 2013; Taylor 2018). This stance assumes that the social world is socially constructed, a concept that has been created by individuals within a society. However, to understand the social world, the structures and systems that underpin it need to be closely considered (Kroeze, 2012; Taylor, 2018). Connolly and Gersch (2016) and Sobitan (2022) have used IPA whilst adopting a critical realist ontology. They argue that a reality does exist for individuals and by rejecting the existence of a reality, research is at risk of denying individual experience, especially of marginalised groups (Connolly & Gersch, 2016; Sobitan, 2022).

The relativist ontological stance assumes that there are multiple realities that are determined by the individual; each individual creates their own subjective version (Mertens, 2015). The epistemological stance is that knowledge is formed through language, interpretation, and interaction and aligns with subjectivity and social constructionism (Mertens, 2015). The relativist ontological stance is fundamentally different to objectivity in that it suggests that humans attach meaning to their ideas that inform how they behave (Robson, 2011).

Subjectivity promotes the view that knowledge is constructed through interactions with others (Robson, 2011). This perspective advocates that the world is understood through peoples' perception of it and therefore, disputes the existence of an objective reality (Taylor, 2018). Subjectivity promotes the ideas that there are multiple subjective realities, and the researcher has their own construction of reality (Robson, 2011). Within this stance, the

researcher has a role in trying to understand how individuals attribute meaning to their experiences and acquire knowledge through their interpretation (Robson, 2011; Mertens, 2015).

Like subjectivity, social constructionism promotes a similar view of knowledge acquisition, however, social constructionism extends to aspects of language (Mertens, 2015). For example, the terminology and meaning associated with the focus of the present study such as the Channel Panel, "radicalisation" and "extremism" have a social dimension to their identification. These dimensions include the identification, perception, and the connotations associated with these terms (Taylor, 2018). Social constructionism considers the phenomenon within the context in which they occur, as well as recognising that participants have a role in constructing this understanding with the researcher (Mertens, 2015; Taylor, 2018).

3.3.1 The Present Study

The researcher's ontological stance guided the selection of a paradigm (Mertens, 2015) that coincided with interpretivist perspective whilst promoting the existence of multiple realities and thus acknowledging the value of individual experience. Based on this, the positivist and postpositivist paradigms were rejected. In contrast, the interpretivist paradigm assumes the stance that understanding of phenomenon is gained through the interpretation of individual lived experiences, which aligns with the use of interpretative phenomenological analysis (Kroeze, 2012; Willig 2013).

With regards to the ontological stance, despite acknowledging that the social world is socially constructed, critical realism promotes the existence of an objective reality which is fundamentally different to the view of the researcher (Taylor, 2018). Furthermore, relativism assumes the existence of multiple realities but ceases to recognise the shared experience that connects the participants within the present study (Robson, 2011; Mertens 2015). Therefore, to complement the alignment with the interpretivist paradigm, and recognise the shared experience of participants, a bounded relativist ontological stance was adopted. This position endorses the view that not one single reality exists, but rather multiple subjective realities, and the interpretation of which depends on the individual (Moon & Blackman, 2014). Bounded relativism also allows for consideration of the socio-political context surrounding the EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel. Bounded relativism promotes the view that individuals

have different perspectives and varied relative views, based on the interpretation of their experiences (Moon & Blackman, 2014). This view assumes that experiences of the same phenomenon can result in one '*shared'* reality existing within a 'bounded' group (Moon & Blackman, 2014). This grouping can be the result of shared experience, cultural, political and/or social factors, with these realities being unique to the group (Moon & Blackman, 2014). The individual experiences of participants are unique, however, in the present study, they are "bounded" by their experiences of being involved with the Channel Panel.

To accompany this, the epistemological perspective was guided by the ontological stance (Willig, 2013) and so, subjectivity and social constructionism were considered. Whilst a subjective approach recognises the role of the researcher, social constructionism varies slightly as it places greater importance on the role of language (Robson, 2011; Taylor, 2018). The epistemological position of the present study is social constructionist which aligns with the belief that knowledge is constructed through language, interpretation, and interaction (Mertens, 2015). Social constructionism connects with the interpretivist paradigm as it is through the interpretation of lived experience that a greater insight into a phenomenon is gained (Taylor, 2018). Within IPA, there is importance placed on language as a means of providing 'rich data' and the role of the researcher within the interpretation process (Smith et al., 2022). Thus, adopting this paradigm is deemed an appropriate way of understanding EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel as well as considering the wider socio-political landscape, that resulted in the development of such processes (Taylor, 2018).

3.4 Research Methodology

Within this section, four pattern-based qualitative analysis methods were considered in relation to the present study. These include Discourse Analysis (DA), Grounded Theory (GT), Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) which is deemed the most suitable for the present study.

3.4.1 Discourse Analysis

DA is often aligned with relativism as it is underpinned by the belief that language is a social practice (Burr, 2000). Discursive psychology is supported by conversational analysis which assumes that 'talk' is a form of action and the researcher examines the structures, rules,

and practices of language (Wetherell et al., 2001). The method assumes that language is rhetorical, and 'talk' is constructed to instigate action. Data is analysed through coding and unlike other qualitative methods of analysis, additional aspects of the interview are coded including, pauses, intonation and change in pitch, etc. (Wetherell et al., 2001).

The limitations of DA include the descriptive rather than explanatory outcomes produced as well as the subjective nature of interpretation and the lack of framework for this process (Wetherell et al., 2001). The approach places importance on social interaction and would not be a sufficient method of analysis for the present study as the focus is EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel.

3.4.2 Grounded Theory

This method aims to establish research that is 'grounded' in sociological theories. GT requires the researcher to bridge the gap between theory and reality by conducting exploratory research which leads to theory formation whilst reflecting on preexisting ideas and empirical research (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). The cyclical process requires the researcher to participate in iterative cycles of data collection and analysis (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). Codes are applied to the data and connections between the categories identified by the researcher (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). The process of analysis is twofold; the researcher frequently compares the individual data to the dataset for similarities and differences as well as comparing the data with theory (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007).

The method is limited as it seems to discount the importance of external factors and the influence these can have on participants' responses. GT was not appropriate for the present study as the method involved limited reflexivity which does not account for the role of the researcher as much as other methods such as IPA (Smith et al., 2022). IPA recognises and positions the researcher as integral to the study (Smith et al., 2022). IPA also aims to draw out and reflect upon these influences that are considered inevitable and of value (Smith et al., 2022).

3.4.3 Reflexive Thematic Analysis

RTA is "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006 p. 79). RTA is used to analyse data concerning experience,

individuals' understanding, ways of being and how they construe the world around them (Braun & Clarke, 2022). RTA operates inductively, with the researcher imperative and active in the process of extrapolating codes from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Within RTA, the researcher is reflexive throughout the collection and analysis processes; RTA involves codes being applied to data and grouped into themes (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

The limitations of this approach include the risk to coherence, primarily due to the flexibility of the process, the difficulty with determining reliability and validity due to the subjective nature of analysis, and the emphasis not being on drawing interpretations from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Furthermore, RTA aims to extract themes across a data set, whereas IPA allows for the recognition of convergence and divergence between participants (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Smith et al., 2022).

In comparison to RTA, IPA is underpinned by hermeneutics and provides a space for the participant to make sense of their experiences, whilst the researcher is active in the process of the interpretation of these experiences (Smith et al., 2022). As IPA is rooted in idiography, it is also concerned with understanding the individual's lived experience (Smith et al., 2022), which renders it a more appropriate method for the present study.

3.4.4 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

IPA is useful for understanding how people make sense of the world and their experiences. This method focuses on the specific characteristics of a participant's interpretations as well as generating patterns across all individuals (Smith et al., 2022). IPA is hermeneutical in nature and supports a researcher and participant relationship; recognising that the researcher has a "central role in the analysis and interpretation of participants' experience" (Tuffour, 2017, p. 4). IPA is also exploratory in nature, allowing for the complexity of lived experience and "explores the meanings people assign to their experiences" (Tuffour, 2017, p. 2).

3.5 Research Methodology of the Present Study

IPA has been selected in favour of other methods discussed (DA, GT, RTA) for its focus on experience and is therefore, more consistent with the research aims. IPA acknowledges

that themes extracted from the data are the researcher's construction of the participant's interpretation (Tuffour, 2017; Smith et al., 2022). This method allows for the researcher to consider the impact their interpretation has on the findings, evident through the reflexive commentary. There are several key elements that underpin IPA including phenomenology, hermeneutics, idiography and reflexivity (Smith et al., 2022). These core principles are discussed, along with the limitations of this methodology, in the following section.

3.5.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology, first developed by Husserl in the early 20th century refers to the philosophical study of 'being' (Smith et al., 2022). Originally, Husserl (1927) developed "reductions," a series of steps aimed at grouping an individual's preconceptions and preexisting knowledge with the purpose of exploring phenomenon (Smith et al., 2022). This technique stipulated that the analysis process must be independent of the researcher's views (Smith et al., 2022). Heidegger (1977) discounted Husserl's "reductions" as the researcher's understanding could not be separated from the data and the closest a researcher can get to fully understanding a person's lived experience, is through interpretation (Smith et al., 2022). Consequently, Heidegger (1962) and Satre (1962) contributed to the understanding of participant's views as "embedded and immersed in a world of objects and relationships, language and culture, projects and concerns" (Smith et al., 2022, p. 16). This development accounts for the wider systems around the individual whilst focusing on interpretation of experience (Smith et al., 2022). IPA considers the participant in relation to their context, rather than independently of this (Smith et al., 2022). This encouraged the researcher to adopt a phenomenological and reflective approach, contradicting the widely used positivist viewpoint used by some researchers (Smith et al., 2022). Unlike other approaches (GT, DA, RTA), the emphasis on phenomenology allows the researcher to consider and account for the participants' wider context, rather than considering individuals in isolation (Smith et al., 2022). The study of 'experience' is complex; it focuses on a lived process, an exploration of perspectives and meaning, which is unique to the participants' conception of and relationship to the world around them (Smith et al., 2022). The concept of 'experience' goes beyond analysing what may have happened to an individual and the researcher seeks to understand participants' relationship to the world through their interpretations (Smith et al., 2022).

For the present study, this refers to the lived experience of EPs involved in the Channel Panel and the socio-political context surrounding this. The researcher's role is to make interpretations based on the participant's account; how they attach meaning to their experiences (Smith et al., 2022). The interview itself provides a space for the participant to make sense of their own experiences through the IPA process (Alase, 2017). Findings reflect the researcher's interpretation of how participants make sense of their lived experiences, achieved by the researcher putting themselves into the position of the interviewees (Alase, 2017).

3.5.2 Hermeneutics

Phenomenology is widely regarded as a "hermeneutic enterprise," (Smith et al., 2022, p.23) which underpins IPA. As interpretivism grew, the philosophical underpinning and theory of interpretation, referred to as hermeneutics developed (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher's interpretation is accounted through hermeneutics as analysis of data is to be viewed within the context of the researcher's previous experience (Smith et al., 2022). Hermeneutic phenomenology identifies the role of the researcher and their perception of the world as being "inextricably intertwined with the way in which they interpret the participant's experiences" (Oxley, 2016, p. 56). Therefore, the current research aligns with Heidegger's version of IPA as the researcher's interpretation cannot be separated from the findings (Smith et al., 2022).

This approach requires reflexivity; when analysing the data, the researcher will naturally apply pre-existing knowledge and preconceptions which must be accounted for through active reflection of their contribution (Oxley, 2016). IPA is an iterative and cyclical process in which the researcher has an 'active' role (Oxley, 2016). Smith et al. (2009) explained that the researcher's role is to share participant's experiences by extracting the 'hidden' phenomenon through immersion in the participant's accounts (Oxley, 2016). The practicalities of this are discussed further in section 3.5.4.

A key feature of a researcher's ability to make meaning of an individual's interpretation involves the application of the 'hermeneutic circle' (Smith et al., 2022). This accounts for the intricacies of understanding a participant's interpretation and specifically refers to the relationship between 'the part' and 'the whole' (Smith et al., 2022). The idea being that to

understand ‘the whole’ one must understand ‘the part’ and vice versa (Smith et al., 2022). This circle functions at various levels, for example ‘the part’ could be representative of a single word and ‘the whole’ could refer to the sentence in which the word appears (Oxley, 2016; Smith et al., 2022). In relation to the present study, the ‘hermeneutic circle’ insinuates that ‘the part’ symbolises the individual’s interview, whilst ‘the whole’ could embody the individuals’ experience of the Channel Panel (Oxley, 2016; Smith et al., 2022).

3.5.3 Idiography

IPA is underpinned by idiography, which contrasts the nomothetic nature of some psychological researchers; it does not focus on establishing trends and generalising findings but is concerned with conducting thorough, in depth and intensive analysis of fewer cases (Oxley, 2016). Each case is considered independently of others, and the research is focused on the ‘particular,’ the individual details of a participant’s lived experience (Oxley, 2016). The ‘particular’ functions on two levels; firstly, the detail and depth of analysis must be conducted systematically and secondly to understand how “experiential phenomena” (Smith et al., 2022, p. 24) have been made sense of by the individual. As IPA does not aim to make generalisations, but rather capture the depth of lived experiences of fewer participants, a small, purposely selected sample is used (Oxley, 2016). Research promoted by the BPS advises that a sample of between three and six participants is ideal, as more cases can be problematic for upholding the idiographic commitment (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011; Oxley, 2016). This number of participants allows for similarities and differences between cases to be ascertained. Compared to other methods, IPA has been critiqued for promoting a small sample but what it does offer is a rich, interpretative analysis from an ‘expert group’ which contributes a unique insight into a particular phenomenon (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011; Oxley, 2016).

3.5.4 Reflexivity

Reflexivity refers to the process of interpretation and reflection that allows the researcher to consider how they have influenced the process (Cohen et al., 2018). It provides a framework for the researcher to be accountable for their own position, acknowledge preconceptions, to recognise that the social and political context are embedded and to

consider how interpretations have been made (Smith et al., 2009). The recursive process allows the researcher to reflect on the role of language, power, ideologies, and social interests as well as the methodological process itself (Haynes, 2012). The researcher's thinking is determined by their pre-existing understanding of the world, values, political position, and use of language (Haynes, 2012). Therefore, it is important that this is acknowledged in the reflexive commentary throughout (Haynes, 2012).

The reflexive process aligns with social constructionism in terms of how an individual constructs knowledge (Haynes, 2012). Researchers engage with the process through the double hermeneutic circle which can take the form of observations, feelings, and interactions, which are noted in a reflective journal (Haynes, 2012). In the present study, commentary boxes are included throughout to capture the researcher's reflexivity.

3.5.5 Limitations of IPA

IPA has been heavily critiqued for lacking standardisation and experimental rigour, aspects that could support external validity (see section 3.9 for further discussion). Typically, within IPA studies, there is an emphasis placed on the collection of 'rich' data where participants are able to communicate their experiences, primarily through language (Tuffour, 2017). Therefore, this implies a pre-requisite level of language ability of all participants (Tuffour, 2017). This is important for researchers to consider when they must counter for potential language differences and difficulties. However, considering the training required to become an EP, this was not specifically noted as part of the criteria (see Table 3.1; Tuffour, 2017; Smith et al., 2022).

Critics have queried whether IPA truly captures experience rather than opinions; within this study the question formation and preparation of prompts aimed at eliciting participants' experiences tried to limit this pitfall (see Appendix 14 for the interview schedule). Furthermore, the six-stage analysis process (discussed in section 3.7) seeks to draw out lived experience through re-reading of transcripts, reflection on the data and elaboration on quality indicators to support accurate and authentic presentation and interpretation of participant views (Smith et al., 2022). If more than the recommended amount of six participants are recruited, this can inhibit the idiographic element of the methodology (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011). Fewer participants allow for a more in-depth exploration of experience

whilst preserving the commitment to an individual's unique lived experience (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011; Oxley, 2016). The temptation to make comparisons within the data can also lead researchers to drifting from the key elements of IPA into a method resembling RTA (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011). Smith, et al. (2009) propose limiting comparisons to one aspect within the group of participants, focusing on the convergence, what is constructed at a group level and divergence, the participant's individual experience (Hefferon & Gil-Rodrigues, 2011) and therefore, allowing them to consider everyone's experience as unique.

Despite these limitations, IPA offers a flexible approach to understanding experience that is consistent with the ontological and epistemological stance and the focus of this study (Tuffour, 2017). IPA offers a framework for exploring EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel by providing a space for individuals to make sense of their experience's whist accounting for the researcher's contribution to the process through the hermeneutic cycles. Therefore, this approach is the most suitable to answer the research questions.

3.6 Research Design

To explore EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel, a total of five EPs were recruited. This section will outline the context surrounding the research, the sampling and recruitment process as well as considering various methods for data gathering.

3.6.1 Recruitment

Participant Selection

IPA requires participants to provide a unique insight into the phenomena (Smith et al., 2022) which is the focus of the study and in this case, EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel. To uphold the idiographic element and promoted by the BPS recommendation for qualitative research; a minimum of three and a maximum of six participants is recommended (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011; Oxley, 2016; Smith et al., 2022). To ensure homogeneity amongst the sample, all participants were selected for their unique insight into the Channel Panel through their direct involvement with the process. Participants will be recruited through purposive sampling to maximise homogeneity of the sample (Smith et al., 2022). In keeping with

Langdridge (2007), as the chosen phenomenon is not considered 'common' as each experience of the Channel Panel process occurs across a variety of different LA contexts. Moreover, interpretation of this could be influenced by variation in the individual EP; their knowledge, experience, and context (Smith et al., 2022). Therefore, participants have been recruited based on their involvement with the Channel Panel (Langdridge, 2007).

Participant Eligibility Criteria

Selection criteria included qualified HCPC-registered EPs, with direct experience of the Channel Panel process. Further eligibility criteria are presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Participant Sampling Eligibility Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
- Fully qualified EPs that are registered with the HCPC working in the UK. - EPs who have attended Channel Panel meetings. - EPs who have been involved in the Channel Panel process whilst working in a local authority service (LA), rather than as a Private EP.	- Trainee Educational Psychologists and Assistant Educational Psychologists. - EPs who have not been directly involved with the Channel Panel.

Direct involvement requires EPs to have participated in Channel Panel meetings. LAs are not obliged to have EP input into the Channel Panel, and currently only a small subset of LAs may involve EPs, thus the pool of potential participants is very small (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016; HM Government, 2021; HM Government 2023). Those who have been involved in cases that have been discussed at panel and where there have been concerns regarding "extremist" views were considered not to have the necessary experience for recruitment. Due to the

limited pool of potential participants, the study will include EPs who have had previous involvement as well as those who are currently involved.

Sample Strategy

Several avenues for recruitment were explored as part of the sampling strategy. Unfortunately, most EP services contacted were unable to participate due to the service not being involved with the Channel Panel. A total of 126 services were contacted through email correspondence. Some social media websites were used, a post was submitted to X, formerly Twitter which was viewed by over 600 accounts, the majority of which were EPs. The details of the study were also posted to EPNET, an EP mailing list with approximately 2,800 members. A colleague also posted details of the study to the 'National Association of Principal Educational Psychologists' (NAPEP).

Final Sample

A total of five fully qualified and HCPC-registered EPs were recruited from different local authorities across the Midlands and North-West of England. The sample consisted of three females and two males. Three participants had previous involvement with the Channel Panel, with two participants currently involved. Previous involvement ranged from five years to eighteen months ago at the time of interview. This sample size was considered sufficient and is in line with BPS recommendations for conducting IPA, as it allowed the idiographic commitment to be upheld (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011; Oxley, 2016).

Reflexive commentary – Recruitment

The process of recruiting participants for the present study was difficult. Therefore, the duration of time since some of the EPs were involved in the Channel Panel varied. For one participant, their involvement was five years ago, and I was initially apprehensive of the impact this would have on the findings. This had implications for how I approached the interview; it was of greater importance that the discussion provided a space for participants to reflect on and make sense of their experiences. Prior to the interview, I reviewed the questions to ensure they covered various aspects of the involvement; the psychological and personal skills they drew upon, what they 'gave' and 'took' from their involvement and how they felt during panel meetings. The EPs varied in seniority, and it was possible that time lapsed, and their current role could impact their recollections and thus, have implications for the findings.

3.6.2 Qualitative Methods for Data Gathering

Qualitative methods of data collection allow researchers to explore phenomenon in greater depth; allowing for 'rich' data to be obtained from how participants communicate their interpretations of lived experience (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Qualitative methods allow for the complexities of human behaviour to be accounted for (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Often criticised for the perceived lack of validity and reliability, qualitative methods can appear to lack the rigour and standardisation of quantitative approaches (Mertens, 2015). It is difficult to exclude biases, particularly if there is a small sample size (Robson, 2011). The role of the researcher in the process of interpretation; specifically, how biases can occur which may impact the interpretation of the data (Robson, 2011). However, despite these criticisms which are addressed later in the methodology (see section 3.8), qualitative approaches remain valuable for exploring the individual's experiences as they aim to recognise and position the researcher as active and integral to the process (Robson, 2011).

Methods of data collections will be considered in the following section specifically, focus groups and different types of interviews.

Focus Groups

Focus groups have been widely used as a data collection method in qualitative research. The group format allows for several participants to respond to discussion amongst participants, a unique feature of this approach (Robson, 2011). The flexible structure provides an opportunity for participants to discuss a particular topic and could lead to individuals sharing more information, allowing the interviewer to collect 'rich' data (Robson, 2011).

However, focus groups are not without their limitations, the main concern being that it is difficult to capture individual views, and this could compromise the idiographic obligation to IPA (Robson, 2011; Smith et al., 2022). There is the added complexity of group dynamics and how the individual voice is extracted from the discussion when there are multiple hermeneutics present (Robson, 2011; Smith et al., 2022).

Interviews

Structured Interviews

This method involves the researcher writing a set of questions that are delivered in the predetermined order (Robson, 2011). This approach prevents the researcher from asking additional questions and so this strategy lends itself to a fixed design study (Robson, 2011). The rigidity of this method did not align with the interpretivist nature of this study therefore, a structured interview was ruled out (Robson, 2011).

Unstructured Interviews

The use of unstructured interviews was considered and is also a method frequently used in flexible designs that adopt the ontological and epistemological stance taken by the researcher. The interview is informal and although the interviewer has a general topic of interest, there are not any specific questions allowing the conversation to develop organically (Robson, 2011). As this study aimed to explore the experiences of the Channel Panel, there were specific questions that needed to be asked therefore, unstructured interviews were not considered the most appropriate method.

Semi-structured Interviews

Often used in flexible designs, a semi-structured interview differs as the interviewer creates a guide, which facilitates interaction by providing a prompt of the key areas to be covered (Mertens, 2015). The wording and order vary depending on the direction of questioning which differs greatly from the rigidity of structured interviews (Robson, 2011). The "active" role of the researcher in guiding the interaction is recognised as this approach permits additional questioning (Robson, 2011; Smith et al., 2022). The flexibility of semi-structured interviews allows for an exploration of the lived experiences of EPs involved in the Channel Panel. A semi-structured interview would be most appropriate for the present study as it would allow for flexible discussion whilst ensuring the focus remained on the chosen phenomenon (Willig, 2013).

The Present Study

The focus on experience requires a method that must "facilitate the elicitation of stories, thoughts and feelings about the target phenomenon" (Smith et al., 2022, p. 53). Whilst structured interviews are a means of acquiring data, the rigidity of this method does not provide the space for the participant to reflect and share their experiences. Therefore, a more flexible approach such as semi-structured interviews would be most appropriate (Robson, 2011).

3.7 Data collection

This section will explore the process of data collection, including the interview procedure as well as ethical considerations pertaining to the research. Bracketing will also be included within this section through reflexivity boxes which allow for the researcher to acknowledge their thoughts in relation to the data collection process.

3.7.1 Developing an Interview Schedule

The following points regarding the construction of the semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix 14) were informed by Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez (2011) and Smith et al. (2022):

- The interview should include open-ended questions that allow the participant to talk at length and in great depth which are essential for capturing the lived experiences of individuals in relation to the phenomenon.
- The interview should include an opening narrative or descriptive question which invites the participant to share experiences before questions of an analytic, reflexive, and evaluative nature that encourages the participant to think about their experiences in greater depth.
- Questions should be broad and general, allowing the participant to discuss the topic freely and it is their prerogative to determine the limits of what they wish to share.
- The interviewer should refrain from developing assumptions, as they have a responsibility to remain open and not steer the conversation; ensuring questioning and any additional prompts remain independent of their thoughts.
- Avoid the construction of long and detailed questions that can act a constraint for the participant.

3.7.2 Interview Procedure

Individual semi-structured interviews were undertaken with each of the five participants to explore their experiences of the Channel Panel and supporting young people deemed at risk of "radicalisation" as defined by Lynch (2013). Due to a limited pool of potential participants, the interview schedule was piloted with a Trainee EP via Microsoft Teams for purposes of considering the order and number of questions. Feedback led to changes to reordering the schedule's question one and two to allow participants to explain what had led them to being involved before discussing why young people may be referred (see Appendix 14 for interview schedule). The addition of question four also provided an opportunity to capture how the participant felt during panel meetings. The pilot also led to question six being reworded to include both person and professional aspects: *What did you give to the Channel Panel experience and what did you take on a professional or personal level?* All interviews were conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams and were audio recorded on an encrypted electronic device. The interviews ranged in length and lasted between forty-eight and sixty-five minutes.

As previously discussed, reflexive commentary boxes will present the researcher's thoughts throughout the process. The first of which is presented below.

Reflexive commentary – Developing an interview schedule

The initial schedule did not fully reflect the focus on experience, the questions focused too much on the aspects of the role and the practicalities rather than their experiences and the interpretive approach to explore phenomena. At times, I found it difficult to select the correct wording for the questions and found myself grappling with the language to ensure the questions encouraged participants to share their experiences. Additional questions which focused on experience were added, for example "what did you give to the Channel Panel experience and what did you take away on a professional or personal level?" and "can you tell me about how you felt during the Channel panel sessions?" To fulfil the secondary aims of the research, a final question focusing on how EPs could further support young people was included. The pilot was useful in terms of establishing a research measure and provided an opportunity for questions to be read, out loud to another individual. This encouraged me to consider the flow of the schedule. However, as the pilot was with a Trainee EP, who had no direct involvement and limited knowledge of the Channel Panel process, it would have been more beneficial to the study if I had met with an EP who had experience.

3.7.3 Ethical Considerations

Procedures for recruitment and data collection upheld the ethical principles outlined in the Code of Human Research Ethics (BPS, 2018). Ethical approval was granted by the ethics committee at the University of Nottingham's School of Psychology (see Appendix 9 for ethical approval certificate). Further considerations were given to obtaining consent, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of participants, the right to withdraw and additional considerations (BPS, 2018).

Informed Consent

Participants were provided with information pertaining to the study in the form of a recruitment letter and the participant information sheet (see Appendix 11 for recruitment letter; see Appendix 12 for the participation information sheet). Consent was required directly from participants and the consent form involved participants indicating that they had understood the different aspects of the study by ticking boxes, this also included agreeing to being audio recorded (BPS, 2018; Appendix 13). Consent was also clarified at the start of the interview. This ensured that the study was in accordance with the British Psychological Society's 'Codes of Ethics and Conduct' (BPS, 2018; see Appendix 13 for consent letter and GDPR sheet). Participants were also provided with the contact details for the researcher, supervisor overseeing the research, and the ethics committee, should they require them.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Interviews were audio recorded on a digital recording device which was stored in a locked cabinet and recordings were destroyed following analysis (BPS, 2018). Participants were notified that data would be used in the study and would remain anonymous (BPS, 2018). To ensure accurate analysis, recordings were transcribed verbatim. All data was anonymised, and a number assigned to each participant (Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.) to ensure identities were protected and to aid discussion (BPS, 2018). Personal data linking to participants (for example, names of other people and places) were omitted to ensure anonymity. This is in accordance with the BPS guidance (BPS, 2018) and Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) 'Standards on Consent and Confidentiality' (HCPC, 2021).

Right to Withdraw

Participants were made aware of their right to withdraw in the information sheet (Appendix 12) and subsequent consent letter (Appendix 13). At the end of the interview, participants were reminded verbally about their right to withdraw and that this was permitted up until data had been anonymise. A debrief sheet was sent to participants on completion of the interview with this information (see Appendix 15).

Debrief Procedure

On completion of the interview, a debrief letter was emailed to the participants. Participants were also provided with the option of speaking with the researcher on

completion of the research, to discuss key findings. Participants were also contacted via email one week after the interview, so the researcher was able to 'check in'. As the participants were EPs, it was felt that should they require additional support, they would respond to the researcher directly. Furthermore, as part of their role, EPs are required to attend regular supervision (HCPC, 2023) and so there is an element of responsibility placed on participants to use this time to discuss anything that may have affected them.

3.7.4 Additional Considerations

Sensitivity and confidentiality of cases

The nature of the study is to explore EPs experiences of the Channel Panel process. When discussing EPs' experiences, if cases are mentioned, sensitivity regarding the language used and confidentiality will be upheld (BPS, 2018). As previously mentioned, "radicalisation" as a term has multiple meanings, and it is a label that has been socially constructed to identify individuals identified by professionals as having potentially developed "extremist" views (Lynch, 2013). This phrasing has been imposed onto the adolescents bought to panel and it is important to consider that young people referred may not align with this terminology (Lynch, 2013). Although this language is widely used, there is subjectivity, and terminology can be interpreted differently, and so sensitivity is important.

Furthermore, the present study was not interested in knowing about specific beliefs regarding religious or political attitudes but is focused exclusively on EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel and potential role in supporting young people in the future.

Aspects of equality, diversity and inclusion were considered throughout this research. As guided by Smith et al. (2022) all participant's views were represented throughout the research, even if they differed from others. When conducting IPA, it is important that both convergence and divergence between the sample are recognised. To ensure that previous interviews did not direct the conversation, notes were made in the research journal (see section 3.5.4). Furthermore, pseudonyms were not given to participants and instead they were referred to as 'Participant 1' etc. The purpose of this was to respect cultural differences; names represent all aspects of an individual's identity and by imposing a pseudonym, it was felt that this could be insensitive to the participants (Allen & Wiles, 2016). To ask participants

to select a name when the pool of EPs who attend the panel is small could have resulted in giving the name of someone who may be involved. This allowed for cultural sensitivity as well as ensuring anonymity of participants (Allen & Wiles, 2016). Additionally, prior to interviews, participants were asked if had any additional requirements.

Reflexive commentary – Interview process

Initially after completing the interviews, I was taken aback with the disparity between EP involvement in panels across the country. Therefore, in reality, many young people are being discussed at panels where there is not an EP present to advocate and provide a psychological perspective. This led me to question the ethics around this and consider whether those panels that did not have an EP were acting in the interests of the young people they discussed especially if the young person had a special educational need. Although, I had a limited understanding of how EPs become part of the panel and subsequently, how EPs are selected to represent their service. I was surprised at the lack of EP representation especially in parts of the country which received the highest number of referrals.

When hearing about EPs' experiences, the variance of responses was unexpected, particularly when hearing viewpoints that challenged my own. My role as a researcher was not to challenge but rather listen and seek to understand the perspectives of participants. Some participants were more talkative whereas others were less forthcoming, but both had interesting viewpoints despite this. It was important not to let previous interviews impact on my questioning. I felt a responsibility to consider responses independently of each other.

As the interviews progressed, my confidence developed, and I was able to ask more prompt questions and felt more comfortable with asking questions about the participants experiences.

3.8 Data Analysis

3.8.1 Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

IPA involves the researcher developing Personal Experiential Themes (PETs) and Group Experiential Themes (GETs) from the data. The stages of IPA data analysis as set out by Smith et al. (2022) will be used to analyse the individual interviews. This includes the process of reading, initial noting, developing emergent themes, making connections before moving to the next case and finally, looking for patterns across data from all participants (Smith et al., 2022).

3.8.2 Stages of Data Analysis

Stage One: Reading and Re-reading

The first stage involved the researcher entering a phase of 'active engagement' achieved by immersing themselves in the data beginning with reading and rereading the first interview transcript and listening back to the audio recording (Smith et al., 2022). This stage allows for the researcher to "gain an understanding of how narratives bind certain sections together" (Smith et al., 2022, p. 78). Here, the researcher must differentiate where the participant uses description and where language indicative of evaluation is present (Smith et al., 2022). At this point, the researcher should record their own thoughts about their experience of the interview and any initial observations in a reflective journal (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011; Smith et al., 2022). This encourages the researcher to remain mindful about how they may influence the data, presented through bracketing (Smith et al., 2022). It is important that from the start of the analysis process that the participants experiences are represented (Smith et al., 2022).

Reflexive commentary – Reading and Re-reading

When reading and re-reading the transcripts, I noted in my research journal that the questions appeared to extract different aspects of the participant experience. I also noted that my lack of experience could impact the data as I have not had involvement with a Channel Panel. It was hoped that the analysis process would help to overcome this.

Furthermore, I noted that to begin with *'there was a sense that I was being drawn to the discussion around psychological theory, rather than to the experiences of EPs.'* By noting this, I recognised that I was drawn to elements of the transcripts that appeared to reflect this observation and I ensured that the focus of the analysis remained on the EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel. It was felt that noting my initial reflections helped me to recognise the influence they had on my interpretations of the data and guided me to returning to focusing on the experiences of EPs.

Stage Two: Exploratory Noting

The second stage required the researcher to develop familiarity with the data and gain an understanding of how the interviewee makes sense of their experiences of being involved with the Channel Panel process. This stage directs the researcher to add detailed notes on the transcript, this includes comments on the focus phenomenon and the researcher's interpretations (Smith et al., 2022). This could also include notes that reflect why the interviewee may feel this way as well as comments on context and language used by participants to try to gain an understanding of their lived experience (Smith et al., 2022; see Appendix 16 for exploratory note taking). In practice, there are two main elements of the exploratory note taking, the thoughts and experiences of participants and the more linguistic elements including functional aspects of language (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011; Smith et al., 2022). Hermeneutics is intertwined with all stages of data analysis but is particularly prevalent at this stage where the researcher reflects on their role within the process (Smith et al., 2022). In line with a phenomenological approach, the researcher needs to recognise the meanings attached to language especially, and dialogue deemed emotional; this requires constant reflexivity to consider what is underpinning these interpretations (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011; Smith et al., 2022).

Stage Three: Constructing Experimental Statements

The purpose of this stage was to consolidate thoughts through the reduction of the amount of data without losing richness and complexity (Smith et al., 2022). It is imperative that the reduction of the data to statements reflects the participant's experiences of the phenomenon (Smith et al., 2022). This stage of analysis requires the researcher to re-organise the data and identify experiential statements (Smith et al., 2022). It is integral that the researcher acknowledges how closely involved with the participant's lived experience they are and the interpretations they are making, highlighted in the reflexive commentary (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011; Smith et al., 2022). The experiential statements must reflect the participants thoughts and the researcher's interpretation (Smith et al., 2022).

Stage Four: Searching for Connections across Experiential Statements

Within this stage, the researcher maps the experiential statements, removing them from the order in which they appeared in the transcript (Smith et al., 2022). The statements are organised by the researcher with some being removed at this stage, in accordance with the research questions (Smith et al., 2022). The transcripts are reviewed independently of each other, and those previously reviewed could be revisited (Smith et al., 2022). The purpose of this stage was to group experiential statements that are similar to reflect the participants' account of involvement with the Channel Panel process. The researcher aimed to find connections within the transcript and recognise important characteristics in relation to the phenomenon (Smith et al., 2022). The hermeneutic circle is sustained during this part of the process; the researcher reflects on the connections within the data whilst constantly referring to the participant's account. The researcher has a responsibility to acknowledge how they impact the interpretations made. The outcome of stage four involves the presentation of a map of interconnections of the transcript where statements are placed in groups and sub-clusters are identified (Smith et al., 2022; Appendix 17).

Stage Five: Naming the Personal Experiential Themes (PETs), Consolidating and Organising

A title is given to each cluster, the aim being to reflect the participants lived experiences, and the intention is to present the analytical elements present within the

transcript (Smith et al., 2022). The Personal Experiential Themes (PETs) are the overarching titles and are presented in table format (see Appendix 18). Within each PET, there are sub-themes containing experiential statements which are evidenced directly to the transcript (Smith et al., 2022). This stage can include close inspection of functional language (Smith et al., 2022). The hermeneutic circle is active as through this presentation of themes, and the researcher can present how the interpretations have been extracted (Smith et al., 2022).

Stage Six: Continuing the Individual Analysis of Other Cases

The researcher is required to consider each transcript in isolation, ensuring that previous analysis does not direct the interpretations made (Smith et al., 2022). By analysing each transcript individually, the researcher can ensure that the method adheres to the idiographic requirements (Smith et al., 2022). The first five stages of the process should be followed for each case, ensuring that the analysis is systematic (Smith et al., 2022).

Reflexive commentary – Continuing the individual analysis of other cases

I noted in my research journal that I was conscious of not letting the analysis of the previous transcript direct my interpretation. I ensured there was sufficient time of at least several days between analysing each transcript. This allowed me to analyse each interview within their own context. I also reflected on the challenge of progressing to analysis of another interview, without considering the previous discussion. At first, it was possible that I was identifying and noting aspects within the transcript that felt familiar. To overcome this, I continued to read and re-read the transcripts. Smith et al. (2022) recommend cross-checking, making sure that any patterns identified are evidenced.

Stage Seven: Developing Group Experiential Themes

The purpose of this stage is to explore patterns of similarity and difference amongst the PETs with the aim of developing Group Experiential Themes (GETs; Smith et al., 2022). It is important that the researcher refrains from developing trends and focuses on “shared features” whilst ensuring not to disregard participants’ distinctive lived experience (Smith et al., 2022). The researcher should begin with examining at the PETs, sub-themes, and

experiential statements. Areas of similarity are identified through the Group Experiential Themes (GETs; Smith et al., 2022) and they are documented in a table (see Appendix 19). It is important that broad similarities are recognised whilst still reflecting the individual lived experiences of participants (Smith et al., 2022).

Reflexive commentary – Developing GETs

Initially, the process of upholding the idiographic commitment felt difficult, specifically ensuring that I reflected participant's experiences whilst also being interpretative. I continuously referred to the transcripts by checking my initial noting, experiential statements, and interpretations against the words of the participants. The process of writing up the findings also allowed for me to make further sense of the data.

I also reflected on the process of analysis and felt that the process of conducting IPA was challenging. I found that discussing the process with my Research Supervisor was useful to developing my skills; I was able to develop my analysis to form deeper interpretations whilst accounting for the influence of my own experiences, understanding of pertinent literature and research, and links to psychology. I accounted for these by recording my reflections in my research journal.

3.9 Ensuring Quality and Validity in Qualitative Research

3.9.1 Sensitivity to Context

The first factor in ensuring quality and validity in qualitative research is sensitivity to context. This can be achieved through the presentation of a clear rationale, beginning with the critical analysis of relevant theory and seminal texts (Yardley, 2008). The inclusion of psychological theory that relates to the focus of the study is key to presenting a relevant and topical rationale (Yardley, 2008). This has been outlined in the literature review where the socio-political context of the development of the Channel Panel has been discussed. The inclusion of the systematic review presented pertinent literature to the topic. The philosophical stance underpinning the methods used to fulfil the research question have been stated.

To fulfil the sensitivity to context, the researcher should reflect sensitivity to the socio-political context of participants and their views (Yardley, 2008). This can be achieved through the study design and qualitative methods used; including open-ended questions to ensure free flowing conversation and allow the participant to speak openly about their lived experiences (Yardley, 2008; Smith et al., 2022). Furthermore, researchers should be sensitive to the data, closely considering what has been shared, what has not been shared, and thought to how their experiences have been interpreted (Yardley, 2008). From this, researchers should show recognition for the complex process of developing interpretations from human perspectives and should acknowledge alternative explanations that may challenge their own perceptions of the phenomena (Yardley, 2008). This is presented in the reflexive commentary and transparent analysis process throughout. It is important to show awareness to how participants' views may be impacted by the presence of the researcher and their opinion of the interviewer (Yardley, 2008).

3.9.2 Commitment and Rigour

Commitment and rigour are achieved through the demonstration of breadth and depth at the data analysis stage (Yardley, 2008). According to Yardley (2008), this could include incorporating a broad range of contexts; participants with different background characteristics to reflect the range of experience of involvement in the Channel Panel process. EPSs throughout the nation were contacted and because of this, demographics were not specified due to the pool of potential participants being very limited which can impact diversity (Yardley, 2008). Extensive in-depth engagement with the topic area allows researchers to present "theoretical sophistication of analysis" and "empathetic understanding" (Yardley, 2008, p. 248) The multi-stage process of analysis allows for rigour and in-depth analysis and will be reviewed in section 5.3.

3.9.3 Coherence and Transparency

Coherence is achieved through the focus of the study being clearly stated, theoretical underpinnings addressed, consistency with the methods, and thorough analysis including the clear extraction of interpretations from the data (Yardley, 2008). The theoretical perspective

needs to be clearly presented and methods need to reflect the ontological and epistemological stance (Yardley, 2008).

The element of 'transparency' relates to the clarity of the approach taken and conclusions drawn (Yardley, 2008). This validity measure relies on the researcher's interpretations based on the transcripts, therefore, including measures such as inter-rater reliability would not be consistent with the subjective approach as a second researcher is highly likely to code differently (Yardley, 2008). As this research aligns with a subjective approach, making inferences about causal relationships and assuming generalisability with findings would not be consistent either (Yardley, 2008). Instead, transparency with the interpretive process through clear documentation and reflection would ensure validity (Yardley, 2008). In practice, this would include the inclusion of the process to how interpretations were developed and consideration of how the researcher has influenced the findings (Yardley, 2008).

3.9.4 Impact and Importance

It is important that findings from the research contribute to the focus area of study (Yardley, 2008). This could take various forms including impacting policy, how practitioners work or the wider community (Yardley, 2008). For the present study, this would be further understanding of EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel process and how this can be considered in terms of roles, benefits, risks, etc when supporting young people who have been identified as at risk of "radicalisation". The present study is unique as it addresses a 'gap' in the literature and would contribute to knowledge of the Channel Panel process, therefore providing a contribution to this area as outlined in section 2.7.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter will present my interpretation of the findings from the IPA of the interviews and seeks to answer the primary research question, *'How do Educational Psychologists experience the Channel Panel?'* As the present study used IPA, the findings aim to capture how the participants have made sense of, and attached meaning to, their experiences. The overarching Group Experiential Themes (GETs) will be presented along with the associated group themes. A summary of which participants contributed to each subtheme is also provided. A more in-depth discussion of each GET follows on, supported by presentation of quotations associated with each subtheme.

4.2 Group Experiential Themes (GETs)

Following the analysis of the interviews (see section 3.8), four GETs were highlighted: *the contribution of psychology is essential, encouraging others to consider a different perspective, the importance of developing professional relationships* and *the personal impact of EP involvement.* The GETs and connected subthemes are presented along with associated subthemes in Figure 4.1. The GETs, subthemes and contributing participants are presented in Table 4.1.

Figure 4.1

A graphic showing the four Group Experiential Themes and associated subthemes interpreted using IPA. The links between subthemes are shown through the dashed lines.

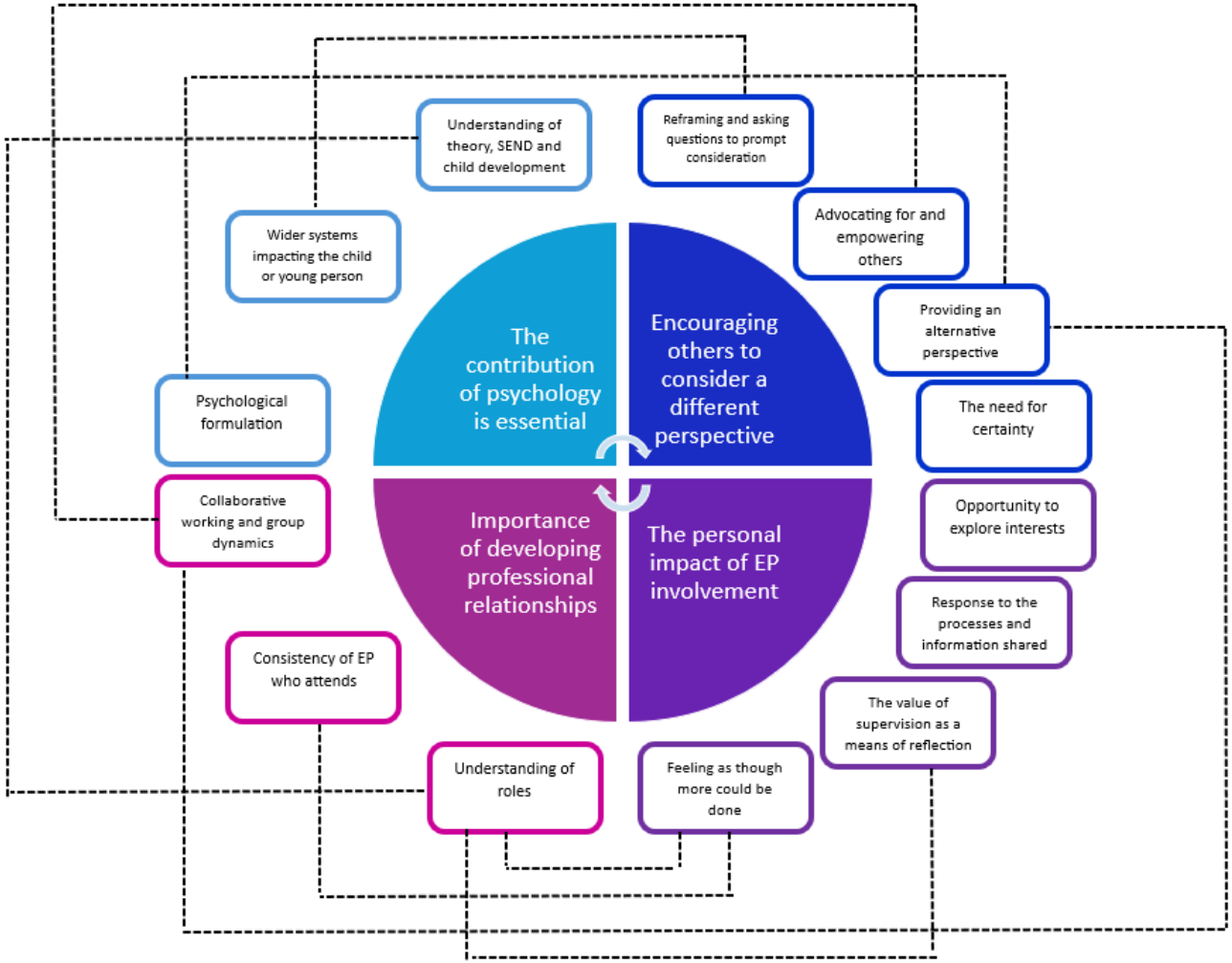


Table 4.1

The prevalence of each Group Experiential Theme (GET) and subtheme across participant accounts.

GET	Subtheme	Contributing Participants
The contribution of psychology is essential	Understanding of theory, SEND and child development	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5
	Wider systems impacting the child or young person	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5
	Psychological formulation	P1, P3, P5
Encouraging others to consider a different perspective	Reframing and asking questions to prompt consideration	P2, P3, P5
	Advocating for and empowering others	P1, P2, P3
	Providing an alternative perspective	P3, P4
	The need for certainty	P5
Importance of developing professional relationships	Collaborative working and group dynamics	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5
	Consistency of EP who attends	P2, P4
	Understanding of roles	P1, P3, P4, P5
The personal impact of EP involvement	Opportunity to explore interests	P1, P2, P5
	Response to the processes and information shared	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5
	The value of supervision as a means of reflection	P1, P3
	Feeling as though more could be done	P2, P3, P4, P5

4.3 The contribution of psychology is essential

All five participants contributed to the development of this GET. It was interpreted as an important element of their involvement when attending the Channel Panel meetings. To understand how participants made sense of their experiences of the Channel Panel, they were asked what they 'took' and what they 'gave' to the process. All participants shared that they gave psychology, and it was interpreted that participants felt this contribution was essential. The input of psychology refers to a range of aspects including psychological theory, wider factors such as the political landscape, and formulation. This is captured in the subthemes; *understanding of theory, SEND and child development, wider systems impacting on the child or young person* and *psychological formulation*.

4.3.1 Understanding of theory, SEND and child development

All participants viewed understanding of theory, knowledge of SEND and child development as a significant part of their experience on the panel. The elements, psychological theory, SEND, and child development differ from one another. However, this subtheme captures the specific knowledge base contributed by EPs. For participants, their contribution of psychology in the form of sharing theory, knowledge of SEND and understanding of child development was the main purpose of their involvement. For some participants, there was a sense of frustration at the lack of other professionals with knowledge of SEND and their reflections appeared to support the need for expertise of psychological theory, SEND and child development and therefore, the presence of an EP. This subtheme has been separated into psychological theory, SEND and child development to aid discussion.

Psychological theory

For Participant 1, knowledge of theory and how this applies to practice is a key part of their experience. This appears to include consideration of how psychology helps provide understanding of young people's views "*embedded in their behaviour and in their thought system around other people"* (Participant 1, 20) They appeared to feel that the EP role was to "*really understand those theories"* (Participant 1, 162). Participant 1 drew upon psychological

theory such as *"group identity theory"* (Participant 1, 21) which reflected that from their experience the EP provides a unique contribution in the form of knowledge of psychological theory.

In contrast to all other participants, Participant 3 noted their understanding of psychological theory in terms of the approaches they used. This participant described this as the most important part of their experience. They reflected on their theoretical stance and adoption of a social constructionist approach *"but also dipping into some sort of psychodynamic approaches"* (Participant 3, 151). They also explained that *"the taking up of that position of curiosity is very much a sort of systemic family therapy model"* (Participant 3, 152).

SEND and Child Development

Across some accounts, there was also emphasis placed on the contribution of knowledge of psychological theory in relation to SEND and child development. Participant 2 stated that their experience consisted of sharing knowledge of psychological theory and understanding of child development, particularly in relation to SEND. This is exemplified by Participant 2.

> *I think the combination of child development and social theory in terms of how children, young people as they grow and develop as teenagers, particularly how their needs change and differs …and what that might manifest itself looking like... combined with a SEND need* (Participant 2, 218-221)

Their account reflects their view of the importance of the EP contribution and their specific understanding of how needs may *"manifest".* It was interpreted that Participant 2 felt their EP insight into SEND and child development was valuable and unique to their role. Additionally, it was interpreted that Participant 2 felt it was important to have a *"psychological eye"* (Participant 2, 409). When examining cases that involved young people who are aged 16 years or under, specifically reflecting on the "*interaction or comorbidity between certain diagnosis and the impact of what that might look like"* (Participant 2, 101-102).

For Participant 2, there seemed to be an interaction between their use of knowledge about child development and SEND within the Channel Panel echoed by Participant 4 and Participant 5. Participant 4 reflected that they contributed understanding about specific skills

in relation to need or development such as the *"child might not be able to do that because they haven't got the executive functioning skills"* (Participant 4, 253-254). Participant 5 explained that their knowledge of SEND underpinned their involvement as other panel members seemed to appreciate that a lot of cases are *"likely to have special educational needs and we don't have the expertise on the panel to meet that need"* (Participant 5, 51-52). Participant 5 further reflected on how they bought a *"detailed awareness of the SEND Code of Practice"* (Participant 5, 205) and described this as *"quite important"* (Participant 5, 206). Moreover, Participant 4 and Participant 5 noted the lack of understanding and confidence of other panel members when discussing cases involving SEND. There was a sense that they felt valued for being able to provide this expertise. For example, Participant 5 noted that within the panel *"there's not really confidence and understanding of around things like difficulties with learning, social, emotional, mental health difficulties and the impact of things like trauma"* (Participant 5, 139-141).

The importance of knowledge of SEND and the perceived lack of knowledge of other panel members within this area was also an area mentioned by Participant 4. They reflected that knowledge of needs is necessary when discussing vulnerable children observing *"how little people know about child development and autism and just the developmental age of a child they know so little… Yeah, they're dealing with children… very vulnerable children all the time…"* (Participant 4, 245-247). Between Participant 4 and Participant 5, there appeared to be a shared feeling that there should be professionals with knowledge of SEND present at Channel Panel meetings.

It appears that understanding of psychological theory, knowledge of SEND and child development was used within Channel Panel discussions in some way by all EPs participating in this study. For several of the participants this seemed to fill a perceived gap in knowledge of other panel members.

4.3.2 Wider systems impacting the child or young person

Across all accounts, knowledge and encouraging others to consider the wider systems appeared to be key to participants' experience and a means of contributing psychology. It was a shared perception that other professionals often did not contemplate additional factors that could be influencing the young person's behaviour, and this seemed to be a unique feature of

the EP experience. However, there were some differences in experiences of what these wider systems constituted. Participant 1 and Participant 5 shared that they drew specifically upon Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory to guide their contributions. In addition, Participant 1 reflected on the importance of exploring the wider sphere of influence, *"the media and the political system at the moment is having a massive impact on our young people and the development of their views…*" (Participant 1, 530-532). Whereas Participant 5 noted that their input focused more on the young person's inner circle: "*There was someone within their sphere of influence who was impacting upon this young person, and it was quite useful to identify within systems theory, who and at what level that person was influencing them"* (Participant 5, 287-290).

Participant 2 appeared to feel that their experience as an EP was valuable to panel discussions and highlighted the possible implications should this be missed, "[other professionals] *didn't understand the implications of everything that was going on in a wider context then things would get missed"* (Participant 2, 132-133).

Moreover, Participant 4 expressed a sense of frustration with Channel Panel meetings being *"very within-child"* (Participant 4, 266) and voiced that they 'expected' the focus to be *"much more environmental"* (Participant 4, 267). Participant 3 conveyed a sense of gravity when reflecting on the influence that the within-child focus can have on the young person's future, the importance of EP involvement to challenge this and offer an alternative.

> *Stopping a within child labelling approach that then ruins that child's trajectory for the rest of their life, because it's a very serious issue. Then yeah, we should be involved in that, that's about outcomes for kids, isn't it?* (Participant 3, 500-502)

4.3.3 Psychological formulation

For some participants there was a sense that developing a psychological formulation was part of their responsibility and contributed to their experience of panel meeting discussions. Participant 3 reflected on their experience of considering other factors impacting on the young person *"rather than giving a view regarding a within-child formulation*" (Participant 3, 116). This highlights the interconnectedness between subthemes as focus on

the wider systems and refraining from a 'within-child' formulation appeared to be linked to one another.

Participant 1 described providing a psychological formulation as the most important part of their experience of being involved with the Channel Panel, highlighting the value they attributed to being able to provide this. It seemed that they constructed the EP role to be *"about providing that psychological formulation"* (Participant 1, 131) and observed that without an EP present *"you're missing someone formulating this case"* (Participant 1, 177). Participant 1 further reflected on the place of psychology and formulation with panel meetings.

> *That is where psychology comes in, and if they haven't got that, then I fear that some of the interventions might be absolutely pointless because it doesn't do what they hope it will do, they've taken a too simplistic formulation of a person…* (Participant 1, 361-363)

However, there was a sense of difference in the EPs' experiences of psychological formulation in Channel Panel cases; Participant 5 appeared to indicate a contrasting view and seemed to distance themselves from the notion of creating a formulation: "*It wasn't really, I think up to me to kind of create a formulation or a working understanding of a young person* (Participant 5, 302-303). In summary, the experience of participants regarding their role appeared to be understanding of theory, SEND and child development, consideration of the wider systems and psychological formulation. This led to the interpretation that EPs participating in this study appeared to view their contribution of psychology as being vital to the Channe Panel process. The presence of this subtheme in discussions with all participants suggests that it was a shared experience across the sample.

4.4 Encouraging others to consider a different perspective

The need to *encourage others to consider a different perspective* was contributed to by all five participants and was interpreted as an important element of their involvement. The theme encompasses the following subthemes: *reframing and asking questions to prompt consideration, advocating for, and empowering others, providing an alternative perspective* and *the need for certainty*.

4.4.1 Reframing and asking questions to prompt consideration

The need to ask questions to prompt considerations was reflected in three of the accounts; Participant 2, Participant 3, and Participant 5. Prompting consideration refers to the feeling that many other professionals on the panel had *"fixed views regarding behaviour"* (Participant 5, 312) which was deemed to be *"influenced by their roles"* (Participant 5, 313). All participants noted that they prompted other professionals to further consider conclusions drawn through the use of reframing; representing when participants reworded an expression usually from a different perspective which could also include posing questions. Participant 2 and Participant 3 both reflected on asking questions with the purpose of redirecting discussion and/or considering a different angle.

> *I suppose, to look at the evidence or the evidence base to assimilate that information and think, can I therefore make this conclusion from this evidence? And I didn't feel like we could back up that conclusion the evidence and so questioning that…* (Participant 2, 183-185)

For example, Participant 2 recalled drawing other professionals' attention to the 'evidence' when they felt discussions had drifted and noted that this required challenging other perspectives. This indicates a level of responsibility and necessity to focus on the specific information at hand and drawing attention back through reframing to what is known. The phrasing *"I was able to do that"* (Participant 2, 177) suggests that this is part of the EP's experience of what they contributed to the Channel Panel. Participant 2 explained that if conclusions drawn did not align with the information, further questioning would be required. There was a sense that while general discussion had a place, the importance of the facts was more so, and it appeared that Participant 2 used reframing and asking questions to prompt further consideration of the evidence. It is possible that the need for reframing and focusing on the 'evidence' could link to feeling obligated to advocate for others, a key part of the EP role.

For Participant 5, knowledge of SEND supported their ability to reframe statements made by other professionals and pose questions to prompt consideration of the young person's needs in relation to the behaviour.

> *So, do you think it's special educational needs are impacting upon his behaviour? It seems like from some of the things that we've spoken about that they have been quite impulsive, […] that allowed others to kind of frame their understanding of a young person through it being rather within need rather than like a behaviour as such* (Participant 5, 220 - 225)

There was a sense that this participant's knowledge of SEND provided a means for them to reframe other professional's "*fixed and rigid views about behaviour"* (Participant 5, 317). It appeared that through reframing, Participant 5 felt they had made a positive contribution to discussions, and that this was welcomed by others.

For Participant 3, the description of how they prompted consideration in others was likened to theory, indicating that they made sense of their experiences through a psychological lens. Furthermore, Participant 3 appeared to reflect on their experience of involvement as needing to support other professionals to reframe their view and/or perspective of the problem through the following analogy which is indicative of how they may approach reframing:

> *It was Ravenette who talked about y'know, the role of the psychologist or the EP... It's almost like the gardener who takes the visitor into the garden and says well, come and have a look at the garden from this angle here because it looks really different from over here…* (Participant 3, 163-165)

Participant 3 also described how their role encouraged others to consider their own position. *"Our role there was around and explicitly around process consultation if you like… So, it was about reflecting, unpicking, helping with the thought processes and the problem solution finding if you like"* (Participant 3, 104-105). It seems that questioning the views of others and not accepting conclusions drawn was an important part of their role. They also shared that "*we did take up that sort of critical friend approach where we were challenging and posing the questions…"* (Participant 3, 110-111). This appeared to be significant for this participant as they referred to their involvement as being a *"necessary irritant"* (Participant 3, 129). There is a sense that having a professional on the panel who can draw on process consultation skills is 'necessary', whilst 'irritant' recognises that others may feel a level of challenge with the questions asked. It appeared Participant 3 held a positive view of being a professional with a particular skillset such as knowledge of consultation skills that enabled them to prompt others

through questioning and reframing. Participant 3 shared their view that prior agreement of their role prepared others to be asked questions that some may perceive to be uncomfortable.

Within this subtheme, there is a sense that participants felt empowered to take up the position of reframing. Moreover, there was some convergence between participants who contributed to the development of this subtheme. Therefore, it was interpreted that reframing and asking questions to prompt consideration was a shared experience amongst the sample.

4.4.2 Advocating for and empowering others

The need to advocate for, and empower others was reflected by three participants: Participant 1, Participant 2, and Participant 3. Participants discussed advocacy and empowerment of others in terms of both young people and other professionals. Advocacy was interpreted as the consideration of another's views and rights, whereas empowerment was interpreted as supporting others to become more confident in their ability.

For Participant 2, there was a sense of advocacy through challenging other professionals.

> *I wonder if that need for advocacy and gentle challenge and y'know, being that critical friend as it were, is erm is needed to be protective for children and young people cus their exceptionally vulnerable working in a system that's designed for adults* (Participant 2, 330-332)

Interestingly, this participant represented this as being a *'critical friend'* (Participant 2, 331) to other professionals. The use of *"needed to be protective"* (Participant 2, 331) and *"exceptionally vulnerable"* (Participant 2, 332) suggests that they experienced feelings of empathy towards the young people discussed and felt a need for someone to advocate on their behalf. Moreover, there appeared to be a sense that Participant 2 felt uncomfortable with young people being discussed within the same forum as adults and the ethical questions regarding the appropriateness of this. It appeared to prompt a need for advocacy as they appeared to recognise the vulnerability of the young people discussed at panel meetings.

> *I'm wondering whether, given that we're rushed for time, whether we're giving this young person the same level of consideration that we did for the first ten, how do people feel about that? Y'know, has anyone got any thoughts about that?* (Participant 3, 234-236)

Similarly, Participant 3's account reinforced the importance of advocacy through questioning, indicating that considering young people's views and rights was a key part of their experience on the Channel Panel. Participant 3 reflected on exercising advocacy by posing questions which encouraged other panel members to reflect on the time allocated to the discussion of each case. For Participant 3 there was a sense that, at times, there was pressure to deliberate all cases on the agenda which if not challenged, could have impacted the length of time spent on cases. For this participant, advocacy took the form of recognising primacy and recency effects regarding the time allocated to discussions.

In contrast, Participant 1 noted their role of empowering other professionals as being part of their experience. There was a sense that the EP felt some panel members were not confident to voice their views and they saw facilitating this as part of their role. Participant 1 explained they would voice this out loud *"saying I'm wondering if so and so has an idea"* (Participant 1, 216) therefore recognising the importance of "*bringing those people who actually have something to say but maybe aren't as confident or don't think it's their place to say so, it is anti-oppressive"* (217-219). Participant 1 further reflected on their role in empowering professionals that were working directly with young people as part of their experience.

> *It was just permission… given to… here's the language you can use... There you go, y'know, now we address it because actually through those conversations and open up and peer challenge etcetera… that's the biggest impact we can have* (Participant 1, 214-216)

There was a sense here, that EP input could support with empowering others by reducing discomfort around language used by school staff when having conversations with young people; for example, what was and was not appropriate. For some, it was knowing which language to use, and it was recognised as a barrier to providing support and so Participant 1 appeared to feel that the 'biggest impact' was to facilitate conversations that

reduced barriers and help others overcome challenges. When discussing advocacy and empowerment, Participant 3 reflected on their expertise as a means of empowering others.

> *The child, and the family are experts. Yeah, they are. But we've also got doctoral training and you can't get away from the fact that you are an expert and actually hiding from your expertise is an illusion and a delusion that doesn't empower people* (Participant 3, 135-138)

According to Participant 3, EPs should acknowledge that they are *"experts",* and this expertise should be used to support other people and *"elevate their narratives"* (Participant 3, 140). It appeared that Participant 3 felt that if EPs fail to recognise the unique expertise they contribute, it could result others being disempowered.

4.4.3 Providing an alternative perspective

The importance of providing an alternative perspective is reflected by three of the participants; Participant 3, Participant 4, and Participant 5. For the contributing participants, there was a clear sense of the value of providing an alternative perspective and the importance this had on directing support and intervention for the young person.

> *There were a lot of cases where he would sort of come to me and sort of say, like, what do you think? Meaning, like, from my perspective as someone who has some understanding of SEND. And I think that was quite valuable* (Participant 5, 136-138)

For Participant 5, they recall being invited to share their perspective on the young person's need as part of their experience. There was space within the forum provided for EPs to voice their opinion, resulting in them feeling comfortable to do so. It appeared that Participant 5 felt valued, and their view was well received. It seemed important for Participant 5 to feel listened to and to have an active role within meetings. They further reflected on the implications of providing an alternative opinion, which resulted in positive change for a young person. *"That kind of sort of paved the way for discussions around what school was doing to promote that young person's inclusion from SEMH perspective"* (Participant 5, 88-89).

Participant 4 noted the response of other professionals when an alternative perspective was presented, "*it's like a bit like sometimes it can be a light bulb moment for*

other people, cause they've just not seen it in that way" (Participant 4, 35-36). Despite their positive reflection of the *"light bulb moment"*, in comparison to Participant 5, Participant 4 had a different experience, highlighting divergence in experience within this subtheme. They shared that other professionals had "*a completely different mindset on the whole thing"* (Participant 4, 103). There was a sense of frustration that their perspective was not heard, and it was interpreted that as a result, they did not seem to feel their perspective was valued. Participant 4 shared their view of what they believed other panel members may have thought about EP attendance: *"not really bothered too much about what she's got to say about children's thinking*" (Participant 4, 125). It appeared that contributing to panel meetings was a barrier for Participant 4. This was attributed to a lack of understanding of the EP role which is discussed further in the *'4.5.3 Understanding of role'* subtheme.

For Participant 3, there appeared to be a great deal of responsibility felt when providing an alternative perspective:

> *A huge risk cus, y'know… a kid might be taken off the radar who might be a risk to society who may benefit from intervention* […] *So, we never underestimated our involvement in this in this work* (Participant 3, 202-206)

This appeared to indicate recognition of the gravity of their voice and the metaphorical 'weight' they experienced in directing the narrative and the implications this could have for the young person.

4.4.4 The need for certainty

For Participant 3, the need for certainty appeared to be an important reflection when making sense of their experiences.

> *Radicalisation can be driven for a need for certainty, yeah, so, there was quite a nice link almost like a parallel process that the drive for radicalisation was driven by a need for certainty… in the absence of certainty in that panel, there was a risk that the panel were driven to certainty. Ohh, we all agree that this kid's a risk? Yes… Next kid… Y'know well, how can you be certain with the not knowing, y'know that's OK. Actually, that's*

an interesting parallel process that I hadn't really thought about before (Participant 3, 210-214)

When asked about their role within panel meetings, they reflected on this being to help others to sit with discomfort and lack of certainty, primarily due to the complexities of human behaviour. Whilst Participant 3 was reflecting on this, they made sense of their experiences by drawing a link between some young people adopting "extremist" views due to a perceived need for certainty which they believed parallels the need for certainty sought by panel members. They shared what appeared to be a sense of similarity between those discussed and those making decisions.

4.5 Importance of developing professional relationships

A significant theme across the data set was the importance of developing professional relationships. This seemed to aid EP involvement and provided support for their contributions within the Channel Panel, and which appeared to evoke positive feelings of being valued, heard, and respected. The accounts suggest there was some polarity within this theme; the absence of positive professional relationships in some cases could have led to participants feeling as though their presence was not valued, which may have contributed to feelings of frustration. The contrast in participants' experiences suggest the importance of establishing relationships with other professionals. This appeared to be an important precursor to laying the foundations for EP involvement and is captured in the following subthemes: *collaborative working and group dynamics, consistency of EP who attends* and *understanding of role.*

4.5.1 Collaborative working and group dynamics

All participants reflected on the benefits of collaborative working; this varied from securing professional development to having a purpose. The data indicated a sense of solidarity with other professionals and feelings of collectiveness attributed to the shared aims of the Channel Panel.

Participant 2 noted the authenticity of the aims of other panel members and the negative reputation it has with some communities.

> *They genuinely want to be supportive to people that come through and they want to help them, y'know to educate them, to do everything that I think Prevent is supposed to do and generally they're balanced, and they do take everything into account…* (Participant 2, 346-348)

There was a sense of alignment between the purpose of their involvement and the objectives of other professionals. Furthermore, the impartiality of discussion and *"balanced"* nature of outcomes was interpreted to be important for this participant's experience of the panel.

The significance of having a shared aim was raised by Participant 1 who reflected that the *"ultimate goal"* (Participant 1, 241) is *"working to protect people"* (Participant 1, 240). Participant 1 noted that having role boundaries and respect from other panel members enabled successful collaborative working; "*as soon as you got your role boundaries in place and they see where you fit into what's happening, and then you get that professional… I think it's just professional respect, isn't it?"* (Participant 1, 332-333). For Participant 4, there was a sense of gratitude about experiencing working collaboratively.

> *It's just interesting seeing different points of view and I think well, I would never have thought about it like that but then I've learned something from it, so it's been a good learning curve for me* (Participant 4, 39-41)

Working with different professionals (police, social workers, etc) seemed to provide an opportunity to observe different approaches. It appeared that Participant 4 took learning from the process of working collaboratively and it seemed that their involvement had positive implications for their professional development.

Participant 5 appeared to positively reflect on the opportunity to work collaboratively. They voiced the benefits of joint working, namely the proactive and preventative nature of prompt response to referrals and intervention "*it did feel that we were working in somewhat of a preventative way because we're trying to address the needs of young people before they kind of reached, if you like, at a stage of radicalisation"* (Participant 5, 36-38). The use of *'we'* indicates that this participant views their experience of working on the Channel Panel as being

of a shared and collaborative nature. There was a sense of contentment in working preventatively with others; "*it was nice to feel like you were doing something a little bit more proactive"* (Participant 5, 270).

For Participant 3, collaborative working was *"purposeful",* and it was interpreted that they felt as though they had an active role; *"I felt it was purposeful, I didn't feel like I was cruising. I felt. It felt like hard work because you have to be completely aware of what's going on at all times..."* (Participant 3, 152-153). However, there was a sense of caution for this participant, who reflected on the *"inherent risk"* (Participant 3, 207) of "*groupthink"* (Participant 3, 207) when working as part of the panel. Linked to the subtheme *'The need for certainty'* this participant noted the haste in which conclusions could be agreed upon. To support the identification of *"groupthink"* (Participant 3, 207), Participant 3 reflected on drawing on the psychology underpinning group dynamics and assumed responsibility for declaring when they observed it. Whilst other participants noted taking learning and acquiring knowledge from working collaboratively from the experience.

4.5.2 Consistency of EP who attends

For some participants, a barrier to developing professional relationships was the lack of consistency in the EP who attended the panel meetings. For Participant 2, there was a sense that sporadic attendance resulted in difficulties with forming relationships which they felt had implications for effecting change.

> *It would be a much more respected position on the panel if I was able to go every month but it's a good three- or four-hours commitment monthly and sometimes they put twice monthly panels on because of the cases coming through* (Participant 2, 286 -288)

> *I'm not a face that's there regularly and so I think, y'know when you go into the room, you can tell people that go there like, every month or every, y'know, few weeks because they know each other whereas, there's none of that, so I think that's an impact,* […] *I haven't got the relationships in the panel to be able to effect the change* (Participant 2, 289-292)

For Participant 4, the arrangement of working across multiple authorities involved young people and schools being discussed that were not known to them.

> *Where I'm looking through the minutes and I haven't got a clue, y'know, it says what the EP said last time, but it's very hard to pick it up, you think there needs to be continuity with the EP and also I don't understand that EPs' can work across authorities but it's not likely that I'm gonna pick up a [NAME OF SERVICE REDACTED] child* (Participant 4, 168-171)

Participant 4 appeared to share a sense of frustration from feeling restricted and unable to fulfil their role, due to how EP involvement was allocated between services, as part of their experience. There seemed to be a sense from Participant 4 that consistency of who attends meetings is important and reflects on the positive impact this would have. For example, continuous involvement could enable EPs to "*monitor feedback and it be an ongoing piece of case work that you monitored"* (Participant 4, 277).

4.5.3 Understanding of role

For some participants, the understanding of roles was a prominent element of their experience. There was a sense that this 'understanding' refers to the key responsibilities of the EP as well as other professionals. It appeared that this understanding of roles was important to a successful experience for the contributing EPs.

For Participant 5, previous work appeared to lead to other individuals understanding the *'unique contribution'* and with this, how EPs work.

> *I didn't have to kind of go through explaining what we do and what my kind of unique contribution was, he really knew what it was and the work that we've done previously and the stuff that we did afterwards, so that was a huge advantage* (Participant 5, 320-323)

This appeared to lead to the development of a *"bidirectional relationship"* (Participant 5, 130) which indicated a sense of mutual understanding.

> *The difficulty with sitting in panels, a lot are adults... […] y'know we can apply some of the stuff, but actually we need to, y'know HCPC has it there… don't step outside of your knowledge base* (Participant 1, 386-388)

Similarly, Participant 1 refers to the importance of understanding *"role boundaries"* (Participant 1, 197) which they attributed to underpinning their positive experience and directing their involvement.

> *We did take up that sort of critical friend approach where we were challenging and posing the questions… and because I think we made that quite transparent and clear and there was, I guess, a degree of consent to that, it wasn't received negatively* (Participant 3, 110-113)

With this, Participant 1 showed an appreciation of the need to work within their scope of practice and knowledge base to exercise restraint and work within guidelines and professional standards.

Participant 3 reflects on providing an opportunity for EPs to *"set up the expectation"* (Participant 3, 127) in terms of how they would contribute to Channel Panel meetings. Participant 3 reflected on the positive personal impact this appeared to have on their experience, stating that there was *"no imposter syndrome."* This reflected a sense of not feeling anxiety with their role on the Channel Panel and experienced feelings of confidence, purpose, and appreciation. It appeared that this participant attributed their positive experience to clearly defining their role prior to attendance.

For Participant 4, there appeared to be a sense of frustration, which they seemed to attribute to a perceived lack of clarity regarding the role of the EP which seemed to negatively impact their experience.

> *I think the biggest thing for me, the most frustrated thing is people just and I touched on this, don't know what we're about, they don't really know who we are they don't know what… they think we may be psychiatrists or just don't think people have a clear enough understanding* (Participant 4, 117-120)

This perceived lack of understanding seemed to extend to their understanding of the roles of other professionals.

I don't exactly know what the different police... y'know, there's different layers of the police aren't there and it's not always clear what part or role they play in it? To piece it all together, so I find that frustrating… (Participant 4, 122-124)

Participant 4 expressed frustration at not understanding the responsibilities of others and which also appeared to negatively impact their experience.

4.6 The personal impact of EP involvement

The personal impact of EP involvement was highlighted as a significant theme across all the data sets. All participants discussed the impact their involvement had on them personally when sharing their experiences of the Channel Panel. Due to the prominent presence of the personal impact in all discussions, it was interpreted that this was a shared experience across the sample. This GET is captured within the subthemes; *opportunity to explore interests, response to the processes and information shared, the value of supervision as a means of reflection* and *feeling as though more could be done.*

4.6.1 Opportunity to explore interests

For some participants, involvement in the Channel Panel allowed them to explore their personal and professional interests; for others, this inspired their participation. The specific motivations for this appeared to range from wanting to learn more about the factors leading to the development of "extremist" views, to learning more about the process and exploring the interest more generally.

There's always been that interest in that aspect of young people and what leads people to have kind of extremist thoughts and ideas (Participant 1, 18-19)

I have found it really interesting on a personal, professional level to understand these conversations and what happens in a process that I think is quite guarded and quite, y'know, cloak and dagger and very hidden... erm I get a sense of, I would rather be involved in a process like this, even if it's not a perfect process and then not be involved and that I can effect some positive influence (Participant 2, 245-248)

So that was an area of interest I would say and prior to becoming an EP (Participant 5, 20-21)

For Participant 2, the reason for being involved surpassed development of an interest.

I find it very fascinating on a personal level more than anything... And - and also, I think it's a reasonably controversial process, so I was keen that if I could be involved in a way that was positive (Participant 2, 8-10)

There was a sense that they were driven by a curiosity to acquire a positive firsthand experience of the Channel Panel process. Their motivation to be involved seemed to be underpinned by a need to advocate for those individuals from communities where Prevent is *"not very well trusted"* (Participant 2, 17).

Personal connections… erm… in terms of from religious backgrounds that maybe often get represented at the panel, and erm… it's not got a very good rep is what I would say... It's not very well trusted process within certain communities (Participant 2, 16-18)

This aligns with Participant 2's reflection on focusing on the evidence rather than judgements or stereotypical information, discussed as part of the development of '*Encouraging others to consider a different perspective*' GET.

4.6.2 Response to the processes and information shared

There was convergence within the sample regarding the experience of the processes and information shared. For some participants, the Channel Panel process resulted in a change of mindset, whereas for others the reality varied greatly from their expectation. For several participants, the process and exposure to information triggered an emotive response.

I think I went into it thinking that we'd have a lot more action plans and a lot more and agreed arrangements for a lot of these people than we actually did and most of the time a lot of the referrals, I would say at least kind of 40% were just kind of batted back because schools hadn't sort of met that threshold for external involvement for Channel (Participant 5, 73-76)

Participant 5 shared that the experience differed from their expectation; there was a sense that they felt disheartened at the process which consisted of referrals being *"batted back"* to schools. There was an indication that the experience of being involved resulted in some feelings of dissatisfaction; this appeared to be due to the administrative nature of needing additional information, rather than contributing to the creation of action plans.

Similarly, for Participant 4, there was an indication of dissatisfaction at the process, regarding the implications of young people referred.

> *When a child's been to Channel Panel it is, it is a how huge it is, y'know they are really really labelled and I mean in school... Y'know all well, I've been to the, y'know, this kid is all is a problem and will always be a huge, massive problem to them* (Participant 4, 305-307)

They stated, *"the last thing you want a child to do is be going to Channel Panel because it it's just such a stigma in school… it really is… y'know, and everything they do is scrutinised"* (Participant 4, 310-311). The use of phrases such as *"the last thing you want", "such a stigma",* and *"scrutinised"* conveys participants views of the severity of the implications for the young people. It could also suggest that this experience elicited an emotive response from the participant. It was interpreted that there is a sense of frustration due to the purpose of the process being to support young people, whereas the experience was that it perpetuated a stigma which resulted in further challenges for individuals referred.

Participant 2's experiences seemed to differ from other participants. They talked about initially feeling the process was *"daunting"* (Participant 2, 138) and having a *"sceptical mindset"*. They further reflected on their experience when initially being exposed to information about young people involved in "radicalisation"; *"it's almost alarming, it's panicky, but you're getting a real unadulterated view of, y'know, some of the thought processes of people in society, including children and young people and that can be quite scary"* (Participant 2, 111 - 114). The use of impactful language suggests that the participant felt unnerved by the information shared and there was a sense that they were unprepared for the disclosure of such information. However, they reflected that through increased exposure to the process and greater insight into the thought processes of other professionals, their feelings changed; *"I find it really interesting, and reassuring to some extent too, cus I think I did go in with a little bit of a sceptical mindset and I found it reasonably reassuring"*

(Participant 4, 432-434). It was interpreted that this participant's involvement resulted in a sense of relief that the process was supporting those it was designed to help.

For Participant 1, involvement in the Channel Panel resulted in feelings of discomfort about information sharing.

> *It's about it's the uncomfortableness of information sharing as well,* […] *about the expectation of what we shared about these young people… and I was like, the adults have given permission the children haven't given permission... And I felt massively uncomfortable about some of the information that was shared or being asked to be shared when these children hadn't done anything wrong…* (Participant 1, 424-428)

This participant reflected on the process, specifically young people not giving permission to be discussed as only parental consent is requested. There was a sense that this raised ethical considerations which appeared to lead to feelings of concern. For Participant 1, their exposure to cases prompted feelings of uneasiness; *"some of the cases are horrific"* (Participant 1, 399) and *"you take on a lot and it's, it's quite a scary world out there"* (Participant 1, 406-407). Their experience appeared to elicit an emotional response that transcended their role as an EP and seemed to have implications for their personal life.

> *We're not going to the* [NAME REDACTED] *market this year like, we're just not doing it… because I've heard something and that means I know something that the rest of society doesn't know, so I'm just gonna keep you guys safe* (Participant 1, 411-413)

4.6.3 The value of supervision as a means of reflection

For some participants, the value of supervision as a means of reflection appeared to be an important element of their experience. Participants seemed to see this as a means of making sense of their experiences through reflection on their response to the information, their role, and their own biases. There is convergence between two participants' accounts which suggest the importance of supervision.

For Participant 3, supervision provided a space to reflect on their experience within panel meetings as well as considering their role and own biases.

> *I think it's just about acknowledging your own bias, isn't it? And that's where good supervision… So, anyone engaging in this work needs* […] *good supervision so that you*

> *can sort of reflect on your own lens that you bring to the work and it's almost like a parallel process* (Participant 3, 175-178)

There was a sense of the importance of having *"good supervision"* when engaging with the Channel Panel and it was interpreted as being a valuable and key to supporting EP involvement in the process: "*I think with good supervision, you're able to sort of place those sort of ego demands and go in there and just reinforce in your mind what your role is"* (Participant 3, 150-152). Participant 3 also indicated supervision is a requirement for any EP involved with the Channel Panel as it provides a safe space for active reflection, which highlights the importance of regular supervision. They reflected on supervision being "*psychodynamic […] so we were reflecting on both what happened in the panel but also how some of those reenactments were happening in supervision so sort of group dynamics*" (Participant, 289-291). It appeared that this enabled EPs to consider their position within the Channel Panel meetings.

Similarly, Participant 1 reflected on the value of supervision as a means of reflection. There was a sense that supervision provided support for the emotive responses triggered by exposure to details of cases. It was interpreted that this participant valued having a safe space for reflection and placed importance on regular supervision.

> *Some of the cases are horrific… y'know? Things that people have done, I've had my eyes wide open now to the other side of society and that isn't a comfortable place to sit... So, what supervision have you got in place around it? Do people really understand what you're doing and what your role is?* (Participant 1, 399-401)

Participant 1 appeared to place value on supervision with a colleague who understood "extremism" and an insight into the processes. There was a sense that this provided an appreciation of the information EPs would be privy to and the nuances of panel involvement: *"I had a senior. Y'know, thankfully that I could talk to who was knowledgeable about extremism, y'know, he'd done his masters in counter terrorism, etcetera. So absolutely got what I was doing"* (Participant 1, 402-404). Supervision was interpreted as an important part of this individual's experience and was a contributing factor to their overall positive experience. Participant 1 also reflected on the restrictions within supervision for EPs who are involved. Professionals are required to sign documentation stating they will not disclose details of cases which extends to supervision. There was a sense that although supervision provided an outlet for discussing their *"response"* they still held on to information that could

be burdensome. It was interpreted that this resulted in conflicting and unresolved feelings: "s*o in supervision, I could discuss, I guess my response to it, but I couldn't discuss the cases or anything any identifying factors, anything"* (Participant 1, 418-419).

4.6.4 Feeling as though more could be done

For the majority of participants (Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 4, and Participant 5), there was discussion about feeling as though more could be done.

> *I think if we were able to solve those limitations, we could make better relationships with panel members in order to kind of flag things or see things earlier for children, cause we'd be having much more ongoing involvement,* […] *and do that work in a more preventative way… Erm and if we were able to be involved more frequently* (Participant 2, 324-328)

> *I wonder if there's a way in which it could be a bit more problem solving rather than a bit formulaic, but I recognise is that the Prevent kind of duty is very… quite rigid in its approach* (Participant 5, 328-330)

There was a sense amongst participants that the capabilities and contributions of EPs could be used more effectively. Across all the contributing participants' accounts, there appeared to be opportunity to improve the role of the EP further which participants felt might make their involvement more impactful; this included working more preventatively and participating in problem-solving. However, there was a sense of positivity regarding the future possibilities of the role. In contrast, despite appearing to feel hopeful, Participant 4 seemed to maintain the narrative that involvement in the panel was frustrating; there was a sense of them feeling unfulfilled and not contributing psychology.

> *I come away feeling a bit… well, yeah. I've had a nice morning, but did I… What did I really do? Did I make a difference to that meeting? And to be honest… no, I've helped somebody feel a bit better… I don't feel like I've added anything psychological at all* (Participant 4, 153-154)

4.7 Summary of findings

The findings presented four GETs that were interpreted from EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel: *the contribution of psychology is essential, encouraging others to consider a different perspective, the importance of developing professional relationships* and *the personal impact of EP involvement.* All GETs were developed from contributions from all participants, whilst the subthemes varied, see Figure 4.1. The first GET, *the contribution of psychology is essential* represented the following subthemes: *understanding of theory, SEND and child development, wider systems impacting on the child or young person* and *psychological formulation* interpreted from the interviews. The GET, *encouraging others to consider a different perspective* was developed from the following subthemes: *reframing and asking questions to prompt consideration, advocating for, and empowering others, providing an alternative perspective* and *the need for certainty*. The third GET, *the importance of developing professional relationships* was developed from the following subthemes: *collaborative working and group dynamics, consistency of EP who attends* and *understanding of role.* The final GET, *the personal impact of EP involvement* is a culmination of the following subthemes: *opportunity to explore interests, response to the processes and information shared, the value of supervision as a means of reflection* and *feeling as though more could be done.* Across these themes, there was a sense that EPs who participated in this study shared some similarities in experience of the channel panel process. The findings will now be discussed in relation to pertinent psychological theory and existing literature.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Chapter Overview

The chapter will discuss the four GETs which emerged from the analysis and offer further interpretations of EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel. The GETs and corresponding subthemes will be discussed in relation to current literature and psychological theory to answer the research questions (see section 2.7.3). A methodological review will follow considering the limitations and strengths of the current study. The unique contribution of the research and implications of practice will be presented as well as consideration for future research.

5.2 Summary of Research

The current study aimed to explore EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel and consider how EPs could support young people identified as being at risk of "radicalisation." The aim was to build on current research by gaining greater insight into EP involvement, as psychologists are not required to be present in all panels in the UK (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016; Home Office 2023b; Cook & Schneider, 2024). The research aimed to answer the following questions: *How do Educational Psychologists experience the Channel Panel?* and *What implications does this have for future practice when supporting young people identified as being at risk of "radicalisation?* Semi-structured interviews were used, and an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was conducted to achieve this. Four Group Experiential Themes were interpreted from EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel: *the contribution of psychology is essential, encouraging others to consider a different perspective, the importance of developing professional relationships* and *the personal impact of EP involvement.* Whilst these themes represented the individual experience of participants, there is an indication of some similarities in the experiences of the Channel Panel for the five EPs interviewed as part of this study. A discussion of the findings in relation to existing literature and psychological theory will follow. As IPA aims to generate new insights, it is conventional when using this methodology to introduce research pertinent to these new perceptions (Smith et al., 2022).

5.2.1 The contribution of psychology is essential

All participants contributed to the development of this GET. Participants appeared to make sense of their experiences through their role, primarily the contribution of psychology. The '*contribution of psychology is essential'* was interpreted as a key theme from EPs' experiences and thus, integral to their reflections. This interpretation is not surprising considering the role of an EP is to contribute psychology. However, the findings imply that through being involved in the panel, EPs are in fact fulfilling a knowledge gap which seems to be psychological theory, SEND, and child development as well as the ability to create a psychological formulation.

5.2.1.1 Understanding of psychological theory and SEND and child development

Psychological theory

Psychological theory

The application of theory appeared to be an important part of what EPs contributed to panel discussions. This connects to findings by Lee and Woods (2017) who highlighted the value commissioners placed on psychological knowledge. There was a sense from some participants that the addition of a psychological viewpoint and 'alternative perspective' differed from the contributions of other professionals, also recognised in the research (Lee & Woods, 2017).

SEND and Child Development

It was interpreted that the contribution of knowledge of SEND was valuable, particularly understanding of how special educational needs can manifest and the interaction between specific types of need. Ashton and Woods (2006) highlighted that EPs have a unique insight into SEND and child development and this was knowledge specific to their role and not something other professionals had on the Channel Panel. Caton and Landman (2021) acknowledge that young people with social communication difficulties such as autism could be more susceptible to developing interests in ideologies or being vulnerable to recruitment. Considering this in relation to the findings of Allely et al. (2024); what may present to other professionals as being an individual with an association to a particular ideology, to an EP, this

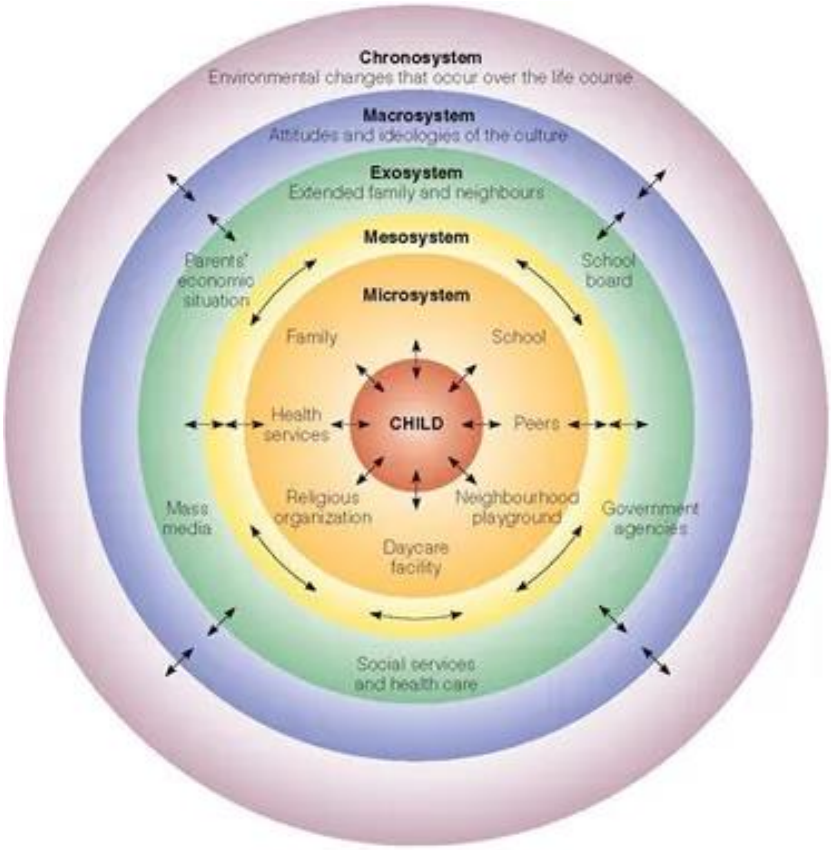
might suggest an individual with a fascination driven by obsession, repetition, and compulsion. These aspects are often seen in children and young people with social communication needs and is an area where EPs can provide additional knowledge (Allely et al., 2024). The experiences of EPs in the present study suggest that they provided an important contribution to discussions about young people's needs, SEND and child development. Furthermore, Thornton and Bouhana (2017) recognised the importance of having expertise of child development on the panel, particularly the understanding of how this may present in adolescents. Additionally, EP expertise of socio-cognitive factors appear to have been contributed to discussions by some of the participants in the present study (Thornton & Bouhana, 2017).

5.2.1.2 Wider systems impacting the child or young person

It was interpreted that consideration of the impact of the wider systems on young people developing "extremist" views was an important contribution of EPs. Some EPs made specific reference to Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; see Figure 5.1) whilst other EPs discussed the importance of considering the influence of individuals on young people developing "radicalisation", such as family members and peers.

Figure 5.1

Ecological System's Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005)



There seemed to be some agreement amongst EPs of the negative implications of a within-child focus within the Channel Panel. This aligns with theory promoting that an individual is shaped by the different systems within their environment; these systems consist of the microsystem, ecosystem and macrosystem, whilst the mesosystem and exo-system account for the interactions between the elements (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; see Figure 5.1). There was acknowledgement of the key systemic influences such as their home environment and interaction between key adults and schools on a young person's life and how this may contribute to the development of "extremist" views. It was interpreted that Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) provides a helpful way to consider the systemic influences on young people who may be at risk of "radicalisation". For some EPs sharing knowledge of this theory and directing other professionals to consider the wider environment was key to their experience. For example, there was reference to the outer spheres such as

the political landscape linked to government policy which can also have implications for the development of “extremist” views (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Research by Ghosh et al. (2023) and Cook and Schneider (2024) indicate that failing to consider the young person’s environment and the interactions between the systems denotes that professionals are not considering the young person holistically. Moreover, it is possible that depending exclusively on within-child formulations could result in interventions not being successful (Taylor & Soni, 2017). As a result, factors known to contribute to the development of “extremist” views such as feelings of alienation and intergroup conflict could be missed (Taylor & Soni, 2017). It was viewed by some participants that other professionals on the panel did not necessarily consider the wider environment. Therefore, this was a unique contribution of the EP and so, key to their experience of being involved with the Channel Panel. The findings suggest that the consideration of wider systems was essential to developing appropriate intervention in line with the young person’s needs.

5.2.1.3 Psychological formulation

For some participants, there was an indication that their role was to provide a psychological formulation; some EPs reflected on the responsibility they felt for this to be accurate as it directed intervention. This links with Thornton and Bouhana (2017) whose research concluded that some interventions recommended were not successful as an incorrect formulation may have been made. The importance of the EP providing a psychological formulation seemed to be an important aspect of their experience of the Channel Panel. It appeared, that for some, this prompted further exploration by other professionals of the evidence in relation to the young person. There are various definitions of formulation but ultimately it “summarises and integrates a broad range of biopsychosocial causal factors. It is based on personal meaning and constructed collaboratively with service users and teams” (Division of Clinical Psychology, 2011, p. 2). Moreover, the process of formulation is “central to the implementation of any psychological intervention” (Johnstone & Dallos, 2014, p. 5). However, there is limited research in this area in relation to educational psychology as most of the current literature is conducted by medical professionals or from a cognitive based therapy perspective (Johnston & Dallos, 2014). Despite this, it is recognised as one of the standards of proficiency of the EP role (HCPC, 2023) and has the following

purposes: clarifying hypotheses, understanding, prioritising issues and problems. Selecting specific interventions, predicting response to strategies, determining criteria for successful outcomes, considering progress and reformulation, and overcoming biases (Johnston & Dallos, 2014). This corresponds to the experiences of EPs on the Channel Panel as many reflected on the importance of reformulating and considering their own biases. This also provides an indication into the other aspects of the EP role and how they can further contribute to Channel Panel meetings.

5.2.2 Encouraging others to consider a different perspective

All participants contributed to the development of this GET. Participants appeared to reflect on their experiences of what they contributed to the Channel Panel process and after contributing EP specific knowledge, there was a sense that encouraging others to consider a different perspective was a key part of the EP experience. This GET comprises of four subthemes: *reframing and asking questions to prompt consideration, advocating for and empowering others, providing an alternative perspective* and *the need for certainty*. The findings suggest that encouraging other professionals to consider an alternative perspective was central to EPs' experience of the Channel Panel role.

5.2.2.1 Reframing and asking questions to prompt consideration

EPs in the present study observed that other professionals on the panel could present 'rigid' views that focused on a young person's behaviour, rather than considering other factors that may be influencing the young person's actions. There was a sense of needing to encourage other professionals to consider all the evidence to inform decision making. This aligns with Fallon et al. (2010) who describes EPs as "scientist-practitioners" and the importance of operating from an evidence-base, particularly when considering the form of intervention that should be recommended (Fallon et al., 2010; Lee & Woods, 2017). Further insight can be gained from Cameron (2006) who explored the unique contribution of EPs and suggested that EPs ask particular types of questions which encourage others to consider alternative perspectives and reduce the risk of pursuing a single narrative. Furthermore, Nolan and Moreland (2014) used discourse analysis to explore the strategies used by EPs in consultation. The study included interviews with EPs, SENCOs, teachers, and parents who had

previously participated in consultations (Nolan & Moreland, 2014). Out of the strategies highlighted as being used, several corresponded with the EPs reflections on their experiences of the Channel Panel. These included the use of deep listening, questioning, wondering, challenging, focusing, and refocusing, summarising, and reformulating (Nolan & Moreland, 2014). SENDCos and parents reflected on how 'questioning, wondering and challenging' from the EP allowed them to think in new ways (Nolan & Moreland, 2014). Moreover, wondering aloud prompted further consideration of the child's needs and additional support that could be provided. This suggests the skills EPs use for consultation (Nolan & Moreland, 2014) align with those shared by EPs in the present study when reflecting on their experiences of reframing and using questioning.

5.2.2.2 Advocating for and empowering others

There was a sense for several EPs in this study that their role was to advocate and empower others within the Channel Panel process; this referred to both young people being discussed and other professionals in the meetings. There was reference to the need for EPs to, at times, challenge the views of other professionals and for them to be "protective" (Participant 2, 331) of the young people discussed. This aligns with Smillie and Newton (2020) who used a mixed methods design to gather the views of EPs regarding obtaining and representing young people's voices. Findings from Smillie and Newton (2020) suggest the importance of EPs advocating for young people. In the present study, the majority of EPs reflected that this was an important part of their role and was achieved by providing additional information about their needs when the young person was not present.

It is possible that the need to advocate is underpinned by practice guidelines and research linking to anti-oppressive practice. Firstly, the HCPC 'Standards of Proficiency' (2023) which require EPs to be able to challenge discrimination as well as maintaining an awareness of the impact of identity on experience (HCPC, 2023). Research by Burnham's (2012) into 'Social Graces' provides a framework which may underpin EPs' promotion of anti-oppressive practice. When reflecting on their experiences of the Channel Panel, some EPs alluded to challenging on the basis of religious background and having an awareness of pre-existing stereotypes (Participant 2, 16-18, see section 4.6.1). Burnham (2012) provides an insight into different areas of diversity, and it is possible EPs used this framework during Channel Panel

meetings. These include gender, race, age, ethnicity, and sexuality (Burnham, 2012). The framework was intended to support practitioners to remain mindful about a range of differences (Burnham, 2012). The model represents a kaleidoscope of the socially produced differences in which the aspects are interwoven; in different contexts some come to the forefront, and some remain at the background (Burnham, 2012). Widely considered as a tool to understand difference and promote reflexive thinking, this provides a link between the experiences of EPs and recent research (Totsuka, 2014).

Some participants reflected on the need to advocate and empower other professionals, specifically school staff. One participant reflected on the supporting teachers with language when broaching the topic of "radicalisation" with young people. Mastroe (2016) used interviews with those involved in implementing the Prevent strategy and those with firsthand experience of Prevent. The study recognised a sense of 'fear' felt by school staff who regarded themselves as undertrained (Mastroe, 2016). It also appeared to have led to over-reporting and an increase in referrals made because of single incidents (Mastroe, 2016). This contributes greater understanding of the context in which EPs are working when involved with the panel and echoes reflections made by some participants (Mastroe, 2016).

5.2.2.3 Providing an alternative perspective

Providing an alternative perspective appeared to be integral to the EP experience. It was deemed a key part of the role in several cases, where is appeared to facilitate a shift in the views of other professionals. The impact of this appeared to be measured by EPs seeing other professionals considering the case differently or presenting with a different mindset and/or observing different interventions being recommended for a young person. Ashton and Roberts (2006) highlighted the importance of EPs providing an alternative perspective, this was recognised by both EPs and SENDCos as being one of the unique contributions of the EP. SENDCos shared that the different perspective was important to understanding the problem and considering the young person more positively (Ashton & Roberts, 2006). There was a sense that EPs felt that the approach and perspective differed from that of other agencies which aligns with the EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel in the present study (Ashton & Roberts, 2006). Nolan and Moreland (2014) shared that EPs can encourage others to consider alternative perspective through questioning, wondering and challenging; it is through asking

questions that others are encouraged to view the situation differently. There is a link here to the previous themes; reframing and asking questions to prompt consideration and advocating for and empowering others. Nolan and Moreland's (2017) research into discursive strategies highlighted the importance suggesting and explaining had in facilitating "transformational learning, a qualitative shift in the perspective and understanding" (p. 71) of others. It appears that for some EPs, a key part of their experience was facilitating this "qualitative shift" (Nolan & Moreland, 2014, p. 71).

5.2.2.4 The need for certainty

The need for certainty was highlighted as a key factor regarding the decision making of cases considered by the Channel Panel. Whilst reflecting on their experience, Participant 3 recalled their perception of some other professionals appearing to have difficulty with the discomfort of uncertainty and the prospect of simply not knowing. When making sense of their experience, it was observed that this participant shared their view of a parallel between this discomfort felt by professionals, and literature stating that an individual may develop "radicalisation," to meet a need for certainty (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016). The model of Personal Uncertainty (Hogg et al., 2013) refers to an individual's feelings of anxiety and uneasiness that are experienced throughout a person's life. It is suggested that the adoption of "extremist" ideologies may subdue these feelings (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016). Whilst there is no research supporting the connection made by Participant 3, there is an indication that sitting with uncertainty is uncomfortable (McGregor et al., 2008). McGregor et al. (2008) highlighted through two studies that uncertainty can result in an individual developing intense, critical opinions to relieve these feelings. The first study involved twenty male participants, where a sense of uncertainty was prompted, and concluded that the feeling of uncertainty increased the need for conviction (McGregor et al., 2008). This could provide an indication to why Participant 3 felt other professionals had difficulty with feelings of uncertainty. The second study involved both male and female participants and highlighted that uncertainty induced feelings of defensive zeal (McGregor et al., 2008). The findings provide an insight into the impact that uncertainty could have and thus, a greater insight into Participant 3's experiences.

5.2.3 Importance of developing professional relationships

All participants contributed to the development of this GET. Participants appeared to reflect on the importance of developing professional relationships as part of their experiences of the Channel Panel. This GET comprises of three subthemes: *collaborative working and group dynamics, consistency of the EP who attends* and *understanding of roles*. The findings suggest that developing positive professional relationships is integral to the EP experience.

5.2.3.1 Collaborative working and group dynamics

Shared aims and role boundaries were highlighted as crucial elements for collaborative working in the Channel Panel. There also appeared to be importance placed on the alignment between the aims of EPs and other panel members. Farrell et al. (2006) discussed the importance of EPs working as part of multi-agency teams. Moreover, Thornton and Bouhana (2017) suggest that group dynamics could be a limitation, particularly when opinions differed. Walter and Petr (2000) highlight the importance of having shared aims and values, stating that "an explicit and shared value base is not merely one dimension of inter-agency collaboration but, rather, it constitutes its very core" (p. 496). Furthermore, Barclay and Kerr (2006) support the importance of shared goals and understanding of roles within groups to aid successful collaborative working. Warwick (2023) conducted research which supports the need for collaborative working. The research explored the role of EPs working as part of multi-agency teams to support children with care experience (Warwick, 2023). This reaffirms the experiences of contributing participants as the research acknowledges that collaborative working can allow professionals to have a greater contribution when working as part of a team (Warwick, 2023).

5.2.3.2 Consistency of EP who attends

The organisation of EP involvement appeared to be a barrier for some professionals. The rota system between multiple EPSs seemed to be problematic as it prevented consistent attendance at panel meetings. This resulted in EPs providing advice that would then be reviewed by a colleague from a different service. This lack of consistency appeared to prevent some EPs from developing professional relationships which they felt had implications on their

ability to contribute, challenge and effect change at panel meetings. Roberts (2018) who explored multi-agency working using three multi-agency partnerships in England. The study concluded that the development of long-term professional relationships between practitioners has positive impact on the ability to effect change enabling the "swifter resolution" (Roberts, 2018, p. 52). These 'long-term professional relationships' are developed through clear communication and high-level trust between individuals (Roberts, 2018). Therefore, a lack of consistency of EP representation at the Channel Panel could prevent the establishment of these relationships and as Roberts (2018) suggests, may have negative implications for group working.

5.2.3.3 Understanding of roles

The understanding of roles and responsibilities appeared key to the EP experience of the Channel Panel. For some EPs, the discussions prior to involvement where the EP contribution was pre-agreed with other professionals was highlighted as an essential element of involvement. In contrast, when the role was not discussed prior to involvement, this seemed to have negative implications for the EPs' ability to utilise their skillset. Nancarrow et al. (2013) explored the principles required for successful interdisciplinary working. The research drew on a systematic review of the literature and perceptions of 253 staff from intermediate care teams in the UK (Nancarrow et al., 2013). Qualitative content analysis highlighted ten characteristics underpinning effective interdisciplinary team working, one of which was respecting and understanding roles (Nancarrow et al., 2013). The study suggests that shared knowledge of the limitations and boundaries of roles as well as the impact this may have on cases need to be understood to enable successful working (Nancarrow et al., 2013). This is particularly pertinent to the present study of EP experience of the Channel Panel as there seemed to be confusion over the EP role in relation to their involvement with the Channel Panel. Nancarrow et al. (2013) highlight that professionals should also have an awareness of how their role fits in with the responsibilities of others and that these are explicit. It appears that when there had been discussions about roles prior to involvement, in the Channel Panel, the EP seemed to reflect more positively on their contribution in comparison to those where this had not been the case, which aligns with findings from Nancarrow et al. (2013).

5.2.4 The personal impact of EP involvement

Although attending in a professional capacity, involvement in the Channel Panel seemed to have had a personal impact on the EPs participating in this study. There was a sense that whilst attendance provided an opportunity to pursue personal and professional interests and be involved with a unique way of working, there are personal implications for those involved. This included the exposure to potentially distressing detailed information that differed from more standard forms of casework which seemed to have personal repercussions for some EPs. This GET comprises of four subthemes: *opportunity to explore interests, response to the processes and information shared, the value of supervision as a means of reflection* and *feeling as though more could be done.* The findings suggest that whilst there appeared to be a personal impact on individuals, the experience offered an opportunity for EPs to make a positive contribution in a space where there is no current requirement for psychologist involvement (see section 4.4.1).

5.2.4.1 Opportunity to explore interests

There is a sense that the involvement in the Channel Panel allows EPs to explore interests that are not met by casework. There appeared to be a common interest in "extremism" particularly how a young person is "radicalised" and how they can be supported through the path away from "radicalisation". For some EPs, this coincided with a more systemic interest in the Prevent Agenda (2018) itself and the processes surrounding cases referred. Lee and Woods (2017) noted the pursuit of EPs' personal interests as part of their research of the evolution of the role within the context of traded services. Their research highlighted that EPs felt they have more opportunity to use their skills and interests and as a result felt they had acquired skills and developed on their practice (Lee & Woods, 2017). The pursuit of interests within the context of their role allowed for EPs to use the full range of skills and expertise as well as being able to fill gaps left by other services (Lee & Woods, 2017). This corresponds with the experiences of the contributing EPs; they reflected that involvement with the Channel Panel allowed them to explore areas of interest and work in a way that differed from their usual role. Whilst it does provide support for EP experiences, it is worth noting that the focus of the research was relating to casework and so the context differs from the forum of the panel (Lee & Woods, 2017).

5.2.4.2 Response to the processes and information shared

There was a sense that EP involvement differed from their expectations; the purpose of attending meetings was to generate action plans to support the young people discussed. In practice, the EPs observed that many referrals did not meet the threshold and required additional information. In several cases, the EPs commented that a referral had been made as a response to a one-off incident and further monitoring was required. This corresponds with referral data published by the Home Office (2023b), a total of 645 cases of 6,817 referrals were adopted by the Channel Panel. From the EPs perspective, there appeared to be a disconnect between school staff and the purpose of the panel; many cases referred seemed to involve young people with an additional need/s and it appears that a lack of understanding of how these needs may manifest may have led to inappropriate referrals. This corresponds with Chadwick (2019) who highlighted why some young people with social communication difficulties appear to adopt "extremist" views including that their interest may be driven by factors such as loneliness and lack of ability to detect deception (Chadwick, 2019). It is also possible that the increase in referrals could be a response to the pressure placed on professionals to recognise the signs of "radicalisation" and refer cases (Mythen et al., 2017).

From the EP/participant perspective, there appeared to be an indication that for some young people, there is a negative stigma associated with being referred to the panel. The negative connotations of Prevent, particularly associated with communities that consider it suspect, are recognised by recent research (Thornton & Bouhana, 2017; Mythen et al., 2017). Heath-Kelly and Strausz (2018) undertook research involving interviews with six safeguarding experts and online questionnaires with 329 health care professionals in the NHS to generate further insight into the legitimacy of situating Prevent within safeguarding. Although this is not specific to education, health care professionals are also responsible for making referrals and participate in the Channel Panel processes. Based on their findings, Heath-Kelly, and Strauss (2018) label the referral process as being "highly stigmatising for individuals" (p. 97). One safeguarding professional recalled it being "difficult to come back from a Prevent referral […] a person's life can be blighted by [a Prevent referral] in all sorts of ways" (Heath-Kelly & Strausz, p. 97). This research is pertinent to the findings of the present study, as for some EPs, involvement within the panel could be a conflicting experience given the negative stigma that appeared to be associated with some referrals.

5.2.4.3 The value of supervision as a means of reflection

EP involvement in the Channel Panel seemed to be enabled by regular supervision. Whether it was group or individual supervision, this appeared to help EPs to process and make sense of their experiences of panel meetings. It also seemed to provide EPs with an opportunity to reflect on their own contributions and consider alternative perspectives. Hawkin and Shohet (2012) describe supervision as a "joint endeavor" (p. 60) where an individual reflects on their practice and aims to improve the quality of their work. The importance of supervision is reflected in the statutory requirements for EPs to attend regular supervisory meetings (HCPC, 2023). Dunsmuir et al. (2015) undertook research into the value of supervision using semi-structured questionnaires completed by 246 practising EPs. The study highlighted the importance of supervision for providing an opportunity for EPs to discuss casework, problem-solve, seek emotional support and reflection (Dunsmuir et al., 2015). This aligns with the findings of the present study which highlights that supervision was valued by EPs as a means of providing emotional support, particularly when they were reflecting on their response to information shared at the Channel Panel (Dunsmuir et al., 2015). There was an indication that psychodynamic approaches to supervision were used as a means of supporting EPs to process their experiences of panel meetings (see section 4.6.3). This approach aims to focus on the individual's resistances, anxieties and learning generated from a situation (Frawley-O'Dea & Sarnat, 2001). This can allow an EP to gain an understanding of their psychological processes (Frawley-O'Dea & Sarnat, 2001).

5.2.4.4 Feeling as though more could be done

There was a sense that more could be done, particularly in terms of the EP role; supporting young people discussed at panel and working to empower school staff. The limitations of the EP role appeared to be addressed through discussions prior to involvement. It is possible that further support could be provided to young people and assistance given to empower school staff when considering referrals through link EPs (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016; D'Lima, 2019). EPs have a varied skill set that enables them to work in several ways; they are well placed to support through direct work using a range of tools, consultation, specific training (Ashton & Roberts, 2006; Fallon et al., 2010).

It appears that some of the ongoing difficulties with how Prevent and subsequently, the Channel Panel are viewed could align with EPs reflecting that more could be done. Mastroe (2016) highlights the lack of support from some local communities, believed to be a result of the centralisation of Prevent, which has contributed to a reduction in community-based projects being involved. Furthermore, the negative public perception of Prevent seems to have led to a reluctance of individuals to make referrals and for parents of young people to consent to Channel Panel involvement (Mastroe, 2016). The research further highlighted participant's experiences of marginalisation, particularly of Muslim communities, in relation to Prevent policy and practice (Mastroe, 2016). This aligns with research previously discussed by Mythen et al. (2017) who concluded that the emphasis on religious ideologies in the legislation underpinning Prevent is problematic.

5.2.5 Comparison of IPA Themes to Meta-ethnographic Synthesis

Although the current study focuses on the experiences of EPs and the systematic literature review presented in Chapter 2 focused on why young people developed "extremist" views; there are similarities between the third order interpretations developed from the meta-ethnographic synthesis and findings from the present study. This was particularly the case when EPs reflected on their experiences of discussions regarding the children and young people. The third-order interpretation *'vulnerability'* reflected the additional difficulties often experienced by young people who develop "extremist" views, for example, a lack of a sense of identity, isolation, and social, emotional, and mental health difficulties. All EPs shared the importance of understanding of theory, SEND and child development. This was particularly pertinent in *'the contribution of psychology is essential'* GET. For EPs, there appeared to be a sense that their knowledge of young people who have SEND, particularly social communication needs was valuable as many of the cases referred involved young people with additional needs (Gaudette et al., 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023).

The influence of the wider systems is reflected in both the third-order interpretations and the findings. The literature highlighted the importance of possible risk factors which could lead a child to being more susceptible to the development of "extremist" views (Brown et al., 2021; Gaudette et al., 2022; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023). The findings of the present study developed on this further as EPs reflected on the impact of risk factors such

as childhood trauma and SEND and how these may manifest in young people. A sense of lack of belonging and isolation could lead a child to being more vulnerable. Furthermore, the context surrounding the child was considered by all EPs. There was reflection on the interconnection of the systems around the child and the impact of the wider systems such as societal discourse and the political landscape. The experiences of EPs echoed the key psychological factors underpinning the development of "radicalisation" highlighted in the systematic review. These include the influence of others (Brown et al., 2021; Gaudette et al., 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023), the familial environment (Gaudette et al. 2022; Ghosh et al. 2023), and childhood trauma and adversity (Brown et al., 2021; Ghosh et al., 2023).

The theme of vulnerability was also reflected in other aspects of this study's findings. All EPs contributed to the GET *'encouraging others to consider a different perspective'.* EPs were able to encourage other professionals by posing questions which, amongst other things, seemed to consider the vulnerability of the young people and the wider systems which may be impacting on them. This was also reflected in the need to advocate and empower the young people.

The development of the GET *'the personal impact of EP involvement'* also seems to align with the third-order interpretation, *vulnerability*. Some of the EPs reflected on the impact on the young person being referred to panel and the potential bearing of being referred to the Channel Panel. Participants also reflected on the information shared in panel meetings, specifically, the details of young people's involvement and their circumstances in relation to how they developed "extremist" views. This also linked to most participants appearing to feel that more could be done to support young people who were referred to the Channel Panel.

5.3 Methodological Review

This section will consider the challenges and limitations and strengths of the current research.

5.3.1 Challenges and limitations

There were several challenges and limitations highlighted in undertaking the present study which focuses on exploring EPs experiences of the Channel Panel.

Whilst it was decided that the geographical locations of EPs would not be shared as this could compromise the anonymity of participants, it is important to acknowledge that the sample was not as varied as originally anticipated and so, did not represent all regions of the UK. Although IPA does not seek to make generalisations, it would have been useful for more regions to have been represented. Furthermore, the recruitment of participants was reliant on the Principal Educational Psychologists (PEPs) knowing what the Channel Panel was, the roles EP have within it, and identifying those within their team who have had experiences and passing on information of the study. This has implications as if senior leadership are not aware of the potential role EPs have in the Channel Panel, then they are less likely to request involvement in this space.

The experience of the EPs ranged from those who are currently involved with the Channel Panel to those who had previous involvement. Those with previous involvement ranged from seven years to twelve months ago. This has implications for the findings as it brings into question the relevance of the experiences of those participants for the present-day practices. Furthermore, the sample ranged from newly qualified EPs, main grade EPs and those in senior positions. It is possible that the range in experience could have underpinned their knowledge of "extremism" and the contributions they were able to make; both of which may have influenced their experiences. This may have implications for the findings due to the differing focus of their roles and their ability to instigate change. For example, one participant involved at a Senior level was able to consult with other professionals involved in the commissioning of EPs onto the panel. This has relevance as their experience and seniority permits them to advocate for and champion EP involvement in spaces where they may not currently be present, such as the Channel Panel.

Due to the limited pool of potential participants with the required experience, the interview schedule was piloted with a peer, a fellow TEP. It would have been more appropriate to conduct a pilot with an EP with experience as this would have been more helpful to determining the suitability of the questions from the viewpoint of someone with firsthand experience. The schedule was discussed, and feedback was received from the author's

Research Supervisor and changes were made. While it may have been helpful to co-produce the interview schedule; this was not possible due to the recruitment issues experienced, the limited pool of potential participants and time constraints.

Due to the nature of IPA, the researcher is the only individual to analyse the data and therefore is the primary influence on the findings and their interpretation; as the method itself relies on the researcher's own subjective interpretation. It is important to acknowledge the role the researcher had in the analysis process and the steps taken to ensure that this was robust.

5.3.2 Strengths of the current research

The present study is grounded in interpretivism and so developing an understanding of EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel remained the central focus; specifically, their individual and shared interpretations of their experiences conveyed through their interaction with the researcher.

The study included a small and purposefully selected sample of five participants (Oxley, 2016). The sample size is in line with the BPS (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011; Oxley 2016) which enabled the research to uphold the idiographic commitment of IPA. The small sample size allowed the researcher to exercise sensitivity, whilst ensuring rigour when interpreting the experiences of participants. As IPA does not aim to make generalisations but seeks to make sense of an experience, highlighting convergence and divergence between the sample, the total sample size meets the criteria for IPA (Smith et al., 2009). To ensure a homogenous sample, purposive sampling methods were used (see section 3.6.1 for recruitment process).

The purpose of the research was addressed through the completion of semi-structured interviews. The length of interviews allowed for the collection of detailed and rich data; the open conversation allowed participants to share experiences of the Channel Panel and provide detailed responses and unique insights (Willig, 2013; Mertens, 2015). This allowed for the generation of rich phenomenological interpretation of data (Smith et al., 2009).

Although there was homogeneity regarding the shared experiences of EPs, there were differing experiences amongst participants, the present research has discussed the shared

experiences of EPs and highlighted the nuances and giving voice to participants' individual experiences (Langdridge, 2007; Smith et al., 2022).

The current research upheld the theoretical principles of IPA, phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography. The focus of the study was to explore EP experience of the Channel Panel to develop understanding of phenomenon aligned with the phenomenological element of this methodology (Smith et al., 2022). Furthermore, the interview process provided space for participants made sense of their understanding (Alase, 2019). The data collection and analysis processes enabled interpretations to be drawn regarding the lived experiences of individuals and recognised the role of the researcher (Smith et al., 2022). The perceptions and position of the researcher were considered throughout the process by reflexive commentary which recognised the influence they had on the interpretations (Cohen et al., 2011; Haynes, 2012). The idiographic element was upheld through the inclusion of five participants which adhered to the recommendations set out by the BPS (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011; Oxley, 2016). Additionally, the IPA process allowed for individual experiences to be analysed before similarities and differences across the data were noted (Smith et al., 2022).

To ensure transparency, the process of analysis has been clearly outlined and the steps set out by Smith et al. (2022) were followed. This includes adhering to the key aspects of IPA whilst remaining open-minded; acknowledging biases throughout, the researcher's contribution to analysis and recognising the influence the researcher has on the findings (Yardley, 2008; Smith et al., 2022). The researcher's reflexivity was documented through notes made between interviews, and in a reflexive journal, extracts of which are included throughout in the form of a reflexive commentary (Yardley, 2008; Smith et al. 2022; see section 3.8). Interviews were analysed independently and several days were left in-between each discussion to minimise the chance of the previous interview influencing the questioning. The process of analysis was clearly illustrated through the inclusion of extracts of coded data, initial note taking, the development of experiential statements, the generation of PETs, and the creation of GETs. The approach used was demonstrated by the inclusion of quotations from transcripts were used to exhibit how the researcher has interpreted the participants' interpretations of their experiences. The themes and interpretations were also discussed with the Research Supervisor. Whilst this research is not transferable, it does provide a valuable

insight into the experiences of EPs which has implications for EP practice discussed in section 5.5-5.7.

The presentation of details of the study, specifically those pertaining to the process of analysis and evaluation of data has ensured replicability and confirmability. Moreover, Yardley's (2008) four principles of quality and validity; *sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, coherence and transparency* and *impact and importance* (outlined in section 3.8) add to the rigour of the findings.

Overall, the study allowed EPs to share their interpretations of their experiences of the Channel Panel which provides a valuable insight into the experiences of a limited population as only a small number of panels have EPs present. This research builds on previous studies regarding the important contribution EPs can make in this area such as the unique skillset and the ability to work at different levels; with young people directly, indirectly with key adults and at a systems level (Fallon et al., 2010; Sewell & Hulusi, 2016; Lee & Woods, 2017).

5.4 Distinctive contribution of this research

The literature review presented current literature on the theoretical underpinnings of why an individual may develop "extremist" views. This included the combination of Personal Uncertainty and Reactive Approach Motivation theory (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016), Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Talyor & Soni, 2017; Cook 2023; Ghosh et al., 2023) and resilience as a protective factor (Masoudi et al., 2022; Sklad & Park, 2017). Consideration was also given to childhood trauma and adversity as existing literature presented this as a contributing factor (Simi et al., 2016). A systematic literature review focused on the psychological processes experienced by young people who developed "extremist" views and demonstrated a need for psychological understanding when considering the processes underpinning "radicalisation" (Brown et al., 2021; Pilkington & Hussain, 2022; Gaudette et al., 2022; Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022; Ghosh et al., 2023). The current context highlighted the Prevent Agenda and the Channel Panel process which has involved increased responsibility on professionals identifying and referring young people (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016; Lee & Woods, 2017; D'Lima, 2019). At present, it is not a requirement for EPs to attend panel meetings, despite young people accounting for the largest number of referrals and the increased pressure on school staff to recognise if a young person has developed "extremist" views

(Sewell & Hulusi, 2016; Lee & Woods, 2017; D'Lima, 2019). Whilst existing research (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016) recognised that EPs are well placed to support in this area, there has been no exploration of EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel process. Previous doctoral theses have explored teacher's views (Joyce, 2018), the use of Reactive Approach Motivation theory to support the identification of young people at risk of "radicalisation" (D'Lima, 2019) and Milmine (2023) examined multi-agency perspectives on the role of EPs with supporting in this area. The existing research highlights a clear role for EPs within the Channel Panel and so, it was important to conduct a study exploring their experiences of the panel process.

The present study provides a unique insight into the experiences of the five EPs who had participated in the Channel Panel process. The use of IPA allowed for interpretations to be drawn and for the development of new understanding of EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel. The interpretations include *the contribution of psychology is essential*, which, given the nature of the EP is to be expected. However, additional interpretations include *encouraging others to consider a different perspective, importance of developing professional relationships* and *the personal impact of EP involvement* shed new light on EP experiences of the Channel Panel process. These interpretations include the sense of importance placed on advocating for young people and other professionals.

The current study suggests that EPs made a valuable contribution to panel meetings and have a key role as part of the Channel Panel; contributing a psychological perspective, knowledge of SEND and child development, understanding of group dynamics, encouraging others to consider an alternative perspective.

5.5 Implications for the Channel Panel

This section will first discuss the implications of the findings for the Channel Panel before considering the implications for EP practice, then more widely on EPSs, local authority level and future research.

The present research highlighted implications for the Channel Panel including the potential benefit of professionals with knowledge of child development and SEND present. Based on the EPs experiences, it seems important for panels to recognise the gaps in expertise and consider the implications of not having a psychologist present. The present study highlights the potential contribution EPs can make to Channel Panel drawing on their

knowledge of child development and SEND. The study also highlights ethical implications of young people's needs being discussed where an EP is not present when other professionals do not appear to have expertise within this area.

There is a need to reflect on the current processes, particularly the discussion of cases involving children and young people within a forum that also considers adults and the possible ethical questions this poses. For example, the appropriateness of discussing cases involving children and young people within a system that is designed for adults, especially where there is no current stipulation for professionals to have knowledge of child development and needs specific to young people (Home Office, 2023a). Furthermore, the need for consent from young people and their awareness of the detailed discussions to be considered was raised in the EPs interviews. Currently, adults who hold parental responsibility consent for young people to be discussed but at present, there is no process for obtaining consent from the young person themselves. This raises questions regarding referrals where the child has not committed an offence; various personal details are being shared within a forum of professionals when they have not done anything wrong.

There is also a need to address the stigma and negative connotations experienced by some young people being referred to the Channel Panel. Despite the intervention and support provided by panels in some areas being extensive, EPs experiences suggested that the panel had a negative reputation with some communities. Furthermore, EPs felt that for some children, there were repercussions of being referred which can negatively impact their school experience. This suggests that further work to ensure that children referred are receiving support and any stigmas around the panel's involvement are directly addressed if needed. There is also an opportunity for community-based work that supports communities to understand the role of the Channel Panel and the support it can provide.

5.6 Implications for Educational Psychology practice

The research highlighted the range of transferable skills EPs were able to draw on during their involvement; various aspects of psychological theory, child development and knowledge of SEND. This also extended to consultation skills, maintaining a position of curiosity and group dynamics; this expertise is part of the EP skillset and unique contribution

(Fallon et al., 2010; Lee & Woods, 2017; HCPC, 2023). EPs are also well positioned to work at various levels; systemic, indirectly with professionals and directly with school staff and young people (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016).

Role definition

The research highlighted the importance of defining the EP role prior to involvement, specifically, the boundaries and constraints to supporting the understanding of other professionals (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016). There were instances where this had not taken place, and which left some EPs feeling others did not understand their role and they were not able to contribute anything psychological. EPs work differently to many other professionals (Fallon et al., 2010; Lee & Woods, 2017; HCPC, 2023), often taking up the position of a '*critical friend*' (Participant 3, 110-111); asking questions and encouraging others to pause and challenging views. Therefore, it may be helpful to manage the expectations of others on the panel regarding the specificities of the EP role and agree to what EP involvement may look like.

There is an argument for pursuing EP involvement in all panels as this could present an opportunity for EPs to work proactively and preventatively with a particularly vulnerable population. EPs are well positioned to provide additional support to schools in this area. This may take the form of conducting consultations, training, and supporting the implementation of interventions.

The potential contribution that EPs can make to panels is multi-faceted and could support other professionals as well as young people, primarily through advocacy, facilitation skills and awareness of the theory underpinning group dynamics which could have implications for the formulations made which subsequently direct the intervention. Whilst other professionals contribute valuable skills to the panel, the present research has shown that the skills and knowledge bases supplied by EPs is unique.

Consistency

The research highlighted the importance of having consistency in the EP who attends the Channel Panel. When panels cover large geographical areas that can encompass different EPSs, this has implications for EPs who work for different services as they do not have access to information about cases. Furthermore, they do not have an opportunity for involvement if

the young person lives within a different local authority. Further consideration is required for panels where EPs from multiple services are involved. When EPs regularly attended, they had an awareness of previous cases and were able to make valuable contributions. Moreover, consistent attendance allowed for understanding of the EP role and professional relationships to develop which, the findings suggest, were key factors to EPs contributing to panel meetings and reporting a positive experience. It appeared that EPs who regularly attended seemed to have greater knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of other professionals.

Ability to challenge

The findings suggest the importance of EPs being able to challenge the views of other professionals within meetings. There are implications for EP practice here, as there appears to be a responsibility for EPs to pose challenges regarding understanding and conclusions drawn in relation to cases involving young people. EPs also have a role in advocating for young people and other professionals if they believe that their voices are not being heard in the Channel Panel process (Ashton & Roberts, 2006; HCPC, 2023). Therefore, EPs involved in the Channel Panel should be prepared to challenge discussions if they do not feel that decisions are in the interests of the young person.

Supervision

The data highlighted the importance of supervision for supporting the reflection of the EPs involved. Some EPs reflected on supervision providing an opportunity for reflecting on their own position as well as the dynamics of the panel itself. The nature of information may cause distress and so consideration needs to be given to supporting the EPs involved by ensuring they have access to regular supervision that helps them to make sense of their experiences and work through any difficulties they have encountered. Whilst EPs would not be able to discuss details of cases, supervision would enable them to share how they felt in response to information that was described by some EPs as *'horrific'* (Participant 1, 399) and *'alarming'* and *'quite scary'* (Participant 2, 111 - 114).

From the interviews, there appeared to be tension for some of the EPs regarding EP attendance at the Channel Panel and the parameters of the panel itself. This concerns the discussion of both cases pertaining to adults and young people and whether these should be

discussed in the same forum. It is important to acknowledge whether consent has been obtained and raises ethical concerns to whether EPs should be present in meetings that discusses cases outside of the age limits with which EPs work.

5.7 Implications at a local authority level

As many EP services are based within the local authority, it is necessary to consider the implications this has for them. Currently, there is not a nationwide policy that requires EPs to attend Channel Panel meetings (Home Office, 2023a; Cook & Schneider, 2024). An additional implication of the study is that greater understanding of the EP role is required. The lack of understanding of the contribution EPs could make and the role, in some cases, being associated with the ability to fulfil statutory responsibilities, has resulted in EPs' skillset not being fully utilised. However, it needs to be borne in mind that EP involvement would have implications for service budgets and capacity of EPs; additional supervision may need to be provided for those involved. There is also the impact on time allocations and so this has implications for EPs being allocated appropriate time to attend meetings. However, having an EP present on the Channel Panel would allow for a limited resource, EPs, to have a wider impact whilst still working to support young people identified as being at risk of "radicalisation". They are able to work with professionals working directly with young people and therefore, able to effect change indirectly. Furthermore, attendance at the Channel Panel would allow EPs to share valuable insights when discussing cases. This research prompts consideration and conversations with those in charge of EP allocations to how to effectively deploy EPs into spaces where their skillset can be used to have maximum impact.

Allocation of a consistent EP would allow for services to be commissioned, which may offset financial outlay and capacity. This also has implications for the local authority; the prospect to work preventatively at a systemic level, where EPs can use the full range of their skillset to support the intervention of vulnerable children. Involvement could also support the development of relationships with other professionals.

5.8 Implications for future research

The current research explored five EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel. Although the number of potential participants was limited, there are few EPs attending panels across the UK. Further research exploring the views of other EPs in regions across the country who are involved with the panel would gain a wider understanding of EPs' experiences of the Channel Panel.

A limitation of the present research is that it only considers EPs experience of the Channel Panel and focused solely on their perspective. Therefore, future research could involve the roles of other professionals on the panel such as members of the police and the panel chair to gain their insights into their own and EP contributions. Moreover, due to the limited pool of participants, some of the EPs who participated in the study had not been involved with the Channel Panel for five years. Consequently, further research could involve EPs and professionals who are currently involved to gain an understanding of existing experiences.

Although the current research provides an insight into EPs' experiences, there is still no research exploring the experiences of young people who have been referred to the Channel Panel. This was the initial area of focus, however, there were various challenges faced by the researcher including the need for permission from the Home Office. Research in this area could build on existing literature and research to provide a greater understanding of why young people develop "extremist" views. This insight could provide firsthand experience which could inform practice and support professionals, including EPs, to understand how to further support young people identified as being at risk of "radicalisation."

5.9 Research conclusion

The case for supporting young people who are identified as being at risk of "radicalisation" has been strengthened by recent statistical data showing an increase in referrals with young people accounting for the largest population (Home Office, 2023b). This, along with the introduction of the Prevent duty (2015), placed greater pressure on school staff to recognise the signs of "radicalisation". EPs work at various levels and have expertise which

makes them well placed to provide support in this area (Ashton & Roberts, 2006; Sewell & Hulusi, 2016).

The literature review highlighted "radicalisation" as a "psychological phenomenon" (Augestad Knudsen, 2017, p. 39). The meta-ethnographic synthesis considered psychological processes contributing to the development of views. The Prevent Agenda underpinned the Channel Program, a referral process that provides intervention to those identified as being at risk (Home Office, 2023b). Current policy does not require an EP to be present on the panel (Home Office, 2023a; Cook & Schneider, 2024). However, in some areas of the UK EPs have been involved. There is, however, limited research into the Channel Panel, and it was hoped that by exploring the experiences of EPs, an insight into their contribution could be ascertained. To address this gap, this study aimed to answer the following research question and subsidiary question: *How do Educational Psychologists experience the Channel Panel? What implications does this have for Educational Psychologists when supporting young people indirectly through the Channel Panel?*

A qualitative exploratory study using semi-structured interviews with five fully qualified EPs was used to capture their lived experience of being involved in the Channel Panel. Four interrelated GETs were interpreted using an interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith et al., 2022), these were as follows: *the contribution of **psychology** is essential, encouraging others to consider a different perspective, the importance of developing professional relationships* and *the personal impact of EP involvement.* Participant's knowledge of psychology, SEND and child development appear especially important when discussing cases involving young people. EPs have skills in areas such as consultation which appear valuable when encouraging others to pause, question and consider their own viewpoints and decisions which directly impact the young person. Although these themes represent the individual experiences, the findings suggest that there were similarities in experience amongst the sample. The findings highlight the experiences of EPs as contributing valuable psychological knowledge and expertise, advocating and empowering others and their role in encouraging others to consider a different viewpoint by posing questions and challenging.

The implications of the findings have been discussed. The implications for the Channel Panel include the benefit of EP involvement, particularly in a forum that involves discussion of young people where there may also be SEND too. In terms of EP practice, the definition of the parameters of the role is important whilst ensuring consistency in which EP attends and access

to supervision is provided. At the LA level, there is currently no requirement for an EP to be on the panel (Home Office, 2023a; Cook & Schneider, 2024) and EPs have a unique skillset that could provide a valuable contribution to Channel Panel discussions. The research highlights the value of having an EP present on the panel.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Excluded Studies

Reference	Reason/s for Exclusion
Pearce, J. M., Lindekilde, L., & Parker, D. (2023). Understanding UK university academic staff attitudes towards recognising and responding to student radicalisation. *British Educational Research Journal*, *49*(6), 1254–1272. https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3896	Study did not focus on experiences of young people.
Dulck, B., & Houssier, F. (2023). From the experience of the religious to the hatred of the feminine: Non-Muslim teenagers' conversion to Islam and departure for the jihad. [in French] *L'Evolution Psychiatrique,* 88(3):369-379.	Study was conducted in French, despite filters being applied.
Haugstvedt, H., & Gunnarsdottir, H. M. (2023). Managing role expectations and emotions in encounters with extremism: Norwegian social workers' experiences. *Qualitative Social Work: QSW : Research and Practice*, *22*(1), 67–85. https://doi.org/10.1177/14733250211051410	Study did not focus on experiences of young people.
Barracosa, S., & March, J. (2022). Dealing With Radicalised Youth Offenders: The Development and Implementation of a Youth-Specific Framework. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, *12*, 773545–773545. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2021.773545	Study did not focus on experiences of young people.
McGlynn, C., & McDaid, S. (2019). Radicalisation and Higher Education: Students' Understanding and Experiences. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *31*(3), 559–576. https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2016.1258637	Study did not focus on experiences of young people.
Coid, J. W., Bhui, K., MacManus, D., Kallis, C., Bebbington, P., & Ullrich, S. (2016). Extremism, religion and psychiatric morbidity in a population-based sample of young men. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, *209*(6), 491–497. https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.bp.116.186510	Study did not focus on adolescents/ used quantitative methods of data collection.
Stedmon, A., Richards, D., Frumkin, L., & Fussey, P. (2016). Human Factors in security: User-centred and socio-technical perspectives. *Security Journal*, *29*(1), 1–4. https://doi.org/10.1057/sj.2015.40	Study did not focus on experiences of young people.
Betts, K. R., & Hinsz, V. B. (2013). Group Marginalization: Extending Research on Interpersonal Rejection to Small Groups. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *17*(4), 355–370. https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868313497999	Study did not focus on experiences of young people.
Jacques, K., & Taylor, P. J. (2013). Myths and Realities of Female-Perpetrated Terrorism. *Law and Human Behavior*, *37*(1), 35–44. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0093992	Used quantitative methods of collection/ analysis. Study did not focus on experiences of young people.
Miconi, D., Santavicca, T., Frounfelker, R. L., & Rousseau, C. (2023). Preference for online social interactions and support for violent radicalization among college and university students. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *93*(4), 350–363. https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000681	Used quantitative methods of collection/ analysis. Study did not focus on experiences of young people.

Srivastava, P., Sehgal, T., Jain, R., Kaur, P., & Luukela-Tandon, A. (2024). Knowledge management during emergency remote teaching: an interpretative phenomenological analysis of the transition experiences of faculty members. *Journal of Knowledge Management*. https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-02-2023-0112	Not focused on the process of "radicalisation".
Hollewell, G. F., & Longpré, N. (2022). Radicalization in the Social Media Era: Understanding the Relationship between Self-Radicalization and the Internet. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, *66*(8), 896–913. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X211028771	Used quantitative methods of collection/ analysis. Study did not focus on experiences of young people.
Ellis, B. H., Abdi, S. M., Lazarevic, V., White, M. T., Lincoln, A. K., Stern, J. E., & Horgan, J. G. (2016). Relation of Psychosocial Factors to Diverse Behaviors and Attitudes Among Somali Refugees. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *86*(4), 393–408. https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000121	Not focused on the process of "radicalisation".
Kozlova, M., Mikheev, I., & Lyapina, A. (2024). Reintegration of Russian children returned from war zones in the Middle East: Directions, actors, barriers. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *156*, 107322. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2023.107322	Not focused on the process of "radicalisation".
Sanders-Phillips, K., & Kliewer, W. (2020). Violence and Racial Discrimination in South African Youth: Profiles of a Continuum of Exposure. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, *29*(5), 1336–1349. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-019-01559-6	The study focused on young people in South Africa.
Gill, P., Clemmow, C., Hetzel, F., Rottweiler, B., Salman, N., Van Der Vegt, I., Marchment, Z., Schumann, S., Zolghadriha, S., Schulten, N., Taylor, H., & Corner, E. (2021). Systematic Review of Mental Health Problems and Violent Extremism. *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, *32*(1), 51–78. https://doi.org/10.1080/14789949.2020.1820067	Study did not focus on experiences of young people.
Rousseau, C., Miconi, D., Frounfelker, R. L., Hassan, G., & Oulhote, Y. (2020). A Repeated Cross-Sectional Study of Sympathy for Violent Radicalization in Canadian College Students. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *90*(4), 406–418. https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000444	Study did not focus on experiences of young people.
Stathi, S., Vezzali, L., Waldzus, S., & Hantzi, A. (2019). The mobilizing and protective role of national identification in normative and non-normative collective action. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *49*(9), 596–608. https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12619	The study involved participants in several countries outside the inclusion. Used quantitative methods of collection/ analysis. Study did not focus on experiences of young people.
Ellis, B. H., Decker, S. H., Abdi, S. M., Miller, A. B., Barrett, C., & Lincoln, A. K. (2022). A Qualitative Examination of How Somali Young Adults Think About and Understand Violence in Their Communities. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *37*(1-2), NP803–NP829. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520918569	Not focused on the process of "radicalisation".

Pieri, Z. P., & Grosholz, J. M. (2023). "Soldiers of the Faith": A Comparative Analysis of White Power Songs and Islamic State Nasheeds. *Deviant Behavior*, *44*(1), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2021.1994359	Study did not focus on experiences of young people.
Cheah, C. S. L., Gürsoy, H., & Balkaya-Ince, M. (2021). Parenting and social identity contributors to character development in Muslim American adolescents. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *81*, 68–78. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2021.01.002	Study did not focus on experiences of young people.
Zmigrod, L. (2022). A Psychology of Ideology: Unpacking the Psychological Structure of Ideological Thinking. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *17*(4), 1072–1092. https://doi.org/10.1177/17456916211044140	Used quantitative methods of collection/ analysis. Study did not focus on experiences of young people.
Leander, N. P., Agostini, M., Stroebe, W., Kreienkamp, J., Spears, R., Kuppens, T., Van Zomeren, M., Otten, S., & Kruglanski, A. W. (2020). Frustration-Affirmation? Thwarted Goals Motivate Compliance With Social Norms for Violence and Nonviolence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *119*(2), 249–271. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000190	Used quantitative methods of collection/ analysis. Study did not focus on experiences of young people.
Kende, J., Baysu, G., Van Laar, C., & Phalet, K. (2021). Majority group belonging without minority group distancing? Minority experiences of intergroup contact and inequality. British Journal of Social Psychology, 60(1), 121–145. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12382	Used quantitative methods of collection/ analysis. Study did not focus on experiences of young people.
Wroe, L. E. (2021). Young people and "county lines": a contextual and social account. *Journal of Children's Services*, *16*(1), 39–55. https://doi.org/10.1108/JCS-10-2020-0063	Not focused on the process of "radicalisation".
Veronese, G., Pepe, A., Jaradah, A., Al Muranak, F., & Hamdouna, H. (2017). Modelling life satisfaction and adjustment to trauma in children exposed to ongoing military violence: An exploratory study in Palestine. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *63*, 61–72. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2016.11.018	Used quantitative methods of collection/ analysis. Study did not focus on experiences of young people.
Corner, E., Taylor, H., Van Der Vegt, I., Salman, N., Rottweiler, B., Hetzel, F., Clemmow, C., Schulten, N., & Gill, P. (2021). Reviewing the links between violent extremism and personality, personality disorders, and psychopathy. *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, *32*(3), 378–407. https://doi.org/10.1080/14789949.2021.1884736	Used quantitative methods of collection/ analysis. Study did not focus on experiences of young people.
Velitchkova, A. (2022). Institutionalized behavior, morality, and domination: A Habitus in action model of violence. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, *52*(1), 2–21. https://doi.org/10.1111/jtsb.12292	Not focused on the process of "radicalisation".
Garbarino, J., Governale, A., & Nesi, D. (2020). Vulnerable children: Protection and social reintegration of child soldiers and youth members of gangs. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *110*(Pt 1), 104415–104415. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104415	Not focused on the process of "radicalisation".

Appendix 2: Weight of Evidence A – Methodological relevance – CASP Overall rating

Criteria	Brown et al. 2021	Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022	Gaudette et al., 2022	Pilkington & Hussain, 2022	Ghosh et al., 2023
1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Cannot tell	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Cannot tell	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

9. Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
10. How valuable is the research?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Weight of Evidence A Judgement	**Medium**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**

Appendix 3: Weight of Evidence B – Methodological relevance – Criteria and judgement

Criteria	Brown et al. 2021	Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022	Gaudette et al., 2022	Pilkington & Hussain, 2022	Ghosh et al., 2023
Qualitative methods of data collection used.	Yes - Semi-structured interviews	Yes - Semi-structured interviews	Yes - Semi-structured interviews	Yes - Semi-structured interviews, field diaries and mediated dialogue events	Yes - Semi-structured interviews and focus groups
Robust qualitative data analysis.	Yes – Thematic Analysis	Yes – Thematic Analysis	Yes – Thematic Analysis	Yes – Ethnography	Promotes analysis of representation, interpretation, and self-reflection
Weight of Evidence B Judgement	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**

Appendix 4: Weight of Evidence C – Topic relevance – Criteria and judgement

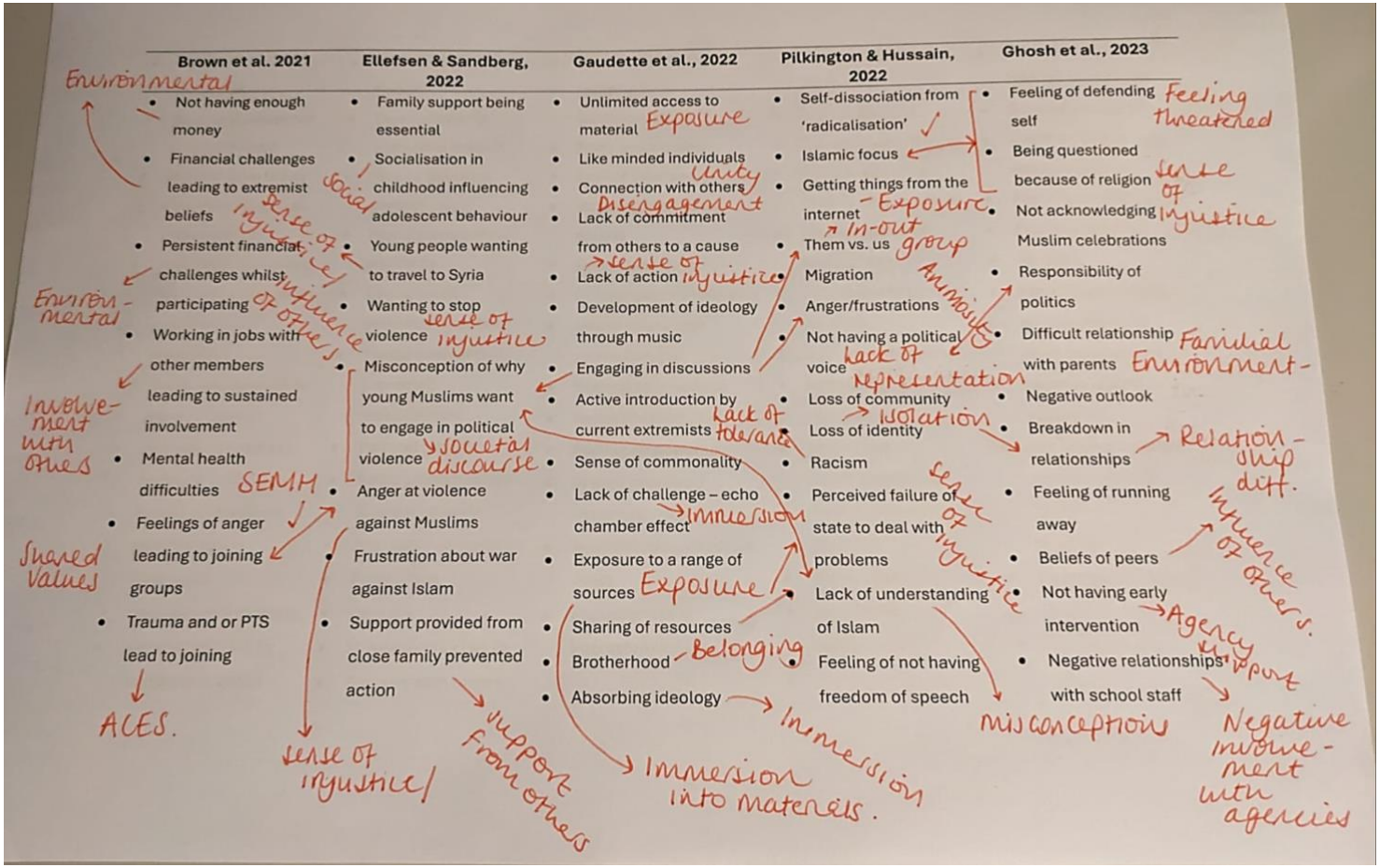
Criteria	Brown et al. 2021	Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022	Gaudette et al., 2022	Pilkington & Hussain, 2022	Ghosh et al., 2023
Focus solely on young people's experiences of "radicalisation".	No – there were 24 participants who were former extremists. However, the study also involved 10 family members and 2 close friends.	No – the study interviewed 7 former extremists and 19 family members.	No - the study focused on 10 former extremists. However, the research involved participants aged 27-44 years old. Some participants reflected on their experiences as adolescents.	No - the study focused on 10 former extremists. However, the research involved participants aged 19-33 years old. Some participants reflected on their experiences as adolescents.	No – the study interviewed family, friends and professionals that worked directly with the young people involved.
Weight of Evidence C Judgement	**Medium**	**Medium**	**Medium- High**	**Medium- High**	**Medium**

Appendix 5: Weight of Evidence D - Overall appraisal judgement

Authors	WoE A	WoE B	WoE C	WoE D
Brown et al. 2021	Medium	High	Medium	**Medium**
Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022	High	High	Medium	**Medium-High**
Gaudette et al., 2022	High	High	Medium- High	**High**
Pilkington & Hussain, 2022	High	High	Medium- High	**High**
Ghosh et al., 2023	High	High	Medium	**Medium-High**

Appendix 6: Phase 4 of the meta-ethnographic approach

As directed by Noblit and Hare (1988), Phase 4 of the meta-ethnographic process began with the researcher identifying key metaphors, phrases, ideas. The researcher then began to juxtapose these findings through displaying the commonalities and differences between these concepts (Noblit & Hare, 1988). This image below represents an example of the process to identify the similarities and differences between the included studies. A list was made of the key metaphors, phrases, and ideas; annotations were made to identify the relationships between the concepts.



Appendix 7: Phase 5 of the meta-ethnographic approach

This following table displays the development of the second order for the systematic review. The themes identified in the five individual studies that contributed to the current systematic review. The colour-coding corresponds with the table in Appendix 8 showing how they were developed into second order translations and then to third-order interpretations.

Brown et al. 2021	Ellefsen & Sandberg, 2022	Gaudette et al., 2022	Pilkington & Hussain, 2022	Ghosh et al., 2023
In group/out group	Familial environment	Being part of something	Developing and maintaining relationships	Interactions between systems
Lack of intervention	Lack of integration	Developing and maintaining relationships	Influence of others	Lack of understanding
Low self-esteem	Low self esteem	Active role	Making sense of self	Negative attitudes to formal institutions
Lack of exposure to others	Emotional development – lack of empathy for others	In group/out group	Sense of injustice	Membership
Adverse childhood experiences	Negative involvement with agencies	Shared interest with others	Isolation	Sense of purpose
Misinformation	Lack of resilience	Seeking acceptance	Lack of representation	Shared interest with others
Immersion into materials	Parent-child relationships	Lack of challenge	Them vs Us	Societal context/discourse
Disengagement	Prejudice views	Isolation	Difficulty developing trust	Animosity
Lack of tolerance and diversity	Exclusion	Experiencing strained relationships	Lack of integration	Adverse childhood experiences
Polarisation	Built up anger and frustration	Influence of others	Otherisation	Marginalised
Unity	Feeling threatened	Perception/ dehumanisation of the "other"	Political exclusion	Feeling safe
Disappointment	Lack of knowledge	Anonymity	Societal context/ discourse	
	Them vs Us		Interaction between systems	
	Geographical contact			

Appendix 8: Phase 6 of the meta-ethnographic approach

The following table displays the third-order interpretations. They colour-coding corresponds with Appendix 7 to show how the themes were developed into second-order concepts and then third order interpretations.

Second-order concepts	Third-order Interpretations
Lack of positive social connections and relationships	**Vulnerability**
Social, emotional, mental health difficulties	
Developing a negative sense of self	**Resiliency**
Lack of positive sense of belonging	
Group dynamics	**Connection & Community**
Lack of exposure to others	
Risk factors	**Wider systems**
Context surrounding the young person	

Appendix 9: Ethical Approval

The University of Nottingham

UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

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Nottingham
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Thursday 7th December 2023

Ref: **S1571 Chair Approval Minor Amendments**

Dear Lauren Hywel-Edwards & Sofia Hussein,

Your name and contact details: Lauren Hywel-Edwards
Email: lauren.hywel-edwards@nottingham.ac.uk
Today's date: Monday 5th December
Title of the new project: An exploration of Educational Psychologist's experiences of the Channel Panel and working with young people who have been identified as being at risk of "radicalisation".
Are you an undergraduate, postgraduate or staff? PGR

Details of the previous study:
Applicant: Lauren Hywel-Edwards
Title: An exploration of young people's experiences of the Channel Panel and their response to being identified as being at risk of "radicalisation".
Date of approval: Monday 5th June
Reference number (if known): S1521

As Chair of the Ethics Committee I have considered your request and I am happy to grant approval for the following changes:

List of significant changes in the proposed study. This list should include any changes which could potentially impact on ethical risks of the work e.g., moving from student participants to vulnerable adults; use of sensitive stimulus materials; changes in remuneration or consent procedures:

1. Participants would be Educational Psychologists (EPs) rather than those who have first hand experience of being referred to Prevent and subsequent Channel Panel intervention.

Due to difficulties with recruiting and the Home Office declining to support the research, the participant group needs to be amended. The study will now interview EPs who have participated in the Channel Panel process and will focus on their experience of working with young people who have been referred.

2. Changes to procedure.

As the participant group will be changing, this is now an adult professional sample - participants will be recruited through a number of ways including:
- Direct contact via email with EPs who are known to have been involved with the Channel Panel to invite them to take part voluntarily, with information letter (Appendix 1).
- Emails to Educational Psychology Services to share indirectly to EPs to invite them to take part with information letter.
- Posts placed on websites accessed by EPs including EPNET and NAPEP to invite voluntary participation.

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- Use of social media including LinkedIn Twitter, etc, to invite voluntary participation.

3. Reduction in the risk to participants.

As the study will now focus on the involvement of EPs, there is minimal risk of harm to participants as the interviews will not be asking participants to recount memories of a difficult time, unlike in the original application. As previously stated, participants will be asked to give consent (see Appendix 2 for updated letter).

Final responsibility for ethical conduct of your research rests with you or your supervisor. The Codes of Practice setting out these responsibilities have been published by the British Psychological Society and the University Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns whatever during the conduct of your research then you should consult those Codes of Practice.

Independently of the Ethics Committee procedures, supervisors also have responsibilities for the risk assessment of projects as detailed in the safety pages of the University web site. Ethics Committee approval does not alter, replace, or remove those responsibilities, nor does it certify that they have been met.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Stephen Jackson
Chair, Ethics Committee

Appendix 10: Initial Recruitment Email, Twitter post and EPNET

Initial Recruitment Email

Dear [redacted]

I'm a third year Trainee Educational Psychologist at the University of Nottingham. I am in the process of recruiting for my thesis which focuses on the experiences of Educational Psychologists who have been involved in the Channel Panel process. I was wondering if you (or anyone you may know) have been involved in the Channel Panel process? If so, would you be willing to participate in the study and share your experiences? Participation would involve a one-off interview for approximately one hour at some point in the next couple of months. I completely understand if you do not have availability for this.

Many thanks,

Lauren

Lauren Hywel-Edwards
Trainee Educational Psychologist
University of Nottingham[redacted]

Twitter post

EPNET Post (Sent with poster)

Are you an EP with experience of the Channel Panel?
As part of my doctorate I plan to explore EPs' experiences of working with young people identified as being at risk of "radicalisation".

The purpose of study is to develop on pre-existing research of how EPs can support young people identified as being at risk and how they currently contribute to the Channel Panel process as well as exploring how EPs could provide further support in this area.

The study will involve attending one interview online or in person and all personal details will be anonymised.

If you're interested, please contact me via email as soon as possible: lauren.hywel-edwards@nottingham.ac.uk

Thank you!

Lauren

Lauren Hywel-Edwards
Year 3 Trainee Educational Psychologist
University of Nottingham

Appendix 11: Recruitment letter

To Whom it May Concern,

Title of Project:

An exploration of Educational Psychologists' experiences of the Channel Panel and working with young people who have been identified as being at risk of "radicalisation".

I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist studying for a Doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology at the University of Nottingham. Part of the requirement of my course is to complete a research project. I am writing to you as you may be able to help with the recruitment of participants for my research project.

The study aims to explore the first-hand experiences of Educational Psychologists (EPs) who have been involved in the Channel Panel process. The research aims to explore their experiences of working with young people who have been identified as being at risk of "radicalisation". The study seeks to determine the role EPs have within this process and how young people can be supported in the future.

The study will involve meeting with the researcher for a one-off interview. The semi-structured interview will last approximately 1-1.5 hours. The interview will be recorded on an electronic device to help with analysis, all data will remain anonymous with no personal details shared and stored in line with the Data Protection Act. The recordings will be destroyed one year after the study has been written up.

To ensure the correct individuals are recruited, participants will need to meet the following criteria:

- Are a fully qualified EP, registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and are working in the United Kingdom.
- Have previously been or are currently involved with the Channel Panel and have attended panel meetings.
- EPs who have attended Channel Panel meetings and have therefore, been involved in discussing cases and conversations regarding suitable intervention/support for the young person.
- EPs who have been involved in the Channel Panel process whilst working with the Local Authority, rather than as a Private EP.

All names will be anonymised and data will be handled with strict ethical procedures in mind. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Your support would be valued as this is a highly under-researched area and the voices of young people remain to be captured.

Yours sincerely,
Lauren Hywel-Edwards
Trainee Educational Psychologist

Appendix 12: Information sheet for participants

Title of Project:

An exploration of Educational Psychologists' experiences of the Channel Panel and working with young people who have been identified as being at risk of "radicalisation".

Ethics Approval Number: S1571

Contact details:
Researcher: Lauren Hywel-Edwards
Researcher's Email: lauren.hywel-edwards@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr Sofia Hussain
Supervisor's Email: sofia.hussain1@nottingham.ac.uk

This is an invitation to take part in a research study exploring Educational Psychologists' experiences of the Channel Panel process and working with young people who have been identified as being at risk of "radicalisation".

Purpose of the research:

The study aims to explore the first-hand experiences of Educational Psychologists who have been involved in the Channel Panel process. The research aims to explore their experiences of working with young people who have been identified as being at risk of "radicalisation". The study seeks to determine the role Educational Psychologists have within this process and how young people can be supported in the future.

What will it involve?

The study will involve meeting with the researcher for a one-off interview. The semi-structured interview will last 1-1.5 hours. The interview will be recorded on an electronic device to help with analysis, all data will remain anonymous with no personal details shared and stored in line with the Data Protection Act. The recordings will be destroyed one year after the study has been written up.

Participation in this study is **totally voluntary and you are under no obligation to take part**. You would be free to withdraw at any point before or during the study.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me. We can also be contacted after your participation at the above email address.
If you have any complaints about the study, please contact:
Stephen Jackson (Chair of Ethics Committee)
stephen.jackson@nottingham.ac.uk

Appendix 13: Participant Consent Letter and GDPR sheet

Title of Project:

An exploration of Educational Psychologist's experiences of the Channel Panel and working with young people who have been identified as being at risk of "radicalisation".

Ethics Approval Number: S1571

Researcher: Lauren Hywel-Edwards
Researcher's Email: lauren.hywel-edwards@nottingham.ac.uk
Supervisor: Dr Sofia Hussain
Supervisor's Email: sofia.hussain1@nottingham.ac.uk

The participant should answer these questions independently, please circle:

Have you read and understood the Information Sheet?	YES/NO
Have you had the opportunity to ask questions about the study?	YES/NO
Have all your questions been answered satisfactorily (if applicable)?	YES/NO
Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study? (at any time and without giving a reason)	YES/NO
I give permission for my data from this study to be shared with other researchers provided that my anonymity is completely protected	YES/NO
Do you agree to take part in the study?	YES/NO

Signature of the Participant: _____ Date: _____

Name (in block capitals): _____

This section is for the researcher

I have explained the study to the above participant, and he/she has agreed to take part.

Signature of researcher: _____ Date: _____

Name (in block capitals): _____

GDPR Form

Research participant privacy notice for tailoring

Privacy information for Research Participants
For information about the University's obligations with respect to your data, who you can get in touch with and your rights as a data subject, please visit: www.nottingham.ac.uk/utilities/privacy/privacy.aspx.

Why we collect your personal data?
We collect personal data under the terms of the University's Royal Charter in our capacity as a teaching and research body to advance education and learning. Specific purposes for data collection on this occasion are to gather the first-hand views of Educational Psychologists who have been involved in the Channel Panel process.

Legal basis for processing your personal data under GDPR?
The legal basis for processing your personal data on this occasion is Article 6(1e) processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest.

How long we keep your data?
The University may store your data for up to 25 years and for a period of no less than 7 years after the research project finishes. The researchers who gathered or processed the data may also store the data indefinitely and reuse it in future research.

Measures to safeguard your stored data include:

- To ensure an accurate record, and for transcription purposes each interview will be digitally recorded on a password protected mobile phone (disconnected from the any online storage platform), only accessible to the lead researcher for interviews conducted virtually and in person.
- University transcription services will be used (which comply with GDPR regulations and are suitable for sensitive data), and numbers will be used to replace the participant names and any information that could identify the participant will be removed to address anonymity and confidentiality.
- Once transcription is produced, the digital recording will be deleted two weeks from the date of transcription.
- Any data that could be linked to the identity of the participant (e.g., geographical area) will be anonymised or removed. Data is being pooled into themes. Any quotes used will be anonymous and will be associated with a number, and identifiers removed.
- The recordings of the interviews will remain stored on an encrypted device, in line with the Data Protection Act. The recordings will be destroyed two weeks from the date of transcription.

Appendix 14: Semi-structured interview schedule

Interview Schedule

1. Can you tell me about what led to you being involved with the Channel Panel?
   Possible prompts: Why did you want to be involved?
2. Can you tell me about why young people may be referred to the Channel Panel? And what did you make of this?
   Possible prompts: Why do you think they were referred?
3. Can you tell me more about the role of an Educational Psychologist involved in the Channel Panel?
   Possible prompts: What was your role?
4. Can you tell me about how you felt during the Channel Panel sessions?
5. Can you tell me about what psychological, professional, or personal skills you drew upon during the involvement with the Channel Panel?
6. What did you give to the Channel Panel experience and what did you take on a professional or personal level?
   Prompt: what psychological theories, frameworks, skills qualities did you draw upon?
7. Can you tell me about the limitations of role of the EP in relation to the Channel Panel?
   Possible prompts: When you reflect on that time, what were the challenges?
8. Is there a role for EPs on the Channel Panel? What contribution could EPs make?
9. When you reflect on your experiences of the Channel Panel, how do you think EPs could further support children who have been identified as being at risk of “radicalisation”?

Appendix 15: Debrief sheet for Stakeholders and Participants

Title of Project:

An exploration of Educational Psychologists' experiences of the Channel Panel and working with young people who have been identified as being at risk of "radicalisation".

Thank you for your involvement in the research project.

The study aims to explore the experiences of Educational Psychologists' (EPs') experiences of the Channel Panel and working with young people who have been identified as being at risk of "radicalisation". Your support in this project is valued as this is a highly under-researched area and your involvement has allowed for the experiences of EPs to be captured. The purpose of the interviews is to determine the role EPs have in contributing to the panel and how they may further support young people who have been referred to the Channel Panel.

Right to Withdraw and Data Storage

For transcription purposes each interview will be digitally recorded on a password protected mobile phone (disconnected from any online storage platform), only accessible to the lead researcher for interviews conducted virtually and in person. University transcription services will be used (which comply with GDPR regulations and are suitable for sensitive data), a number will be assigned to each participant to replace the participant names and any information that could identify the participant will be removed to address anonymity and confidentiality.

You right to withdraw remains until the data is anonymised three months after the interview date. The recordings of the interviews will remain stored on an encrypted device, in line with the Data Protection Act. The recordings will be destroyed two weeks from the date of transcription.

For more information about the topics discussed:
https://educateagainsthate.com/

Thank you for your time.
Lauren Hywel-Edwards

Contact details:
Researcher: Lauren Hywel-Edwards
Researcher's Email: lauren.hywel-edwards@nottingham.ac.uk
Supervisor: Dr Sofia Hussain
Supervisor's Email: sofia.hussain1@nottingham.ac.uk

Appendix 16: An example of steps 1-3 in the IPA process

Example of a section of Participant 1's transcript, including initial noting and experiential statements.

Exploratory Notes	Transcript	Experiential Statements
	Interviewer: Absolutely…. OK. So, sort of thinking a bit more about those Channel Panel sessions. Can you tell me a bit about how you felt during those sessions?	
Participant admits to feeling nervous The Channel Panel is a different environment to usual Importance on what EP said as this can have implications Pressure on EP to get 'it' right as this can determine support put in place Working with vulnerable people Emphasis placed on 'great' to exaggerate weight EP has responsibility on panel Active listening skills are important Role of the EP on Channel Panel Shared purpose/aim to improve someone's life Mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities Everyone had a purpose	Participant 1: Always nervous. You're always out of your comfort zone, aren't you? Because actually there's big implications to what you're saying because you get it wrong, ohh you get it wrong but and to a certain extent you get it wrong or the right interventions aren't put in place, there's the massive consequences… y'know of where the pathway could lead these people if actually we leave them vulnerable to people who want to use them, erm… for their means. So. So I guess I felt a great weight of responsibility in those meetings… I felt, y'know, you really fine tune you're listening… You kind of synthesising of information, etcetera. Erm… you felt very supported, y'know everyone was there for a common purpose to… erm… improve the person's life and… erm… to reduce the likelihood of an extremist activity being carried out. So yeah… But the people y'know, I guess as I said, the way it's set up, everyone	Pressure to get things right Serious implications of getting it wrong

Emphasis here placed on 'actually' this could be contrary to belief Professionals contributed to the creation of a 'safe space'	understanding their role boundaries, what the purpose of them being there was, etcetera, it actually was quite a *safe* space that was created. Interviewer: (Pause) That sounds really good. Thank you. And so thinking now a little bit more about the psychology. I know you've mentioned a few theories already, but I was wondering, could you tell me about what psychological and professional and/or personal skills that you drew upon during your involvement with the panel? Participant 1: Yes, so there's loads isn't there? So from the basic kind of personal skills, isn't it? It's your active listening, it's your ability to summarise information, reflect it back to people. As I said in an accessible way it is your systemic thinking… So it is the likes of Bronfenbrenner that comes into it eco-systemic models... It is a group identity theory, contact theory all of those… Allport's kind of stuff 1954 it's still very relevant even though it hasn't been proved… it's your cognitive developmental models, it's your mental health models... Y'know your resiliency will etcetera, etcetera. There, there's just so much application learning development.. y'know if you quite a few had learning needs and so how do you address that and support them? How do you change your language?	Responsibility of the role and to make the correct formulation Understanding of EP role/purpose of their attendance is important Channel Panel provided a safe space for discussion Use of active listening and personal skills
Skills used by EP in Channel Panel meetings – personal skills, active listening and provide a summary in an accessible way Systemic thinking – considering the environment and what is happening around the young person Ability to apply theory to practice Knowledge of psychological theory Knowledge of different aspects of child development Understanding of resiliency Knowledge of how young people learn Understanding of special educational needs		

Knowledge of interventions to support different areas of need The importance of language Emphasis on professionals 'engaging' with young people – they are responsible Other aspects of psychology EP to consider the organisation/system/process as well as bringing knowledge of theory Support facilitation of group despite not being chair Nonverbal social cues Example of how EP may encourage someone to share their views Advocating for quieter members of the panel Empowering other professionals Promoting anti-oppressive practice Pause after reiterating the positive aspects of EP - could indicate reflection	How do you *engage* with this? So. So there. There was lots of that. There was that kind of organisational psychology so you're looking at group dynamics within a meeting, aren't you? Interviewer: Yeah Participant 1: How do you work together as a team for the best outcomes? How do you support people to interact in that forum even though I wasn't chairing? During but ensuring that people were able to come in noticing the body language, etcetera, y'know, and saying I'm wondering if so and so has an idea cuz you can see them just itching to kind of say something and how do you bring in those people who actually have something to say but maybe aren't as confident or don't think it's their place to say so it is anti-oppressive, y'know it's there as well… (pause) yeah, there's got loads of stuff, isn't there, really? Interviewer: Yeah, so many. So, thinking about then about your time as part of the Channel Panel, it's kind of a two-part question. What did you give and what did you take on a professional or personal level from that experience? Participant 1: So in terms of what I… do you mean what I gave professionally because obviously it's the psychological input given professionally?	Contribution of understanding the systems around the child Sense of advocacy for the young person and what they have experienced Navigation of differences between professionals

EP provided knowledge of psychology during meeting Practically it was monthly meetings which could lead to taking on casework Young people discussed in the same forum as adults Would not comment on adults Laughter could represent relief Knowing the role of others Indicative of self-importance Considering the roles of others and what they can bring to the discussion Important to not feel the need to solve all problems The panel helped develop skills Use different skills/skills in a different way Working with other professionals/ applying skills in a different environment Working as part of a multi-agency team with other professionals that may not come into contact with aving an impact in a different way compared to usual role	Interviewer: Yeah Participant 1: -In terms of time, it was monthly meetings, y'know, half a day, monthly meetings and then picking up case work sometimes around that. But as there weren't many young people coming through then I wouldn't touch the adults (laughter) like that... That's beyond me... (laughter) But also knowing where other people have to play, y'know, I think as a cohort of people's... Educational Psychologists can be a bit up themselves and a bit high and mighty, and it's recognising the skill set of other people that we don't need to do everything and hold everything and I was very good at not holding if someone else wanted to do that, then let them crack on ermm... and what I took from it... Well, it's brilliant professional development. Y'know that understanding and the skill set and working in a different environment applying y'know your skills... (Pause) Yeah, and just experience of different ways of working. That's what I took from it... Interviewer: Yeah, I think that must be, yeah... Participant 1: ...And a sense of actually impacting at another level. Interviewer: Yeah	Reassuring that people are heard Responsibility of promoting anti-oppressive practice Gave time to the panel Showing restraint – practicing within guidelines/ professional standards Listening to other people and the contribution they bring

Government systems Focus is different – protection is the goal, the role of EP is different Consideration to who is the 'client' whereas with the Channel Panel there was the added issue of public safety Early intervention/working preventively Prevent public from being harmed Cut off point, turning criminal People receive less support EP constrained by the process	Participant 1: Y'know, when you're working with the Home Office, the police, y'know you can't. You're working to protect people, y'know, that's your ultimate goal there, which is quite *different*, because actually when we think as an Educational Psychologist are thinking who is your client, is the young person is at the school? Whereas actually who is benefiting from this? *The public* we're trying to keep the public safe by making sure our interventions are really early as early identification and supportive interventions put in place that prevent these people from going further down the track where there might not be a return because then it turns into criminal and as soon as it turns into criminal, you lose that ability to put in place interventions to support people…	Opportunity to learn from others/cases Exposure to different ways of thinking/working Opportunity to work at a different level Shared aim of protecting people

Appendix 17: Developing Personal Experiential Themes

The experiential statements were grouped based on their connections to develop the Personal Experiential Themes (PETS). The example below includes the these for Participant 1.

Appendix 18: Personal Experiential Themes

Table of Personal Experiential Themes (PETS) for Participant 1

Each PET is show in **UPPERCASE BOLD,** and linked experiential statements is in **lower case bold.** Underpinning these, there are examples of key phrases from the transcript and associated lines numbers.

NEGATIVE EFFECT ON SELF

Personal impact of being exposed to 'horrific' details

- *you take on a lot and it's, it's quite scary world out there…* (406-407)

THE IMPORTANCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY INCLUDING EXTREMISM

Knowledge of research and how this applies to practice

- *Bronfenbrenner ecosystemic model, wow, the media, and the political system at the moment is having a massive impact on our young people and the development of their views…* (530-532)

Demonstrates knowledge of theory

- *You really understand those theories and that systemic view of a person that Bronfenbrenner, y'know, and what needs to then be changed in order to effect change…* (162-163)

Not all cases involved those who had extremist views

- *I would say had extremist views that were there, it was part of the wider picture and they've just been picked up because they've said this, but that wasn't actually what the issue was for that person…* (51-54)

Understanding of development and how this can influence an individual

- *We are human psychologists, we learn all about development and the influences on people* (160-161)

EP contributing information of psychology theory

- *it's becoming embedded in their behaviour and in their thought system […] It's group identity theory taken to the extreme…* (20-22)

Group dynamics as a possible underlying factor

- *you can create them and us really easily along those, those racial lines, or those cultural lines, and that's what was happening with these people* (65-67)

Consideration of the different factors leading to the development of views

- *Normal behaviour patterns of their experiences, etcetera that have led them to that them and us, which is when you look at prejudice formation, that is exactly kind of where it comes from and where it leads to* (39-42)

Opportunity to share knowledge and insight into case

- *There's a lot that could be shared with schools and settings* (478-479)

RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE CORRECT PSYCHOLOGICAL FORMULATION

Serious implications of getting it wrong

- *There's big implications to what you're saying because you get it wrong, you get it wrong […] the right interventions aren't put in place, there's the massive consequences…* (188-191)

Bringing psychology to the forum to support thinking around cases

- *They need that holistic view of a person and all the complexities to then be able to, […] "ahh, it's addiction" We give him an addiction thing… Okay, but what's underlying the addiction?* (350-352)

Responsibility of the role and to make the correct formulation

- *That is where psychology comes in, and if they haven't got that, then I fear that some of the interventions might be absolutely pointless […] they've taken a too simplistic formulation of a person…* (361-363)

Pressure to get things right

- *So I guess I felt a great weight of responsibility in those meetings* (192)

Psychological formulation is an important element

- *And it's like you're missing the psychology. Yeah. You're missing someone formulating this case around it….* (176-177)

EP contribute valuable insight to meetings

- *There's a lot of skill sets there that we hold as Educational Psychologists that enable us to do that with information and present it in an accessible way* (180-182)

EP unique contribution is providing psychological formulation

- *It is about providing that psychological formulation* (131)

Role in the meetings was to provide summary and present information in accessible way

- *You can pull it all in and you can summarise it in the succinct kind of way that people understand* (180)

EMPOWERING OTHER PROFESSIONALS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Role of managing the reactions of those working with the child

- *It's where people are quite scared of things. Err and… a lot of it is a reaction to what I would see sometimes* (39-40)

Responsibility of promoting anti-oppressive practice

- *How do you bring in those people who actually have something to say but maybe aren't as confident or don't think it's their place to say so it is anti-oppressive* (218-219)

Providing an opportunity to pause

- *First, let's just hold and then let's look at it and then let's think what we need to do* (468-469)

Developing the skillset of others to enable them to have conversations

- *Through those conversations and open up and peer challenge, that's the biggest impact we can have* (484-485)

Containing the emotions of others

- *The Educational Psychologists are very skilled at holding and containing others around a child...* (469)

Have the right professionals is essential

- *Y'know, it was chaired really well. It had the right people around the table. It was very multi agency in it's a view y'know its conception was well thoughout…* (167-168)

EP has varied skillset that can contribute

- *And we oversimplify. Oh, they've got ACES? And?... how does that impact? How have they read that? Have they internalised that? What's their learning needs? Can they even understand that? Y'know, there's-there's loads of different things that then come into play, which they just don't think of* (372-375)

Use of active listening and personal skills

- *How do you support people to interact in that forum even though I wasn't chairing? […] noticing the body language, etcetera* (214-216)

Empowering other professionals to support young people

- *It was just permission given to here's the language you can use... There you go, y'know, now we address it because actually through those conversations and open up and peer challenge etcetera… that's the biggest impact we can have.* (214-216)

Reassuring that people are heard

- *Saying I'm wondering if so and so has an idea cuz you can see them just itching to kind of say something* (215-216)

FEELINGS OF UNEASYNESS

Resilience frequently featured in practice

- *Six areas of the wheel of resilience to map out their life and what's happening for them, and then to put in place interventions in each of those* (56-58)

Vulnerability of individuals

- *They were vulnerable people that people then groomed* (66-68)

Knowledge of special educational needs

- *We had an autism specialist on the panel as well to help people think about it in that context rather than this is someone who holds really extremist views* (73-74)

Extremism was an area of interest prior to joining the Channel Panel

- *It was actually my doctorate thesis, so I developed an anti-racist curriculum. So, my thesis looked at prejudice formation in children err and looked at, as I said, developing an anti-racist curriculum which I did through kind of collaborative action research with a number of schools* (13-15)

Prior knowledge of prejudice formation and extremism important

- *My doctorate thesis really helped […] understanding prejudice formation, understanding how it develops* (131-133)

Requires knowledge of different aspects of psychology

- *You've got to have read, yeah, yeah… You need to know your stuff around extremism, radicalization and just prejudice formation* (309-311)

Understanding of how a lack of identity can impact on an individual

- *How do we develop this person so that we develop their own multitude of identities again so they don't have to hold this one because as soon as we hold that we defend it, if we've only got reduced to one and this is us and this is all me, if I try and challenge that, that's then really difficult, because what else do I have?* (140-143)

Consideration of what the behaviour was communicating

- *People are seeking things through their behaviour and through their thought processes and they get led to a certain way and it's very easy to be groomed* (63-64)

Develop an individual's self identity

- *We fit with different tribes and that's how we are… that is group identity theory. Whereas these people have lost their hats, and they just have one and that's the hat they're wearing* (138-140)

Young people did not always understand what they were saying

- *So they just learn and didn't actually often realise… what the implications of that were because they hadn't got that ability to see their impact on others and what it meant* (70-71)

WORKING WITH A COMMUNITY OF PROFESSIONALS

Position of the EP enables them to provide support

- *For Educational Psychologists, I guess we're an eclectic bunch… our training allows us to have view of organisational, clinical, forensic to a certain extent* (383-385)

Joint working and the response of the team

- *It was looking at our response to the Trojan horse and through that getting to know some of the people on there* (24-26)

Working with other professionals was sometimes challenging

- *There were some cases there were some cases where police were up to their thing* (272-273)

Channel Panel provided a safe space for discussion

- *It actually was quite a safe space that was created* (198)

Navigation of differences between professionals

- *They [the police] come at it from such a criminal aspect, which of course they do. That's their job… […] no, we don't need that* (128-130)

Shared aim of protecting people

- *You're working to protect people, y'know, that's your ultimate goal* (241)

Exposure to different ways of thinking/working

- *I would see from other professionals that they underestimated the complexity of a human... And so they were going for different things, and you're like, hold on* (347-349)

Respect for other professionals

- *But as soon as you got your role boundaries in place and they see where you fit into what's happening, and then you get that professional… I think it's just professional respect, isn't it?* (332-333)

Listening to other people and the contribution they bring

- *Yeah, and just experience of different ways of working. That's what I took from it…* (235-236)

Different professionals have different ways of working

- *That understanding and the skill set and working in a different environment applying y'know your skills. Yeah, and just experience of different ways of working. That's what I took from it…* (234-236)

CLEAR BOUNDARIES OF ROLE – EXPECTATIONS AND LIMITS

Showing restraint and practicing within guidelines/ professional standards

- *The difficulty with sitting in panels, a lot are adults […] HCPC has it there… don't step outside of your knowledge base* (386-388)

Understanding of EP role and purpose of their attendance is important

- *Everyone understanding their role boundaries, what the purpose of them being there was* (197-198)

Identification of role boundaries is important

- *But as soon as you got your role boundaries in place and they see where you fit into what's happening, and then you get that professional… I think it's just professional respect, isn't it?* (332-333)

Navigating the power dynamic within the panel

- *And so you were limited in what you could contribute… because actually they didn't want to hear it* (275-276)

Role restricted by time constraints

- *We're trying to get things done before this young person goes to court… as soon as it goes to court, […] that's custodial, that's done and we pull out our intervention* (251-252)

Barrier to EP involvement is access to the panel meetings

- *I think the key challenges for EPs is getting a foot in the door (298)*

Uncertainty of young people being discussed in same meeting as adults

- *We're not trained to work with adults, […] very rarely do we work with the 18 to 25* (390-391)

Differences in the local authorities, currently does not include EPs in panel

- *I've come across to another local authority and it's interesting […] it's like you're missing the psychology* (170-171)

Ethical concerns regarding consent of information sharing

- *The children haven't given permission... And I felt massively uncomfortable about some of the information that was shared or being asked to be shared when these children hadn't done anything wrong…* (425-428)

DEVELOPING PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Opportunity to learn

- *Well, it's brilliant professional development* (234)

Opportunity for professional development

- *I'm really pleased for my professional development that I was involved with those* (548-550)

Opportunity to work at a different level

- *So it was just kind of transposing that into a different forum cause that's how I work kind of normally anyway. It is very collaborative, it's very multi-agency* (265-266)

Provided opportunity to develop knowledge and apply theories to practice

- *It was about applying your psychological knowledge and theories to them and a lot of it was predominantly I have to say around mental health and well-being* (47-48)

Channel panel allowed EP to pursue interests in young people developing extremist views

- *There's always been that interest in that aspect of young people and what leads people to have kind of extremist thoughts and ideas* (18-19)

SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION AVAILABLE THROUGH THE CHANNEL PANEL

Intervention as meeting the needs of the young people and replacing behaviours

- *How else is he getting control if these are the drivers to this behaviour and this is the identity, how do we set it up so that when we're trying to take that away, we're putting in replacements to each of those as we go* (148-150)

Emphasised the importance of adults knowing the young person

- *I walked into the school and said tell me about him, they couldn't… And I was like, well, there's my first concern, isn't it?* (85-86)

Early intervention is key for providing impactful support

- *We're trying to keep the public safe by making sure our interventions are really early as early identification and supportive interventions* (243-244)

Support provided by the panel is thorough and incorporates different aspects of their lives

- *What this person got from a referral into the Channel Panel was the best package of support you could ever ask for anyone* (102-103)

Supportive of the assistance the Channel Panel offered

- *I felt that the people who get referred into Channel Panel were the luckiest people because actually they got the team around them* (93-95)

Able to put support in place quickly

- *No Department of Work and Pensions visit, no mental health service, y' know, no housing coming… whereas here everything's suddenly put in place for them* (123-124)

Channel Panel provided access to a range of support for people

- *The wheel of resilience to map out their life and what's happening for them, and then to put in place interventions in each of those* (57-58)

- **CONSIDERATION OF THE WIDER SYSTEMS AND THE ENVIRONMENT SURROUNDING THE YOUNG PERSON**

Contribution of understanding the systems around the child

- *Bronfenbrenner that comes into it eco-systemic models* (204)

Consideration of the factors around the young person

- *Oh, they've got ACES? And?... how does that impact? How have they read that? Have they internalised that? What's their learning needs? Can they even understand that?* (372-374)

Consideration of the systems around the young person

- *I never work with a young person themselves at all, y'know, it's definitely about the people around them and the systems around them* (473-474)

Consideration of the young person's environment

- *With everything around them have found themselves in such a place. And again, as we say then, you've got the vulnerability factor* (113-114)

Meetings were an opportunity to consider the environment around the child

- *And it's supporting people to then understand, no, we need to change everything around this person in order for them to change* (165-166)

Consideration of different factors including political, media and geographical

- *Bronfenbrenner ecosystemic model, wow, the media and the political system at the moment is having a massive impact on our young people and the development of their views* (530-532)

Understanding that the experiences of individuals can have an impact on their behaviour

- *A lot of it was predominantly I have to say around mental health and well-being and the situation that they found them in when you looked at their experiences, their circumstances, etcetera […] it was an outlet* (47-49)

Empathetic to the young people – what they have experienced

- *Because they've got mental health needs because they're often their experience is really crappy, like and you could see where they've become totally disillusioned* (109-111)

Channel Panel provides opportunity for holistic working

- *So the role I would say is to ensure that people around the table understood the holistic view of the person* (127-128)

Sense of advocacy for the young person and what they have experienced

- *Quite a few had learning needs and so how do you address that and support them? How do you change your language? How do you engage with this?* (209-211)

Questioned asked about the young person's inner circle

- *where's his sense of belonging? You don't even know him. Yeah. Where are his friendships, he hasn't got any right? Here we go* (87-88)

REGULAR SUPERVISION WITH EXPERIENCED COLLEAUGE PROVIDED VALUABLE SUPPORT

Colleague who provided supervision had understanding of extremism

- *I had a senior. Y'know, thankfully that I could talk to who was knowledgeable about extremism, y'know, he'd done his masters in counter terrorism, etcetera. So absolutely got what I was doing* (402-404)

Access to supervision was important

- *Some of the cases are horrific… y'know? Things that people have done, I've had my eyes wide open now to the other side of society and that isn't a comfortable place to sit... So what supervision have you got in place around it? Do people really understand what you're doing and what your role is?* (399-401)

Could only discuss response to cases in supervision, not cases

- *So in supervision, I could discuss, I guess my response to it, but I couldn't discuss the cases or anything any identifying factors, anything* (418-419)

Thankful for supportive supervision

- *I had a senior. Y'know, thankfully that I could talk to who was knowledgeable about extremism, y'know, he'd done his masters in counter terrorism, etcetera. So absolutely got what I was doing* (402-404)

Appendix 19: Group Experiential Themes

Table of Group Experiential Themes (GETS)

Each GET is show in **UPPERCASE BOLD,** and each group-level sub-themes is in **lower case bold.** Underpinning these, there are examples of key phrases from contributing participants, and associated lines numbers.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF PSYCHOLOGY IS ESSENTIAL

Understanding of theory, SEND and child development

- *Understand those theories and that systemic view of a person that Bronfenbrenner* (Participant 1, 162-163)
- *Knowledge of child development, there's an aspect of awareness of kind of social psychology theory in terms of belonging and kind of fitting in and a sense of identity […] in terms of how children, young people as they grow and develop as teenagers, particularly how their need and change differs and what that might manifest itself looking like* (Participant 2, 217-221)
- *We're sort of social constructionist… but also dipping into some of the psychodynamic approaches* (Participant 3, 351-352)
- *Well, he's got autism and then it's an umbrella for all this behaviour, well, autistic children do this… so and they don't really understand that they'll put it down to his autism* (Participant 4, 59-60)
- *There's not really confidence and understanding of [other panel members] around things like difficulties with learning, social, emotional, mental health difficulties, and the impact of things like trauma* (Participant 5, 139-141)

Wider systems impacting the child or young person

- *And it's supporting people to then understand, no, we need to change everything around this person in order for them to change* (Participant 1, 165-166)
- *The media and the political system at the moment is having a massive impact on our young people and the development of their views* (Participant 1, 530-532)
- *The implications of everything that was going on in a wider context then then things would get missed* (Participant 2, 133)
- *Stopping a within child labelling approach that then ruins that child's trajectory for the rest of their life, because it's a very serious issue* (Participant 3, 500-501)
- *It does feel sometimes it's very within child and you, you wouldn't really expect that from the police would you? You'd think, be much more environmental* (Participant 4, 266-267)
- *Always tended to be that the was someone within their sphere of influence who was impacting upon this young person and it was quite useful to identify within that systems theory, who and at what level that person was influencing them and at what level they were influencing other people* (Participant 5, 287-290)

Psychological formulation

- *That's not what this person needs at the moment to be viewed like this and so it is about providing that psychological formulation* (Participant 1, 130-131)
- *EPs' are really well placed to take up that critical reflective position in the group and for me that's a more psychological position than giving a view regarding a within child formulation* (Participant 3, 114-116)
- *It wasn't really, I think up to me to kind of create a formulation or a working understanding of a young person* (Participant 5, 302-303)

ENCOURAGING OTHERS TO CONSIDER A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

Asking questions to prompt consideration

- *I suppose, to look at the evidence or the evidence base to assimilate that information and think, can I therefore make this conclusion from this evidence? And I didn't feel like we could back up that conclusion the evidence and so questioning that* (Participant 2, 183-185)
- *We did take up that sort of critical friend approach where we were challenging and posing the questions* (Participant 3, 110-111)
- *Difficulties with attentional, difficulties with managing and regulating impulsive behaviours, and it seems like from some of the things that we've spoken about that they have been quite impulsive and I think that was good because that allowed others to kind of frame their understanding of a young person through it being rather within need rather than like a behaviour as such* (Participant 5, 222 - 225)

Advocating for and empowering others

- *How do you bring in those people who actually have something to say but maybe aren't as confident or don't think it's their place to say so it is anti-oppressive* (Participant 1, 217-219)
- *I wonder if that need for advocacy and gentle challenge and y'know, being that critical friend* (Participant 2, 330-332)
- *And it's also acknowledging that we are experts* (Participant 3, 133)

Providing an alternative perspective

- *A kid might be taken off the radar who might be a risk to society who may benefit from intervention* (Participant 3, 202-203)
- *It's like a bit like sometimes it can be a light bulb moment for other people, cause they've just not seen it in that way* (Participant 4, 35-36)
- *From my perspective as someone who has some understanding of SEND. And I think that was quite valuable* (Participant 5, 136-138)

The need for certainty

- *Radicalisation can be driven for a need for certainty, yeah, so, there was quite a nice link almost like a parallel process that the drive for radicalization was driven by a need for certainty in the absence of certainty in that panel* (Participant 3, 210-213)

IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Collaborative working and group dynamics

- *Yeah, and just experience of different ways of working* (Participant 1, 235)
- *Genuinely want to be supportive to people on the that come through and they want to help them* (Participant 2, 346-347)
- *That there's groupthink, that there's an inherent risk that they rush to a conclusion* (Participant 3, 207-208)
- *So it's just nice to get together with different people and different, y'know, the police and detectives and social workers I just really like all of that collaboration and see how other people work and there's so many different approaches* (Participant 4, 26-28)
- *Working in somewhat of a preventative way because we're trying to address the needs of young people* (Participant 5, 36-38)

Consistency of EP who attends

- *It would be a much more respected position on the panel if I was able to go every month […] I'm not a face that's there regularly and so I think […] I haven't got the relationships in the panel to be able to effect the change* (Participant 2, 286-293)
- *That child might not be discussed for say the first month and then it might be another six months that we discussed that child again… that's why the continuity is important* (Participant 4, 281-282)

Understanding of role

- *The difficulty with sitting in panels, a lot are adults. And for with that, y'know we can apply some of the stuff, but actually we need to, y'know HCPC has it there… don't step outside of your knowledge base* (Participant 1, 386-388)
- *We were very clear about the role that we were agreeing to undertake* (Participant 3, 96-97)
- *I don't exactly know what the different police... y'know, there's different layers of the police aren't there and it's not always clear what part or role they play in it? To piece it all together, so I find that frustrating…* (Participant 4, 122-124)
- *I didn't have to kind of go through explaining what we do and what my kind of unique contribution was, he really knew what it […] so that was a huge advantage* (Participant 5, 320-323)

THE PERSONAL IMPACT OF EP INVOLVEMENT

Response to the processes and information shared

- *You take on a lot and it's, it's quite scary world out there* (Participant 1, 406-407)
- *Just so it can be a bit daunting if I'm honest and I'm not sure how much people know what the hell I do or what I am or why I'm there* (Participant 2, 138-139)
- *They [the child] are really labelled and I mean in school... Y'know all well, I've been to the, y'know, this kid is all is a problem and will always be a huge, massive problem to them* (Participant 4, 305-307)

- *I went into it thinking that we'd have a lot more action plans and a lot more and agreed arrangements for a lot of these peoples than we actually did and most of the time a lot of the referrals, I would say at least kind of 40% were just kind of batted back because schools hadn't sort of met that threshold* (Participant 5, 73-75)

The value of supervision as a means of reflection

- *So in supervision, I could discuss, I guess my response to it, but I couldn't discuss the cases or anything any identifying factors, anything* (Participant 1, 418-419)
- *I think with good supervision, you're able to sort of place those sort of ego demands and go in there and just reinforce in your mind what your role is* (Participant 3, 150-152)

Feeling as though more could be done

- *I don't have the time commitment* (Participant 2, 288)
- *And there's probably more psychology involved potentially* (Participant 3, 175)
- *I come away feeling a bit… well, yeah. I've had a nice morning, but did I… What did I really do? Did I make a difference to that meeting? And to be honest… no, I've helped somebody feel a bit better* (Participant 4, 151-153)
- *I wonder if there's a way in which it could be a bit more problem solving rather than a bit formulaic* (Participant 5, 328-329)

Opportunity to explore interests

- *There's always been that interest in that aspect of young people and what leads people to have kind of extremist thoughts and ideas* (Participant 1, 18-19)
- *I find it very fascinating on a personal level more than anything* (Participant 2, 8)
- *Area of interest I would say and prior to becoming an EP* (Participant 5, 20-21)