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Nottingham

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“I’m like mould...no matter how many times you wipe it away in the shower, it always comes back, and that’s like me, I’m like, I’m back baby”: A narrative oriented inquiry into the strengths and vulnerabilities of young people without a permanent home in education, employment and training.

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Abstract

Described as a national scandal, the number of homeless people in England reached record levels in 2023 despite being widely under-reported (Fitzpatrick et al., 2023). Between 2022-2023, Centrepoin's UK youth homeless data bank reported that 136,000 young people sought support from their local authority due to homelessness or risk of homelessness. Young homeless people (YHP) are an extremely vulnerable group who often go unnoticed in education, employment and training (EET) settings (Pescod, 2024). A recent special by the British Psychological Society in 2024, titled Homelessness and Educational Psychology, highlights the impacts of homelessness. The current study is timely and responds directly to the growing call for EPs involvement and action in this area.

The current study adopted Hiles and Čermák's (2008) framework of Narrative Oriented Inquiry (NOI) to explore the lived experiences of YHP in EET, specifically, the strengths and resources which support their access and engagement and the vulnerabilities which hinder their access and engagement with EET. The YHP's perceptions of their future and their identity positionings were also explored. Guided narrative interviews and a life path were used to collect the participants' narratives. Three YHP, aged 18-23 years, and living in a hostel, participated in the research.

Hiles and Čermák's (2008) NOI framework was used for data analysis, which primarily draws on Lieblich et al's (1998) analytical techniques. The findings illustrated factors which were either a strength, vulnerability or both to YHP's engagement with EET: - relationships, individual factors and experiences, challenges of living without a permanent home and unmet basic needs, systemic obstacles in EET and resilience. Further interpretations were made regarding the YHP's perceptions of their future: - stability, independence and freedom, engaging with EET and systemic inequality. Identity positioning of the self, others, and the broader homelessness and EET system were also explored. It revealed a perception that systems actively disadvantage YHP in EET.

The findings are discussed in relation to existing literature and relevant psychological theory. Importantly, they highlight both the positive experiences and moments in YHP's stories, alongside the challenges. This offers a counter-narrative to the dominant discourse in existing literature, which portrays YHP's experiences of EET

as predominantly negative. Implications for EET professionals, including EPs are considered. The limitations of the current research are reflected on and recommendations for future research are considered.

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Thank you to my academic tutor, Yvonne Francis, for your continuous guidance, support and care throughout my research, particularly collaborating to publish the findings of my SLR. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to have worked alongside you and have learned so much from you. My placement supervisor, Marie House, for your ongoing practical and emotional support. I couldn't have completed the doctorate without you, and I am very grateful for all the delicious coffee which you supplied during our supervision. And my bestest friend who has been there every step of the way – Izzi!

I would like to thank my close family for the unwavering love and support which has enabled me to pursue a career in educational psychology. Thank you to my dad for all the support and helping me to be resilient. My nannan and grandad, thank you for all your unconditional love and support, and my two younger brothers—Samuel and Ben—thank you for being my psychology “case studies” throughout the last 10-years, but mainly our special relationship has always inspired me to be resilient and strong. Love you both very much and I couldn't have ever dreamed of being an educational psychologist without you two by my side! I would also like to thank Ian, from my community choir, for your generosity and kindness in proofreading my thesis and diligently spotting some typos.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to the memory of my mother, Tammy, who passed away in 2023. I hope that using a part of our story for inspiration of my thesis will help encourage more conversations about supporting young people experiencing homelessness and greater care and empathy towards all who experience homelessness. My research journey has also reminded me that writing and sharing our own story is the truest, bravest and most meaningful story we can tell.

Glossary of terms

CatZero

A youth development initiative run by the charity CatZero designed to support young people (14-40) who are not yet engaged in any education, employment or training.

CSCS

Construction skills certificate scheme.

CYP

Children and young people.

EET

Education, employment or training.

Homelessness

Homelessness can be experienced in a variety of ways. Fitzpatrick et al (2000) suggests five forms of homelessness: - roofless, houseless, lack of secure tenure, intolerable living conditions and sharing accommodation which is the definition I have adopted in the research.

Narrative

Hunt (2024) states that in psychology, narrative refers to the biological, cultural and social resources and skills that people use to construct and share a story. Two elements are required for narrative: (1) the cognitive skills that enable construction and (2) the story itself.

NEET	Not in education, employment or training.
NOI	Narrative oriented inquiry described by Hiles and Čermák (2008) as an exploratory model for narrative analysis. They present a flexible framework of six analytical techniques, developed primarily by Lieblich et al (1998).
PfA	Preparing for adulthood.
SEND	Special educational needs and disabilities.
Stories	A story is a result of a narrative and can be based on real or imagined sequence of events (Bruner, 1986).
YHP	Young homeless people.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Organisation of the research

The research is organised into six chapters: introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, discussion and conclusion. It is written in the first person, reflecting my epistemological standpoint that acknowledges the importance of my positionality within the research process. The following section 1.2 outlines my interest in the topic.

1.2 Personal and professional interest in the topic

I am deeply passionate about supporting young homeless people (YHP), and I believe in Mandela's (2003) famous quote that education is the most powerful tool to change the world. I see education as a means of offering not only personal growth and development but also the opportunity for a brighter future.

My initial interest in this topic stems from a personal connection to homelessness. After completing the first year of my doctorate, I lost a parent who, at various points in their life, had experienced homelessness. This loss led me to question: What if they had received more support as a young homeless person? What if they had had more educational, training or early employment opportunities to break the cycle of homelessness? Whilst I do not have primary experience of homelessness per se, the circumstances surrounding my parents' struggle made the harsh realities of homelessness real and vivid. This personal encounter fueled my decision to delve into this topic and to explore the early forms of support for YHP which may prevent homelessness in adulthood. I debated whether I should select this topic for my thesis due to the risk of potential researcher bias and emotional harm as a human due to my recent bereavement. However, I felt that this topic was far too important to not be explored, and I believed that through great sensitivity and reflexivity, that my experience will complement my research and engagement with my participants. A copy of my personal reflections which supported my decision making can be found in Appendix 1.

I joined a working group on Homelessness and Educational Psychology with Educational Psychologists (EPs), which further deepened my thinking on this topic. I encountered a young person in my casework who was not attending school and had just become homeless with her mother. This experience prompted me to question: how can I focus on a child's academic development when they do not even have a place to call home? The SEND Code of Practice (2015) outlines the role of EPs supporting young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) through Post-16 and Preparing for Adulthood (PfA). Therefore, I believe that EPs could contribute towards providing more early help for young homeless people to support their transition from school to further education, training or employment (EET). I hope that my research will shed light on this area and give voice to the inspirational YHP I have met.

1.3 Contextualising the research

In 2025, unprecedented numbers of children and young people are experiencing homelessness. The most recent census data by Office of National Statistics (2021) revealed that around 1.7% of children are homeless in England and Wales. Jayanetti (2023) adds that at least 4.4% of children in London are homeless. The term 'homeless' often triggers the perception of a rough sleeper. But homelessness can be experienced in a multitude of ways, often hidden from the public eye. Our communities are being severely impacted by homelessness, particularly children and young people. Despite its prevalence, there is a lack of academic literature in this field. In practice, education professionals, including educational psychologists, report that they feel a lack of knowledge about the impacts of homelessness on children and young people's lives and development. As highlighted by Pescod et al (2024) in their recent special edition on homelessness, educational psychologists are uniquely positioned to explore this area, deepening our understanding of the experiences of YHP and ways to support them. Therefore, my research is timely and aims to contribute to the growing call for EPs involvement in this area through focusing on the experiences of YHP in EET.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.2 National context

The United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (1989) states in Article 27 states that all children and young people (CYP) should receive adequate housing, and this should not be interpreted as shelter alone. Every CYP has the right to live somewhere with security, peace and dignity (UN Habitat, 2009). Homelessness in England reached record levels at the end of March 2024 and was described as a 'national scandal' (Adu, 2024). The public perception of homelessness is often viewed as sleeping on the streets (rough sleeping), yet this form of homelessness is a small percentage of the homeless demographic. In 2023, a national survey reported that there were 2,400 individuals living on the streets, 15,000 in shelters, whilst there were 151,630 children in England living in temporary accommodation, including hotels, hostels or shelters (Nuttall, 2023). These forms of accommodation are typically inadequate, unsafe and do not meet the needs of CYP (Baptista et al., 2022).

2.3 Defining homelessness

There is no universal definition of the term 'homeless' although it is often used by society in a way which dehumanizes homeless people of all ages (Robinson, 2008). In the UK, the Housing Act (1996) defines homelessness as an individual or family who is likely to become homeless within 56 days or those with no access to accommodation or whose living arrangements are a safety risk. However, the legal 'homeless' label fails to address the various ways in which homelessness can be experienced. Fitzpatrick et al (2000) identifies five forms of homelessness: - roofless, houseless, lack of secure tenure, intolerable living conditions and sharing accommodation. Roofless is defined as a lack of shelter of any kind, including rough sleeping. Houseless includes living in all forms of emergency or institutional accommodation due to no access to mainstream housing. Whereas a lack of secure tenure includes staying with friends, relatives or sofa surfing. Intolerable living conditions such as threats to an individual's safety or wellbeing, overcrowded or sub-standard accommodation or sharing accommodation long-term due to no access to separate housing.

2.4 YHP, discrimination and social exclusion

Young homeless people not only experience challenges from their living situation but they also face societal stigma, discrimination and dehumanisation (Pomeroy, 2013). Homelessness is fraught with inaccurate and harmful stereotypes which fail to consider the individuals' lived experience and their humanity (Paat et al., 2021). Research by Lang (2024) highlights how homeless people are 'othered' and blamed for not making the appropriate changes in their life. Negative discourses persist and are amplified in media sources through inaccurate reports about homeless people as a burden to society (Paat et al., 2021). There is an emotional disconnect between homeless people and their circumstances. 41% of the public see homeless people as offenders rather than victims (Lang, 2024). Many YHP experience shame linked to their circumstances. They describe feeling rejected and excluded from society, they fear being judged, feeling unable to share their homelessness status with others (Begg et al., 2017; Buckner, 2008; Moore & McArthur, 2011). The social stigma and judgement by the public has an adverse impact on YHP's mental health and wellbeing (Evolve, 2018; Jones et al., 2018; Mulrenan et al., 2020; Paat et al., 2021). Whilst each YHP has their own unique homeless experience, many face additional discrimination, oppression and disadvantage linked to their gender, race, disability or sexual orientation (Pavlakakis & Pryor, 2021).

2.5 Causes and impact

The most common cause of homelessness, regardless of the type, is poverty. Childhood poverty significantly increases the likelihood of homelessness at some point in an individual's life (Bramley & Fitzpatrick, 2017; Fitzpatrick & Davies, 2021). Other causes of homelessness, include the limited availability of affordable social housing, and significant life events such as relationship breakdown, unemployment, mental or physical health issues and alcohol or substance misuse (Bramley & Fitzpatrick, 2017; Crisis, 2024a). The impacts of homelessness can exacerbate the initial cause, making it more difficult to manage and break from (Crisis, 2024a).

2.5.1 Health and development

Every YHP's experience is unique and intertwined with its root cause. It affects all areas of CYP's life and development. YHP can experience a lack of sleep, poor nutrition, limited food and access to health and social care services (Action for Children, 2024; McKenna & Scanlon, 2024). Some CYP go to school hungry due to increased time spent travelling from their accommodation to their school or setting (McKenna & Scanlon, 2024). Some YHP shared experiencing anemia, bedbug bites, eczema and fatigue (Kirkman et al., 2010). Others may stay awake to move around and maintain safety, or engage in risky behaviours to secure a place to sleep (Action for Children, 2024). Homeless people are significantly more likely to experience violence or abusive behaviour from others (Ballintyne, 1999; Newburn & Rock, 2005; Sanders & Albanese, 2016). Fitzpatrick et al (2013) suggest a correlation between youth homelessness and criminal behaviour, substance use and continued homelessness in adulthood. This emphasises the importance of early intervention for YHP to mitigate against these risk factors. Homelessness can be physically and mentally exhausting and can cause additional acute and long-lasting impacts for CYP.

2.5.2 Social, emotional and mental health

Homelessness is associated with increased rates of mental health difficulties, including anxiety, depression and eating disorders (Action for Children, 2024). A podcast by Centrepont (2021), emphasised how YHP may perceive themselves as having 'nothing'. Without adequate support, this can spiral into a sense of worthlessness – 'I am nothing'. YHP may also experience social isolation due to being cut off from family and friends or the fear of judgement from others (Crisis, 2024b). Rules and restrictions, often present in shared accommodation, is suggested to make it difficult for CYP to make friends (Polillo et al., 2018). For some there is a pressure to make limited noise due to cramped living conditions which may negatively impact a child's opportunity to play or spend time with their friends (Roovis & O'Hare, 2024). YHP may seek and accept connection and belonging from other groups, increasing their vulnerability to exploitation and dangerous situations (Crisis, 2024b).

Many adolescents living in temporary accommodation, which applies to most YHP with and without their families, reported feeling overwhelmed, scared, and tired due to their living conditions (Hallet et al., 2015). In Roovis and O'Hare's (2024) research, one YHP described the frequency of threat and violence in their temporary accommodation. Thus, homelessness often coincides with other forms of trauma or adversity which can impact CYP's mental health (Haskett et al., 2016). Kirkman et al (2010) asserts that the impact of loss from homelessness may lead to experiencing uncomfortable emotions and increased behavioural problems. Such losses can include: - loss of home, personal belongings, privacy, community, family pet, relationships, routines and a sense of belonging (McKenna & Scanlon, 2024; Roovis & O'Hare, 2024). Managing profound loss is particularly challenging for YHP, as they are often placed in shelters far from their local communities and education settings, severing their connection to existing support systems (McKenna & Scanlon, 2024).

2.6 Homelessness and education, employment and training

2.6.1 Education

Education is considered a significant protective factor for all CYP (Mihic et al., 2022). Much of the available research, albeit mostly from the US, suggests that youth homelessness has a significant impact on access and engagement with education. As highlighted by recent research, 'education is an area which is impacted directly by youth homelessness and, in turn, difficulties in education can be a causal or maintaining factor in homelessness' (Pescod, 2024, p. 56). YHP are more likely to underperform in education assessments compared to their housed peers (Masten et al., 1997).

Internationally, YHP struggle to attend school, concentrate in class, complete their homework and persevere with their learning due to experiencing multiple moves and disrupted relationships (Murran & Brady, 2023; Pescod, 2024; Roovis & O'Hare, 2024). In Ireland, education professionals reported that homeless CYP experience poor physical and mental health, low self-esteem and social isolation which negatively impacts their school attendance and engagement (Irish Primary Principal's Network, 2019). An international review by Murran and Brady (2023) revealed that homelessness often contributed to reduced support networks,

increased school mobility and behavioural challenges in homeless CYP which negatively impacted their development. YHP in education reported having SEN needs which their education organisation did not meet, which in turn, prevented their access to education (Pescod, 2024).

2.6.2 Training and employment

Youth homelessness often results in a disrupted education experience which can present barriers to a young person's prospects and opportunities. YHP are significantly more likely to be NEET than their housed peers (Coles et al., 2010; Dibb et al., 2019). Action for Children (2024) reports that YHP are unable to secure paid employment because employers typically require a home address before an individual can become employed. This makes it almost impossible to become employed (Slesnick et al., 2018).

Those who aspire to careers requiring further education may struggle to access it, as financial resources are often prioritised for basic needs like food and shelter, or due to a lack of qualifications from their statutory education, limiting their opportunities (Buzzeo et al., 2016; Dibb et al., 2019; Pescod & Gander, 2024). Buzzeo et al (2016) highlighted that young people facing poverty often must choose between earning an income or pursuing education, with many opting for short-term work to meet urgent living expenses. Travel costs further reduce the feasibility and appeal of further education for YHP (Buzzeo et al., 2016). YHP often leave statutory education with low self-confidence, reinforcing the perception that they are not worthy of education (Buzzeo et al., 2016). The services available to support YHP in EET are described as 'bureaucratic rather than holistic' where professionals have little awareness and understanding of the needs of YHP (Buzzeo et al., 2016; CentrePoint, 2015). This further prevents YHP from accessing an EET pathway. YHP are more likely to engage in risky behaviours to acquire financial resource, for example, drug dealing or prostitution (Pescod & Gander, 2024; Slesnick et al., 2018). These actions often lead them further away from opportunities in EET.

2.7 Psychological theories

2.7.1 Hierarchy of Needs

Themes from the existing literature highlight how young people's basic physiological needs may not be met due to their homeless circumstance (McKenna & Scanlon, 2024; Pescod, 2024). In McKenna and Scanlon's (2024) study, homeless children struggled to access food, rest and warmth due to limited financial resources and a lack of appropriate facilities in their temporary accommodation. Their parents, also facing homelessness, believed their children were more likely to experience exhaustion, hunger and poor physical health due to their poor living conditions. YHP living in temporary accommodation report feeling a range of uncomfortable emotions, such as being overwhelmed, exhausted and anxious due to their living situation (Polillo et al., 2018). This can be understood in terms of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs. As stated by Pescod (2024), challenges with finance, food and health will be more of a priority than education and learning.

Maslow (1943) states that before human beings can feel motivated for self-development, there are a series of physiological needs which must be met first, starting with the most basic and progressing towards higher psychological needs: - physiological needs (sleep, water, food, shelter), safety (both physical, psychological and financial), love and belonging, self-esteem and self-actualisation. YHP who are tired, hungry, unsafe, unwell or stressed are unlikely to access resources for EET because their most fundamental needs are unmet (McKenna & Scanlon, 2024; Pescod, 2024). The lack of met need can also act as a barrier to EET engagement. For example, financial difficulties may limit EET opportunities due to travel costs (Buzzeo et al., 2016) causing some YHP to engage in risky behaviours in order to survive (Slesnick et al., 2018).

Using Maslow's (1943) framework, EET settings can help meet the basic needs of YHP which in turn will boost financial security, stability and social inclusion (Pescod & Gander, 2024). Attending a setting can provide a safe and consistent place during uncertain times of homelessness (Begg et al., 2017). Settings can also help YHP's individual needs by offering bespoke support and opportunities for positive relationships with others (McKenna & Scanlon, 2024). In turn, it will support YHP's capacity to access learning.

2.7.2 Attachment Theory

Closely related is Bowlby's (1997) attachment theory. Bowlby (1997) believed that all human beings have an innate motivation to feel connected to others. When individuals feel connected, understood and valued, they are likely to function at their best, experience emotional stability and safety, be resilient and work towards future goals. YHP shared that warmth and affection from adults in education helped them to develop positive attitudes about learning (McKenna & Scanlon, 2024).

Relationships are central to belonging and identity. Relationships with others provide an internal working model for how humans perceive themselves, others and the world around them. Thus, it is important for all CYP to experience safe relationships to support positive self-identity. However, in Pescod's (2024) study most YHP reported negative experiences with education professionals which adversely impacted their sense of belonging to the setting. Human identities are made up of the communities they live in, so displacement from homelessness can cause a loss of connectedness (Vandermark, 2007). Roovis and O'Hare (2024) highlight the importance of bolstering relationships to mitigate against a loss of place.

2.7.3 Attribution Model

The attributions one holds about themselves, others and situations impacts their behaviour (Miller, 1995, 2002). Weiner's (1972) attribution theory explains how people interpret the causes of success or challenge which are typically emphasised in EET. Weiner (1972) identified three core areas of causal attributes: - (1) locus of control, whether the cause is located internally or externally; (2) stability, the stability of the cause over time and (3) controllability, whether the outcome was in the person's control. Each core area exists on a spectrum with two opposite ends. For example, controllable, the person has influence over the outcome or uncontrollable, the outcome is outside of the person's control.

The attributions that YHP hold about themselves are crucial due to their impact on their motivation to engage with EET. A YHP who views themselves as 'worthless', is unlikely to engage with EET because they attribute the 'problem' to something inherently wrong within themselves. Many YHP report negative experiences in

education which led them to feel helpless in education (Pescod, 2024). Pescod (2024) also highlighted how some YHP blamed themselves for their academic challenges by positioning themselves as abnormal. However, some YHP attribute homelessness as an external challenge which has facilitated them to be more able to participate in learning – sometimes as a means of gaining a career and breaking the cycle of homelessness.

Attributions held by adults are also important to consider because they influence the way they respond to CYP. Dobbs and Arnold (2009) revealed how CYP who were perceived more negatively received more sanctions. This is especially relevant when considering homelessness, as society frequently holds inaccurate and harmful beliefs that homelessness is entirely within an individual's control. Denessen et al (2022) adds that professionals responding to the needs of CYP based on biased perceptions are less likely to meet their needs. This may contribute to a harmful cycle, as YHP who are met with negative attributes from adults are more likely to have negative educational experiences, damaging their self-esteem and sense of belonging. However, for some YHP, their awareness of the negative perceptions of others encouraged them to want to prove people wrong and distance themselves from harmful narratives (Edwards, 2023; Pescod, 2024).

2.7.4 Self-Determination Theory

Pescod (2024) highlights the relevance of Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self Determination Theory (SDT) to understand how motivation plays a role in YHP's access and engagement with EET. Deci and Ryan (1985) assert that motivation exists on a continuum that is constantly shifting, reflecting how individuals may move between different types of motivation depending on their experiences, environment, and sense of self. Intrinsic motivation refers to acting because it leads to comfortable emotions whereas extrinsic motivation refers to acting because it leads to reward or avoiding punishment. The 'amotivation' end of the continuum refers to having to motivation to act at all. Ultimately, SDT assumes that individuals are most motivated when their fundamental needs are met, which moves beyond extrinsic rewards and punishments. Pescod (2024) revealed that 'amotivation' was common among YHP because often they are often in situations where they experience significant change

and receive a lack of support and guidance to continue persisting with their learning. However, a common motivating factor for YHP was the desire for a better future (Pescod, 2024). It is important for EET professionals to understand the complexities around YHP and the factors which influence their motivation to engage in learning and self-development opportunities.

2.7.5 Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory is important for YHP. He demonstrates the multiple interconnected systems around everyone, ranging from the microsystem, their immediate environment, to the chronosystem, the dimension of time. Existing literature highlights that individual's lives are often complex but added complexity within the YHP population. Haskett et al (2016) explains that homelessness often does not occur in isolation. Common themes alongside homelessness include: - poverty, trauma, abuse, relational, physical and emotional losses, stress and anxiety and unacceptable or dangerous living conditions. The presence of even one of these factors can be incredibly difficult to navigate and when experienced together, they pose a significant challenge for anyone, especially a YHP lacking family or adult support.

Pescod and Gander (2024) present the exosystem, microsystem and individual factors for YHP which act as motivators for EET or maintaining NEET. The motivating exosystem factors for EET referred to the varied access of EET opportunities. The microsystem factors included YHP needing support from adults to access EET such as advice and encouragement and having role models and friends in EET. Individual factors included the YHP's 'soft skills' such as being able to complete education or job searches and complete an application, stability of life circumstances and routine and financial independence. However, the exosystem factors which maintained YHP being NEET included the lack of attractive EET opportunities. Microsystem factors referred to the negative experiences YHP often had in education or learning settings and the absence of supportive, positive adult relationships to guide them into EET. The individual factors for maintaining NEET included literacy and numeracy difficulties, lack of academic qualifications from statutory education, neurodiversity and poor mental health of YHP.

2.7.6 Fallibility of theories

Psychological theories provide useful explanations or hypotheses, but they cannot fully capture every individual experience, especially in complex situations like homelessness, where culture, context and intersectionality play significant roles. An important limitation is that theories often lean toward reductionism, attributing phenomena to a single factor. For example, Bowlby's (1997) attachment theory emphasises attachment styles, but human behaviour is shaped by a wide range of influences that no single framework can fully capture. Another criticism relates to the origins of theories and the participant samples on which they were built. As noted by Muthukrishna et al (2020), much psychological research has historically relied on biased samples, often from Western populations, limiting their applicability to other groups. Despite this, such theories are often overgeneralised, which can lead to misrepresentation and ethical concerns. While I have drawn links between the experiences of YHP and certain psychological frameworks, these theories ultimately provide only partial insights and cannot encompass the full scope of their unique individual experiences.

2.8 The voices of YHP

The lived experience of YHP in EET is considerably limited, particularly in England. Media sources often discuss YHP, but their own voices and representation are notably absent from these conversations. Furthermore, the success stories of YHP in EET are marginalised due to the dominating negative perceptions and deficit-focus in existing literature and in society (Edwards, 2023). This is echoed by EET professionals in England. YHP are described as a hidden population and there are few professionals currently providing direct support to YHP (Pescod, 2024; Roovis & O'Hare, 2024). Education professionals, including EPs, have shared they lack knowledge about what homeless families and young people experience. Understanding the experiences of YHP will better enable education professionals to provide support for them and the best positioned to inform this understanding are the young people who experience it firsthand.

2.9 Aims of systematic literature review

The lived experiences of YHP offer an important opportunity to develop an understanding of youth homelessness and ways to support. The primary knowledge of youth homelessness lies within those who have experienced it. This underpins the rationale for my systematic literature review (SLR) which aimed to explore the strengths and vulnerabilities of YHP in education from their perspective.

2.10 Systematic literature review

In this section, I will systematically explore the existing qualitative literature to examine the strengths and vulnerabilities of YHP's educational experiences. I felt that exploring the research in this field will allow me to identify what is known about YHP's educational experiences and identify gaps which my research could make a unique contribution to. To support this process, the following review questions guided my search and synthesis of the literature:

What is known about YHP's educational experiences? What strengths and resources support them to engage in education? What vulnerabilities disrupt their engagement in education?

2.10 Qualitative syntheses

Qualitative syntheses have increased in use over the last decade as a methodology to undertake systematic reviews (Flemming & Noyes, 2021). The shift towards qualitative syntheses aligns with the social constructionist paradigm that a 'one size fits all' approach to synthesising qualitative research is not feasible. A qualitative synthesis collates the findings from individual studies with primarily qualitative data (Flemming & Noyes, 2021). It provides unique insight into the subjective experience of individuals and create a meaningful and rich picture of a particular phenomenon (Graham et al., 2018). The purpose of a qualitative synthesis is to generate a greater understanding of a topic and is often used for those which are sensitive in nature (Flemming & Noyes, 2021), such as youth homelessness. My review questions were

seeking to enhance the understanding of YHP's educational experiences – which is a type of question which qualitative syntheses typically can answer (Noyes et al., 2019). Some examples of qualitative evidence synthesis, recommended by Cochrane Qualitative and Implementation Methods Group are thematic synthesis (Thomas and Harden, 2008), framework synthesis (Oliver et al., 2008) and meta-ethnography (Noblit & Hare, 1988).

2.11 Rationale for synthesis

According to Petticrew and Roberts (2006) and Owens (2021), an SLR is an effective method for synthesising existing literature which helps to identify what is known, and what is unknown, about a particular phenomenon by providing an unbiased summary of the evidence. I decided that a SLR would be valuable for my research due to the limited examples of similar work being conducted in this field. I focused solely on qualitative research because I was interested in exploring the lived experiences of YHP, an aspect that quantitative research could not capture.

2.12 Organisation of the review

The following section will highlight my review and synthesis method. The review findings will then be presented as individual themes.

2.13 Review method

Thomas and Pring (2004) outline the key steps for completing a SLR: (1) formulate review question, (2) comprehensive approach to searches, (3) study selection with the application of inclusion and exclusion criteria, (4) critical quality appraisal of the selected studies and (5) data extraction which answers the review question. The extracted data is then analysed and synthesised using a particular method of synthesis.

I chose to undertake a thematic synthesis as my qualitative evidence synthesis. Thematic synthesis is an interpretive approach which enables new interpretations between studies to be made which may not have been present in the individual

primary studies (Flemming & Noyes, 2021). It is described as a flexible approach, making it applicable to most qualitative data from primary research. The purpose is to create a holistic and rich understanding of a phenomenon which my review intended to do. The analysis was completed following Thomas and Harden's (2008) model of thematic synthesis: (1) line-by-line coding, (2) development of descriptive themes and (3) analytical theme generation.

Firstly, codes were given to statements from the individual papers regarding homelessness and education. I then created codes for groups of statements in the second stage of synthesis. I continually referred to the individual papers to ensure my synthesis was grounded in the voices of the participants. Mind mapping was used to support making links between the descriptive themes which were either a strength and/or a vulnerability in YHP's education experience (appendix 11 and 12).

2.13.1 Locating studies and search strategy

A systematic search of research literature was conducted between April and June 2024 using the following databases: PsycInfo, PsycArticles, APA Psyc Net, Social Sciences Premium and Ebsco Host including ERIC. A final manual search using Google Scholar was conducted to ensure no journal or articles had been missed. Table 2.1 shows the search terms used to find research in the homelessness and education field.

Table 2.1: Database search terms

Search term	Alternatives/truncations
Temporary accommodation	homeless* or houseless or runaway or rough sleep or rough sleeping or temporary house or temporary housing or hostel
Young people	young person or child or minor or young adult or pupil or student
Education	School or college or FE or university
Experience	narrative* or lived experience* or story or stories
Strengths	resilience* or resources

Vulnerabilities	hardships or challenges
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The SPIDER tool was selected as part of the search because it shows greater specificity for each database and supports the refinement of components for qualitative research (Cooke et al., 2012; Methley et al., 2014). To be included in the final analysis, the studies needed to meet the following SPIDER criteria in Table 2.2:

Table 2.2: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for SLR

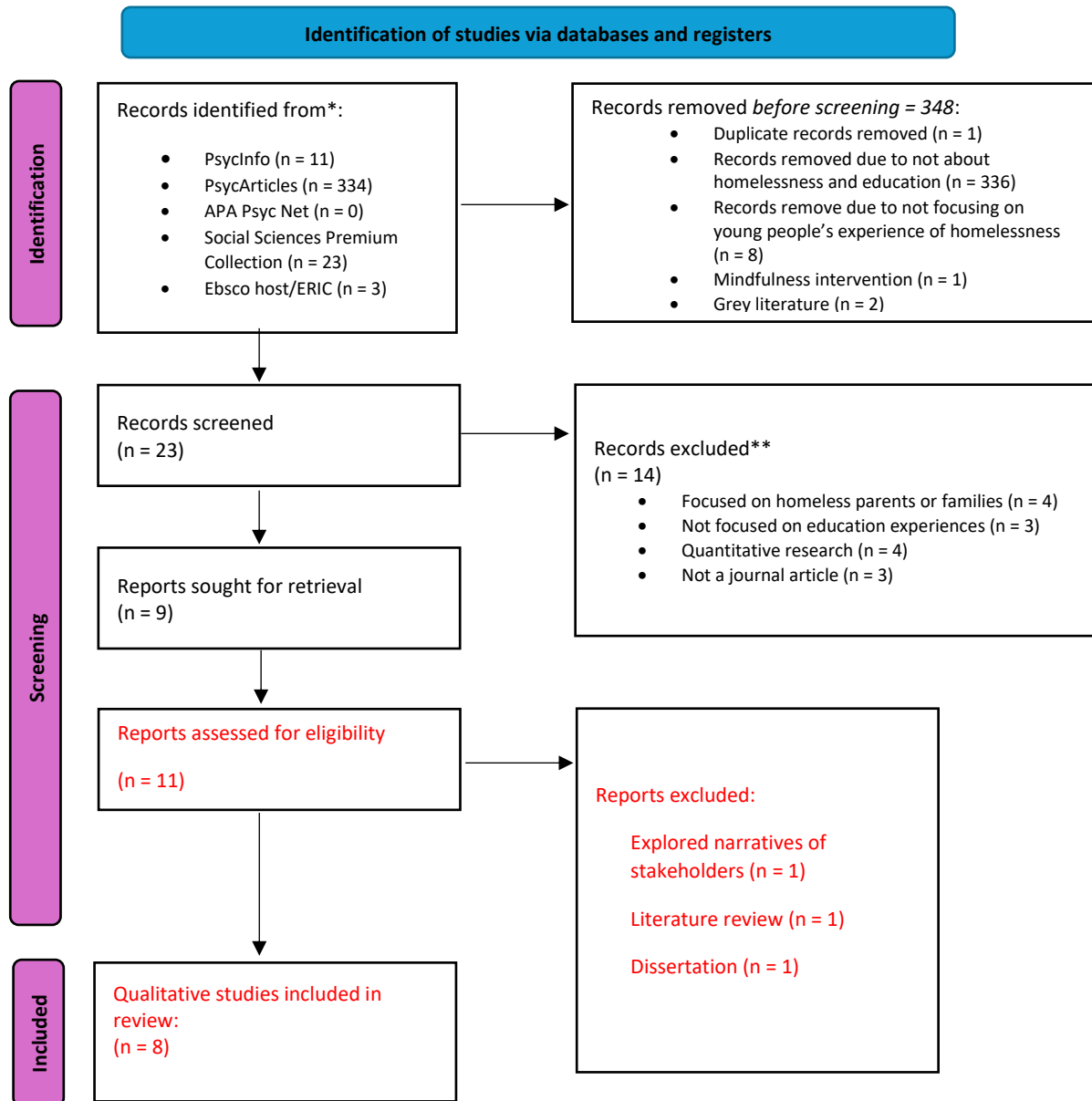
SPIDER tool	Inclusion	Exclusion
Sample	YP aged between 16-25 years who are or were homeless during their education.	YP under 16 or over 25. No experience of homelessness during education.
Phenomenon of interest	Homelessness and education.	
Design	Not limited.	
Evaluation	Strengths and vulnerabilities experienced by YHP in education.	Focus outside of education.
Research type	Qualitative due to the reviews focus on lived experiences.	Quantitative data.

The journals must be written in English. There was no date restriction on the studies due to the limited amount of research currently available. Studies were accepted from the UK and other Western countries with a similar culture towards homelessness, such as the USA, Australia, and Canada. The decision was made to exclude all grey literature because the review is planned to include peer reviewed literature.

2.13.2 Results of the search

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) flowchart by Moher et al (2009) illustrates the literature selection process shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: PRISMA flowchart highlighting the literature selection process



The database searches yielded 348 studies. Following screening of titles and abstracts 326 studies including one duplicate were removed as they were not relevant to the topic of homelessness and education. The remaining 23 records were assessed in full for eligibility. 14 further studies were excluded at this point due to focusing on homeless parents or homeless families (n=4), not focused on education experiences (n=3), not peer reviewed (n=3). A total of eight studies were included in the review; seven remained in the analysis following quality appraisal which is detailed in the section below. Two articles, Mulrenan et al (2020) and Moore & McArthur (2011), were included in the review despite some participants falling

outside the age inclusion criteria. Both studies provided clear age breakdowns, allowing for the inclusion of data specific to the 16–25 age group relevant to my review.

In December 2024, the British Psychological Society (BPS) published a special issue on homelessness and educational psychology. It published five research papers on the issue of homelessness. From those papers, one article by Pescod (2024) met the inclusion criteria for my review. I excluded the remaining papers for the following reasons: one was an SLR, another focused on children's understanding of their homelessness, while others explored parental perspectives and employees' perceptions from a homeless charity. I updated my review synthesis in March 2025 to include Pescod's (2024) study.

2.13.3 Quality appraisal

The initial eight studies included in the review were systematically appraised using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme [CASP] (2018) tool (appendix 10). The CASP appraises qualitative research using ten questions covering three broad categories: (1) the validity of the findings, (2) the findings and (3) the value of the findings plus the studies ethics are assessed. Following completion of screening for eligibility, one study by Day (2002) was excluded due to not meeting three of the criteria, leaving seven qualitative studies. With the later addition of Pescod's (2024) study, eight studies were included in the SLR.

Most studies met most of the CASP criteria and were therefore included in the review synthesis. Mulrenan et al (2020) and Jones et al (2018) did not meet the researcher positionality criteria. I chose to include these studies due to the researcher positionality category being considered less critical to the overall methodological quality, and valuable findings it presented. Edwards (2023), Pavlakis and Pryor (2021) and Gupton (2017) did not provide enough information about their ethical considerations, however they met all other CASP criteria, and therefore I chose to include them. Moore and McArthur (2011) did not provide enough information about researcher positionality, ethical considerations or how they ensured the rigor of their analysis. Similarly, Toolis and Hammack (2015) offered limited detail on researcher positionality and ethical considerations. In their case, the

main concern was the lack of information on the rigor of data analysis, rather than any indication that their analysis itself was flawed. Despite these studies not fully meeting two or three CASP criteria, I chose to include them because the omitted categories were less critical to the overall findings and their contribution to the synthesis. Given the limited research in the field of homelessness and education, each piece of evidence was considered critical for the review. A study by Day (2002) did not meet any CASP criteria and was consequently excluded.

2.13.4 Reading the studies and data extraction

The eight studies were read and re-read in accordance with Thomas and Harden's (2008) model of thematic synthesis. A descriptive summary of the studies and participants included in the synthesis can be found in Table 2.2. Appendix 13 presents a summary of the main themes and findings. Six analytical themes, plus seven sub-themes, were identified from the data set and will be illustrated in section 2.4.

Table 2.3: Descriptive summary of studies and participants

Author/Year	Location	Research (question, aims)	Participants (gender, age)	Research design	Form of homelessness	Education	Data Analysis
Mulrenan et al (2020)	England	Experiences of YHP	16 (13F, 2M) Aged 20-50. White (3), Black African/ Black Caribbean/ Mixed heritage (12)	Qualitative; groups and interviews.	Varied	University	Thematic analysis
Jones et al (2018)	USA	Educational barriers and facilitators for YHP	20 (11F, 9M) Aged 18-24. Gay/lesbian (3), bisexual (6) heterosexual (11). African American (10), White	Qualitative; interviews	Temporary accommodation	Varied	Open coding

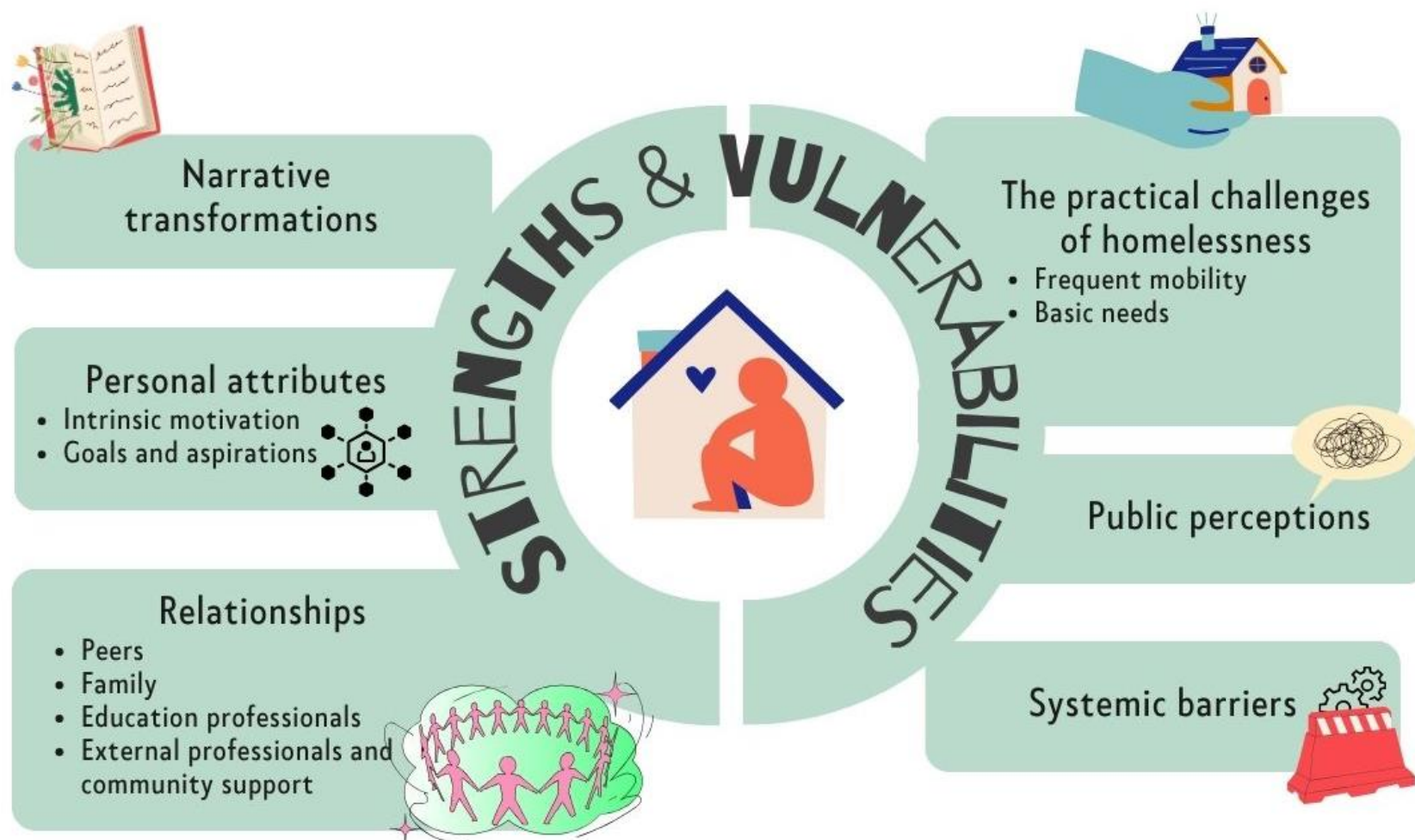
			(3), Other/Mixed heritage (7).				
Edwards (2023)	USA	Narratives of homeless high school graduates	8 (4F, 4M) Aged 18-23.	Qualitative; interviews.	Varied	High school.	Antideficit narrative analysis
Pavlaklis & Pryor (2021)	USA	Lived experiences of homeless Black students	21 (13F, 8M) plus 10 staff	Qualitative; interviews and focus groups.	Varied	High school and EET	Open coding
Toolis & Hammack (2015)	USA	Lived experiences among YHP	11 YHP (5F, 6M) Aged 19-23. African American (4), White (4), Hispanic/Lat ino (1), American/In dian (1), Asian American (1).	Qualitative; interviews.	Varied	EET	Narrative analysis

Moore & McArthur (2011)	Australia	Educational experience of homeless children	25, most under 14, 8 aged 15-21	Qualitative; interviews, art and group work	Varied	Varied	Open coding
Gupton (2017)	USA	Narratives of YHP in college	4 (2F, 2M) Aged 17-21 Black American (4).	Qualitative; narrative interviews.	Varied	College	Narrative-oriented inquiry
Pescod (2024)	England	Educational experiences of YHP	7 (2F, 5M) Aged 18-19 Black British (4), Black African (1), Arab British (1), Arab (1)	Qualitative; Interviews	Hostel	College (3), Sixth Form (1), Apprenticeship (3)	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

2.4 Literature review synthesis

The aim of the SLR was to understand YHP's educational experience from their perspective. Following a thematic synthesis of the eight studies, six analytical themes, plus seven sub-themes, were identified from the data set and were categorised as strengths or vulnerabilities. Figure 2.2 provides a visual summary of the analytical themes. In this section, each analytical theme will be discussed separately, with key quotes from the studies highlighted to illustrate the findings.

Figure 2.2: Summary of analytical themes: Strengths and vulnerabilities



2.4.1 Narrative transformations

Narrative transformations were identified as a strength in four studies (Gupton, 2017; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021; Toolis & Hammack, 2015). The YHP used narrative transformation to reframe homelessness as a positive learning experience. Their strengths included being able to adjust to new situations, form new friendships and explore new opportunities.

Moving has given me a greater outlook on life. It's not all about social status and stuff like that...I hated moving away from all my friends, my teammates, but now that I'm in [new state], I'm working. I can go up there and visit whenever I want. (Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021)

I had to go through 18 years of bullshit for a reason just to be here, to be successful. (Toolis & Hammack, 2015)

Homelessness was positioned as the opportunity for learning and post-traumatic growth for some YHP. They accepted what was within and outside of their control and used this as motivation to foster interpersonal strength.

It was a good change to move here because over there I would have been distracted with friends and drama...over here, I'm more concentrated on my grades. I met people. They're nice people. Now, I know how to pick my friends. (Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021)

Some things you really can't control...But you can always take something from it, learn something from it. And then leave it. Your past is really just the past. (Toolis & Hammack, 2015)

He has constructed homelessness as a space of transformation...hardship was necessary for growth...Alejandro distinguished what was outside of his control – experiencing homelessness – with what he perceived as within his control – actively transforming this experience into a source of strength. (Toolis and Hammack, 2015)

The children believed that having lived through difficult times, they and their families had developed an appreciation for life and a sense that they could overcome future challenges. (Moore & McArthur, 2011)

2.4.2 Personal attributes

The second theme relates to YHP's personal attributes, which emerged from six studies (Edwards, 2023; Gupton, 2017; Mulrenan et al., 2020; Pavlakis & Pryor,

2021; Pescod, 2024; Toolis & Hammack, 2015). This theme contains two sub-themes, intrinsic motivation and goals and aspirations.

2.4.2.1 Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation was highlighted in five studies as a source of strength in YHP's educational journey (Edwards, 2023; Gupton, 2017; Mulrenan et al., 2020; Pescod, 2024; Toolis & Hammack, 2015). For some YHP, their motivation was fueled by the challenges they faced due to their homelessness. They spoke about being driven to create a better life for themselves through education.

So, you can go to the college and then you study safe. You received certificates because the future, if you don't study, if you be in the street, hanging with your guys and the you walking around, and then it's gonna be hard for you. (Pescod, 2024)

My current situation was not my final destination...so, I was like, 'in order for me to get up out my mom's apartment with my brothers, in order for me to be this person who wants to help his family, I gotta get up. I gotta get up, I gotta go to school. (Edwards, 2023)

Where's this kid who supposedly gets all this stuff but he doesn't have to work because his mom and dad are gonna take care of him until he's done with college.... it doesn't go for the people who are at the bottom... you gotta dig for the things you want. You gotta scrape for the things you want. (Toolis & Hammack, 2015)

I'm just going to keep following the path until I get to where I want to go. (Gupton, 2017)

Experiencing hardship through homelessness fostered personal growth and development, cultivating a stronger determination to overcome adversity. However, this journey was not without its personal challenges and sacrifices.

I will do everything to finish this course. I am not going to give up. If it means sleeping in the street, I will sleep in the street in order to go to school. (Mulrenan et al., 2020)

Most of-most of them don't wanna study too. But when you're strong, you know, then you're gonna sit here. You're gonna think life, 'So why I'm not studying? So why I'm here I'm not doing anything?' You know, if you're not strong, it's not easy because sometimes you don't have money, you're broke, you need to go to college (Pescod, 2024)

Deep down I always knew there was something that was going to happen . . . I always had a little, tiny hope, and if you have the tiniest bit of hope it goes so far. It's like a mustard seed of faith...faith that I can get out of this situation. (Toolis & Hammack, 2015)

Contrastingly, one study highlighted that a lack of motivation was considered a vulnerability to YHP's access and engagement with education. Some YHP were not motivated to engage in education due to other challenging circumstances in their personal lives. Whereas others accessed education but did not feel motivated enough to engage in it.

I'm still in Sixth Form. So, I'm not even going to Sixth Form but then, I didn't go to Sixth Form anymore I've given up. (Pescod, 2024)

Goals and aspirations

Four studies highlighted the YHP's goals and aspirations as a strength (Edwards, 2023; Gupton, 2017; Mulrenan et al., 2020; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021). Whereas Pescod (2024) emphasised how some goals and aspirations could hinder a YHP's engagement with education. Two studies positioned tangible goals such as a secure place to live and having a secure family unit as positive, supportive reasons to engage with education (Gupton, 2017; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021). Their aspirations could be interpreted as providing sources of stability, fulfilling their basic need for safety and security.

Students expressed broader goals such as financial independence and family building. Others discussed home ownership, a symbol of stability. Jade hoped to buy a house and James aimed to have a stable place to live. (Pavlakis and Pryor, 2021)

Sequoia said that it [college] was a way of getting away from [shelter]. Her interests were not in going to college, but rather escaping what she perceived a toxic environment at her group home. (Gupton, 2017)

I just really want to know how you can help me to be successful...I want to succeed, I want to get my high school degree so I can help my family get up outta this space. (Edwards, 2023)

For some YHP, their dreams and aspirations did not involve an education pathway, thus they were less likely to engage with formal education. However, this does not

mean they lacked meaningful goals. Rather, the value they placed on education was diminished when they viewed their career path as separate from academia.

...another reason why my attitude towards college went bad was 'cause I changed my career path, and I wanted to change my career path into youth work. (Pescod, 2024)

2.4.3 Relationships

Across all studies, relationships were positioned as a strength or vulnerability for YHP in education (Edwards, 2023; Gupton, 2017; Jones et al., 2018; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Mulrenan et al., 2020; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021; Pescod, 2024; Toolis & Hammack, 2015). This theme is broken down into four sub-themes: family, peers, education professionals and external professionals and community support.

2.4.3.1 Family

In four studies, relationships with parents, carers, and families were identified as significant in supporting their engagement with education during periods of homelessness (Jones et al., 2018; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Mulrenan et al., 2020; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021). Some YHP and their families were provided with tangible support from extended family members which supported meeting their most basic needs.

Extended networks of aunts and uncles had lent her mother money and provided intermittent housing. (Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021)

...whenever we go to his 24-year-old brother with problems and needs, "he always pulls through". (Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021)

YHP living with their parents shared that the negative impacts were lessened due to the support provided by their parents. Their homelessness was less likely to impact the education experience of those YHP.

...the children report that, during periods of homelessness, they also felt connected and supported by the families, and their parents mitigated some of the negative effects of being homeless. (Moore & McArthur, 2011)

The connection to family members was also positioned as a protective factor for some YHP's engagement with education. Their personal upbringing and perceived

family values provided some YHP with the motivation to persevere in their studies despite their hardships. However, Mulrenan et al's (2020) study highlighted how some young people felt their parents did not have an awareness or understanding about their homeless situation during their education.

...their decisions were strongly influenced by family relationships. They believed that their upbringing had helped them carry on and wanted to repay their parents by graduating from the university. (Mulrenan et al., 2020)

[My mom is] very brave and independent. She's taught me to be independent, [to] keep my head on my grades and get in my career and [be able to] sustain myself. (Pavlakakis & Pryor, 2021)

[My father] feels proud to have a child who has a degree. He talks to other people a lot...'my daughter is in England and studying a degree.' He does not even know what his daughter is going through. (Mulrenan et al., 2020)

In contrast, some YHP identified the lack of parental and family support as a vulnerability in their lives. Not having adult support meant that YHP had to survive without the adult support which their housed peers typically receive.

I grew up in different homes. No one really raised me. I raised myself. (Jones et al., 2018)

2.4.3.2 Peer relationships

Similarly, peers featured in five studies (Edwards, 2023; Gupton, 2017; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Mulrenan et al., 2020; Toolis & Hammack, 2015). Peer relationships were identified as the single most important factor for some YHP to continue with their education (Mulrenan et al., 2020). Their friendships often helped to meet their basic needs such as a temporary place to sleep which was closer to their education setting, enabling them to attend.

...their friend's family provided them with a physical place to sleep while they were homeless...Helen attributed her friendship with Natasha as the single most important factor in helping her graduate high school. (Edwards, 2023)

...I didn't wanna go live with my aunt because it was so far. So, my friend Natasha, her parents were like "oh its okay honey stay with us for a bit". (Edwards, 2023)

...I got close with a few of my friends and sometimes they'll let me stay over at their house. You know, when I had practice like the next day. Cause they stay in that area, so I would just, you know, have to wake up and I would be right there. I didn't have to travel or anything like that. (Edwards, 2023)

The kids are the ones that have the life experience. They're the ones that have these problems that happen to them and they find the solutions to figure them out. (Toolis & Hammack, 2015)

I mean just socialising – takes you mind away from [being homeless], definitely. (Mulrenan et al., 2020)

...If something happened at the shelter, I would just go to a friend's house 'til it cooled down. (Gupton, 2017)

Two studies highlighted how they had a lack of peer relationships, and education professionals, during education which increased their vulnerability through social isolation. This was due to fear of their peers discovering their homeless circumstance and difficulties making friends due to high mobility.

I didn't mention to anyone...I just felt like I did not want anyone to sympathise with me and I think that's where I went wrong. The whole of the first year I never saw any lecturer...even my friends. I kept it to myself. (Mulrenan et al., 2020)

For me making friends was really hard...I really missed my friends and my school. I remember leaving it thinking 'I don't want to leave, don't make me leave'. (Moore & McArthur, 2011)

I mean yeah, it's lonely here now. I don't really talk to anyone here except some of the staff. (Gupton, 2017)

Some YHP viewed peer relationships as a vulnerability, given the heightened risk of peer pressure and group dynamics. One YHP shared that they felt less motivated and less likely to engage in positive activities when surrounded by others who lacked motivation. This was seen as an uncontrollable factor.

If you're the one person that wants to get something done, living with three other people who don't really care; something about you, the way that you're going to be, is going to force you to not care. (Gupton, 2017)

2.4.3.3 Education professionals

Four studies illustrated how positive trusting relationships with education professionals supported YHP in education (Edwards, 2023; Jones et al., 2018; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Pescod, 2024). For example, teachers invest in YHP, showing care and compassion, offering time to have informal conversations and providing encouragement and pastoral support.

He allowed Marcus to come to his classroom during lunch for tutoring and to have informal conversations – their informal conversations led to them building a relationship where Marcus felt comfortable disclosing his housing status...while caring and informal conversations led Marcus to share his life experiences, it also allowed Marcus the opportunity to receive additional tutoring for his algebra course. (Edwards, 2023)

Even to this day, one of my coaches from another high school [will ask] ‘are you still coming back to play with us?’ (Edwards, 2023)

Um, and it’s gotten, the teachers always phoning, ‘Why are you not in, why are you not in?’ (Pescod, 2024)

The relationship with education professionals was positioned as helpful by some YHP – particularly when they felt safe enough to share their homeless status. For some, this encouraged an understanding, empathetic and compassionate response from education professionals. Without this safety in the relationship, the education professionals may not have been made aware of their homelessness, which may have been a barrier to providing additional support.

It was kind-of good that she [my teacher] knew, because I wasn’t working very good because I was doing other things. If she didn’t know, she would make me work and get angry and things. (Moore & McArthur, 2011)

I felt like he genuinely just cared for his students. I don’t like to tell people anything about me. I’m really closed-minded and closed in, but if I tell him [family homeless status] who knows maybe he can really help me. So I told him, and yeah he was able to help me. He didn’t look at me as a student tryna be a charity... (Edwards, 2023)

[Mr Owens] would give me reality checks! He would encourage me to keep that little thought of wanting to be someone...I always kept that in my mind, like I want to be someone. I want to be someone. I am going to be someone. So that is what kept me really motivated. (Edwards, 2023)

There was the one art teacher and like a resource room teacher...I guess like gave me their – let me use them as a stepping stone, you know what I’m saying, for not

just other things, like doing things at school but just humanity in general, those skills that I need to work out with people. (Jones et al., 2018)

In comparison, relationships with education staff were not always constructed as protective by all YHP. Some YHP experienced a lack of positive relationships with education professionals. Rather, they perceived education staff to be uncaring and distrusting which impacted on their ability to engage with education.

Kevin said that he had a distrusting relationship with his teachers at his school and he perceived the majority of his teachers as not caring about him. (Edwards, 2023)

I have a bad teacher two years in a row. And she used to make fun of me in front of everyone. I used to make myself physically sick so I wouldn't have to go. (Moore & McArthur, 2011)

I wish I had been...told 'I will not allow you to fail...and give me some type of self-empowerment to be able to do it...they [staff] are supposed to do whatever is in their power to help that kid. (Jones et al., 2018)

In one study, the lack of support around staffing changes in education settings had a significant impact on some YHP.

They left after my freshman year, and I was heartbroken. I was mad...they just left like it was nothing. (Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021)

One study highlighted how some YHP felt that education staff could not always provide them with the holistic support they needed. Thus, the YHP felt there were limits to their relationship.

[staff support] ...that don't really count because you can't call them on a regular basis. Like, you're crying late at night and you can't call them...[only] 9:00 to 4:30. (Jones et al., 2018)

2.4.3.4 External professionals and community support

External professionals and people were positioned as a fundamental source of support for YHP in five studies (Edwards, 2023; Gupton, 2017; Jones et al., 2018; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021; Pescod, 2024). YHP received support from various external professionals and people, including homeless charity staff, social workers, youth workers and relationships with people from church. The homeless charity staff provided invaluable support to YHP, which supported their overall wellbeing and

access to education which mimicked family-like relationships. Being seen as a young person first, not a homeless young person, was offered by their homeless charity.

Like they're there 100% behind me. If it wasn't for them I wouldn't be in college.
(Pescod, 2024)

...they're all from different cliques in school. When they walk through that door, the cliques disappear. (Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021)

My number one memory of living with my mom was at a homeless shelter. But I don't know, they don't make you feel homeless at all because they're all warming and everyone is there for a reason. (Jones et al., 2018)

"I feel like Kelly is like our big mom and Dave is like our dad". Jade described the program as "one big family". (Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021)

"Right now, I just meet with my tutor [a volunteer]. We go over my homework and she encourages me to work hard" (Gupton, 2017)

My new mentor is great. She's really supportive of me, like believing in myself. We just click. (Gupton, 2017)

...Mr. Tom and Miss Irene. I had so much fun with them. They would come take us fishing – me and my sister – take us fishing, take us to events, take us to their house...they kept us sane. They kept us from feeling like we were being overwhelmed by everything...they put happiness into our life. (Jones et al., 2018)

Others shared that having a safe space to attend, such as a church, and relationships with their pastor was helpful. They shared messages about overcoming adversity and offered pastoral support which mitigated their stress from their homeless circumstance.

While Robert never had the opportunity to disclose his unstable housing conditions to an adult in school, he was immediately able to tell his pastor, simply because she asked. (Edwards, 2023)

...she was pretty supportive and always prayed for me. It kind of motivated me a lot. You know, because [church] is all about uplifting people. It helped out a lot.
(Edwards, 2023)

Having a church is like having a family. (Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021)

2.4.4 The practical challenges of homelessness

Six studies identified this theme, the practical challenges which YHP experience which increases their vulnerabilities in relation to their capacity to engage with

education (Edwards, 2023; Gupton, 2017; Jones et al., 2018; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021; Toolis & Hammack, 2015). It includes two sub-themes: frequent mobility and unmet basic needs.

2.4.4.1 Frequent mobility

In four studies, YHP shared how instability in their housing arrangements and frequent moves was a significant barrier to educational attendance, receiving support from wider support systems, such as their education setting, community and other forms of support (Edwards, 2023; Gupton, 2017; Jones et al., 2018; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021). Due to frequent residential moves, and sometimes far away from the YPs education setting, accessing education itself can be a significant barrier. This is because of the significant distance and financial implication of numerous public transports to physically reach the education building. This means that YHP are faced with the decision to travel each day to get to their setting, which practically and financially may not be possible for them, or to not attend their education setting at all.

On any given day, Jeffrey would be living anywhere from 20 min to 2hr away from school. (Edwards, 2023)

Living with her aunt required Helen to take four buses to get to get to school every day. (Edwards, 2023)

When Kevin started at [shelter], it would take him over an hour by bus to get to campus... Kevin stated: "Well, I mean it started out bad, then went good. I mean, I just messed up some early assignments and not going to class all the time, but it worked out." (Gupton, 2017)

By the time she returns to [shelter], it is close to 9.00pm, which means Sequoia usually misses the dinner that staff or volunteers prepare for the residents at 6:30pm. (Gupton, 2017)

Frequent mobility, whether residential, community or education setting, meant that YHP were stripped of support which was typically available. This suggests that young homeless people are not always able to access what might be typically offered to young people in one of their multiple systems – education setting, community, and other services, compared to their housed peers.

Frequent mobility also meant that students were sometimes wrenched from support systems, neighbourhoods, and schools...these sudden and often negative

experiences with residential mobility often caused rifts in students many support systems. (Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021)

...everyone I knew and grew up with, I left them all. (Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021)

Frequent mobility is reported to have caused the YHP to have missed many days of schooling. It is paired with ‘*instability*’, suggesting that high mobility is synonymous with feelings of instability, insecurity, and vulnerability.

...this mobility and instability caused them to miss many days of school. One participant had to switch schools after moving to live with her aunt, she commented about the school staff’s response: ‘they just didn’t care...the first day of school... [school staff told me] I don’t know why you came to school. There’s only two months of school left. (Jones et al, 2018)

YHP sometimes felt that they missed key learning opportunities causing gaps in their foundational knowledge. This suggests that YHP are academically disadvantaged due to not having access to the same learning opportunities as other non-homeless young people. Likewise, this quote suggests that due to residential and educational moves, some YHP had to repeat learning which they had already done as a previous setting.

Many youths talked about feeling lost in school after moving around because they had never learned the fundamental knowledge needed for mastery of the academic material, while others talked about becoming bored because they were repeating the same context they had learned at previous schools. (Jones et al, 2018)

2.4.4.2 Basic needs

Unmet basic needs were highlighted in four studies (Jones et al., 2018; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021; Pescod, 2024; Toolis & Hammack, 2015). Unlike other young people, YHP reported having unmet basic needs, impacting their development, mental health and capacity for learning. These unmet basic needs are not always visible to others, such as educational professionals, thus a lack of understanding and support can be an additional barrier for YHP.

Jessia struggled to complete homework at home due to a lack of Wi-Fi...James described his apartment infested with “bugs and flies” as lacking hot water. (Pavlakis and Pryor, 2021)

So, if you're not strong like you know, you can't go to college, then you'll not—you got nothing in your belly so—harder but if you're strong, you can do it. (Pescod, 2024)

Because I didn't have any clothes. We literally left out of nowhere. (Jones et al, 2018)

Some YHP do not have access to the basics which their housed peers likely have provided for them. It was highlighted that some young people do not have what they need to survive the day or week ahead, therefore, negatively impacting their engagement with education.

I was sad I couldn't be some average kid...I don't have a cell phone, I don't have money...I don't have anyone to cut my hair...and I didn't have money for clothes. I walked around with scraggly clothes with tatters at the bottom, like shoes that had holes in them. You have to do this every day for most of your life. You can't really be outgoing with people, because they judge you and they say stuff. (Toolis & Hammack, 2015)

I had guidance. My mother always taught me the noble things I should do. But because of that one thing I didn't have, I was in the place that I was. And that was money. Money I didn't have, so I have to live in this government funded program to support myself. (Toolis & Hammack, 2015)

2.4.5 Public perceptions

Public perceptions of homelessness were a dominant theme which emerged as a vulnerability in five studies (Jones et al., 2018; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Mulrenan et al., 2020; Pescod, 2024; Toolis & Hammack, 2015). The YHP reported that when their homeless status was known, they were treated differently, experienced discrimination, and sometimes experienced shame. Some YHP internalised other people's negative perception of them, which impacted their wellbeing and education, for some, causing them not attend school (Jones et al., 2018; Moore & McArthur, 2011). For others, homelessness was constructed as personally devastating, a near to death experience, yet it also led the YHP to discover their resilience (Toolis & Hammack, 2015).

Youth described the lack of opportunities and low expectations as just another way in which these systems had given up on them. (Jones et al, 2018)

When I went into the first program, I felt like shit. I felt like I was nothing. Like I was a nobody, like I was homeless on the street. I never felt like killing myself but I felt like...it wouldn't be any different...from that depths, I found myself. (Toolis & Hammack, 2015)

Others attended education but experienced negative social perceptions from others which impacted their wellbeing in education.

Melanie frequently had to navigate negative social perceptions and treatment, often experiencing neglect and blame by those in positions of authority. (Toolis & Hammack, 2015)

Some of the teachers used to look down on me – the school had a really good reputation and they would sort of look down on you and think ‘you don’t belong here’ and ‘what are you doing here – you’re not worthy enough. (Moore & McArthur, 2011)

One study highlighted that education professionals are usually unaware of a YP or family’s homeless status due to the negative assumptions and feared discrimination by YHP. This prevents YHP from receiving support in education. Instead, YHP and families are missing out on vital sources of support due to the negative assumptions which surround homelessness.

Mum didn’t want people to know where we were living so I didn’t go to school all the time. (Moore & McArthur, 2011)

One student explained that she felt personally ‘reduced’ by her homeless situation and felt too ashamed to discuss it with her fellow students. (Mulrenan et al, 2020)

YHP must navigate a difficult discursive world which positions them as ‘less-than’ other members of society. This also comes from those positions of authority, thus, suggesting that negative perceptions of homeless people can pervade every level of society. Ultimately, these views can be harmful to YHP, particularly in terms of their educational engagement.

Feelings of shame among homeless people are well documented...and partly explain why they do not access the services that they need. (Mulrenan et al, 2020)

In one study, homelessness is emphasised as alike to having an additional need. However, the perceptions of homelessness, held by education professionals and wider society, means that this is not recognised or treated as so.

Homelessness is, in itself, like having an additional need, and is one which should be supported in schools. (Pescod, 2024)

For others, it was a motivating factor whereby YHP wanted to prove people wrong through engaging with education (Mulrenan et al., 2020; Toolis & Hammack, 2015).

I told him, that's not cool . . . you think I'm going to sell drugs and shit. You think I live in a bad neighborhood, selling drugs." One way that he resisted these stigmatizing perceptions was through his formal attire, wearing a tie and suspenders every day.

"[My mom] always thought I was doing something I wasn't supposed to be doing . . . She thinks I'm selling drugs. I mean, really? Because of course, every drug dealer outside wears a tie and stuff," he said sarcastically. "Crack? Don't get it on my suit." (Toolis & Hammack, 2015)

2.4.6 Systemic barriers

Systemic barriers emerged as a vulnerability for YHP in five studies (Gupton, 2017; Jones et al., 2018; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021; Pescod, 2024). Jones et al (2018) and Pavlakis and Pryor (2021) considered the impact of race on YHP, although there was a lack of evidence of intersectionality across all studies. There was evidence of the multiple ways which the systems around YHP actively disadvantage them. Adults have negative views and lower perceptions of YHP, they were often more severely punished, and they had limited access to educational opportunities. YHP described a lack of awareness and understanding of their circumstances by professionals, which in turn, impacted on their sense of belonging.

...not being clear about expectations and rules, and the difficulty of having to learn a new set of rules after each move...when these rules were not clearly communicated...this sometimes led to youth being kicked out. (Jones et al, 2018)

I feel like we're all here to learn and it's just—I'm not learning anything. (Pescod, 2024)

...frustration that systems had essentially set them up for failure...youth are at the will of educational systems, given their limited development capacity and rights. (Jones et al, 2018)

Two years ago when I re-did them, my English, the college tried not giving me a scribe and that made me really upset. I was distraught. I was so angry. I came here but crying. (Pescod, 2024)

I was suppose to graduate and walk and all that stuff, but then the school said I couldn't walk at graduation 'cause I didn't pass Government and I don't have the credits. (Gupton, 2017)

High school failed me. I didn't fail high school, I graduated. But high school definitely failed me, the system failed me... like the system...wanted to focus on like developmental issues or behavioural issues and not like educational issues. Not like I had a problem in school, it was just like if I didn't understand something and I didn't do my homework it was because I didn't behave or I didn't do this and that. And it's like I never got the proper attention or the proper help that I needed. (Jones et al, 2018)

...if a kid is in trouble or in need, why is the first thing they think of is to kick them out? That makes no sense...I don't think that out-of-school suspension is the way to go because there's too many kids that once you kick them out there's too much trouble they can get into. (Jones et al, 2018)

This highlights how some YHP feel disadvantaged in education because of their homeless circumstance. They do not always feel able to learn. Some YHP shared that a lack of understanding by education professionals, about homelessness, meant they held negative and unhelpful perceptions of some young people. One YHP was assumed to be a 'truant' and one YHP found education difficult to access due to being sanctioned for behaviour expressing their unmet needs.

Jade was labelled truant after a mid-year move, having missed class meetings in a course despite being unaware that she was enrolled. (Pavlakakis & Pryor, 2021)

When Mum pulled me out of school, I didn't care because I was getting in trouble. I can't read that well now and I'm not good at maths, but I don't think I'm dumb – I just missed out. (Moore & McArthur, 2011)

They just didn't care...the first day of school, I started...[school staff told me] 'I don't know why you came to school. There's only two months of school left'. (Jones et al, 2018)

2.5 Chapter summary

In summary, the SLR highlighted a range of factors that can either facilitate or hinder YHP's access to and engagement with education. The review revealed that YHP frequently encounter negative societal perceptions and systemic barriers which, despite their best efforts, obstruct their ability to remain in education. At the same time, several strengths were identified as supporting their engagement—for example, reframing their experience of homelessness as a source of learning, having personal goals and motivation, and building supportive relationships with

family, peers, educators, and professionals. When such relationships were positive and YHP felt understood, their educational engagement was better sustained.

A key takeaway from the SLR was that every YHP had a unique narrative of homelessness. What emerged as a strength for one individual could serve as a vulnerability for another, and vice versa. This insight directly informed my chosen research methodology: valuing the individuality of each experience, embracing its uniqueness, and placing YHP at the centre of the research process. Consequently, I adopted a narrative approach, applying narrative-oriented analysis to the data. The review also shed light on the many challenges and vulnerabilities YHP face—particularly the damaging stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes held by society and, at times, by education professionals. This further justified my decision to use a narrative approach grounded in positive psychology, as it creates space for participants to recognise their strengths while also acknowledging their challenges, ultimately aiming to provide a more empowering and therapeutic research experience. Importantly, a narrative approach allows participants to author their own stories, which I felt was essential to offer them.

The SLR explored YHP's educational journeys from their own perspectives, identifying both the resources that support their engagement and the obstacles that disrupt it. Strengths included the reframing of homelessness through narrative transformation, individual attributes, and supportive relationships. Vulnerabilities included the practical difficulties of homelessness, negative public attitudes, and systemic barriers, all of which posed significant challenges to educational engagement. The synthesis showed that for some YHP, what is considered a strength in one context may function as a vulnerability in another, and vice versa. Building on these findings, my research seeks to extend this underexplored area by focusing more broadly on YHP's experiences in education, employment, and training (EET), an even less developed area within the field. The research questions are outlined in Section 3.3.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter begins with an exploration of different psychological research paradigms, the ontological and epistemological stance and the current research aims. My positionality as a researcher and research design will be outlined, including its limitations and considerations of other methodological approaches.

3.1 Psychological Research Paradigms

According to Guba and Lincoln (1998), a paradigm is a specific set of philosophical beliefs containing their own ontological and epistemological stances and methodological approaches. Ontology refers to the basic assumptions about the nature of reality and epistemology refers to the nature of knowledge (Robson, 2011). Specifically, what can be known about the relationship between reality and knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). There are varied paradigms in psychology including positivism, post-positivism, constructivism, social constructionism and pragmatism.

3.1.1 Positivism

The positivist paradigm implies realist ontology, assuming there is one single and measurable external reality (Robson & McCartan, 2016). It adopts objectivist epistemology which assumes that the researcher and the investigated phenomenon are separate entities and knowledge is value-free (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Facts which demonstrate a causal explanation are considered the only valid forms of knowledge available to the scientific world which are gained from direct experience or observation (Hammersley, 2019). The linked methodological approaches are mainly quantitative, such as fixed research methods and statistical data analysis. The positivist paradigm has been subject to several critiques. Firstly, it is considered overly deterministic and reductionist because it disregards subjective human experience and reduces human

experience to numbers. It relies completely on observable phenomenon, meaning unobservable phenomena such as thoughts and feelings are ignored (Mertens, 2015). The notion of 'pure objectivity' is also contested. MacKay (2008) argues that pure objectivity can never be achieved because research is neither value independent nor neutral.

3.1.2 Post-positivism

Similar, but different, the post-positivist paradigm attempts to combine positivism and constructivism. It remains committed to objectivity but also recognises the potential impacts of subjective influences (Robson & McCartan, 2016). This implies that there is no cultural neutrality because each researcher's assumptions influence every aspect of their research (Hammersley, 2019). Post-positivist ontology is realist; it assumes that there is one single external reality to be discovered. However, claims to understand truth can only be known imperfectly through probabilities (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Shadish et al., 2002). The epistemology aligns with positivism. It assumes that the researcher manipulates and directly observes phenomena objectively (Mertens, 2015). Crucially, the findings are never considered absolute truth due to only framing them as a probability (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Despite its attempts to address the challenges of a purist positivist approach, Hammersley (2019) states that post-positivism is only revisionist because it holds onto positivism too closely. Groff (2004) positions post-positivism as illogical because the epistemologies of positivism and constructivism are in direct opposition and cannot be combined.

3.1.3 Pragmatism

The pragmatic paradigm presents an alternative to the positivist versus constructivist discourse (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2012). It is also a paradigm which is increasingly used in the EP profession (Burnham, 2013; Meyer & Schutz, 2020). Importantly, it resists the debate over ontological and epistemological approaches and is concerned with only the practicalities of research. It assumes a pragmatic approach to ontology and

epistemology which is situated in critical realism. This argues that there is one external reality which can be interpreted differently by humans (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). Mixed method designs may be used, allowing the researcher to move between qualitative and quantitative approaches within the same research project (Cohen et al., 2013). A critique of pragmatism is time. Mixed methods can be time and resource consuming (McCrudden & Marchand, 2020) and lack a conceptual framework to hold potential opposing epistemologies together (Shah & Al-Bargi, 2013).

3.1.4 Constructivism

The constructivist paradigm enables researchers to explore unique human experience and their meaning-making. It embraces the multifaceted and subjective nature of human experience (Usher & Edwards, 2003). It is inspired by multiculturalism and individual diversity. It sits in direct opposition to the epistemological assumptions held by the positivist paradigm (Moore, 2005). It is grounded in relativist ontology which assumes that there are multiple, socially constructed realities which may contrast each other (Mertens, 2015). The epistemological approach recognises the interactive relationship between the research and researcher. The related methods are mainly qualitative which aim to develop rich data descriptions, interpretations and outcomes which are contextually rooted (Mertens, 2015).

3.1.5 Social constructionism

Similarly, social constructionism shares much of the pedagogy of constructivism, particularly regarding its ontological and epistemological views on knowledge and reality. However, there are key differences as it builds on the constructivist paradigm. Constructivists assert that individuals construct meaning based on their own experiences and cognitive processes. Social constructionists, however, propose that meaning is co-constructed through social interactions, language, and cultural practices. It suggests that what is considered as a form of knowledge is not a definite truth; it is a result of the social, relational, historical and cultural context it was constructed in.

Therefore, in social constructionism, more emphasis is placed on broader social and cultural processes. I have adopted the social constructionist paradigm for the current research which will be justified in the following section 3.2.

3.2 Ontological and Epistemological Position

3.2.1 Ontology

Within this research, a relativist ontological position was adopted which conceptualises multiple socially constructed realities. It assumes that there is no single truth, but numerous constructions of the world (Burr, 2015; Gergen, 1985; Mertens, 2015; Robson, 2011). Thus, conceptual systems might be real for some individuals but not for others. Relativist ontology recognises the historical and cultural location of every social construction. The current research is concerned with listening to and understanding the lived experiences of YHP regarding their EET experience. It seeks to discover the multiple, uniquely different, and constructed narratives of YHP's EET experiences, which aligns with a relativist stance.

3.2.2 Epistemology

I adopted a social constructionist epistemology which asserts that meaning is historically and culturally specific and develops through social practices, interactions, and institutions (Gasper, 1999; Moran, 2007; Young & Collin, 2004). It aligns with Lieblich et al's (1998) view that humans discover, understand, articulate and share themselves through storytelling. Language is a part of reality rather than reflecting it, and an individual's reality is constructed through the stories they tell. I reflected that every experience of homelessness is unique and each YHP has a personal story. Constructionist epistemology asserts that language is a form of social action, and importantly, the construction of knowledge is interactional. Therefore, my positionality is openly acknowledged and considered integral at every stage of this research.

3.3 Research Aims, Question and Purposes

My research aims to explore the narratives shared by YHP regarding EET, with a focus on their inherent strengths and resources which support them in their educational journeys. I focused on the following questions:

- 1. What do the stories of YP without a permanent home tell us about the strengths and resources which support them to engage in EET?**
- 2. What do the stories of YP without a permanent home tell us about the vulnerabilities which disrupt their engagement in EET?**
- 3. What are the types of stories told by YHP in relation to their homeless and EET experience?**
- 4. What are YHP's perceptions of their future?**
- 5. How do young people without a permanent home position themselves?**

3.5 Current Research Design

A qualitative method was adopted to explore the unique experiences of YHP in EET through their personal narratives. A positive and narrative psychological framework using a life story approach was used (O'Riordan, 2011; Wilson et al., 2007).

3.5.1 Positive Psychology

The use of positive psychology is important when seeking the voices of marginalised groups, such as YHP. According to Wise (2000), much can be learned from stories shared without viewing an individual as impaired or damaged. The nature of positive psychology moves away from a discourse of deficit, which the researcher considers YHP to be subject to (Guise et al., 2023). Instead, it offers a model of strength and resilience which Wagner and Watkins (2005) consider to amplify those exact qualities. Positive psychology takes a stance against the notion that negative life experience causes an individual to be permanently damaged and disadvantaged (Boniwell, 2008).

Alternatively, it acknowledges those difficult experiences but facilitates space to curate a sense of hope to build positive qualities and resources for the future (Boniwell, 2008).

This feels pertinent for the current research. I wanted to acknowledge the challenging experiences of YHP but also provide an opportunity to recognise, celebrate and build on their personal strengths with a look to their future. The current research also draws upon narrative psychology, which will be explored in section 3.5.2.

3.5.2 Narrative Psychology

'Narratives are grounded in everyday life, from our conversations to films and books.

We all create and tell stories, and we listen to other people's stories'.

(Hunt, 2024, p.1)

Since the 1990s, narratives have been explored in a variety of fields, including medicine and health and social care (Greenhalgh & Hurwitz, 1999; Kleinman, 1988). In psychology, Bruner (1986), Sarbin (1986) and Riessman (1993) are some of the key theorists who have interwoven narrative with psychology. This shift, described as a 'narrative turn' moves away from scientific positivist approaches where more attention is paid towards an individual's story, how and why it is constructed, what it achieves and how the audience affects its narration (Riessman, 2008). Narrative approaches help to inform understandings of people (Hunt, 2024).

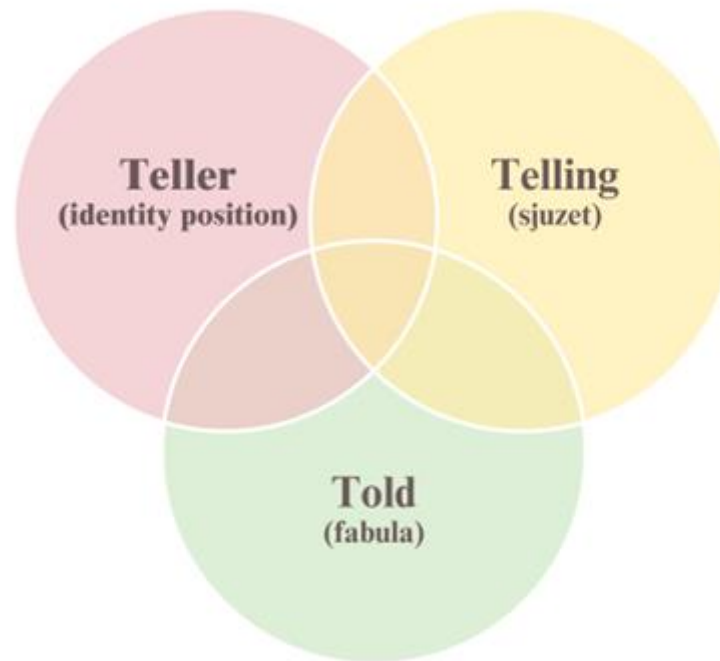
There is considerable disagreement around the term 'narrative' due to it being constructed differently in many fields (Hunt, 2024; Riessman, 1993). In psychology, narrative refers to the biological, cultural and social resources and skills that people use to construct and share a story (Hunt, 2024). It operates at several levels: - the individual, interpersonal, social and cultural (Hunt, 2024). The application of narrative results in a story, and so 'narrative' and 'story' are two interlinked but separate constructs. To expand, narrative can be defined as two elements: (1) the cognitive skills that enable construction and (2) the story itself. Bruner (1986) explains that individuals tell real or imagined stories about a sequence of events. The purpose of narrative is to

convey a meaning of experience because a story resembles an understanding of the world and personal identity (Murray, 2008; Neisser & Fivush, 1994; Sarbin, 1986). Importantly, Morioka and Nomura (2021) share that meaning is co-constructed through the sharing of stories. This has implications for narrative researchers such as I, who will play an active role in that meaning-making process.

3.5.3 Narrative Analysis

The purpose of narrative analysis is to understand individual experience (Wells, 2011). Attention is paid to the chronology of a story, but also how it is shared, who produces it and how, who it is shared with, and how narratives are silenced, challenged or accepted by others (Andrews et al., 2008). The impact of a story can also be analysed (Andrews et al., 2008). Wertz et al (2011) expands that narrative analysis emphasises the link between the narrator and the researcher and considers the wider social and cultural context a story is situated in. A narrative researcher should therefore be reflexive (Given, 2008). Narrative analysis explores the whole story, the telling of the story and a critical exploration of the teller's position of the story (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Relationship between the teller, told and telling



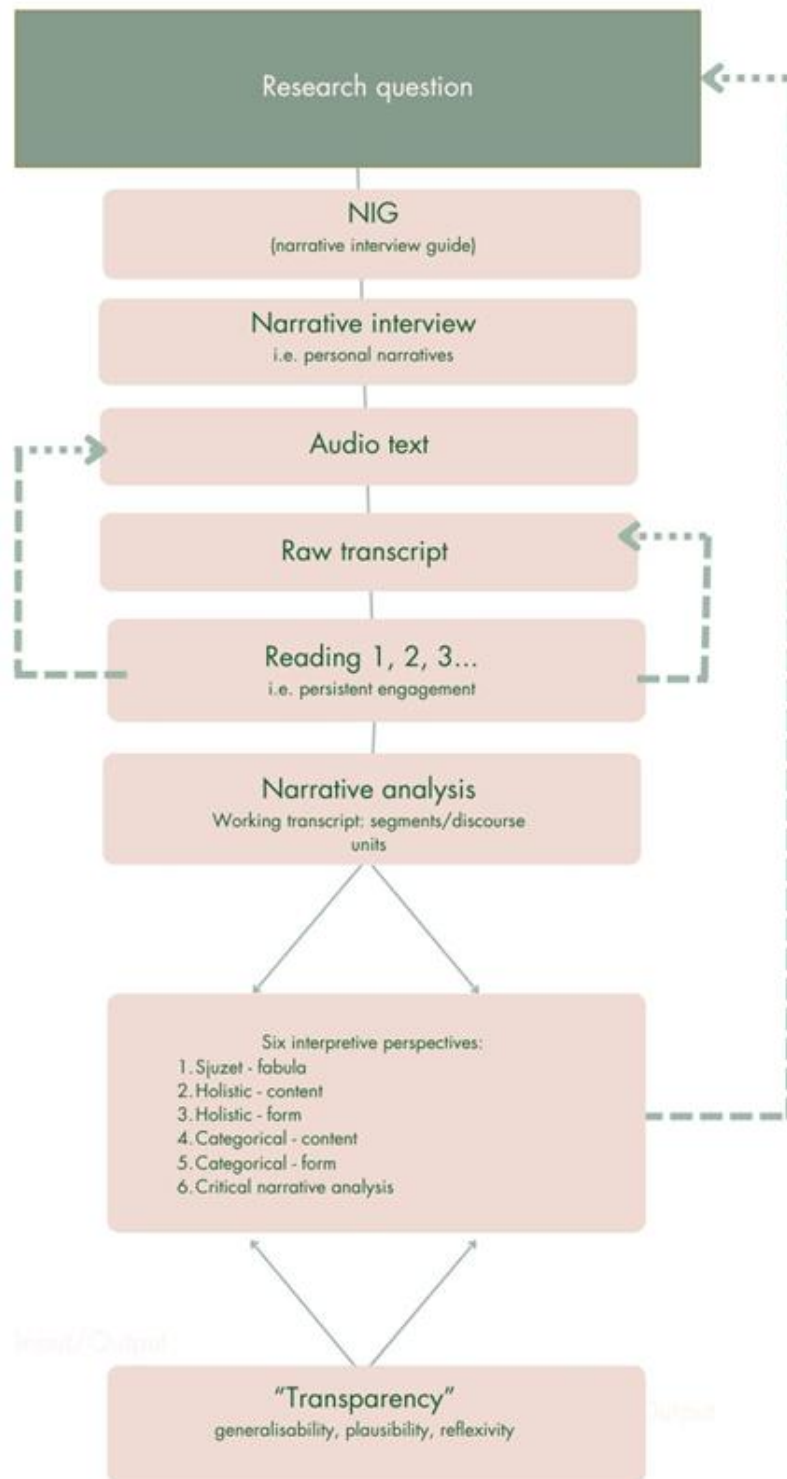
Narrative analysis remains an emerging analytical approach in psychology. A formal model of narrative analysis has not yet been developed (Hiles et al., 2017). However, a framework for narrative analysis, Narrative-Oriented Inquiry (NOI), was created by Hiles & Čermák (2008) which will be outlined from section 3.5.4.

3.5.4 Narrative Oriented Inquiry (NOI) and personal identity

NOI is considered by Hiles et al (2009) a dynamic methodological approach to narrative research. It is a model which is rooted in narrative psychology and incorporates transparency, inclusivity, critical pluralism and reflexivity (Hiles et al., 2009). NOI is an exploratory method and acknowledges that individuals make sense of themselves and their world through unconscious meanings and motivations, a range of cognitive skills and cultural resources from stories. Through narratives, individuals position themselves

in relation to the events or phenomenon being narrated. NOI is closely linked to personal identity and positionality because it emphasises understanding individuals lived experiences through the stories they tell about themselves, which is a reflection of their personal identities. Hiles and Čermák (2008) explain that narratives are not just about recounting a chronology of events; it is about how humans implicitly and explicitly interpret those events and position themselves and others within them. Individuals often use narrative to recover from adverse life events or experiences (Wells, 2011). Positionality thus runs through the course of any narrative and are foundational to the way individuals understand themselves, others and their world around them. Personal identity is constantly shifting and evolving throughout a story thus making it an important part of narrative analysis, which will feature in this research through question five: *how do young people without a permanent home position themselves?* The question has been deliberately left open, as I recognise that positionality is woven throughout the narrative. Narrowing the focus could risk limiting the depth of analysis regarding participants' personal identities. The overall NOI process is presented in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: NOI process by Hiles & Čermák (2008)



Hiles and Čermák (2008) state that a narrative approach to research should be clear from the beginning when intending to use NOI. Strategies for data collection may take the form of a narrative or semi-structured interview where co-construction of narratives emerge between the researcher and participant (Silverman, 2021). Transcription of the data then takes place. Data should be read and listened to multiple times to gain a strong sense of familiarity. The researcher then selects all or some of the six narrative analysis techniques depending on the research questions.

One crucial purpose of NOI is to separate the *sjuzet* – how the story is told and consists of the unbounded parts of a story, and the *fabula* – the chronology and basic outline of the events that occurred. The *fabula* is considered the bound part of the text because any change to it would change the entire story. Exploring the tension between the *sjuzet* and the *fabula* is key to understanding the cognitive processes underpinning the story telling. The *sjuzet* reveals how an individual creates an identity position and meaning making through their story. A further five analytical techniques are embedded within NOI and are outlined in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Interpretive techniques

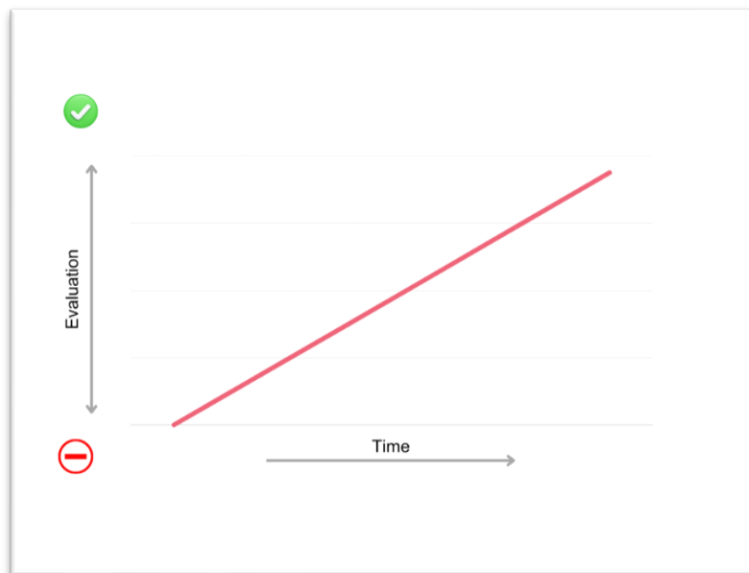
Interpretive technique	Explanation
Holistic-content	Relating specific themes to the overall story.
Categorical-content	Devising the text into separate parts to analyse using thematic analysis.
Holistic-form	The overall plot that is forming throughout the entire story.
Categorical-form	A targeted analysis of the distinct linguistic elements of telling a story which supports the overall story.
Critical analysis	How the teller positions their sense of self in relation to the <i>fabula</i> .

3.5.5 Narrative Plots

According to Gergen and Gergen (1986), a plot, which links events together, is identified through a plot analysis where stories are converted to a linear form to represent their shifts throughout the holistic story. There are three forms of basic narratives which can be identified: - progressive, regressive and stability.

3.5.5.1 Progressive Narrative

Figure 3.3: Progressive narrative



A progressive narrative refers to a narrative which moves closer to the positioned goal of the teller. Directionality is implied, with progressive narratives anticipating gradual increments.

3.5.5.2 Regressive Narrative

Figure 3.4: Regressive narrative



Contrastingly, a regressive narrative is where the individual moves away from their desired goal.

3.5.5.3 Stability Narrative

Figure 3.5: Stability narrative

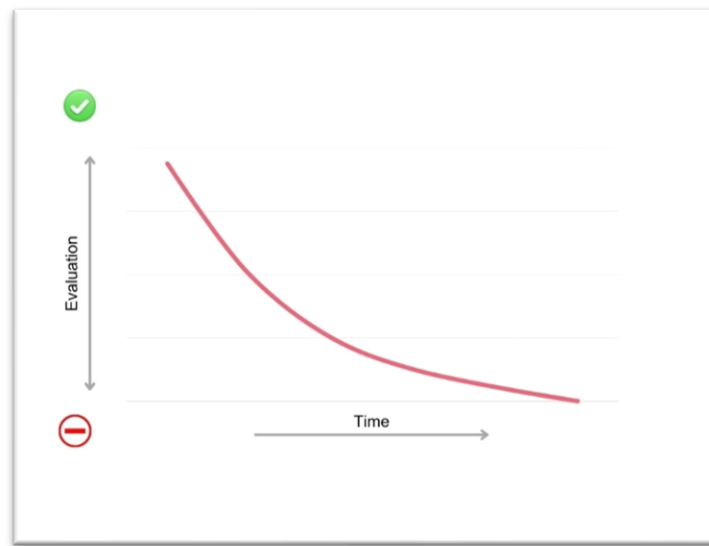


A stability narrative refers to an unchanged, stable pattern within a single narrative. This means that the position of the teller remains relatively unchanged throughout their narrative.

Despite these three common plots structures, Gergen and Gergen (1986) also highlight the messiness of narratives; therefore, not every narrative will be captured in these three rudimentary plot forms. They may take the form of complex plot structures.

3.5.5.4 Tragedy Narrative

Figure 3.6: Tragedy narrative



Tragic narratives begin with a progressive plot but ultimately end with rapid regression. So, it captures the downfall of an individual who once achieved a high position.

3.5.5.5 Romantic Saga

Figure 3.7: Romantic saga narrative



Romantic saga narratives are a series of progressive-regressive narratives.

3.5.5.6 Comedy-Romance Narrative

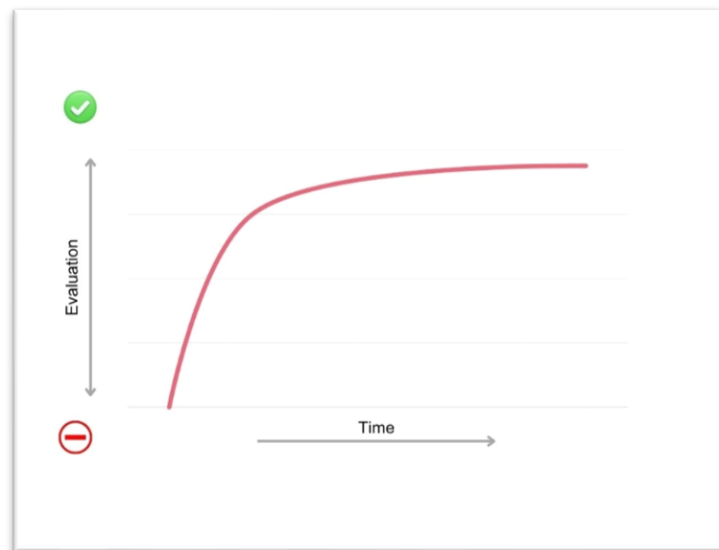
Figure 3.8: Comedy-romance narrative



In contrast, a comedy-romance incorporates both progressive and regressive plot structures, however, they begin with a regressive narrative and end with a progressive narrative – a positive ending.

3.5.5.7 Happily-Ever-After Narrative

Figure 3.9: Happily-ever-after narrative



This plot structure is characterised by a progressive plot structure ending in a stability narrative.

3.5.6 Critique of Gergen and Gergen's (1986) plot types

Gergen and Gergen (1986) offer a range of narrative plots that can be used to explore the type of narrative being shared and the why this might be. While I find the distinctions between these narrative plots useful, I am less comfortable with the labels attached to them, particularly, when applying them to my participants' stories. My participant's stories relate to experiences of homelessness and engagement with EET which could be sensitive and personally challenging content. Therefore, it does not feel ethically appropriate to assign their narratives a label such as 'comedy-romance' or 'happily-ever-after'. For this reason, I have chosen to draw on Gergen and Gergen's (1986) narrative plot types for comparison, but without adopting the original plot names.

3.5.7 Critique of Narrative Analysis

Narrative methodology has significant limitations. Notably, the issues of validity, reliability and generalisability. Narratives are purely individual. They are based on a unique experience and are shared through unique storytelling. This may limit the generalisability of the findings to other people or phenomenon. Also, the subjective nature of narratives emerges from the narrative research process. Meaning is co-constructed through the interactions between the teller and the listener, i.e. the participant and researcher. This suggests that the interpretations of the narrative are completely subjective, causing issues of validity, reliability and generalisability. However, this is recognised within the ontological status of the narrative methodology. Meaning is innately subjective, contextual, and individual, which corresponds with the quote “*all we have is talk and texts that represent reality partially, selectively and imperfectly*” (Riessman, 1993, p.15). Thus, the nature of narrative methodology enables a researcher to represent a co-constructed version of an experience, which arguably for homeless youths is crucial to listen to and learn from.

The interaction between the participant and the researcher may challenge the validity of the findings. The researchers own life history, experiences and perceptions may steer the direction of the narratives at every point of the research: - research question, data collection, transcription, analysis and interpretation. This feels pertinent for me in my research due to my closeness and sensitivity to the topic. To mitigate against this, I adopted a reflexive approach by Willig (2013). I maintained an active diary throughout my research, noting reflections about the data and interpretations (appendix 2).

Despite the emerging use of narrative psychology, there is a distinct lack of evidence around its theoretical and practical components (Hunt, 2024). As explained, the lack of consensus even begins at defining the term ‘narrative’. It is contested between theorists and researchers, meaning its ontological status may not be clear. There is also a lack of formal procedures for conducting narrative research, suggesting negative implications for its validity and reliability (Hunt, 2024).

Recognising the critiques of narrative analysis, I drew on Teddlie and Tashakkori's (2009) criteria for assessing trustworthiness. Table 3.2 summarises the steps I undertook as a researcher to uphold the trustworthiness of this study.

Table 3.2 Steps taken to ensure the quality of research

Credibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triangulation – using multiple data sources including the interview transcripts, recordings, life path record and initial interview notes and reflections.
Transferability	The purpose of narrative research is not to generalise the findings to other contexts, as the focus is on individual stories; there, no measures of transferability were applied.
Dependability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear account of methodological choice throughout the research. • Audit trail – logging comments and reflections throughout every stage of my research, particularly throughout the six phases of analysis.
Confirmability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency in interpretation – documented the process of making interpretations and recorded researcher reflections throughout. • Researcher reflexivity – an active diary to record overall reflections about the research and reflections related to the analysis were recorded on the working transcript for each phase of analysis and for every participant.
Authenticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placed the YHP are the heart of the research, ensuring their stories are at the centre of the research.

- | | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presenting multiple voices, each YHP having a unique story to tell, ensuring not one single story or narrative was told. |
|--|--|

3.5.8 Consideration of Other Methodological Approaches

Other methodological approaches were considered and decided against for the current research. Firstly, interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) was considered. IPA is a qualitative method for data collection and analysis. Similarly to narrative, it is commonly used for exploring how individuals make sense of their life experiences. These methodological approaches share philosophical features such as valuing the linguistics in sharing their subjective experiences. However, the two can be distinguished in their view of narratives. NOI considered narratives to be a way of meaning-making which are socially and culturally located and could be re-told in different ways in the future. IPA assumes that narratives can become knowable facts through their formal IPA-specific methodological procedures (Wertz et al., 2011). IPA was discounted because it was felt that by breaking the narrative down into segments and creating themes, the overall individual experience of YHP might become lost.

Discourse analysis (DA) is another qualitative methodological approach which was considered. DA assumes that words have functions which produce a particular version of events (Burr, 2015). Thus, linguistics plays an active role in creating and shaping the world, so access to someone's reality is always through language (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). NOI was selected over DA because the current research is less concerned with the individual function and consequence of small units of language. The meaning of YHP's stories and the processes which they are constructed and shared through is the focus on the current research. The methodology of the current research will now be explored from section 3.6.

3.6 Research Context and Participants

3.6.1 Context

The research was conducted in the North of England in October 2024. Participants were recruited from a single hostel operated by the charity YMCA. YMCA is the largest voluntary organisation which provide safe and supported housing for young people (aged between 16-25) across England and Wales (YMCA, 2024). In total, YMCA offer 9,466 beds and these take the form of: - emergency housing, supported longer-term housing, supported hostels and foyers. They are one of the few organisations which offer temporary accommodation from the age of sixteen.

3.6.2 Participants

Three participants were recruited, aged 18-23 years. All participants were living in the same YMCA hostel at the time of the interview. Two participants were not in EET at the time, and one had recently completed their college course and accepted a conditional place at university for the next academic year. According to Wells (2011), five participants is generally considered appropriate for most narrative research projects. However, this is dependent on the research. Wells (2011) adds that research involving highly detailed analysis of language may require fewer participants. This informed the decision to cease recruiting after three participants due to the richness of data already sought.

3.6.3 Sampling and Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Purposive sampling was adopted in the research. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) state that this method involves seeking out groups, settings, or individuals where the phenomenon being studied is most likely to be experienced. I contacted local charities known to support and provide housing to YHP which led me to YMCA. The inclusion of participants is based on the categories: - age, living status, EET and consent. Table 3.2 summarises the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Table 3.3: Inclusion and exclusion

Inclusion	Exclusion
Aged between 16-25	Aged under 18 and has a social worker
Currently homeless or previously homeless during EET	Currently experiencing additional difficult challenges which may impact wellbeing
Deemed able to give informed consent	Homeless support staff feel talking about experiences will be too distressing.
Any gender	

3.6.3.1 Age

Young people aged between 16-25 were invited to take part in the research. This age range was chosen based on the requirements of narrative methodology, which involves participants reflecting on and sharing their personal experiences. It was considered that individuals from the age of sixteen onward would be more cognitively able to engage in the storytelling process which is required for narrative analysis. Three young people were recruited for the research, aged eighteen, twenty and twenty-three.

3.6.3.2 Living Status

The participants were required to be homeless at the point of the research or previously homeless during periods of EET. All participants were recruited from a YMCA hostel, so all participants were homeless at the point of the research.

3.6.3.3 Education

Another criterion for the research was EET. All participants must have experienced homelessness at some point in their education, training or employment and be able to reflect on their experiences. All participants experienced homelessness during their transition from statutory education to EET. At the time of the research, one was not

engaged in any form EET, another was undertaking further training, while one was preparing to begin university.

3.6.3.4 Consent

The issue of consent was used for the inclusion and exclusion criteria. All participants were living in a hostel without their parents or carers and were above eighteen. To keep the YP safe in the research, I liaised with the hostel staff to think about which YP met the Gillick Competencies which are: understanding the research, the outcomes and risks, holding the cognitive ability to process and retain information, be able to reason and make decisions and voluntariness (Gillick v West Norfolk and Wisbech Area Health Authority, 1985). If it was deemed by YMCA staff that the YP was Gillick competent, they would be able to partake. In contrast, those who did not meet the Gillick Competencies of consent were excluded from participation. Additionally, those who were under 18 with an assigned social worker were excluded, as the involvement of a social worker was considered indicative of an additional vulnerability for a YHP that could compromise their psychological and emotional safety in participating in the research.

3.6.4 Stakeholder Engagement and Recruitment

All participants were recruited from a national homeless charity. I initially contacted the organisation by sending out an email broadly introducing the concept and hopes of the research. An interest in the research was expressed by a Partnership and Pathway Manager from YMCA. Several online meetings took place to discuss the possibilities of research. The manager then signposted to two YMCA hostel bases, enabling links to be made between the researcher and a Housing Service Manager and a Trauma Informed Practitioner. Permission was granted by the stakeholders from a hostel in the North of England to recruit participants. The stakeholders explained that participation in the research was more likely in the recommended hostel because of the stability of the young people and their longstanding positive relationships with the homeless support

staff. Recruitment was then conducted via the stakeholders. They selected young people to potentially take part based on their knowledge of their young people and my inclusion and exclusion criteria.

An initial meeting with the potential participants was offered, however this was not utilised. Alternatively, I met the participants on the day of the interview to explain the research. The individual narrative interviews were conducted in-person in the hostel's communal 'common room'.

3.6.6 Final Participant Sample

Three participants made up the final sample for my research. The demographic information is summarised in Table 3.3.

Table 3.4: Demographic summary of participants

Pseudonym	Sex	Gender	Age	Ethnic group/heritage	Homeless status	Reason for homelessness	EET status
<i>Matthew</i>	Male	Male	23	White British	Living in a hostel	Family relationship breakdown	Further training
<i>Sam</i>	Male	Male	20	White British	Living in a hostel	Care leaver	Not currently in any EET
<i>Charlie</i>	Female	Male	18	White British	Living in a hostel	Family relationship breakdown	Education transitioning to university

I aspired to be an anti-oppressive researcher throughout my research. As part of this, I asked my participants about their gender identity and preferred pronouns before each interview began. Charlie informed me that they prefer they/them pronouns, so I use these pronouns when referring to Charlie throughout my research.

3.7 Data Collection Process

3.7.1 Guided Narrative Interview

A guided narrative interview was used to collect the data. According to Wells (2011), a narrative interview enables the participant to be placed at the heart of the study. It privileges the meaning that they assign to their own stories and helps the researcher to

better understanding people's experiences and behaviours. Narrative interviews differ to other forms of interviewing because it is an open and flexible approach which enables the participant to control the direction, context and pace of the interview. The researcher does not impose a rigid agenda but may ask broad questions to gain insight into an experience situated in the participant's story.

A guided narrative interview is the combination of narrative and semi-structured interview techniques. The researcher develops a topic guide which aligns with the phenomenon of interest whilst still upholding an open and flexible approach where the participant decides what to share, what not to share, and how they share it. I considered this the best approach to data collection because of the risk that a participant may become distressed if the discussion centred around their difficult life experiences. Therefore, a guide for the interview framed the conversation around EET and homeless experiences with an emphasis on their personal strengths. The interview adopted the following guide, as outlined by Tellis-James and Fox (2016):

1. Eliciting narratives about their future
2. Eliciting narratives about their past, in particular, their past EET experiences.
3. Identifying strengths and resources in their lives which have helped them to get through the experiences they have described in phase two.
4. Exploration of how their strengths and resources may help the participants to overcome future challenges.

Based on the interview guide, I designed prompt cards for the interview which helped to keep the interview focused on their experiences of homelessness and EET (appendix 14). Each interview lasted between sixty and ninety minutes and was carried out individually. I used a life path tool during each interview solely as a facilitative aid and not for data analysis (Wilson et al., 2007). This is further explained in section 3.7.2.

3.7.2 Life Path Tool

I illustrated the life path of each participant during their interview. A life path is a visual record of the participant's story. It aims to capture key life events shared by the

participant. O’Riordan (2011) states that a life path provides participants with a visual prompt which may help to structure their thinking. It is suggested to reduce the intensity of an interview by providing a shared focus, supporting the participants to share potentially difficult stories (O’Riordan, 2011; Wilson et al., 2007). Due to the sensitive and identifiable nature of the information captured on the life path, I have decided not to include copies in my findings chapter. There is no new information on the life path that was not in the transcript, nor was it used to analyse data. The life path tool was used only to facilitate my conversation with each participant during the interview. Each life path began as a blank piece of paper. As the interview progressed, I illustrated the participant’s story, resulting in a unique visual representation. An anonymised copy of Sam’s life path is featured below in Figure 3.10 as an example which was completed for each participant. It reflects his experiences throughout EET and homelessness as well as his hopes for his future.

Figure 3.10: Life path example from current research



3.7.3 Audio Recording

According to Wells (2011), good practice in narrative research is for the interview to be recorded. The purpose of this is to enable the researcher to produce a verbatim transcript of the data which highlights speech and nonverbal communication. I used a Dictaphone to record all interviews and recorded basic field notes after completion of each interview (appendix 16).

3.7.4 Member Checking

Member checking is defined by Bryman et al (2004) as a method for researchers to check their understanding of the findings with the original participants. The purpose is to ensure the researchers' interpretations align with the participants which can mitigate against the participant's voice being overlooked. I decided not to conduct member checking due to my ontological and epistemological position. I assumed that knowledge is socially constructed, and I play an active role in this as the researcher. Therefore, I have my own unique interpretations of the participants' narratives and there can be no single truth. Therefore, I did not seek validation for my interpretations which are acknowledged within a social constructionist paradigm.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was sought from the University of Nottingham's Research Ethics Committee on the 25th of April 2024 (appendix 3).

3.8.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent and assent were gained from each participant. Firstly, I discussed my research with the stakeholders (hostel housing manager), and they shared information about my research and shared the research documents: - participant recruitment and information form (appendix 6 and 7) with the YP in their hostel. Following this, I met with each participant who expressed interest in taking part. I introduced myself and the research with opportunities for questions. I then invited each participant to take part in my research by signing the consent form (appendix 8). The interview then took place once informed consent was given and signed by each participant.

3.8.2 Confidentiality and Data Protection

The participants' right to confidentiality, anonymity and data protection was made explicit on the participant information sheet, consent form and debrief form, as well as explained verbally before data collection. Participants were also provided with a copy of their data protection rights and this was also explained at the beginning of the interview. I explained my role as a Trainee Educational Psychologist and the purpose of my research. The interviews were recorded using a Dictaphone which is only accessed by myself. The participants were each assigned a pseudonym for anonymity, and I made the decision to omit the full transcripts and life paths of each participant from the appendices. Only selected examples will be presented.

3.8.3 Risk of Harm

According to the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2021), research concerned with personal challenging life events is categorised high risk. Due to the nature of this research, there is an increased risk of emotional distress to the participants. The YHP are required to reflect on past and current experiences related to their homelessness and EET experience, and it may lead to discussions around challenging experiences. To mitigate this risk, I clearly defined my role as the researcher at the beginning of the interviews. I worked with the homeless support staff to identify who and where YP can go if they require emotional support. Other support services for YHP such as Crisis and CentrePoint were also signposted on the participant debrief form.

The selected methodology and psychological underpinnings of the research, narrative and positive psychology, also mitigate against the risk of harm. My rationale for this was to facilitate a comfortable, safe, therapeutic, and empowering environment for the participants. Their stories and voice are at the heart of my research. The facilitative use of a life path is also evidenced to reduce the intensity of the interview causing participants to feel safe and relaxed. My research aims to explore YHP's future hopes, offering a narrative of strength and resilience as opposed to deficit, which amplifies those exact qualities (Wagner & Watkins, 2005). Thus, it is hoped that the participants

will experience my research as therapeutic and empowering due to the underpinning psychology and methods drawn upon.

3.8.4 Power

I carefully considered the power dynamic between my participants and myself. I was aware that due to my title 'Trainee Educational Psychologist' I may be viewed as a person with power. I may also be considered a part of the EET system which may cause some YP to feel defensive and anxious. Some of the strategies I used to help mitigate against the negative impact of power dynamics were:

- Snacks to facilitate an informal and relaxed feel to the interview (but not advertising this beforehand).
- Clearly explaining the YP's right to partake and withdraw in the research.
- Following the YP's lead on conversation and tuning into their interests.
- The life path reduced the intensity of the interview.
- Using empathy and compassion, validation, and active listening skills.

3.8.5 Consideration of Language

Throughout the research, the terminology 'homeless' was carefully reflected on. Before and during my data collection, I decided not to use this term with the participants and in my research title. My rationale for this was because I was aware that many homeless people do not refer to themselves as homeless. I was keen to find out how YP conceptualised their living status. I was also aware of the impact of negative social discourses around the term 'homelessness'. Therefore, I used a descriptive and factual term to highlight the YP's living situation, which I considered to be freer from negative social discourse – 'YP without a permanent home'. Interestingly, each participant referred to themselves as 'homeless' which is why I use the term 'YHP' throughout my research.

3.9 Data Analysis Process Using NOI

3.9.1 Transcription

The purpose of narrative analysis is to elicit an individual's story in its purest form (Wells, 2011). The inclusion of all the participants words is considered central by Wells (2011). Poland (2002) recommends that interviews should not be 'tidied up' and should include all ungrammatical or colloquial speech. In keeping with the social constructionist paradigm, narratives are considered a product of social interchange. Therefore, the interview data was transcribed in verbatim and included all words and vocalisations from both the participant and myself to complete a full analysis of the co-constructed story. Poland (2002) outlines an approach to enhance the quality of transcription which captures verbal and nonverbal communication:

- Pauses
- Expressive sounds
- Interruptions
- Overlapping speech
- Garbled speech
- Emphasis
- Held sounds
- Paraphrasing others

Transcription was conducted manually to support my familiarisation with the data.

3.9.2 Reading and Re-Reading

Once the transcript was created, I read and re-read the stories, listening to the interview recording alongside to immerse myself in the data and gain familiarity with the overall stories. This follows Hiles and Čermák's (2008) NOI framework. Crossley (2000) recommends that the interview data should be read at least six times before moving onto further stages of analysis. Once familiarity was gained, Hiles & Čermák (2008) suggest that the data should be broken down into numbered segments to represent

meaningful episodes and events relevant to the research questions. The episodes were arranged down the left-hand side of a working document with the coding and comments displayed on the right. An example of a working transcript is shown in appendix 17.

3.9.3 NOI Data Analysis

The next stage in analysis was the application of analytical techniques. Hiles and Čermák's (2008) propose six analytical techniques are applied to the narrative by working through the text and asking different questions each time. The selection of analytical techniques is dependent on the research question; they may be applied individually or in any combination (Hiles & Čermák's, 2008). Ultimately, the overall purpose of narrative analysis is to analyse the content and chronology of the story, the character positioning and the themes within it. All six analytical themes were applied to the data because they contributed to answering the research questions.

3.9.3.1 *First phase of analysis: Sjuzet and fabula and identity positioning*

The first phase of analysis separated the text into its most basic components – the sjuzet and fabula. The sjuzet is unbounded and refers to linguistic features such as the selected vocabulary, tone of voice, volume, pitch changes, emphasis and more. This aligns with Poland's (2002) approach to data transcription which provides a means of coding these aspects of the sjuzet. The fabula is bound and refers to the content of the story. Identifying the sjuzet and fabula facilitated the exploration into the participants identity positioning, which refers to the ways in which the participant experiences their sense of self through their process of storytelling.

I separated my working transcript into two columns: on the left-hand side with the data set and the right-hand side with space for analysis notes and comments. Following Hiles and Čermák's (2008) guidance, I underlined the fabula in the text and added a basic description in the notes section about the differentiated fabula and sjuzet. Once this process was completed, I moved onto the second stage of analysis which was holistic-content analysis.

3.9.3.2 Second phase of analysis: *Holistic-content*

The holistic-content technique follows guidance by Lieblich et al (1998). The purpose of this technique is to gain a global impression of the participant's entire story and to identify specific themes which emerge and evolve throughout the narrative. I used this analysis technique to answer the following research questions:

- *What do the stories of young people without a permanent home tell us about the strengths and resources which support them to engage in EET?*
- *What do the stories of young people without a permanent home tell us about the vulnerabilities which disrupt their engagement in EET?*

Lieblich et al (1998) details a specific process for this stage of analysis which I followed.

- Firstly, I repeatedly read and listened to each interview to gain a global impression of the story. Lieblich et al (1998) states that there is no clear direction for the researcher at this stage. The researcher must read the material several times until a pattern emerges.
- I then recorded my initial global impressions of each story on the working transcripts. I explored and noted any exceptions in the story, for example, where an episode in the story contradicts the overall impression, a topic which produced disharmony for the participant or an unfinished part of the story. There were also detailed in the working transcripts.
- Through a repeated process of reading, I then identified specific themes at the centre of the participant's story. I tracked each theme from the beginning to the end of each narrative, the interactions between themes and any contradictions to them throughout the text in terms of content, mood or evaluation. Lieblich et al (1998) states that specific content can be constructed as a theme if it is repetitive throughout the story and the participant gives detailed information about it. Importantly, where the participant shares brief detail or does not share parts of a story, this can indicate that as the focal topic of interest.

- Using a method by Brown et al (1988), each text was re-read separately for each theme. This enabled me to trace the transition and evolution of each theme throughout the story. I highlighted in each working transcript where each theme emerges in the text and where it first and last appears. Also, I explored and recorded any exceptions to the themes. I noted my conclusions at the end of each working transcript with a summary of the themes, conclusions and my reflections.
- An example of the holistic-content analysis, including a global impression and emergent themes, is presented in the appendix 18 which was completed for each participant.

Brown et al's (1988) method, detailed as part of Hiles & Čermák's (2008) NOI process, is an interpretive method which resists coding used by researchers. Coding is suggested to restrict a researcher's reflexivity and space for interpretation. Therefore, my interaction with each text must be transparent throughout my analysis, particularly during this stage. I recorded my reflections on each working transcript, during the analysis process as they emerged and following the overall analysis (see appendix 2 for an excerpt).

3.9.3.3 Third phase of analysis: Holistic-form

Holistic-form analysis, as outlined by Lieblich et al (1998) refers to the progression of the overall plot that is forming throughout the entire story. Lieblich et al (1998) states that the main events, progression between events, story cohesion and genre of the narrative should be described, in line with Gergen and Gergen's (1988) plot types. The purpose of this analytical technique is to showcase the variations in the narrative structure and what this means for the participant's identity, perceptions, and values (Lieblich et al., 1998). Additionally, it demonstrates the participant's construction of their evolving life experience. Thus, I used holistic-form analysis to explore:

- *What are the types of stories told by YHP in relation to their homeless and EET experiences?*

- *What are the young people's perceptions of their future?*

As recommended by Lieblich et al (1998), I followed three stages within this form of analysis. Firstly, Lieblich et al (1998) states that a thematic focus for the plot must be identified. I chose the participants' experience of homelessness and EET to explore the relationship between not having a permanent home and their EET experience over time.

Next, Lieblich et al (1998) states that plot dynamics should be identified. This refers to specific forms of speech in the transcript, such the participant's reflections on a stage of their life, or evaluative comments about their life journey. Key elements of the narrative which indicate a shift in the narrative plot should also be included. My first stage of analysis supported this because I organised my working transcripts into a series of self-contained episodes, each representing a shift in topic. Importantly, Lieblich et al (1998) explains that this form of analysis can be enhanced when the researcher reflects on their own personal perspectives and evaluation impressions. To support this, I followed guidance by Murray (2008) who recommends that researchers should provide a summary of their interpretations at each stage of the story, the beginning, middle and end. Therefore, I created a table to showcase the plot dynamics of each story, key supporting excerpts from the transcripts and my personal reflections which demonstrate my process of meaning making.

The final stage of this form of analysis was to produce a visual graphic of each narrative which was a visual representation of my interpretation. Lieblich et al (1998) recommends using a structural graph because it is an effective way of presenting complex and detailed narrative information in a clear way. The structural graph will be presented in the findings chapter for each participant along with a narrative summary. An example of the holistic-form tables used to support my interpretations is presented in appendix 19.

3.9.3.4 Fourth phase of analysis: Categorical-content

Categorical content analysis typically involves analysing the smaller, self-contained episodes thematically. There are several ways to approach this, however, I adopted

Lieblich et al's (1998) method for 'content analysis' because it allows themes to organically emerge from the dataset rather than following a deductive process of analysis. Lieblich et al's (1998) imposes a four-step model for content analysis:

- Firstly, the text should be broken up into small, separate units and selected to analyse based on their relevance to the research questions. However, due to the exploratory nature of my research question and fluidity of the guided narrative interviews, the entire transcript will be analysed using categorical-content analysis.
- Definition of the content categories then takes place. The purpose of this is to identify themes in the narrative and organise them into 'clusters of meaning' (Lieblich et al., 1998). This happens through an iterative process of reading, suggesting a category of meaning, organise into subcategories and then generating additional categories or redefining existing ones. My second stage of analysis, holistic content, supported this. Themes had already begun to emerge from each dataset from the holistic content analysis. These themes will be built upon through this analysis, redefining them and creating subcategories.
- Units of analysis such as phrases, utterances and story episodes were then organised into themes. A principal sentence was assigned to each theme which I considered to best represent the meaning of the category.
- The fourth stage of categorical-content analysis proposed by Lieblich et al (1998) is to draw conclusions from the results. This will be discussed in detail in chapter four. An example of the categorical-content analysis tables, including my reflections at this interpretation stage are presented in appendix 20.

3.9.3.5 Analytical Technique 5: Categorical-Form

The purpose of this technique is to explore the cognitive process and emotional content of the story. Lieblich et al (1998) states that it is important to understand from the narrator something which may not be visible from the content alone. This form of analysis was helpful to answer the research question: how do YHP position themselves? Therefore, only a small number of episodes about EET were analysed following this two-stage process by Lieblich et al (1998):

- Firstly, an investigation of the cognitive and thinking skills should take place. For example, communicating at a metacognition level, avoiding unsubstantiated generalisations, identifying values, taking responsibility for actions, well explained criticisms, restrained criticism to showcase an awareness of other people's perspectives, holding several perspectives in mind and seeing beyond the immediacy of a situation.
- Stage two involves an investigation into the emotional content. This refers to the deep structures of the text within the *sjuzet* and *fabula*. To do this, the following structures are explored within the text: linguistic expression at the lexical, syntactic and structural level, intonation, tone, volume and non-verbal communication.

I did not video record my interviews so the analysis of non-verbal communication (gestures, facial expressions, body language) was not possible but the linguistic expression and paralinguistic indicators will be analysed. An example of this analysis is presented in appendix 21.

3.9.3.6 Analytical Technique 6: Critical Narrative Analysis

Critical analysis is presented by Hiles and Čermák's (2008) as the final analytical technique which can be used in narrative analysis. It originates from Emerson and Frosh (2004) and helps to explore how the narrator becomes the author of their own lives. Emerson and Frosh (2004) recommend a thorough and reflective approach to critical analysis, which can be achieved through the following six principles:

1. Contextualizing the narrative – exploring the context in which the narrative was produced, the broader social, historical and cultural settings and how these influenced the content, structure and meaning of the narrative.
2. Interpreting the construction of identity – how individuals position themselves and others.
3. Challenging assumptions and norms – challenging the assumptions made by the researcher's interpretations and the narrative itself through exploring how social,

historical and cultural assumptions influence the content, structure and meaning of the narrative.

4. Exploring power and agency – how the individual positions themselves and others in terms of empowerment and disempowerment throughout the narrative.
5. Researcher reflexivity – how is the narrative shaped by the researcher's perspective?
6. Exploring the function of the narrative – why is a narrative told and what does it achieve?

An example of the critical analysis notes is presented in appendix 22.

Chapter 4 Findings

4.1 Introduction

Within this chapter, the six analytical techniques from NOI will be synthesised to answer the following research questions:

- 1. What do the stories of YP without a permanent home tell us about the strengths and resources which support them to engage in EET?**
- 2. What do the stories of YP without a permanent home tell us about the vulnerabilities which disrupt their engagement in EET?**
- 3. What are the types of stories told by YHP in relation to their homeless and EET experience?**
- 4. What are YHP's perceptions of their future?**
- 5. How do young people without a permanent home position themselves?**

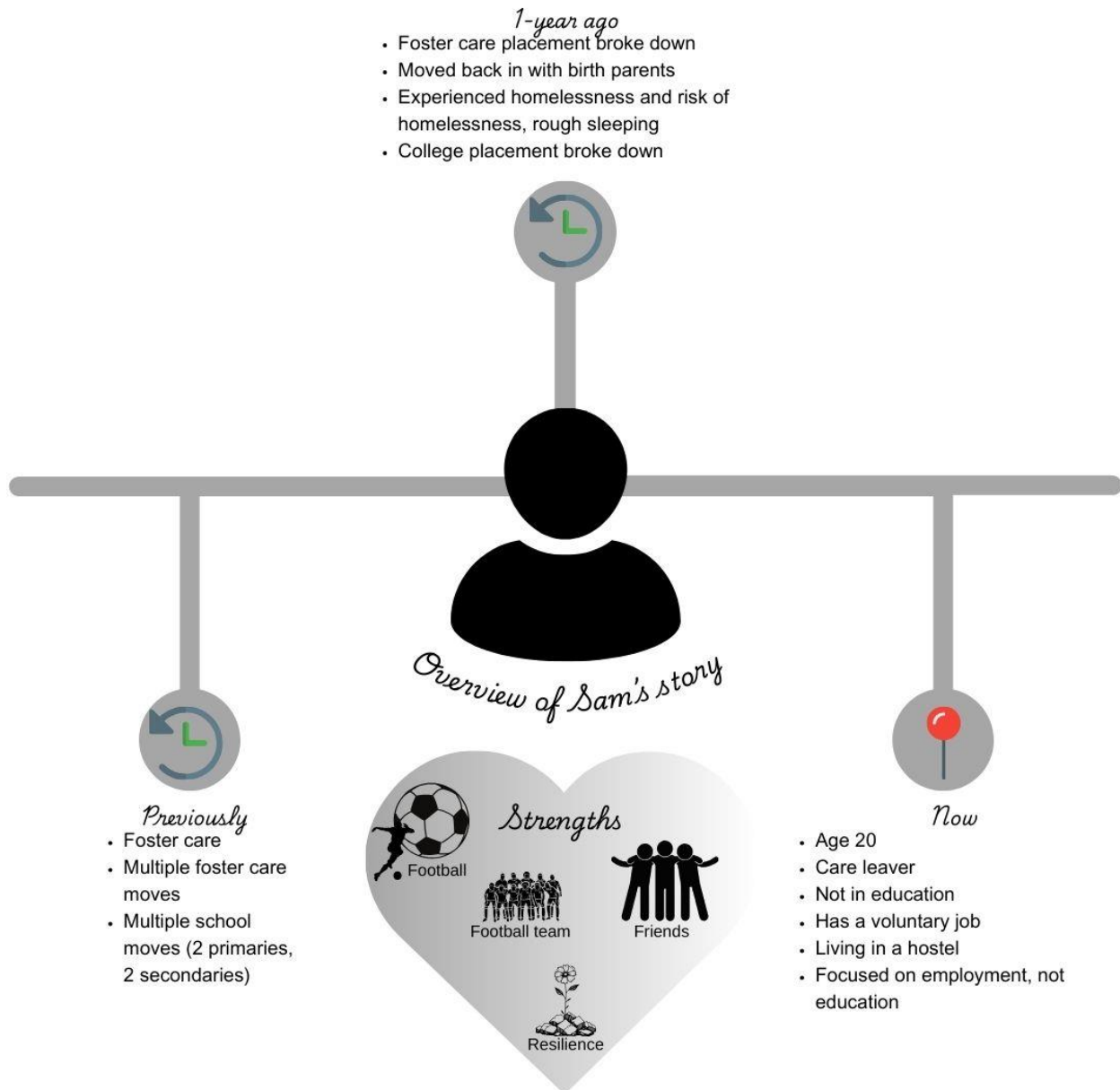
Each participant's story will be presented separately to highlight the individual voice of Sam, Matthew and Charlie. The following structure will repeat for each participant:

- A graphic overview of life story
- Overarching message of the story which was formed during the holistic-content stage of analysis.
- Life story plot reflections which were formed during the holistic-form analysis.
- Themes relating to strengths and vulnerabilities. Each theme will be presented with connected sub-themes. Each sub-theme will be colour coded, either **green** (a strength) or **purple** (a vulnerability) and each quote is numbered to represent the story episode it pertains to. In NOI, a story episode refers to a single topic of conversation, with each shift in topic marking the beginning of a new story episode. Throughout my analysis, it became evident that some themes could not be simply assigned a strength or vulnerability. Some were positioned as both. This was formed during the categorical-content analysis.
- Positioning of identity, which was synthesised throughout all stages of analysis, but mainly categorical-form and critical analysis.

4.2 Sam's story

4.2.1 Overview of Sam's life story

Figure 4.1: Graphic overview of Sam's story



4.2.2 Holistic-content: Overarching message of the story

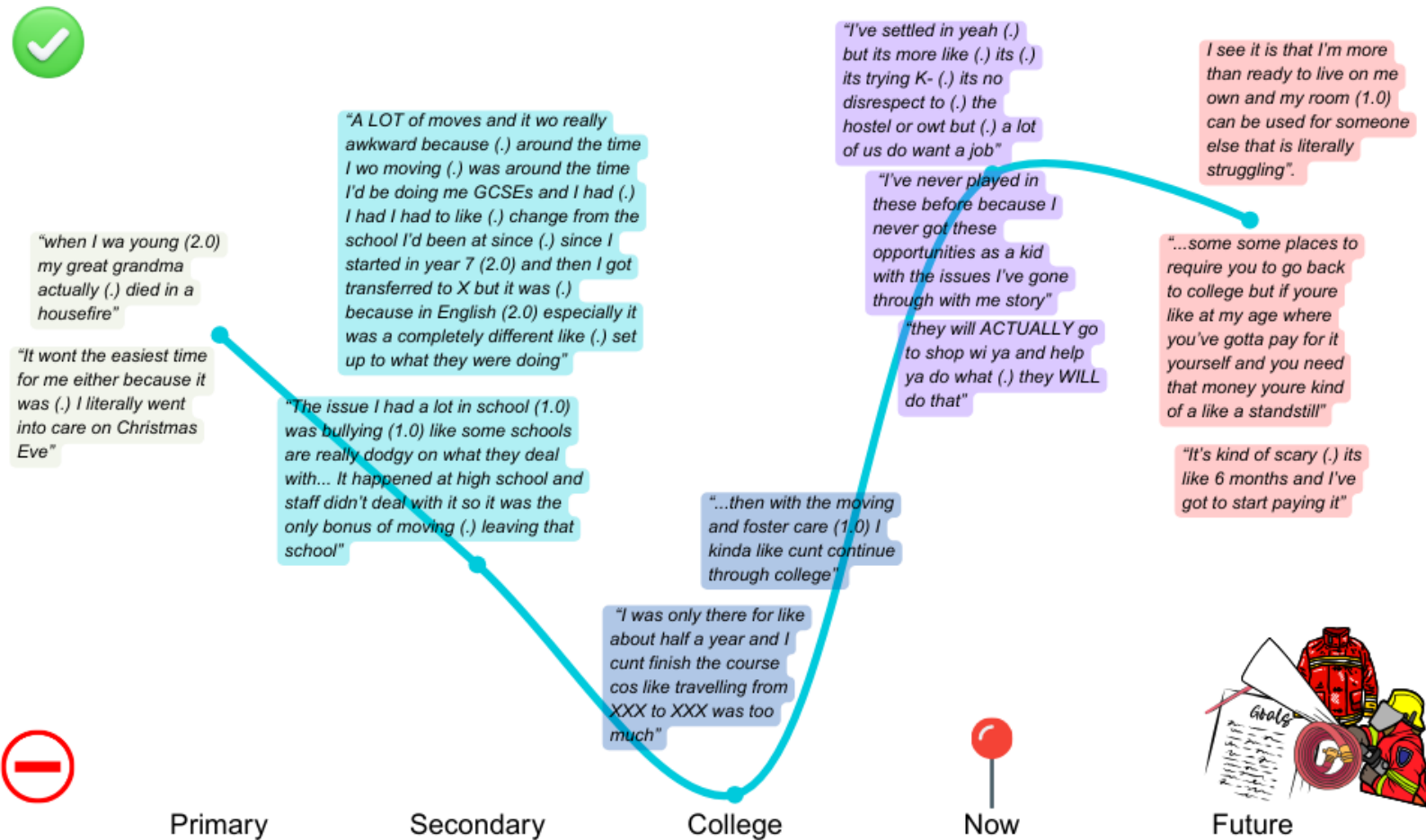
Despite the challenges I have faced, including homelessness and difficulties in education, I have drawn strength from my personal resilience and the support of others. I am determined to take control of my future even though the system still presents significant obstacles.

This global message of Sam's story was interpreted through this sharing of his many challenges in his life so far. He has experienced homelessness in several ways from an early age, including rooflessness and is a care leaver. This in turn has made his experience of education and EET difficult and contributed to him not being able to complete his college course. But, through drawing on his personal strengths and the help provided by others, particularly the homeless support staff, he has demonstrated resilience and is hopeful for his future life. Sam has reclaimed his narrative of adversity and is using it as a source of strength. However, he acknowledges the challenging system he is living in, such that he is struggling to access EET opportunities to create a better future due to his homeless status and lack of financial resources.

4.2.3 Holistic-form: Life story plot reflections

Figure 4.2 demonstrates Sam's EET experiences throughout his changing living circumstances, and perceptions of his future.

Figure 4.2: Graphical representation of Sam's life story



4.2.3.1 Narrative summary of Sam's living circumstances and education experiences

It was difficult to plot Sam's primary education experience due to the limited conversation around this. However, he did share that this was a difficult period in his life due to the loss of a great grandmother through tragic circumstances and it marked the time he first entered the social care system. He also shared that he had moved primary schools due to his birth parents moving house. However, Sam constructed a negative trajectory during secondary education. He shared that he had experienced multiple moves, including broken down foster placements and moving to two secondary schools because of this. He used the phrase 'really *awkward*' when discussing these moves because they occurred at the worst time during his GCSE examinations, suggesting this was increasingly difficult during an already challenging time in his life. Partly, this was because his new school used a different teaching and assessment syllabus which disadvantaged him in his mock results. Despite this, there was an uplifting tone in Sam's plot line because he said the one good thing about moving schools was leaving behind the bullying and lack of school support which he experienced.

A sharp regression line appeared during Sam's time in college and his personal living circumstances. He shared that his foster placement broke down and he moved back in with his birth parents. This meant that he was living further away from his college and the public transport required to make it to the college site was limited. One progressive tone in his time in college was the initial support and understanding provided by the college staff, particularly his course leader who he described as "*fine*" because "*he understood*". He described some reasonable adjustments which his course leader made for him, such as letting him start his day at college later and leaving earlier so that he could safely make it to college and home. However, the sharp regression returned because after a while the college staff "*were funny about it*". Sam's regression occurred also because he was experiencing problems in his family home, often sleeping on the streets for the night.

After being placed into emergency accommodation, and a later referral to his current hostel, Sam is not enrolled in any EET. He shared that his priorities have changed. He wants to focus on getting a job and earning money. Despite not being enrolled in any

EET, Sam constructed a progressive trend because I inferred him to be more physically and emotionally safe and supported “*I’ve settled in yeah*” and “*I like it here*”, and able to think about his future and opportunities which may help him reach his goals. He shared that the key adults in the hostel provide support from all angles and “*they WILL*” help when they say they will help. He offered lots of detail about the opportunities he’s currently got such as a voluntary job, playing for a football team and being able to spend time with his friends. He reflected that he now has opportunities which he never had growing up as a child due to his circumstances.

This progressive trajectory continued when discussing his future goals. He shared that he would like to become a fire fighter, inspired by his own personal trauma back in his primary-age phase of losing his great grandmother in a housefire. But importantly, he shared that he hopes to get a job and have his own permanent place to live. He used the phrase “*I’m more than ready to live on me own*” suggesting that he feels prepared enough to live independently. However, this conversation began to incur a regressive tone because Sam shared the challenges he faces as he transitions into adulthood. For example, he used the word “*scary*” when talking about having to pay more bills and the uncertainty around which jobs will be available to him due to many requiring qualifications, which require financial resource for him to gain. Sam refers to his situation as a “*standstill*” because he is acutely aware of what the requirements needs to enter professions and reach his goal of financial stability, but he is currently unable to do so due to his circumstances.

4.3.3.2 Life story plot comparison

The beginning of Sam’s story begins with a negative trajectory, with the following challenging experiences, the loss of his great grandmother in a house fire and entry into the care system. He also experiences multiple foster placements, leading to school changes and a lack of stability. The period of moving schools during his GCSE exams aligns with the romantic-comedy narrative where the individual experiences multiple setbacks. However, moving schools enabled Sam to escape the bullying he had been subjected to, offering him a moment of potential optimism and hope.

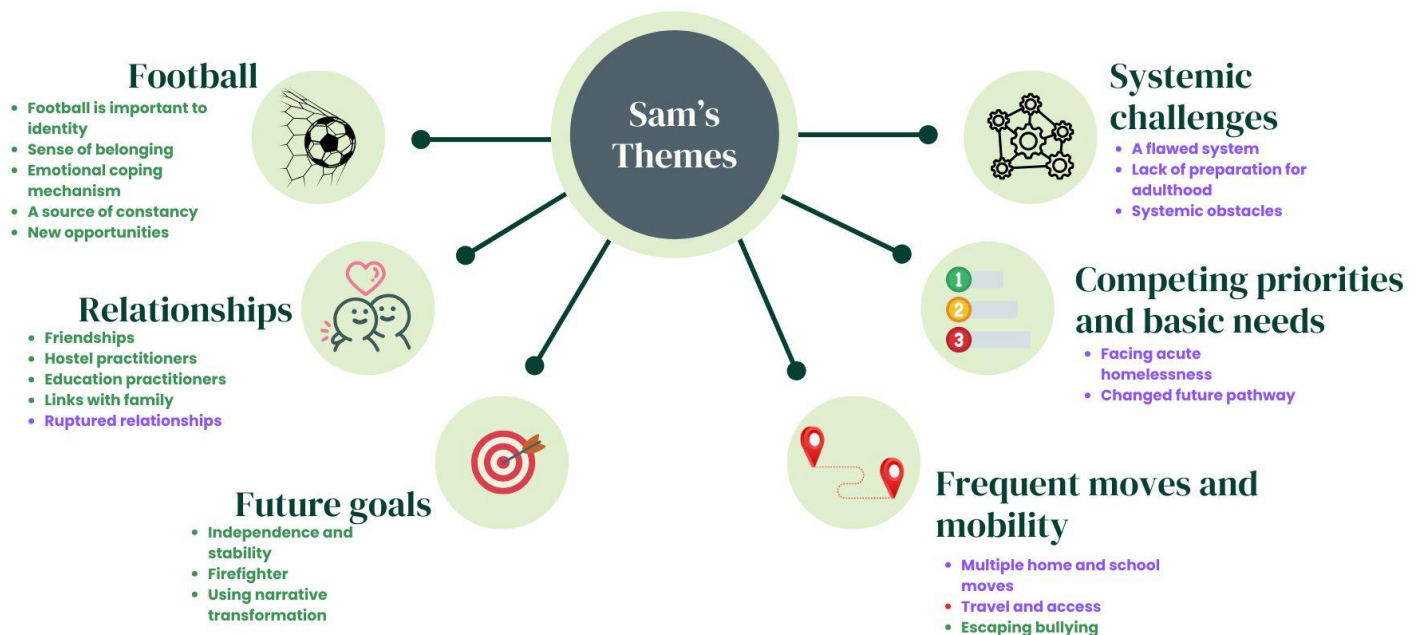
The middle of his story shows further challenges during his time at college and resembles the point where Sam faced some of his most significant setbacks. His foster placement broke down and he moved back in with his birth parents. The challenges of his long commute to college, family difficulties, homelessness, including rough sleeping—and the lack of support created additional instability, ultimately preventing Sam from continuing his college education. The turning point in Sam's story came after he moved into his hostel. It appears to mark the point at which his circumstances stabilise, enabling him to reflect on his past, present and future goals with hope. The safety and support Sam now feel in his hostel reflects the beginning of the progressive narrative, where circumstances improve once they have become problematic.

The ending of Sam's story appears hopeful yet uncertain. He shared that he is ready to move on with his life and live independently. However, he acknowledges that the challenges are not entirely over just yet. Sam's story follows a similar pattern of undergoing struggles, personal growth and the pursuit of a better future, all while dealing with personal and systemic challenges.

4.2.4 Categorical-content: Themes relating to Sam's strengths and vulnerabilities

In this section, the themes related to strengths and vulnerabilities are discussed. Each sub-theme is colour coded: **green** (a strength) or **purple** (a vulnerability). The tables include key quotes along with the story episode number to which they correspond. In NOI, a story episode refers to a single topic of conversation, with each shift in topic marking the beginning of a new story episode. Figure 4.3 offers a summary of Sam's strengths and vulnerabilities. This format is repeated for each participant.

Figure 4.3: Overview of Sam's themes regarding his strengths and vulnerabilities



5.2.4.1 Theme 1: Football

Football has been central to Sam's identity and sense of self, with him positioning himself as a fiercely loyal fan to his local team (2) and finding joy in training with his team (6). He described football as a fundamental **part** of his life (2) and without it, he feels like he is 'losing' (6). I interpret this as reflecting more than just a passion for sport. Football has provided Sam with meaningful opportunities, such as building friendships

(52) and playing for a well-established team (56). It has also worked as a coping mechanism during the challenges he has faced (54). Most significantly, Sam shared that football has remained a constant presence throughout his life, regardless of where he has lived, how he has felt or where he has moved to (55, 56). In a life marked by change, instability and unpredictability so far, football has provided him with a sense of safety and stability, supporting both his identity and mental health.

Table 4.1: Summary table from categorical-content analysis linked to football

Quotes linked to theme 1: Football	Sub-themes and reference to additional examples
<p>(2) S: Football dominates everything.</p> <p>(53) S: I get that some people might say that me and me mates take football too seriously but me and me mates would happily die for our team.</p>	Watching and playing is important to Sam's identity (2, 8, 10, 52, 53, 55)
<p>(52) S: Best thing wo football and me mates cos obviously (1.0) we're like proper loyal XXX city fans.</p> <p>(56) S: Yano like Saturday and Sunday league team (.) I've never played in these before because I never got these opportunities as a kid with the issues I've gone through...</p>	Football has facilitated positive opportunities (43, 52, 56)
(54) S: You get like 2 hours of (2.0) not feeling any emotion (1.0) you're just there (.) chanting jumping celebrating (1.0) every now and then you have a bad game but still.	Football as a form of emotional escapism (53, 54)
(55) S: Like I was in I was on the primary school team and I was on the secondary school team (2.0) and then with the	Football as a source of constancy (55, 56)

<p>moving and foster care (1.0) I kinda cunt continue through college which put me back.</p> <p>(56) A: So it sounds like its always been there in your life</p> <p>S: Yeah yeah</p>	
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4.2.4.2 Theme 2: Relationships

Relationships were presented as a mixed theme by Sam, containing both strengths and vulnerabilities. He shared his friendships have been a crucial source of support throughout his life (52) as they are built on shared passions and values and have remained constant since his early childhood, forming a core part of his identity. He also acknowledged the valuable support provided by the staff at his hostel, reflecting that he can rely on them for help whenever needed (28). Sam highlighted the ongoing connections he has with some of his birth family, which continue to be important for him. Reflecting on his time at college, he acknowledged one supportive relationship with his tutor (20) which helped him to access education for a while. However, Sam also noted some ruptured relationships, particularly the lack of support from his birth family (50) which has been an unprotective factor in his life.

Table 4.2: Summary table from categorical-content analysis linked to relationships

Quotes linked to theme 2: Relationships	Sub-themes and reference to additional examples
(52) S: Best thing wo football and me mates cos obviously (1.0) we're like proper loyal XXX city fans	Friends are important source of support (2, 11, 52)
(28) S: You've always got the support of the staff so you know like if you if you've got any like issues (.) where it's personal or (2.0) dealing with girlfriend or boyfriend issues if you've got a partner (.) there like (.) they are there to like support ya	Hostel staff provide valuable relational and tangible support (7, 8, 28)
(50) S: Like I'll not see a lot of him but obviously like we never like drop contact	Links to family are important to Sam (12, 50)
(20) S: Yeah he understood my situation. He was fine... (20) S: ...so (.) the agreement was I'd be I'd (.) me form tutor (.) he's let me start at 10 but then because of the buses getting back (.) he'd let me finish a bit earlier so I could get home	One helpful education professional (20)
(50) S: Me and me mum (2.0) it's done (1.0) on a really rocky road and one of me sisters I don't talk to and the other one (1.0) it really depends what mood she's in	Ruptured relationships (25, 50)

4.2.4.3 Theme 3: Future goals

Sam spoke about his future goals with a mix of hope and inspiration, but a sense of anxiety and uncertainty. He aspires to achieve independence and stability by securing a full-time job and finding a permanent place to call home (57). He also expressed an ambition to become a firefighter (56) driven by the traumatic experience of losing his great grandmother in a house fire during his early childhood (40). Sam is using his narrative to transform it into a source of strength that is guiding his path towards the future.

Table 4.3: Summary table from categorical-content analysis linked to future goals

Quotes linked to theme 3: Future goals	Sub-themes and reference to additional examples
<p>(57) S: I (2.0) I don't care (1.0) it's gonna be long-term innit (.20</p> <p>A: What you thinking?</p> <p>S: Full-time job and me own place</p>	Aspiration for independence and stability (23, 41, 57)
<p>(56) S: You see like cus obviously my dream job is a firefighter...</p>	Aspiration to become a firefighter (35, 56)
<p>(40) S: So obviously (.) when I wa young (2.0) my great grandma actually (.) died in a housefire"</p> <p>A: Ohh gosh;- (overlapping)</p> <p>S: So its more (1.0) a lot from that yano like trying to stop other people losing family and friends (.) in a housefire</p>	Future is inspired by past challenging experiences (40, 58)

4.2.4.4 Theme 4: Frequent moves and mobility

Sam discussed his frequent moves and high mobility as disruptive factors in his life, particularly affecting his education. Throughout his primary and secondary education, Sam moved several times due to being placed into care and changing foster placements, which also meant changing school multiple times. He recalled the difficulty that presented in his final year of secondary school where his new school followed a different teaching and assessment syllabus, resulting in him not achieving some of his GCSEs (14). In college, he moved back with his birth parents, but poor travel links made it difficult for him to attend college (20). However, he also reflected that the one positive aspect of his high mobility was that it allowed him to escape the bullying he had been experiencing in school (60) so mobility in this sense was positioned as a protective factor to his mental health.

Table 4.4: Summary table from categorical-content analysis linked to frequent moves and mobility

Quotes linked to theme 4: Moves and mobility	Sub-themes and reference to additional examples
(14) S: A LOT of moves and it wo really awkward because (.) around the time I wo moving (.) was around the time I'd be doing me GCSEs and I had (.) I had I had to like (.) change from the school I'd been at since (.) I started in year 7 (2.0) and then I got transferred to X but it was (.) because in English (2.0) especially it was a completely different like (.) set up to what they were doing	Multiple moves (home and school) had a negative impact (14, 15, 16, 22)
(20) S: ...he was fine so obviously the issue (.) a lot of my issue getting into college on time would be (.) well (.) you know like a lot of the villages around XXX are really small and the first bus would be like 8 o'clock but they'd be no chance I'd be able to get from XXX to XXX in one hour...	Barrier to access education due to mobility and travel requirements (19, 20, 21, 60)
(60) S: It happened at high school and staff didn't deal with it so it was the only bonus of moving (.) leaving that school	The bonus of high mobility (60)

4.2.4.5 Theme 5: Competing priorities and basic needs

Sam shared his experiences of homelessness, including acute homelessness (sleeping on the streets) (25) and moving into and living in a hostel (37) meant that he was understandably not in a physical or psychological place to engage in further education during that time. He also reflected on his basic needs and how they took priority over his education. For example, settling back into his family after being in the care system for five-years (24) and settling into the hostel (28).

Table 4.5: Summary table from categorical-content analysis linked to competing priorities and basic needs

Quotes linked to theme 5: Competing priorities and basic needs	Sub-themes and reference to additional examples
<p>(25) S: It was really odd cos because my parents are one of them where they'd kick you out on the streets for the night (.) and it could happen at like throughout the year (.) a few times I was spending a night on the street (2.0) and then they did it around New Year this year...</p> <p>(22) S: Erm no they kicked me out so I went to my parents and then finished (.) I had to drop out of course for a few weeks (2.0)...</p>	Facing acute homelessness (22, 37, 25, 38, 24)
<p>(24) S: And then obviously (.) a lot of time (.) my parents last year it was more like getting settled back into family and stuff cos I hadn't seen any of me family for like 5-years</p> <p>(38) S: If you're like (.) for example (.) if I was like sixteen seventeen and I'd just got kicked out or I'm moving in (.) last thing I'd wanna do is someone moaning at me to get a job"</p> <p>A: Exactly</p> <p>S: You'd wanna get your place sorted first wunt ya</p> <p>A: Yeah</p> <p>S: But at the same time you need money to do that as well</p>	Basic needs over education

4.2.4.6 Theme 6: Systemic challenges

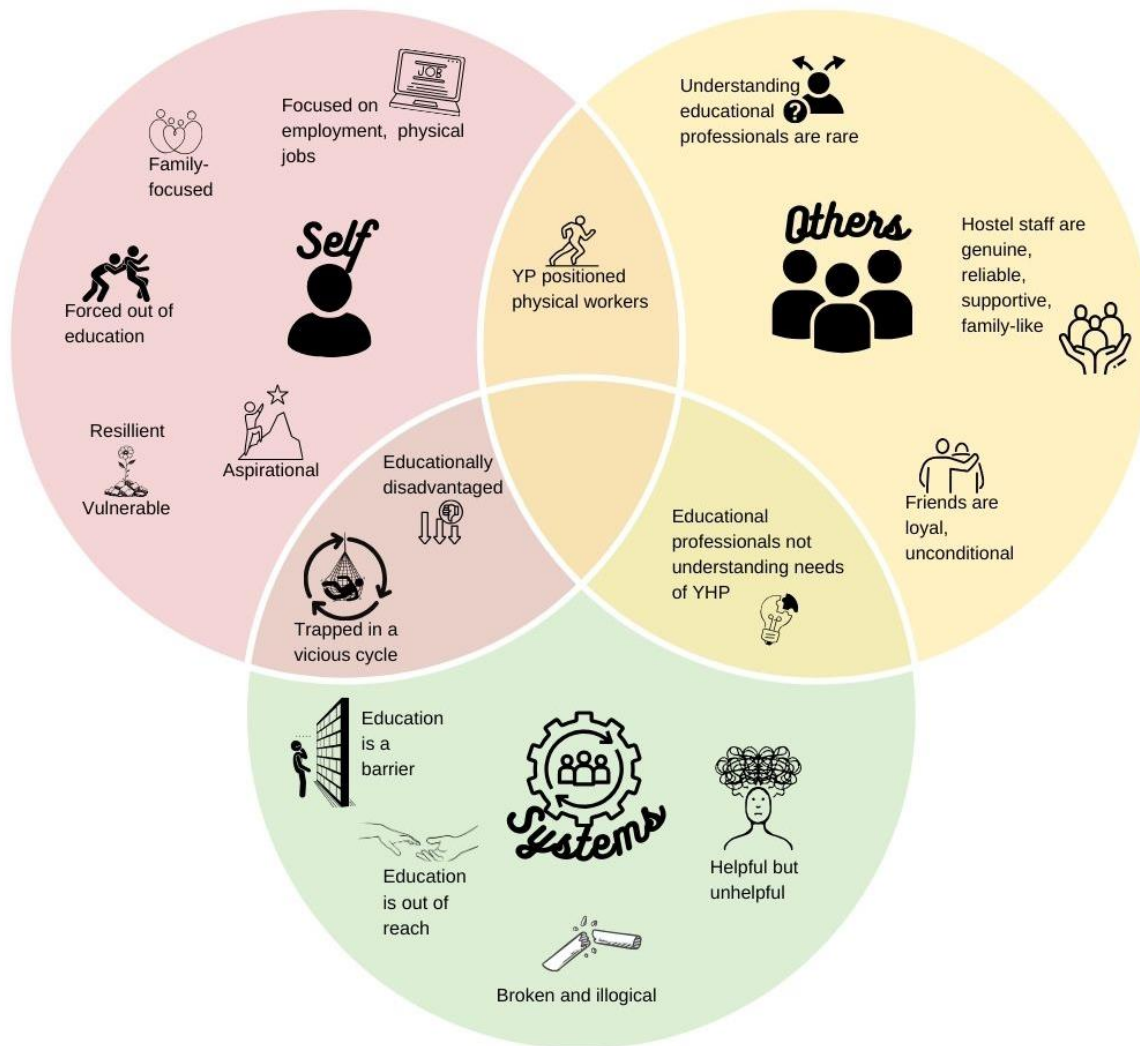
Sam shared about the systemic challenges he faces, positioning the EET system as flawed for young people in his situation. He highlighted the difficulties of wanting to work but being unable to do so full-time due to living in the hostel and receiving Universal Credit (26). He also expressed frustration with the tension between desiring a good job and the requirement to return to college (35). Because Sam is no longer in statutory education, this would incur a cost, and his lack of financial resources leaves him feeling stuck in the system (38). Additionally, he shared how the system fails to prepare YHP for adulthood, specifically his anxiety over budgeting a small amount of money (31).

Table 4.6: Summary table from categorical-content analysis linked to systemic challenges

Quotes linked to theme 6: Systemic challenges	Sub-themes and reference to additional examples
<p>(35) S: ...but it's more like a lot of people erm (.) a lot of young people are wanting to be (.) yano like builders or something like that's where you're out (.) like physical doing jobs but obviously you gotta pay for your CSC (.) JSC and that and obviously (.) some some places do require you to go back to college but if you're like at my age where you've gotta pay for it yourself and you need that money you're kind of at like a standstill</p> <p>(38) S: You see like cus obviously my dream job is a firefighter but obviously (5.0) the issue I've got is I'm sure (.) I'm not too sure if I do or not (.) so I'm still like you know looking at like all about it and everything (.) but I don't know if you've gotta go back college</p>	<p>A flawed system for YHP (26, 27, 35, 38)</p>
<p>(31) S: ...if you've lived here for two years but you've been working part time for two years (.) you're gonna get used to budgeting (.) ON (.) sixteen hours a week (.) but if you start bringing like a grand and half home (.) you're just gonna flunk it</p>	<p>The system causes a lack of preparation for adulthood for YHP (31)</p>

4.2.5 Categorical-form and critical analysis: Sam's identity positionings

Figure 4.4: Overview of Sam's positioning of the self, others and systems



4.2.5.1 Summary of Sam's identity positionings

Sam positions himself as resilient yet vulnerable. He shared his experiences of homelessness, difficult family relationships, being in the care system and losing his great grandmother in traumatic circumstances. All these circumstances increased Sam's vulnerability at the time, potentially causing him to feel powerless. However, he has survived it all and is now more settled and ready to progress further in his personal life. He has even used some of his challenging experiences as inspiration for his future

goals, such as wanting to become a firefighter (40), or help other YHP by giving up his room for somebody else that really needs it (58). This suggests that Sam has undergone a narrative transformation and reclaimed part of his story, turning something challenging into something inspirational and positive (40). Sam positions himself as aspirational for his future. He is focused on family-life (24) and employment (23), rather than education which I interpreted to have influenced his capacity to engage with education. His living circumstances also mean that employment is the best immediate option for him to break the cycle of homelessness. He positions himself as forced out of education due to his personal circumstances and experience of homelessness (14, 15, 19). For example, moving around and living far away from college, paired with lack of transport and poor understanding and adjustments made by education professionals (21), Sam had no option but to withdraw from his college course. This links with his positioning of himself as being educationally disadvantaged; Sam was not able to access education due to his circumstances and the lack of adjustment by the college meant that he could not continue.

Sam positions young people like him to be drawn towards 'physical' jobs and not a nine-to-five office job (35). This construction perpetuates his positioning as a worker, not an academic. He positions his friends as loyal, unwavering and unconditional (44, 45, 52). They are the one few sources of constancy in his childhood and have offered him instrumental support throughout his life. Similarly, the staff at the hostel were positioned as helpful, genuine, reliable and supportive (29). They offered invaluable support in many spheres of Sam's life which have supported him whilst being homeless. Recounting his college experience, he shared that there was one education professional who was supportive, but this was positioned as rare (20). Most education professionals were positioned as not understanding the needs of YHP.

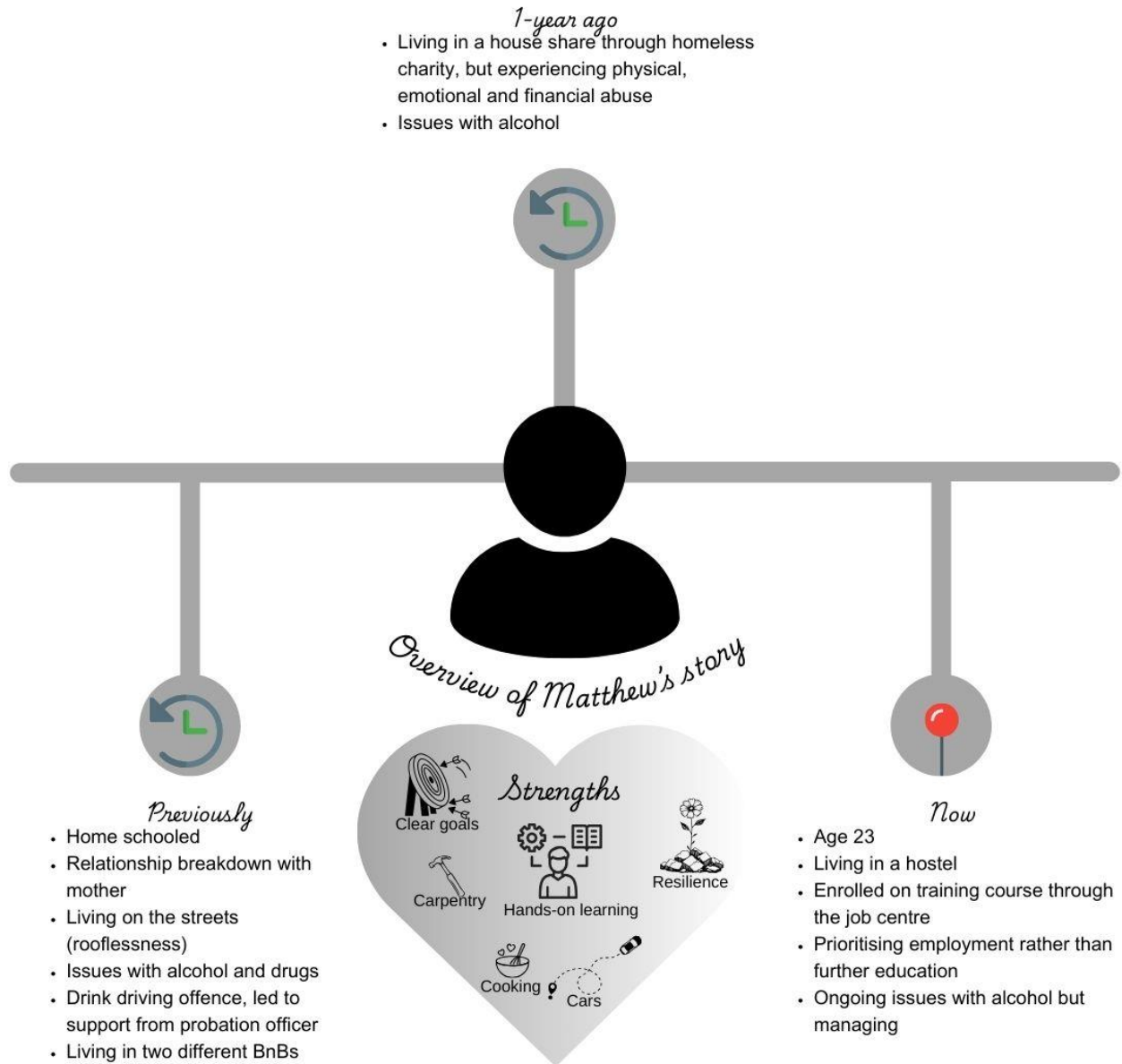
Sam positions education as a barrier for reaching his ideal future goals. For example, he shared that he is not sure whether he could be or wants to be a firefighter if he must go back to college (36). He is now no longer in statutory education and so financial resources would be required to enrol in education. This is a barrier for Sam and positions education as out of reach for him, again reinforcing the employment pathway. The EET and homeless 'system' is positioned as broken and illogical. He shared that it often felt 'back-to-front'; a YHP often needs to get back on their feet after becoming homeless and moving into the hostel — the last thing they want to do is be pressured into getting a job or getting back into education (37). He reflected that a YHP will likely want to get their room feeling homely, but they need money to be able to do that, positioning the system as stuck for YHP (38). He also shared his frustration around not being able to have a full-time job, further perpetuating the cycle of homelessness which he was trying to break free from (26, 27). In this sense, the 'system' was positioned as unhelpful. It hinders him from engaging in any EET. However, aspects of the system (more focused on the hostel) were positioned as helpful. The invaluable support he receives from the homeless support staff.

"I mean It'd be nice (1.0) cos like I say don't get me wrong I like it here (.) but the way I see it is that I'm more than ready to live on me own and my room (1.0) can be used for someone else that is literally struggling"

4.3 Matthew's story

4.3.1 Overview of Matthew's life story

Figure 4.5: Graphic overview of Matthew's story



4.3.2 Holistic-content: Overarching message of the story

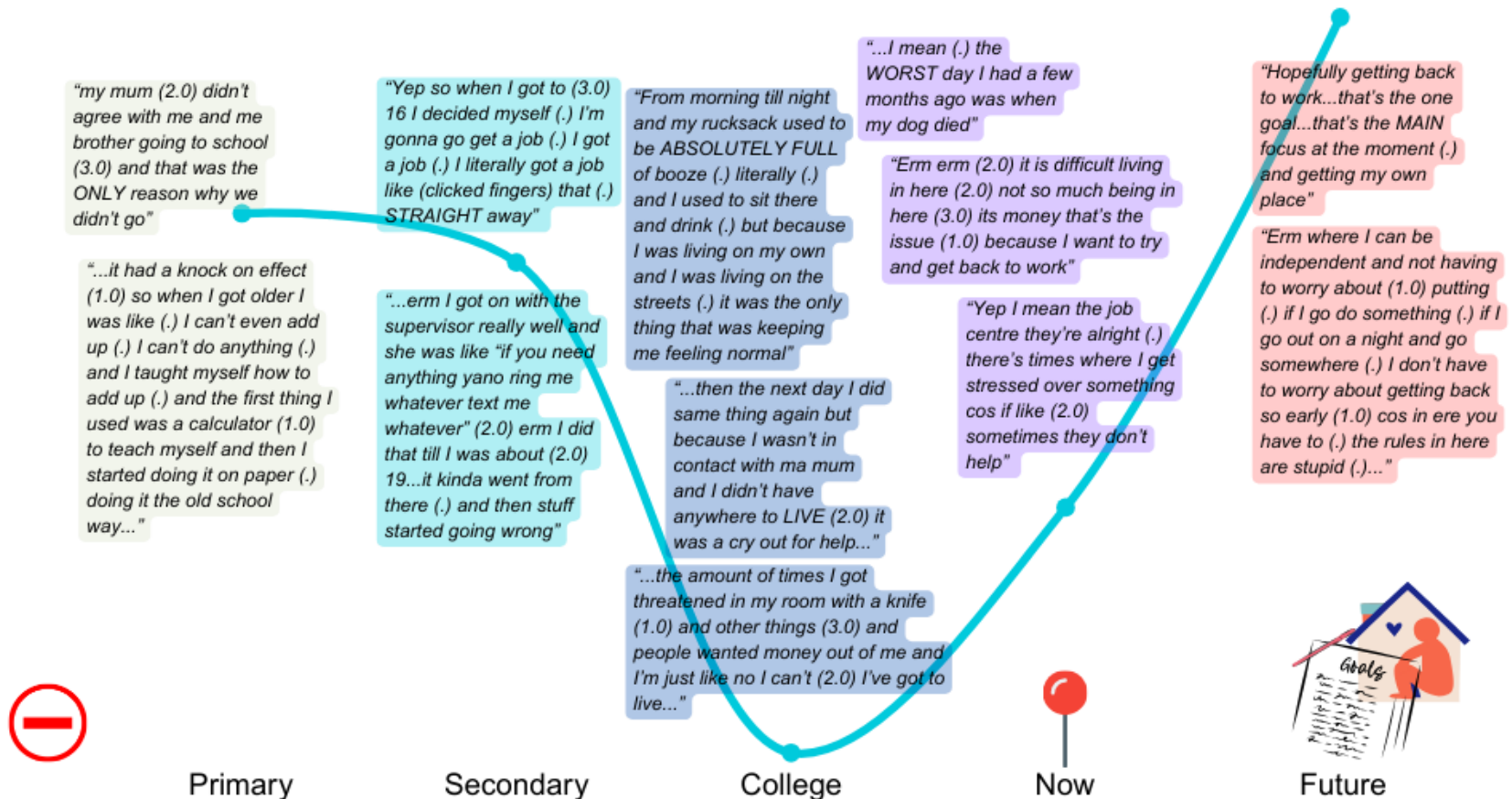
Despite my past experiences with those who were supposed to care for me, I've developed resilience and learned to take life one day at a time, focusing on building my future with the support of the caring adults at my hostel, working towards my goals of securing a full-time job and a permanent home through learning and gaining qualifications.

Matthew has not always had the best experiences with those who were supposed to care for him, including professionals. He has developed an expectation that things often go wrong and has become cautious about planning for his life too far ahead. Despite this, he continues to move forward, taking life one day at a time. He is grateful for the support he receives from the caring adults at the hostel where he currently lives. When his relationships are working well, his life feels better. Now that he is safe and settled, he is enjoying the opportunity to learn and build his portfolio of training qualifications in a variety of fields, including health and safety and construction. He is hopeful that these qualifications will open doors for him, helping him work toward his goal of securing a full-time job and a permanent place to call home. One of Matthew's key strengths is his resilience, which his life experiences have fostered, and he has learned to keep focused on his personal development instead of dwelling on the past.

4.3.3 Holistic-form: Life story plot reflections

Figure 4.6 demonstrates Matthew's life plot throughout his changing living circumstances, his EET experiences and his perceptions for his future.

Figure 4.6: Graphical representation of Matthew's life story



4.3.3.1 Narrative summary of Matthew's living circumstances and education experiences

Matthew did not discuss in much detail his life circumstances during his primary and secondary school years (aged 5-16). However, he shared that he was home educated by his mother throughout this period. In retrospect, he feels this was to his educational disadvantage, as he entered early adulthood with limited academic knowledge and understanding due to the lack of structured learning opportunities.

From a young age, Matthew's trajectory has been focused on employment, and he described getting his first job at age 16. For a while, he enjoyed his role, partly because of a positive relationship with his supervisor. However, over time, this relationship ruptured, and Matthew left the job at age 19. He went on to work as a forklift driver until age 21, but once again, the job became overwhelming, compounded by other challenges in his life. He explained that he felt overworked and unable to continue, which marked a difficult point in his journey.

Matthew's life then took a significant turn when he faced a series of personal challenges, including issues with alcohol and drugs, and a drink-driving offence. This led to a ruptured relationship with his mother and, ultimately, homelessness. He spent three months living on the streets before being referred to emergency accommodation by his probation officer. This temporary stay in a BnB hotel in another part of the country was only for five days, but he was then moved to a different hotel for two months. During this difficult period, Matthew struggled with alcohol, which, despite its dangers, helped him cope and feel "*normal*" in a vulnerable and uncertain time.

Matthew was later referred to a homeless charity, which offered him the opportunity to move back to his hometown and live in a shared house. Although he settled in quickly, his experience was marked by physical, emotional, and financial abuse from housemates. His money and belongings were stolen, and he faced repeated threats in his own bedroom. After reaching out to a homeless support staff, Matthew was offered the chance to move into supported living accommodation, where he currently resides. He speaks positively about his experience at the hostel, appreciating the supportive staff and the safe, stable environment it provides.

With this newfound stability, Matthew has been able to explore learning opportunities. With the support of the homeless support staff and the Job Centre, he has completed a range of qualifications, including first aid, catering, health and safety, and boating, through the CatZero program. He described this as the best 12 weeks of his life, as it kept him occupied and contributed positively to his mental health. The training staff were understanding of his personal circumstances and helped him regain the confidence he had lost. Matthew is now pursuing Construction Skills Certificate Scheme (CSCS) training, which he hopes will open further employment opportunities.

In addition to his professional training, Matthew has taught himself practical skills such as basic arithmetic and how to use a tape measure. He reflected on his educational disadvantages stemming from being home-schooled without access to suitable learning resources, but this has only fueled his motivation to improve and build a better future. Despite not attending formal education settings, once he felt safe and secure, Matthew eagerly engaged in professional training and has now identified clear goals for his future. He aspires to return to full-time work and, eventually, to secure a permanent home of his own.

4.3.3.2 Life story plot comparison

At the beginning of Matthew's story, a negative trajectory is present with a sharp regression during his college years. Here, Matthew experiences a series of personal challenges such as homelessness, difficulties with education, employment and alcohol and substance misuse. These challenges cause significant disruption to his life and contributed to Matthew using alcohol as a coping mechanism to provide him with temporary relief. Also, causing him to receive a drink driving offence, further disrupting his life and relationships. I inferred this to mean Matthew was in no physical or psychological place to be engaging with EET.

Recovering from these hardships, in the middle of his story he shared that he moved into the hostel after a referral from his probation officer and this marked the point where a progressive trajectory began. Matthew received help from the homeless support staff and other professionals who helped him to meet his basic needs and rebuild his life. His

story shifts from using unhealthy coping strategies such as drugs and alcohol to finding more positive ways to cope and thrive, such as sticking to his routine. Through his personal growth since moving into the hostel, gaining qualifications, improving his mental health and focusing on his future, he is working towards the goal of securing a permanent home and returning to full-time work.

4.3.4 Categorical-content: Themes relating to Matthew's strengths and vulnerabilities

Figure 4.7: Overview of Matthew's themes regarding his strengths and vulnerabilities



4.3.4.1 Theme 1: Equity and access

Matthew acknowledged the access he has been given to different opportunities, such as further training (4) and previously, opportunities for employment (8). These have been important to his self-growth and development and facilitated a sense of hope for his future (24). Since finding a sense of physical and psychological safety in his current hostel, Matthew has been able to accept and engage with the opportunities provided to him and he is looking forward to more opportunities in the future after all the hard work he is putting in now. This is central to his identity around being a worker, not an academic.

Table 4.7: Summary from categorical-content analysis: Equity and access

Quotes linked to theme 1: Equity and access	Sub-themes and reference to additional examples
<p>(4) M: Anyway I was I wa doing a program erm it's called Cat0 (.) so I'd done that (.) it wa for 12-weeks so I've done all my qualifications like health and safety, first aid, all the other stuff (1.0) and I gets a phone call whilst I'm there doing my first aid training</p> <p>(24) M: Erm and then I've got my proper CSCS card test (.) hopefully at end of this month and once I've got that there's that many opportunities I can have.</p>	<p>Access to further training (4, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24)</p>
<p>(8) M: Yep so when I got to (3.0) 16 I decided myself (.) I'm gonna go get a job (.) I got a job (.) I literally got a job like (clicked fingers) that (.) STRAIGHT away (2.0) So I applied for one specific job and it was only (.) cos I was (.) it was only minimum wage because of my age...</p>	<p>Opportunities for employment (6, 8, 9)</p>

4.3.4.2 Theme 2: *Comfort in consistency*

Consistency and predictability are important to Matthew as a protective factor for his overall health and wellbeing (12). He positions his fixed daily routine as a source of personal strength (12) so that he knows each day what to expect and that he will make it through each day. One source of consistency which Matthew shared is fundamental to managing is keeping busy each day (1). He likes to have something to keep his mind and body occupied, mainly, so that he lives in the present (17) and not his challenging past. Interestingly, he positions himself as living moment-by-moment due to holding fear around something going wrong if he planned too far in advance (17). Nonetheless,

Matthew tries to foster a sense of consistency in his everyday life, and this is crucial to him feeling able to manage and succeed.

Table 4.8: Summary from categorical-content analysis: Comfort in consistency

Quotes linked to theme 2: Comfort in consistency	Sub-themes and reference to additional examples
<p>(1) A: Aww really what like a job or something</p> <p>M: Nah its just sommet to do (.) to pass the day, to pass MY day really a little bit easier because it saves me SITTIN all day, I'm not I'm one of these where I don't like sitting for long periods of time.</p>	<p>Keeping consistently busy (1, 6, 19)</p>
<p>(12) M:...And for me, getting through day to day life (1.0) I have a routine on a morning (.) I get up, make a coffee come downstairs (.) go and have a fag (.) come in here (.) make x a coffee (.) talk with x for a bit go back outside for another fag and then (1.0) that's my routine for morning and I do that EVERY SINGLE day</p> <p>A: Every single day?</p> <p>M: Yeah and that helps me (.) with my day to day life at this moment in time (.) erm (1.0) yeah</p>	<p>Safety in daily routine (12)</p>
<p>(17) M: Yeah I try and keep I try and go day by day and see what happens because if I don't (.) if I plan too much ahead (.) something will go wrong (2.0) So I just have to keep (.) a level head and think right (.) this is what todays gonna be (.) im gonna do this do that (.) and then the next day will probably be (.) ill have to go and do something else..."</p>	<p>Living in the present (17)</p>

4.3.4.3 Theme 3: Future goals

Matthew's future goals continue to position him as a worker. He said he wants to get back into full-time work so that he's able to gain stability, independence and freedom

(29), so he can live his adult life with autonomy. Importantly, he shared that living in the hostel was only ever a pit-stop for him so that he can receive the support he needs to get back onto his feet (32). He shared that he is future-driven but only because he has needed to be for his own survival. Focusing on his past was constructed as a barrier for him. He needs to focus on a bright, better future where he can position himself as resilient, hopeful and aspirational.

Table 4.9: Summary from categorical-content analysis: Future goals

Quotes linked to theme 3: Future goals	Sub-themes and reference to additional examples
<p>(12) M: For that f- that (.) for (.) all that [pointing to graphic] yeah, to help me (1.0) keep going is I've had to like think about what I want (.) in future because obviously (1.0) I can't (2.0) get stuck back in time (2.0) Yano it's one of them where (.) if you get stuck back in time (.)and you keep going round and round and round which is what I used to do I used to do it whilst I was in here and I used to get TOLD I used to get told in ere there's no point (2.0) going round in circles because (.) it doesn't get you anywhere (.) which it dunt...</p>	<p>Future-driven (12, 32)</p>
<p>(29) A: What about the future then what are you hoping for in your future? That can be your goals ambitions it can be;- (overlapping)</p> <p>M: Hopefully getting back to work</p> <p>A: Yep.</p> <p>M: That's the one goal</p> <p>A: Is that like your main</p> <p>M: That's the MAIN focus at the moment (.) And getting my own place</p>	<p>Stability, independence and freedom (29)</p>

4.3.4.4 Theme 4: Resilience and motivation

Resilience and motivation have been key strengths for Matthew, enabling him to overcome numerous challenges throughout his experience of homelessness. He positions himself as someone who can overcome adversity and push forward despite setbacks (27). For example, Matthew recognised the educational disadvantage he faced in his childhood and took the initiative to teach himself basic addition (27). Living independently, without formal guidance, he gradually learned essential living skills such as cooking (32). Through his narrative, his motivation and determination are foundational strengths which help him to persevere through challenge.

Table 4.10: Summary from categorical-content analysis: Resilience and motivation

Quotes linked to theme 4: Resilience and motivation	Sub-themes and reference to additional examples
<p>(27) M: Erm (2.0) and it had a knock on effect (1.0) so when I got older I was like (.) I can't even add up (.) I can't do anything (.) and I taught myself how to add up (.) and the first thing I used was a calculator (1.0) to teach myself and then I started doing it on paper (.) doing it the old school way (.) where you (.) put two numbers together and then put a line underneath and then add it up like that and I can do THAT</p> <p>(32) M: And I've had to do things for myself I've had to cook for myself and luckily I can cook.</p>	Turning struggles into strength (27, 28, 32)

4.3.4.5 Theme 5: Relationships

Relationships were positioned as both a strength and a vulnerability for Matthew. He attributed much of his success and commitment to further training in the safety, care and compassion he received from the homeless support staff (20). Their support went beyond physical teaching; they demonstrated genuine care and unconditional support. Matthew also highlighted the critical, tangible support he received from some

professionals, such as his probation officer, during his experience of acute homelessness (4). This support helped him to begin regaining his stability enough, so he is now able to engage in further training and look forward to his future. In contrast, Matthew shared how difficult life experiences were linked to fractured relationships. His ruptured relationship with his mother, which led him to seek comfort in alcohol and resulted in a drink-driving offence (3), leaving his first job due to a relationship breakdown (8) and challenging interactions with his key adult as the Job Centre (26).

Table 4.11: Summary from categorical-content analysis: Relationships

Quotes linked to theme 5: Relationships	Sub-themes and reference to additional examples
<p>(20) A: and it sounds like from what you're saying they gave you that support to get your qualifications but also they were supportive in the other forms of support that you might have needed to access and engage with it</p> <p>M: they did they did (.) really really really well in supporting me</p> <p>A: Mm-m-n</p> <p>M: When I was going through my difficult times (.) they were just (.) they were always there</p>	<p>Positive relationships (incl. tangible support) (4, 8, 20, 21, 30, 31,</p>
<p>(3) M: So that one (.) I got put on bail for that and I didn't lose my license (.) first time round erm (.) and then next day I did same thing again but because I wasn't in contact with ma mum and I didn't have anywhere to LIVE (2.0) it was a cry out for help (1.0) So (.) and I had I had to go to court and pay a lot of fines (1.0) luckily I didn't go to prison.</p>	<p>Ruptured relationships (3, 14, 8, 26)</p>
<p>(4) M: Yep Erm cos I stayed in this BnB for 2months</p> <p>A: Right</p> <p>M: And (1.0) it was alright but because I didn't have anybody to talk to (1.0) it was quite isolating, quite lonely (1.0) I didn't have anybody I didn't have many friends (3.0) erm</p>	<p>Social isolation (4, 15, 32,</p>

4.3.4.6 Theme 6: Educational disadvantage and employment pathway

Matthew positions himself as educationally disadvantaged due to being home schooled but his mother not facilitating academic learning opportunities (7). As a result, he positions himself as 'not the brightest spark' which steered him away from education and towards an employment-focused path. This reinforced his pathway into employment from an early age, securing his first job aged 16 which he loved but later broke down due to ruptured relationships (9). Matthew constructed his eagerness to work as a strength, but I argue that it can be seen as a vulnerability because it limits his access to education by removing it as a possible option for him. Despite this, Matthew continues to be focused on getting back into full-time work (5), and working towards this goal is a source of strength and inspiration for him.

Table 4.12: Summary from categorical-content analysis: Educational disadvantage and employment pathway

Quotes linked to theme 6: Educational disadvantage and employment pathway	Sub-themes and reference to additional examples
<p>(8) M: Yep so when I got to (3.0) 16 I decided myself (.) I'm gonna go get a job (.) I got a job (.) I literally got a job like (clicked fingers) that (.) STRAIGHT away...</p> <p>(9) M: Yeah (1.0) So in the end I ended up quitting my job and (.) I went into another job and I worked as a (.) forklift driver for 3 years (1.0) BEST job I ever did...</p>	Starting work early (8, 9)
<p>(7) M: I was not in (1.0) I've never been in school.</p> <p>A: Okay so you've never been in school (2.0) and that's- (drawing) so you've never been in school;- (overlapping)</p> <p>M: I was home schooled (1.0) but my mum never REALLY did anything with us</p>	Limited educational opportunities (7, 27, 28)
<p>(5) M: Erm erm (2.0) it is difficult living in here (2.0) Not so much being in here (3.0) its money that's the issue (1.0) Because I want to try and get back to work</p>	Employment orientated (5, 29)

4.3.4.7 Theme 7: Systemic challenges

Matthew discussed the systemic challenges of being a YHP. Firstly, it is difficult being a YHP and living in a hostel because they have bills to pay and claim Universal Credit to assist with that, but they are unable to work full-time. This causes Matthew to worry about his finances, causing him to experience psychological unsafety (5). He positions himself as stuck in a vicious cycle of needing to work to pay his bills but unable to get a full-time job, making the cycle of homelessness much harder to break. I believe that this

removes further education as an option because Matthew's priority is to earn money to meet his basic needs. Similarly, the support provided by the staff at the Job Centre lacks meaningfulness (25) and at times has been harmful to Matthew (26). This raises the question of what support is available to YHP and whether it is helpful or hindering.

Table 4.13: Summary from categorical-content analysis: Systemic challenges

Quotes linked to theme 7: Systemic challenges	Sub-themes and reference to additional examples
(5) M: Erm erm (2.0) it is difficult living in here (2.0) Not so much being in here (3.0) its money that's the issue (1.0) Because I want to try and get back to work	A flawed system for YHP (5)
<p>(25) M: Yep. I mean the job centre they're alright (.) there's times where I get stressed over something cos if like (2.0) sometimes they don't help</p> <p>A: Yeah</p> <p>M: But all they think about it you putting a job on every day (2.0) Sometimes its not possible because you cant (1.0) put your life on hold to put jobs on every single day (.) I mean I put some on this morning</p>	Lack of meaningful support (25, 26)

4.3.4.8 Theme 8: Basic needs

Matthew's unmet basic needs were positioned as a vulnerability, and one which I interpret that would act as a barrier for engaging with any EET. Matthew experiences anxiety due to his financial situation (26), particularly the challenges of receiving Universal Credit to cover his rent and bills but being unable to work full-time. He

positions himself as stuck in the system because of this. Matthew sometimes cannot afford food (5) leaving his fundamental needs unmet. He also recalled a period of acute homelessness when he lived on the streets, using alcohol to cope and feel ‘*normal*’ (13). This suggests that during this time, his basic human needs were not being met, making it unsurprising that he was not engaged in EET.

Table 4.14: Summary from categorical-content analysis: Basic needs

Quotes linked to theme 8: Basic needs	Sub-themes and reference to additional examples
<p>(26) M: Cos that’s what I worry about you see</p> <p>A: Yeah</p> <p>M: Yano (1.0) and its always a worry because if I don’t (3.0) keep to my commitments, there’s a sanction</p> <p>A: Yeah</p> <p>M: And I can’t pay my rent (.) I cant (.) then I’m gonna fall behind in here</p>	<p>Financial difficulties (5, 26, 27)</p>
<p>(13) M: From morning till night and my rucksack used to be ABSOLUTELY FULL of booze (.) literally (.) and I used to sit there and drink (.) but because I was living on my own and I was living on the streets (.) it was the only thing that was keeping me feeling normal</p>	<p>Unmet fundamental needs (5, 13, 25)</p>

4.3.4.9 Theme 9: Intersecting risk factors

Matthew shared many challenging circumstances and events in his life which have made it more difficult for him to engage in EET. Notably, his varied experience of homelessness and the multiple residential moves (4), problems with alcohol and drugs (13), a drink driving offence (2) and the feeling of overwhelm from a combination of challenging factors and limited support mechanisms (9). Given these significant barriers, it is no surprise that Matthew was not able to engage in EET during these moments of his life.

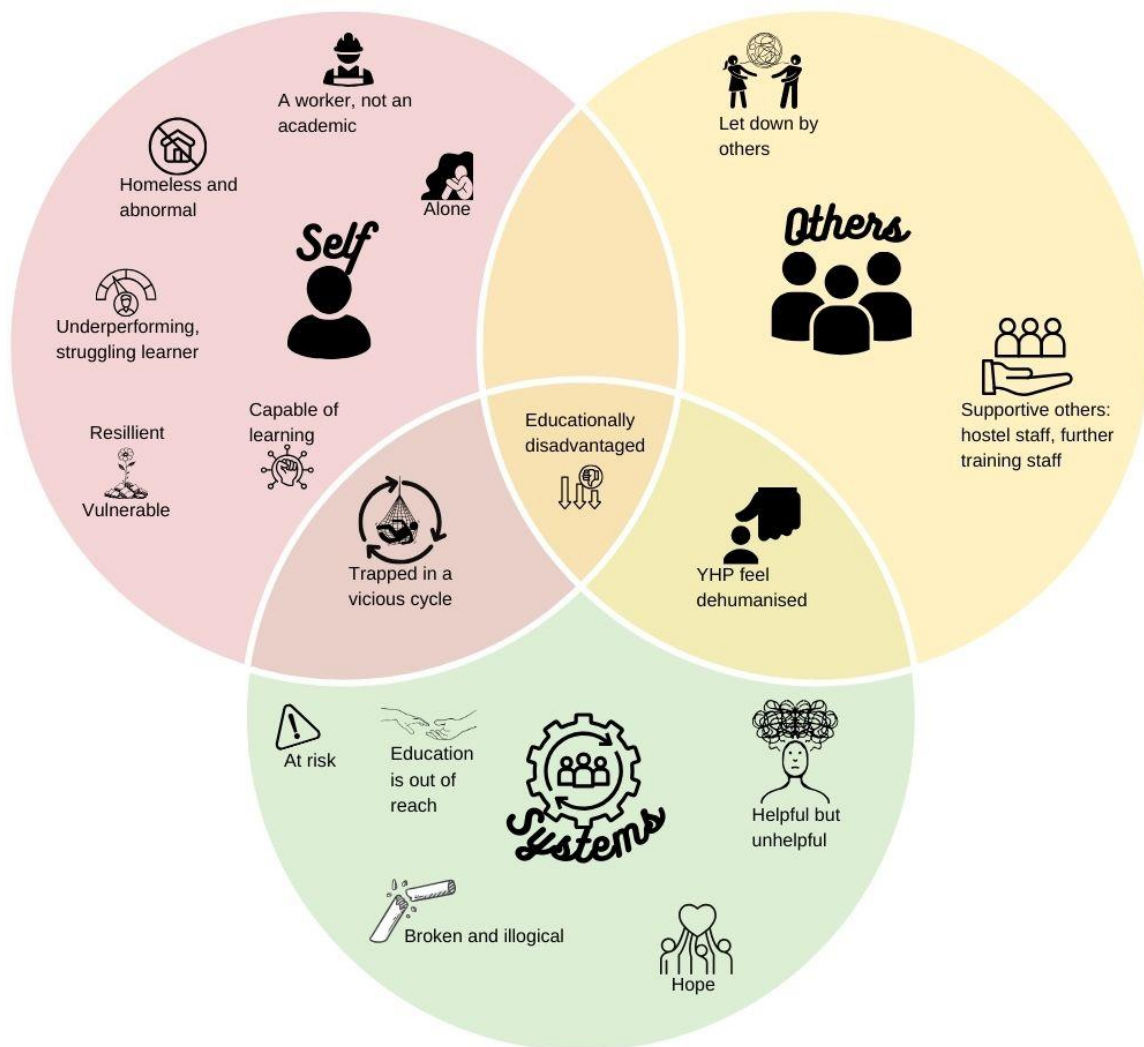
Table 4.15: Summary from categorical-content analysis: Intersecting risk factors

Quotes linked to theme 9: Intersecting risk factors	Sub-themes and reference to additional examples
<p>(2) M: ... I dint feel I felt really under the weather (.) I had a cold as well but I just didn't feel right (1.0) and I was comin up to X area and there's like a set of crossroads and there was a petrol station on left hand side and there's like a bridge on other end (1.) and I started slowing down and I just (2.0) it just went dark (3.0) I fell (1.0)</p>	<p>Drink driving incidents (2, 3)</p>
<p>(4) M: It was (1.0) so (.) at first (.) I ended up (1.0) when after I lost my car (1.0) (coughing) excuse me (1.0) erm (1.0) I ended up (2.0) living on the street (1.0) for 3month (1.0) erm then I gets a phone call from my probation worker (2.0) and (.) I was on probation for about (.) well it was supposed to be a year but they reduced it to 6months (3.0) Erm and then I gets a phone call saying "you need to go to B" (1.0) So I had my appt in B and then they found me some accommodation in like a BnB for about 5 days in B. It was to get (1.0) me sorted to get to go somewhere else (1.0) So once I'd been in B for 5 days I ended up getting another phone call from my probation worker saying "we've got you somewhere in X (1.0) in a BnB" (1.0) so I stayed in there for (1.0) about 2-months</p>	<p>Multiple moves and losses (3, 4, 10, 17)</p>
<p>(9) M: And when you're sat down as well and just like waiting (.) so I used to just go driving around and see what else I could go and pick up I was doing like 4 jobs in one so (.) I was trying to manage that (.) I was picking empty boxes from the other end (.) then picking full boxes out from that are all the bad ones and they</p>	<p>Overwhelm and pressure (9, 10)</p>

are kept separate (.) then coming back again putting (1.0) another load in that and doing the same thing round and round and round (2.0) and then it got to a point where I was getting overworked (1.0) overloaded with it and erm I couldn't do it anymore (2.0) and after that (.) it REALLY-Y-Y-Y did (1.0) affect (1.0) my life (2.0) it also affected relationships...	
<p>(13) M: Last year for me (1.0) I was drinking every single day.</p> <p>A: Hmm</p> <p>M: From morning till night and my rucksack used to be ABSOLUTELY FULL of booze (.) literally (.) and I used to sit there and drink (.) but because I was living on my own and I was living on the streets (.) it was the only thing that was keeping me feeling normal</p> <p>A: Yeah;- (overlapping)</p> <p>M: At that time and then (.) before all that (.) I used to be a cocaine addict (2.0) erm (.) and that was hard (.) VERY hard (.) I've been clean for 3-years</p>	Alcohol and drugs (12, 13, 14, 15, 16)

4.3.5 Categorical-form and critical analysis: Matthew's identity positionings

Figure 4.8: Overview of Matthew's positioning of the self, others and systems



4.3.5.1 Summary of Matthew's identity positionings

Matthew positions himself as a worker, not an academic. He has been on an employment pathway ever since he was sixteen years old (8). This positionality has previously excluded further education as an option for him, which relates to his identity of being an underperforming, struggling student. He shared his journey with homelessness, including sleeping on the streets. He used alcohol and drugs as a

mechanism to cope and feel somewhat '*normal*' about his circumstances (13). By doing so, this positions him and his homeless circumstance as abnormal which is a detrimental perception to have about oneself (13). He positioned himself as 'alone' (4, 32) and 'better off alone' (15, 32) throughout his narrative. He shared about his relationship breakdown with his family, and how he prefers to keep to himself now to keep safe and away from risky situations. Matthew talked about wanting to 'keep his head down' and work towards a better future. The combination of challenging experiences has meant that he positioned himself as vulnerable, particularly at his lowest point when he became homeless and was using drugs and alcohol and received a drink driving offence (3). However, Matthew positioned himself towards the latter of his narrative as resilient (17). He is committed towards his goals of getting back into full-time work and securing a permanent place to live. With the support of others, he has accessed and engaged with further training which he hopes will unlock many work opportunities. He shared that he has taught himself many skills and therefore he positions himself as very capable of learning and achieving (27, 28).

Matthew positions other people in his life, such as his family to have let him down — linking with his personal identity of feeling alone and abandoned (3). Whereas, since living at the hostel, he has experienced more positive relationships with the homeless support and further training staff, which he positioned as helpful and supportive (30). However, professionals from the Job Centre are positioned as harmful to YHP as they caused Matthew to feel dehumanised and worthless (25, 26).

Matthew positions the education system as out of reach for him — he is focused on an employment pathway because he needs to earn quick money to be able to live (29). He spoke about the systems for YHP who want to better themselves and no longer be homeless but positioned this system as broken and illogical. Living in the hostel and claiming Universal Credit means YHP cannot work full-time, which makes breaking the cycle of homelessness more difficult (5). This represented one of Matthew's greatest personal challenges, some days having to go without food to make ends meet. He passionately spoke about the unfairness of the system and offered a better idea of YHP being able to work full-time, pay their rent and bills and progress towards more stable

living circumstances. This represents the overlap between Matthew's self-identity and positioning of the system where he feels trapped in a vicious cycle, causing him to feel hopeless and disempowered in his life (27).

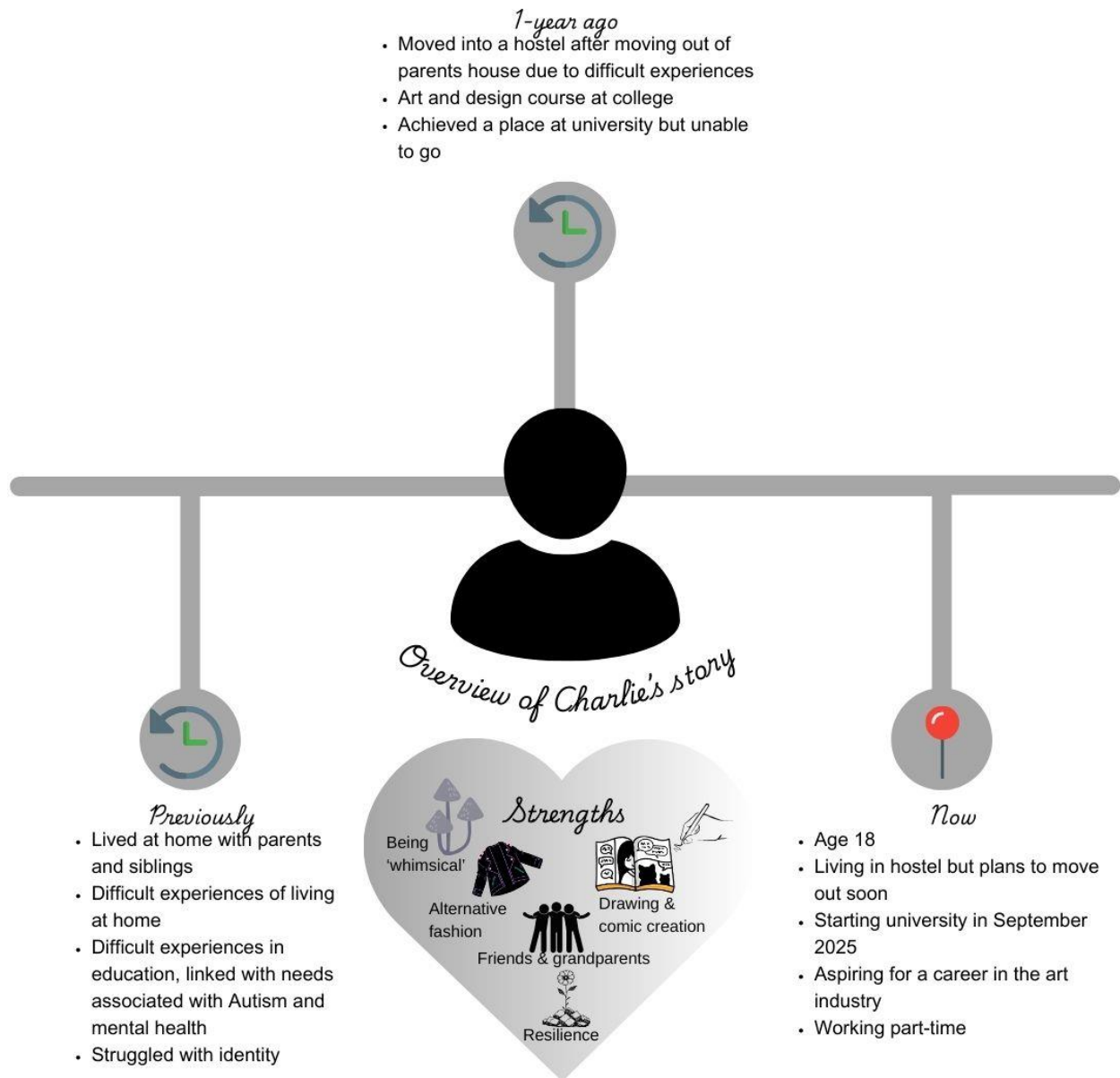
In addition, he spoke about the systems which are meant to be there to protect him, have sometimes hindered him or put him at risk. In one example, Matthew shared how he was subjected to physical threats and violence whilst living in a shared house, causing further harm and disruption to his life which I interpreted as a hindering factor to accessing EET. His current hostel was positioned as helpful; it meets his basic needs, and the staff provide valuable support, predictability and safety (30). However, he also positioned it as unhelpful due to the restrictions on his autonomy and freedom and the inability to work and earn money, which he wants to do. He constructed the EET system for YHP as confusing and mixed. However, there was a sense of hope for Matthew's future. He positioned the hostel as a pitstop in his life which has helped him to get back onto his feet and reengage with EET. It has offered him a sense of optimism, despite its challenges and drawbacks.

"It's just (.) things are a bit (.) trying to get myself sorted and getting ma sen ready to get moved on cos this isn't forever (2.0) it's a pitstop to try and get me back into (.) cos I've never lived on my own (.) so for me living on my own in ere (.) it took a lot of time to get used to".

4.4 Charlie's story

4.4.1 Overview of Charlie's life story

Figure 4.9: Graphic overview of Charlie's story



4.4.2 Holistic-content: Overarching message of the story

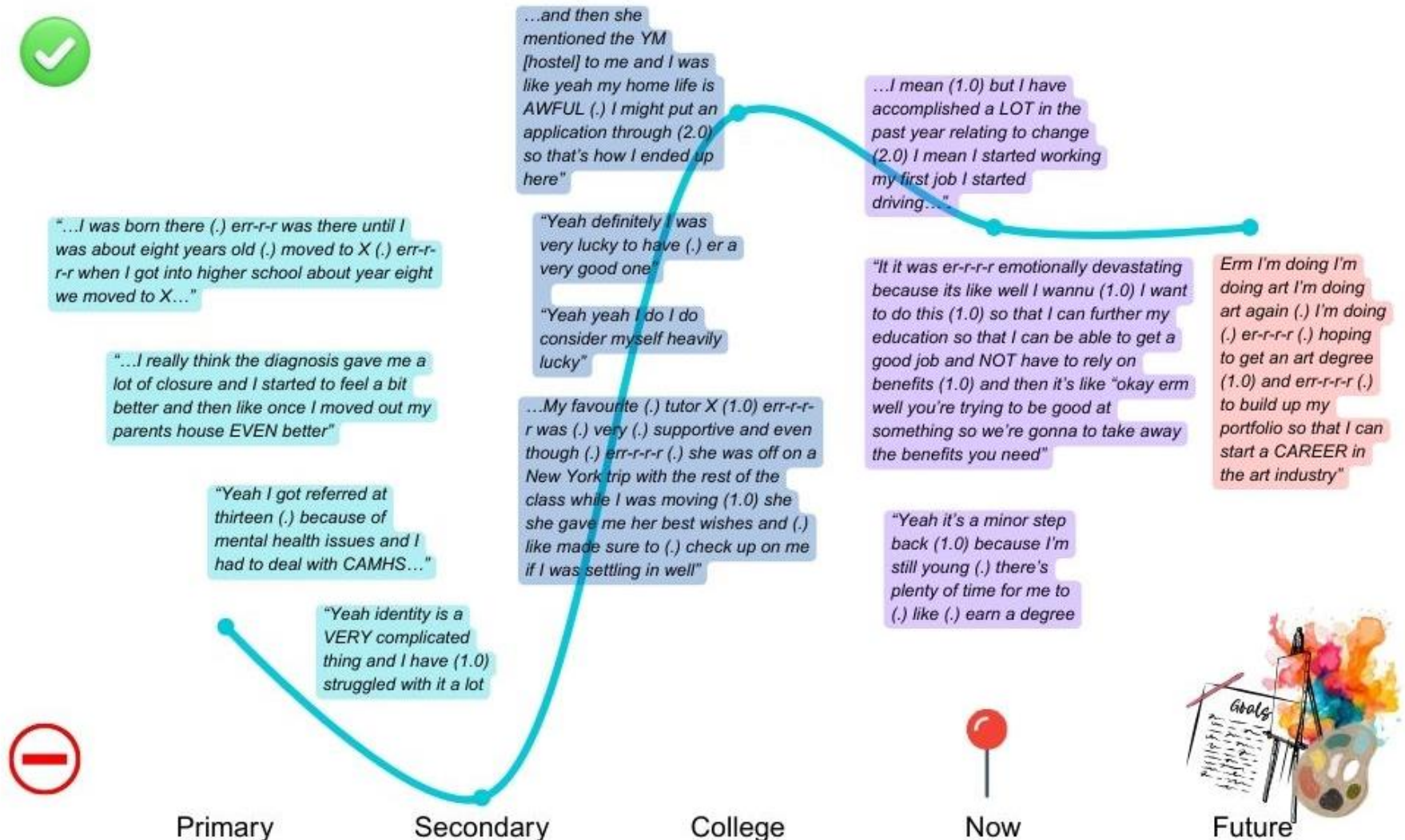
I consider myself heavily fortunate to have had a positive experience in college whilst living in a hostel. I know from the experience of my friends, who also live in the hostel and attend college, a positive educational experience for young people like us is rare. My needs were met in college, though this does not mean I did not struggle at times. I am looking forward to moving in with my grandparents and to finally start my university degree that I earned a place on, so that I can work towards building a career in the art industry.

Charlie had a mix of experiences in education, mainly, struggling with their needs associated with autism and identity during primary and secondary education. They became homeless during their first year of college after struggling to live at home with their parents and siblings. They shared that their experience of college whilst living in the hostel did not feel different to when they lived with their parents. They acknowledged the strengths in their relationships which supported their personal and academic development, such as their tutor, supportive friends and homeless support staff, Charlie achieved a place at university to study art and design however was left emotionally devastated when they were refused due to living in a hostel and claiming Universal Credit. Luckily, their place was deferred for a year, but this was a significant loss. Despite this obstacle, Charlie remains positive and is looking forward to their next chapter, moving to their grandparents and starting university.

4.4.3 Holistic-form: Life story plot reflections

Figure 4.10 demonstrates Charlie's life plot throughout their changing living circumstances, education experiences and perceptions for their future.

Figure 4.10: Graphical representation of Charlie's life story



4.4.3.1 Narrative summary of Charlie's living circumstances and education experiences

Charlie spoke predominantly about their experience in college because this represented the point in their life when they officially became homeless and moved into a hostel. However, they did share that their experiences of primary and secondary education were difficult due to struggling with their needs related to autism, identity struggles, mental health and ongoing difficulties in their home environment. Charlie was not officially homeless at this point, however the trajectory in their personal life and education felt regressive.

After their first year at college and through the help of a friend, Charlie acknowledged that their home life was '*awful*' and decided to apply to live in a hostel. This marks the point of a progressive trajectory in Charlie's life. They shared that once they moved out of their parent's house, life became '*even better*'. They shared that they enjoyed their two-year course in art and design at college and were fortunate enough to have many supportive relationships during this time. Mainly, with their tutor, friends, homeless support staff and their grandparents. However, Charlie shared these positive experiences with caution due to their friends, who were also homeless, having a negative experience in college. Charlie was offered a place at university to study art and design. However, they were unable to progress onto university because they were living in the hostel and claiming Universal Credit, and there was not enough time for them to safely change their living circumstances. Charlie described this as '*emotionally devastating*' but with the support of the homeless support staff, they were able to defer their place for a year. Charlie maintained a positive outlook on this experience, despite feeling incredibly hurt and disadvantaged, and views it as a minor step-back, hence a slight negative trajectory between finishing college and now. Charlie's perception of their future remained positive as they plan to move in with their grandparents to be able to begin their university course in the next academic year.

4.4.3.2 Life story plot comparison

Charlie's life story is characterised by a series of progressive-regressive narratives. At the beginning of Charlie's life, they talk about the difficulties living with their parents and

siblings and attending primary and secondary school. Charlie shared that they struggled to manage their needs related to autism, identity and mental health and home life was described as '*awful*'. The progressive turning point arrived in the middle of Charlie's story, once they had moved out of their parents and into the hostel and accessed the art and design course at college. After moving into the hostel, life became 'even better' and Charlie accepted support from their friends, their college tutor and the homeless support staff. Charlie even achieved a place at university to study art. Here, I interpreted Charlie to start feeling better about themselves and their situation which created a sense of optimism for the future.

However, a moment of crisis happened when Charlie's homeless circumstances prevented them from starting university. For Charlie, the inability to move forward with their university plans due to systemic barriers created a significant emotional impact. Despite this, they received support from the homeless support staff to negotiate and delay their place at university for the following academic year. This gave Charlie enough time to plan how to move out of the hostel so that they can study at university. This suggests that Charlie was able to process their setback, learn from it and adapt to the situation, all with help from supportive professionals. Charlie perceived it as a '*minor setback*' and one which will not matter much in the grand timeline of their life. The support from the professionals and their grandparents helped to restore their sense of optimism about the future.

4.4.4 Categorical-content: Themes relating to Charlie's strengths and vulnerabilities

Figure 4.11: Overview of Charlie's themes regarding his strengths and vulnerabilities



4.4.4.1 Theme 1: Autism

I interpreted Charlie's autistic profile to be central to their sense of identity. They openly discussed how their autism impacted their life, noting that the diagnosis they received whilst at secondary school helped them to have closure and manage better in college (1). They mentioned that they generally felt their needs were met in college, which contributed to their success in completing his two-year art and design course and securing a place at university (6). However, they acknowledged that there were moments when they struggled, and these struggles went unnoticed by education professionals (7). This is further problematic when we acknowledge the invisibility of YHP in education.

Table 4.16: Summary from categorical-content analysis: Autism

Quotes linked to theme 2: Autism	Sub-themes and reference to additional examples
(1)C: Yes I do I was diagnosed at (.) 15 years old yet (.) the symptoms have been EVER present (laughing)	Autism is an important part of Charlie's identity (1)
(6) C: Which like I und- I everybody has their own nee-e-eds and while mine were met (.) my my friends weren't	Met needs contribute to positive education experience (6, 7)
<p>(7) C: Yeah it is (.) I am very lucky to be to have like very low support needs (.) THOUGH that doesn't mean that I don't struggle</p> <p>A: Yeah of course (.) can you tell me more about that?</p> <p>C: Cos that's err-r-r-r (.) sometimes I do wish my autism was like slightly a bit more disabling so people take me seriously</p>	Invisibility of need (7, 8, 19)

4.4.4.2 Theme 2: Relationships

Charlie's relationships were positioned as both a strength and a vulnerability to their access and engagement with EET. They shared how their grandparents offered both emotional and practical support, including providing them with a place to live so they can progress to university (25) and assisting them with personal tasks (36). Additionally, the homeless support staff helped them in various ways (40), and Charlie valued their strong relationship with his college peers, referring to them as the "*fantastic four*" (17). A

positive relationship that helped with their engagement with EET was with one of their tutors, who offered academic and pastoral support by taking the time to check in on them (23). Charlie expressed how fortunate they felt to have positive relationships with college staff, especially after hearing about the negative experiences of their friends, who were publicly outed as homeless in front of their class (16). Charlie also recounted some negative relational experiences, such as struggles with peer relationships and bullying (16) and limited parental support which caused them to feel unable to ask for help (5).

Table 4.17: Summary from categorical-content analysis: Relationships

Quotes linked to theme 2: Relationships	Sub-themes and reference to additional examples
<p>(25) C: Erm (2.0) I don't really know aside from (.) you know moving to X I'm moving in with my nan (2.0) and err-r-r-r (.) we've (.) err-r-r-r my nan and my grandad I have all agreed that it is going to be (2.0) quite the adjustment...</p> <p>(36) C: Yeah I made that cus er-r-r-r (.) my nan is very good at like helping (.) finding jobs...</p>	<p>Grandparents are important source of support (3, 25, 36)</p>
<p>(23) C: I yeah (.) my my (1.0) err-r-r-r my tutor my favourite (.) tutor X (1.0) err-r-r-r was (.) very (.) supportive and even though (.) err-r-r-r (.) she was off on a New York trip with the rest of the class while I was moving (1.0) she she gave me her best wishes and (.) like made sure to (.) check up on me if I was settling in well</p>	<p>Supportive college tutor (6, 14, 23)</p>
<p>(40) C: Er-r-r-r I def- (1.0) X and X were very supportive and they (1.0) you know helped (1.0) like calm me down and like (1.0) so that I could get everything in order</p>	<p>Supportive hostel staff (38, 40)</p>
<p>(16) C: ...I wouldn't say it was hard to make friends because I did find a lot of people who DID vibe with me (2.0) er I think I was lucky and they were (.) they were just also undiagnosed autistic (laughing) so we just we just vibed...</p> <p>(17) C: ...and then she started dating my best friend X so (1.0) we kind of formed like a fantastic four (2.0) it's me my girlfriend X and X</p>	<p>Strength in supportive friendship (16, 17, 20, 21)</p>

<p>(16) C: ...and somebody who used to live here X (.) err-r-r-r went to the same college (1.0) and they they've had experiences where (2.0) err-r-r-r like (.) especially wh- (.) the head of the art department X (1.0) err-r-r-r err-r-r-r-r-r b- basically like (.) outed them as homeless (1.0) in front of (1.0) like all of the class and like X and X's class was ruthless...</p>	<p>Impacted by challenges faced by friends (6, 13)</p>
<p>(16) C: Because (1.0) I've been (1.0) err-r-r-r for a lot of my life I thought there was something wrong with me because it was- (.) aside from (2.0) err-r-r-r (.) there was like a load of people who just didn't like me and I didn't know WHY...</p> <p>(13) C: ...there was this one dude in there who harassed me for over a year on the bus before I could drive (2.0) err-r-r-r (.) basically because I dress alternatively (.) he would like bark and growl at me...</p>	<p>Challenging peer relationships and experiences of bullying (13, 16, 17, 18, 42,</p>
<p>(5) C: Yeah I (.) am (.) a (.) person who is very reluctant to ask for help</p> <p>(5) C: I mean my (.) my parents (.) kind of instilled that in me...</p>	<p>Limited parental support and relationship breakdown (5, 12)</p>

4.4.4.3 Theme 3: Future goals

Charlie expressed clear future goals which are centered around establishing a career in the art industry by pursuing a university degree in art and design (24). To progress towards this goal, they plan to move back in with their grandparents (25).

Table 4.18: Summary from categorical-content analysis: Future goals

Quotes linked to theme 3: Future goals	Sub-themes and reference to additional examples
(25) C: Erm (2.0) I don't really know aside from (.) you know moving to X I'm moving in with my nan (2.0) and err-r-r-r (.) we've (.) err-r-r-r my nan and my grandad I have all agreed that it is going to be (2.0) quite the adjustment (1.0) err-r-r-r (.) cos I'm used to my own space they're used to theirs (2.0) err-r-r-r although we kind of muddle along quite nicely (2.0) err-r-r-r it is (.) there is still going to be an adjustment phase	Transitioning from hostel life to living with grandparents (25)
(24) C: Erm I'm doing I'm doing art I'm doing art again (.) I'm doing (.) err-r-r-r (.) hoping to get an art degree (1.0) and err-r-r-r (.) to build up my portfolio so that I can start a CAREER in the art industry	Pursuing a university degree and career in art (24)

4.4.4.4 Theme 4: Personal attributes

Charlie primarily positions themselves as resilient, which has supported their engagement with EET. Despite the personal obstacle, Charlie is persistent and continues to move forward which is reflected in their college success (45). They shared that they believed their positive college experience was attributed to their naturally quiet nature, as being quiet meant that they got along with the tutors more than their louder friends (6). However, this came with a personal cost. Charlie recounted that their quietness sometimes meant that they went unnoticed in college. Similarly, Charlie shared about their independence skills which they have learned, such as being proactive and practical (5). However, these developed from hardship as Charlie often felt they lacked support from others in their life.

Table 4.19: Summary from categorical-content analysis: Personal attributes

Quotes linked to theme 4: Personal attributes	Sub-themes and reference to additional examples
<p>(26) C: Yeah (.) I'm looking forward to it but I'm also TERRIFIED of change (laughing) (2.0) so (.) you you can imagine (.) I mean (1.0) but I have accomplished (higher tone) a LOT in the past year relating to change (2.0) I I mean I started working my first job I started driving</p> <p>(41) C: Yeah it's a minor step back (1.0) because I'm still young (.) there's still plenty of time for me to (.) like (.) earn a degree</p>	<p>Unwavering resilience (26, 41, 45,)</p>
<p>(6) C: Yeah I quite enjoyed it (1.0) my tutors were really nice (.) and (.) I (1.0) my (.) a lot of my friends won't agree because they (.) didn't really go (.) get a long with a- a lot of tutors but ah (.) I did I think it's because I'm quieter and more reserved than my friends are (.) ma my friends can be more (.) they need more help and can be a bit more combative if they don't receive said help</p> <p>(7) C: Cos that's err-r-r-r (.) sometimes I do wish my autism was like slightly a bit more disabling so people take me seriously</p>	<p>Quietness and college success (6, 7, 19)</p>
<p>(5) C: Yeah I I try to be as proactive (.) and practical as I can</p> <p>A: Yeah (drawing) there good sort of skills and strengths to have really</p> <p>C: Is it yeah (.) especially (.) if you know (.) aren't equipped with (.) you know any kind of help i- for the most part</p>	<p>Learned independence through challenging circumstances (5)</p>

4.4.4.5 Theme 5: Systemic barriers

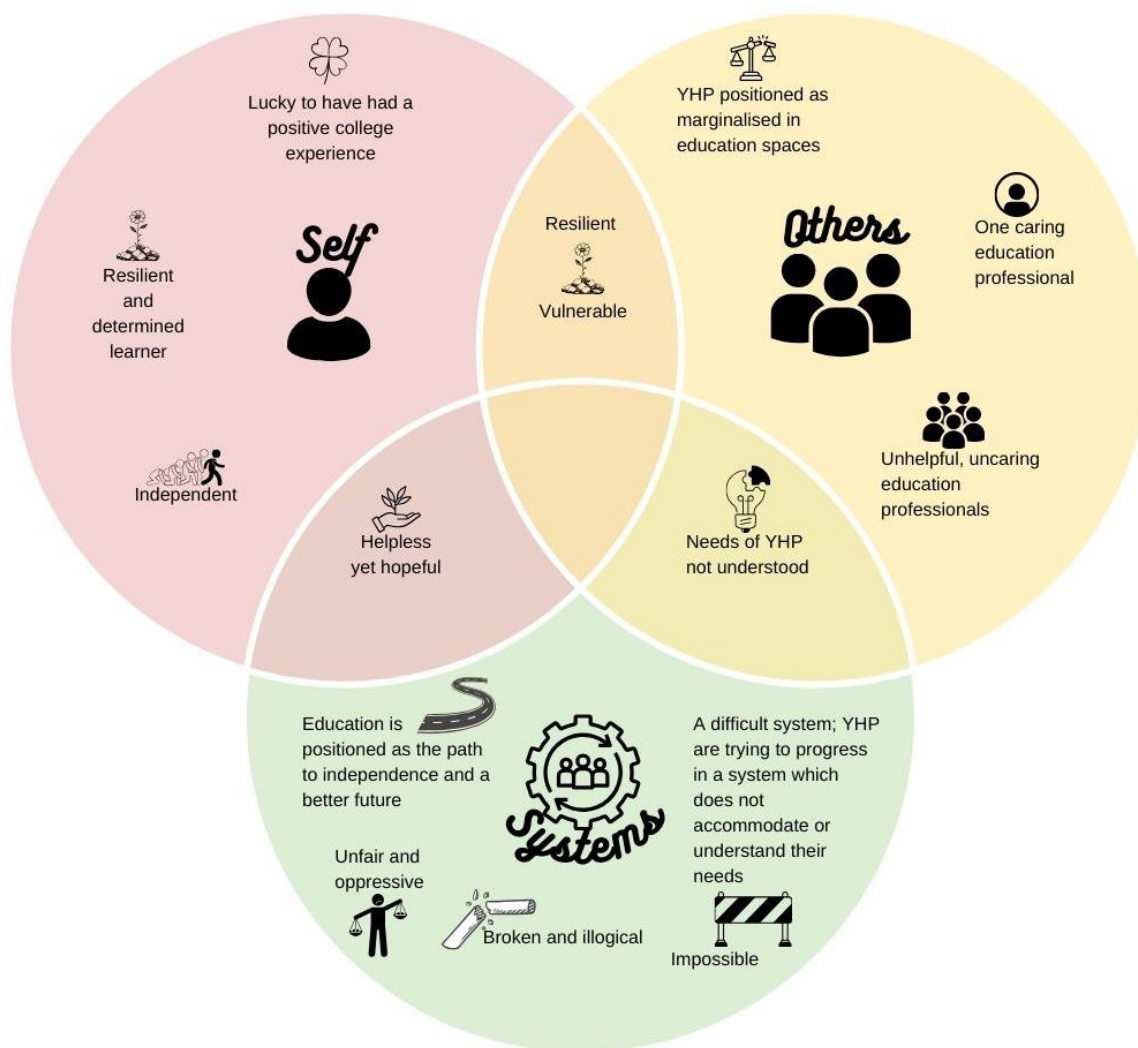
Charlie shared about the significant systemic barrier which they encountered which blocked their access to further education (2). They described themselves as emotionally devastated when they were informed that they could not utilise their university place due to living in a hostel and claiming Universal Credit (39).

Table 4.20: Summary from categorical-content analysis: Systemic barriers

Quotes linked to theme 5: Systemic barriers	Sub-themes and reference to additional examples
<p>(2) C: I was supposed to go this year but then I found out that UC were just like “ah ah ah-h-h” and I didn’t have enough time to fix it unless I like (.) dropped out (laugh)</p> <p>(39) C: It it was er-r-r-r emotionally devastating because it’s like well I wanna (1.0) I want to do this (1.0) so that I can further my education so that I can be able to get a good job and NOT have to rely on benefits (1.0) and then it’s like “okay erm well you’re trying to be good at something so we’re gonna to take away the benefits you need”</p>	Systemic failures preventing access to university (2, 39)

4.4.5 Categorical-form and critical analysis: Charlie's identity positioning

Figure 4.12: Overview of Charlie's positioning of the self, others and systems



4.4.5.1 Summary of Charlie's identity positionings

Charlie described having a positive experience in college which they felt 'lucky' to have (19). Positioning themselves as lucky suggests that having a positive experience for YHP is rare; this is founded in their awareness of their friends' negative experiences at college. Charlie positions themselves as independent and resilient in their learning (45). Despite the obstacles they have faced, they persevered to go to university, which other young people do not have to do (2, 39). However, they developed their resilience and

independence out of hardship and limited support (5). Charlie positions themselves as a vulnerable student who has previously struggled in education, due to intersecting factors such as their autism and unmet needs (1), mental health (1), identity struggles (16) and problems in their family home (21). They position themselves in college as a successful learner who generally had their needs met and was liked by education professionals (6) though they had moments of struggle which went undetected (7). When talking about the homelessness and education system, Charlie positions themselves as helpless (39) and hopeful (40). They hope to access further EET opportunities despite the obstacles.

Charlie positions their friends, who are also homeless, as marginalised, dehumanised and disrespected in EET spaces. For example, they were outed as homeless in their class and did not have positive relationships with the education professionals from college (13). Charlie positioned some college professionals as 'ruthless' (13), suggesting that they did not show much care, empathy or compassion towards them as students. It also implies they do not understand the needs of YHP, which points to a systemic issue. I interpret this to have caused Charlie and others to feel helpless and disempowered in EET spaces, which may have contributed to negative experiences by some YHP. Charlie positioned one tutor as supportive; they tuned into their interests by complimenting their fashion sense, always seemed happy to see them and checked in on them when they were moving into the hostel. This contributed to Charlie's needs being met in college, and in turn, their engagement with their two-year art and design course (6, 14, 23).

Overall, Charlie described having a positive experience in college which they felt '*lucky*' to have (19). They enjoyed going to college and earned a place at university to study a degree in art, causing Charlie to feel empowered, hopeful and optimistic about their future. This is because they position education as the path to a better future (39). However, later in their narrative, they position the EET system as broken, illogical and impossible for YHP. The system stopped their access to university because they lived in a hostel and claimed Universal Credit (39). Charlie received help from the homeless support staff to problem-solve the issue and it was later agreed that Charlie's place

would be deferred a year. They recognised that they were good at something and wanted to pursue their further education so that they are no longer relying on benefits. Therefore, “the system” either take the benefits away or YHP continue claiming benefits but cannot access further education. It is a difficult system to navigate as a YHP trying to better themselves and their circumstances. Charlie’s positioning in terms of the wider system of EET for YHP seems both helpless yet optimistic (40). They had to accept not being able to utilise their offered university place this year. This seemed to leave Charlie in a helpless and disempowered state. However, they remained optimistic and hopeful about the future because of the help they was given to resolve the issue. Their university place was deferred one year and meanwhile they plan to move in with their grandparents. This has left Charlie feeling empowered that through the help of supportive professionals, they still can go to university, albeit a year later than planned.

“...what I normally say is I’m like mould (.) I’m very autistic about mould (.) It’s very complicated you think it’s just a bunch of mushrooms having a party but it’s really complex biologically there’s a lot goin on there (1.0) like it’s always in the air and it attaches to the first thing it can find (.) and no matter HOW many times you wipe it away in the shower it ALWAYS comes back (.) It’s persistent and that’s like me (.) I’m like mould (.) I’m like I’M STILL HERE BABY”

Chapter 5 Discussion

5.0 Introduction

This chapter reflects on participants' individual stories, draws comparisons, and relates them to existing literature and relevant psychological theory. Each research question is presented separately to ensure the findings reflect the intended aims of my research. Limitations of the research design are discussed, followed by implications for EP practice and recommendations for future research.

5.1 Research questions 1 and 2:

What do the stories of YP without a permanent home tell us about the strengths and resources which support them to engage in EET?

What do the stories of YP without a permanent home tell us about their vulnerabilities which disrupt their engagement in EET?

Similarities and differences were drawn across the participants' narratives in terms of their strengths and vulnerabilities. I noticed similarities across the themes, particularly the vulnerabilities.

5.1.1 Strength and vulnerability in relationships

All three YHP shared that positive relationships supported their access to and engagement in EET. However, the sub-themes within these strengths differed for each participant.

5.1.1.1 Homeless support staff

Sam, Matthew and Charlie shared that they had positive experiences with their homeless support staff who provided them with invaluable, unconditional and holistic support, helping them in all areas of their life including EET. These relationships were positioned as family-like, demonstrating the importance of their relationship. This appeared to mitigate against the lack of support from their family which each YHP identified as a challenging factor, particularly because family relationship breakdown was attributed to their cause of homelessness for each participant. This resonated with existing literature which suggests YHP often experience broken or ruptured relationships with their family (McKenna & Scanlon, 2024; Roovis & O'Hare, 2024) and external professionals offer invaluable support to YHP (Edwards, 2023; Gupton, 2017; Jones et al., 2018; Pescod, 2024).

5.1.1.2 EET professionals

Matthew spoke about supportive professionals from his further training. Importantly, they provided unconditional pastoral support during some of his darkest times. Charlie and Sam each shared a positive experience with just one education professional in their setting. For Sam, the support from his tutor was helpful but due to a lack of understanding from the wider college team about his homelessness, his education placement broke down. However, Charlie valued the supportive relationship they had with one college tutor, and this played a significant role in Charlie's perceived successful college placement. This reinforced that EET professionals play a vital role in understanding and supporting the needs of YHP (Edwards, 2023; McKenna & Scanlon, 2024; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021; Pescod, 2024; Roovis & O'Hare, 2024). Even a single professional can have a profound impact on a YHP's life and their engagement with EET. However, it is concerning that for each participant, a positive relationship with an EET professional was rare. The majority of YHP report negative experiences in EET settings which impact on their self-image and motivation to continue with education or learning (Jones et al., 2018; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021; Pescod, 2024). Based on their negative experiences, some YHP view themselves as

unacademic which removes further education as a realistic option. In research, this has been attributed to a lack of academic and pastoral support by adults in EET settings which YHP may need (Pescod & Gander, 2024).

5.1.1.3 Limited understanding of YHP's needs

Sam, Matthew and Charlie shared that adults in EET settings have rarely understood their needs. This reflects Pescod's (2024) research who stated that being homeless is like having an additional educational need which requires adequate support. Many professionals within EET, including EPs, have a limited understanding of the impacts of homelessness on CYP (Edwards, 2023; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Roovis & O'Hare, 2024). This was reflected by Sam, Matthew and Charlie.

Sam shared that he felt supported by his form tutor who understood his homeless situation and allowed him to have a different timetable at college due to his difficult travel requirements. However, the wider college team did not understand Sam's needs and this form of support was stopped; Sam's education placement broke down and he did not return to education. Matthew equally felt misunderstood and marginalised by professionals in the Job Centre. This aligns with research indicating that Job Centres usually have limited awareness of the issues facing YHP and fail to take a holistic approach to supporting their engagement with EET (Buzzeo et al., 2016; CentrePoint, 2015). Charlie described only one supportive education professional, and that was enough for them to feel '*lucky*'. Charlie shared their expectation of YHP being marginalised and discriminated against in education spaces, a reality their friends, also experiencing homelessness, faced as well. This reflects existing literature which suggests that ruptured relationships and a lack of understanding of the issues YHP face can act as a vulnerability to their access and engagement with EET (Edwards, 2023; Jones et al., 2018; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021).

5.1.1.4 Family and friendships

Friendships were positioned differently between each participant. For Sam and Charlie, friendships were important and protective. They were positioned as a source of safety and constancy in their lives. For Charlie, their friends attended college, and these relationships supported their engagement with education, which aligns with themes in existing research (Edwards, 2023; Gupton, 2017; McKenna & Scanlon, 2024; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Mulrenan et al., 2020). Whereas for Matthew, it felt safer to socially withdraw and be more reserved. Multiple moves also meant that Matthew had no existing relationships in his new community (Gupton, 2017; Mulrenan et al., 2020).

For all participants, difficulties with their family relationships were linked to the root cause of their homelessness. After becoming a care leaver, Sam decided to move in with his birth parents but experienced much uncertainty and acute homelessness, including rough sleeping, which impacted on his accessibility and engagement with EET. Matthew shared openly about the ruptured relationships with his family and how he is no longer in contact with his mother. I interpreted this as having a significant emotional impact on Matthew. Charlie's reason for becoming homeless was caused by difficult relationships with their parents and siblings. However, the protective relationship Charlie has with their grandparent's provided strength. They described the emotional and practical support their grandparents offered, including a place to live as they begin their university studies. Research with YHP's has highlighted that support from extended family members can play a key role in meeting their basic needs (Pavlakakis & Pryor, 2021). For individuals like Sam and Matthew who lack this support, meeting their basic needs can be even more challenging, as they must navigate life independently (Jones et al., 2018; Mulrenan et al., 2020).

5.1.1.5 Attachment Theory

I interpreted that each participant experienced periods of upheaval in their homelessness experience, such as when they first become homeless, their relationship breakdowns and general instability and uncertainty in their lives. This appeared to coincide with greater difficulty engaging with EET. For Sam and Matthew, they were not

in a physical or psychological state to be able to engage with EET. Bowlby's (1997) attachment theory can be used to explain this. Given the innate human need to form connections, feel valued and understood, the absence of these connections means they are less likely to experience emotional stability, develop resilience, or engage in opportunities for self-development. The frequent and sometimes sudden moves which YHP experience mean they suffer a lack of connection to their communities. During these times, it is more important than ever for EET professionals to strengthen their relationships with YHP to help mitigate the impact of their broader relational losses. However, the systemic challenge lies with not always knowing when a young person is experiencing homelessness, unless they feel comfortable sharing this with a trusted adult. Nonetheless, each participant shared that once they moved into their hostel and received ongoing support from the homeless support staff, they experienced greater stability in their lives. This allowed them to reflect on their future goals or reengage with EET. It acts as a powerful reminder that positive relationships help YHP to feel safe, to belong and be resilient.

5.1.2 Individual factors and experiences

All participants shared individual factors and experiences which supported their daily life and access and engagement with EET. Edwards (2023) argues that YHP's successes and strengths in education are often marginalised and ignored due to the negative focus within existing research. This resonates with my research findings but is extended further to include training and employment. The following strengths and experiences were found to support YHP: personal hobbies such as football, having access to EET opportunities, daily routine and consistency and having their SEND needs met.

Sam shared in detail the importance of football in his life, such that football has been a source of constancy amongst his difficult life experience; it is a means of escape and has facilitated the connection with his friends who have supported him. He also reflected in part his experience of being in the care system and the role this played in his wellbeing and access to education. Primarily, it was the numerous moves between residential and education settings that he had experienced, which increased once he

became a care leaver and officially homeless. Charlie highlighted the positive experience they had during college, a time when they were homeless because they felt overall their SEND needs were met. Charlie went on to gain a place at university to study art and design. This part of Charlie's story highlights the positive experiences in education which challenge the often derogatory and negative portrayal of YHP by news headlines and existing literature. Matthew shared that he felt educationally disadvantaged due to his home-schooling experience and lack of education opportunities during his childhood. He reflected on his experiences leading to his homelessness which meant that he was not in a physical or mental state to engage with EET. He described a difficult home life and an alcohol and drug addiction which contributed to his lack of self-care and compassion. It is only since living in the hostel and experiencing more stable life circumstances that he has been able to engage with EET opportunities. Since adolescence, Matthew has worked towards securing full-time employment and continues to do so, which aligns with his urgency to earn money to safely live. This resonates with existing literature that states YHP often are pushed into short-term employment, rather than education with long-term employment options (Buzzeo et al., 2016). Nonetheless, Matthew has positive goals to work towards regarding training and employment.

5.1.2.1 Ecological Systems Theory

Homelessness often occurs alongside other forms of trauma and adversity which in turn make it almost impossible for some to engage with EET opportunities. This serves as a reminder of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory that each YHP has interconnected systems around them but there is often added complexity for YHP which needs to be considered. Each YHP in my research had a unique story, with individual factors and experiences that either supported or hindered their experience and capacity to engage in EET. Notably, it suggests that professionals working with YHP must take a holistic approach. As highlighted by Pescod (2024), this may involve adapting previously used strategies and systems to better meet the unique needs of YHP. This way of working aligns with the role of EPs who work at multiple systems around CYP

and can influence other professionals to adopt a similarly holistic and systemic approach. This aligns with existing research that suggests those who do not take a holistic approach in their practice, such as the Job Centre, fail to effectively and meaningfully support YHP (Buzzeo et al., 2016). This was reflected in Matthew's experience, who described feeling dread and worthlessness each time he visited the Job Centre.

5.1.3 Challenges of living without a permanent home and unmet basic needs

Two participants shared in detail the practical challenges of living without a permanent home which contributed to their unmet needs. Sam shared his experience of acute homelessness, including rooflessness and frequently had to move residential and education settings. This made it difficult for Sam to attend education, particularly due to poor transport connections and limited financial resources. Sam also shared that his needs were not understood by his college setting, thus reasonable adjustments were not made, and he was not able to complete his college course. This follows the pattern in existing literature that YHP are likely to experience significant disruption to their education (Gupton, 2017; Jones et al., 2018; Murran & Brady, 2023; Pescod, 2024). Even in the hostel, Sam continued to share worries around his financial security, a theme consistent with other YHP (Toolis & Hammack, 2015).

Similarly, Matthew shared that being homeless caused his unmet needs. Matthew experienced rooflessness and used alcohol and drug as a coping mechanism. Even living in the hostel, Matthew shared that he struggles with financial worries and sometimes must go without food. In previous homeless accommodation, he shared being subjected to physical threats, violence and had his personal belongings stolen. This aligns with themes from other YHP that often their temporary accommodation is unsuitable and unsafe (Roovis & O'Hare, 2024). According to Maslow (1943), without a sense of physical and psychological safety, YHP's basic needs are unmet. YHP often resort to survival behaviours simply to make it through each day, or as Matthew highlighted, unhealthy survival behaviours such as alcohol and drug use. Matthew

began reengaging with EET after receiving support from the homeless support staff from his current hostel. Due to his interconnected challenging experiences related to homelessness, it is no surprise that Matthew was not in a physical or psychological state to engage with EET until recently. This supports existing literature that YHP often have a range of unmet basic needs (Jones et al., 2018; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021; Toolis & Hammack, 2015).

5.1.4 Systemic obstacles in EET

All three participants shared the systemic obstacles they face due to their homeless circumstance (Gupton, 2017; Jones et al., 2018; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021). Sam and Matthew shared the feeling of being stuck in a 'flawed' system for homeless people. Both participants expressed a desire to secure full-time employment but were unable to due to bureaucratic barriers. It was not possible to work full-time while living in a hostel and claiming Universal Credit. Both participants expressed frustration over this, as they recognised the financial resources needed to live a healthy life and break their cycle of homelessness. However, they were unable to secure full-time employment, meaning they continued to rely on Universal Credit and their employment opportunities were limited. This further reinforces Slesnick et al's (2018) research that YHP are less likely to be employed than their housed peers due to the many systemic obstacles in the way of EET.

Due to the financial pressures imposed by the system Sam and Matthew found themselves in, I felt that education was removed as a viable option. They recognised the urgent need to earn money quickly to not be homeless and meet their most basic needs. Thus, both participants were focused on training and employment to secure stable work. This however was not necessarily their preferred path to employment. Sam expressed his desire to become a firefighter but felt it was an unrealistic goal if it required further education due to the financial cost. Therefore, YHP not only are more likely to experience a disrupted education experience but are excluded from EET opportunities due to needing to prioritise their finances to meet their basic needs: -

shelter, food and clothing (Buzzeo et al., 2016; Dibb et al., 2019; Pescod, 2024; Roovis & O'Hare, 2024).

Matthew also shared that he felt the existing systems in place to support YHP to reengage in EET were not appropriate or meaningful. This highlights that even when there are support systems in place for YHP, they are not always helpful and can sometimes act as a systemic barrier to engaging in EET. Additionally, Charlie was subjected to an emotionally devastating failure which left them unable to accept their university offer to study art and design. Charlie could not progress to university whilst living in the hostel and claiming Universal Credit. This was not discovered until it was too late to find a solution, meaning they were unable to move to university with their friends as they originally planned. Charlie felt that they were good at something, and wanted to improve their education and life prospects, but to be better the 'system' had to take away the one thing they needed to survive – Universal Credit. Fortunately, with the support of the homeless support staff, Charlie was able to find a solution. However, this raises an important question: what might have happened if that support hadn't been available?

5.1.4.4 SDT

YHP are more likely to experience a disrupted education experience and are more likely to be NEET (Coles et al., 2010). Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT can be used to explain this. SDT recognises the role of motivation which applied to YHP's engagement with EET opportunities. Pescod (2024) highlighted that YHP are often left in positions with no adult support or guidance to support them and so often present in the 'amotivation' scale where they are not motivated to engage in EET. Each YHP found it difficult engaging in EET without the support from the homeless support staff. However, they were intrinsically motivated to change their life circumstances through EET. They all aspired to not be homeless and were trying to navigate through a very complex system which actively disadvantages them. My findings locate the 'issue' away from YHP themselves and towards the EET system for YHP. This reinforces the key message

shared by Action for Children (2024), despite every intention of YHP to remain in EET, they are inevitably forced out of it.

5.1.5 Resilience and Attribution Theory

All participants demonstrated unwavering resilience in the face of their adversities which I found truly inspiring. Each participant shared challenging narratives around their experience of homelessness and EET. Yet, through their personal determination and the help of supportive adults from their hostel and occasional education professional, each participant was able to skillfully reflect on their past experiences and look towards their future with hope. I interpreted being resilient as an important attribute for the YHP to hold about themselves because it facilitated a sense of personal growth for each YHP. According to Weiner's (1972) attribution model, the attributions one holds about themselves, others and situations impacts their behaviour. Thus, positioning themselves as resilient supported their self-development and motivation to persevere with a form of EET. This was considered a personal strength of each participant. However, I believe this resilience was likely shaped by the many adversities and disappointments they have faced throughout their life.

Nonetheless, this suggests that there are several supportive factors for YHP in EET which should be celebrated and built upon (Edwards, 2023). It challenges the false and damaging narratives that YHP inevitably 'fail' in EET and are projected to become homeless adults. I believe that for any YHP who does not view themselves as resilient, this can be concerning, as it may negatively impact their self-identity, overall health, and wellbeing.

5.2 Research question 3: *What are the types of stories told by YHP in relation to their homeless and EET experience?*

Each participant's overall story was compared to identify similar patterns in the types of narratives shared.

5.2.1 Reflection on the types of stories told

I interpreted all three participants to share similar types of narrative. The narratives largely reflected a stable or regressive narrative plot prior to each participant becoming homeless. Each participant shared a unique circumstance leading to their homelessness. Sam was a care leaver and had experienced trauma in his early childhood, Matthew experienced addiction and alcohol misuse, and Charlie struggled with their identity and SEND needs not being met during primary and secondary education. Sam, Matthew and Charlie all shared difficult relationships with their family which contributed to the cause of their homelessness.

Sam and Matthew experienced challenges in EET due to their homelessness circumstance. Sam's narrative showed further regression during college. He moved back in with his birth parents but often experienced rooflessness, before officially becoming homeless and moving into the hostel. His experiences of homelessness meant that he could no longer attend college. I considered Matthew's narrative to follow a similar trajectory. Matthew was initially homeschooled and had limited access to formal education. His experiences with homelessness, along with issues related to drugs and alcohol, led to significant disruptions in his life. As a result, he was not ready to engage in EET. Matthew's narrative turned progressive towards the end during the time they moved into their current hostel. They shared the valuable support they received from the homeless support staff, helping their circumstances to stabilise and have their basic needs met. This eventually enabled Sam to begin exploring his future goals and career ambitions, and for Matthew to reengage with further training and work towards employment opportunities. This highlights the importance of providing early support to YHP so that their basic needs are met, allowing them to work towards self-actualisation and re-engage with EET.

Charlie described their life before living in the hostel as a difficult time. They struggled with family relationships, mental health and negative experiences in education. Similar to Sam and Matthew, Charlie's narrative shifted to a more positive trajectory after moving into their current hostel. During this time, Charlie was attending college and felt fortunate and grateful for having a positive experience, with their needs being met at college. They described the valuable support offered by a college tutor and the homeless support staff. Charlie completed college and was offered a place at university, but I interpreted the next series in their narrative to be regressive. Due to Charlie's homeless circumstance, they were unable to accept their place at university. At this point, homelessness was a barrier for Charlie pursuing further education. With the support of the hostel staff, a solution was found, representing a progressive turn in their narrative plot. It was agreed that Charlie's university place would be deferred for the following academic year.

The stories shared by each participant are diverse, yet they all highlight similar key points that are important to reflect on. Homelessness can be a barrier to the access and engagement with EET. Being homeless often means that an individual's most basic needs are not being met. As such, it is more difficult to continue engaging or pursuing EET. Homelessness, due to bureaucratic obstacles, can also prevent YHP from pursuing further education, as revealed by Charlie's story. Each participant's story revealed a positive turning point after they moved into their hostel, suggesting that the support provided by the homeless support staff helped the YHP recover from their challenging experiences with homelessness. All three participants were able to reflect on their ambitions for the future, which I believe was made possible by the stability and safety they found while living in the hostel, giving them the space to explore their potential.

5.3 Research question 4: *What are YHP's perceptions of their future?*

This section compares each participant's perceptions of their future, highlighting similar reflections. The future dreams were constructed as a supportive factor in their

engagement in EET. However, each participant alluded to uncertain and discriminatory systems which were perceived as a barrier to achieving their future goals.

5.3.1 Dreams and fears

5.3.1.1 *Stability, independence and freedom*

The theme, stability, independence and freedom were present in all three narratives. They each aspired to build a future where they have a permanent home, stable life circumstances or the freedom to live life with autonomy, healthy relationships and financial independence. Charlie aspired to a career in art so that they would no longer need to access benefits to live. For all, these aspirations appeared to reflect the absence of these in their past and current life circumstances.

Research into the experiences of YHP showcases how homelessness can cause many practical challenges. YHP are often subjected to multiple moves and frequent mobility meaning their attendance and engagement with EET is a barrier (Edwards, 2023; Gupton, 2017; Jones et al., 2018; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021). YHP can often find themselves living far away from their EET setting and with a lack of financial resource, the time, travel and expense required to continue their engagement is prevented (Edwards, 2023; Pescod, 2024; Roovis & O'Hare, 2024).

5.3.1.2 *Engaging with EET*

Each participant aspired to reengage with EET. Matthew aspired to continue engaging with any training opportunity offered to him, including his CSCS qualification which he hoped will create many employment opportunities. Reengaging with employment was important for him because he needed to earn money to break his cycle of homelessness. Similarly, Sam was not enrolled in any EET at the time of my research interview. He did express the dream of becoming a firefighter, having a 'physical' job and earning money. This was inspired by his own traumatic experience of losing his great grandmother in a housefire during his childhood. This links back to YHP using narrative transformation to reclaim difficult part of their story, turning them into a resource and strength (Moore & McArthur, 2011; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021; Toolis &

Hammack, 2015). Charlie had completed their college course and was working part-time whilst waiting to start their university degree. Charlie was determined to pursue a career in art and design. All three participants used their dreams and ambitions to guide their path towards a more stable future through engaging with EET.

5.3.1.3 Systemic inequality

Despite the participants' dreams and hopes for their future, these were overshadowed by anxiety about a system that actively marginalises them. YHP feel disadvantaged due to being homeless (Jones et al., 2018; Moore & McArthur, 2011). They are treated differently, subjected to oppression and shamed by negative public perceptions (Jones et al., 2018; Moore & McArthur, 2011). Some YHP faced limited educational opportunities and were set low expectations for their academic progress (Jones et al., 2018; Toolis & Hammack, 2015). Some YHP felt they did not belong in EET spaces (Moore & McArthur, 2011).

All three participants shared their experience of educational disadvantages and discrimination due to their homeless circumstance. Matthew shared that he has felt educationally disadvantaged due to his upbringing and lack of opportunity. Sam shared that he was unable to continue with his college education due to the lack of understanding of YHP's needs and failure to make adjustments. His aspiration to become a firefighter was positioned as unattainable if further education was required. I reflected that the wider political systems around YHP push them out of education and into short-term employment due to prioritising their basic needs (Buzzeo et al., 2016; Dobb et al., 2019; Pescod & Gander, 2024). Charlie was stopped from progressing onto university because they were homeless and claimed Universal Credit, meaning they had to defer their place for another year.

5.4 Research question 5: *How do young people without a permanent home position themselves?*

In this section, the identity positionings of each participant are analysed and compared. It outlines how they position themselves, others and their perspectives on the broader systems of homelessness and EET.

5.4.1 Self-identity

Each participant presented similarities in how they positioned themselves. Resilient emerged as a predominant identity in each participant's story, unsurprisingly given the uncommon challenges they have faced through homelessness and navigating EET. There were also differences based on experiences and contextual factors in each participant's lives. Charlie identified as a determined learner. They persevered with education through the help of homeless support staff even when homelessness acted as a physical barrier for starting university. They spoke positively about their educational experience in college whilst being homeless and thus positioned themselves as lucky. This suggests that having a positive educational experience whilst homeless is outside of the norm (Edwards, 2023). Matthew and Sam, however, identified differently to Charlie, having had less positive educational experiences in their past. These identity positioning align closer to existing literature which suggests YHP typically do not have positive educational experiences which in turn makes them more likely to become NEET (Coles et al., 2010; Dibb et al., 2019; Pescod & Gander, 2024). Sam and Matthew positioned themselves as focused on employment, rather than education. But their reasons for their identity differed. Sam positioned himself as forced out of education due to his homeless circumstance. The lack of understanding of homelessness by his college at the time meant he could not continue with education. Matthew positioned himself as an underperforming and disadvantaged learner which meant that he did not view education as an option for him.

5.4.2 Positioning of others

Similarities appeared in how the participants positioned others in relation to themselves. All participants generally positioned professionals as mostly unsupportive and unhelpful. Supportive professionals in EET were positioned as rare. The context of this positioning is important because it highlights how each participant had felt let down by an adult at multiple points throughout their lives, particularly in EET spaces. Charlie deepened this by positioning YHP as marginalised and dehumanised in education spaces. This again originated from a difficult experience their friends, also experiencing homelessness, had whilst in a college setting. The positioning of others in this way reflects Bowlby's (1997) attachment theory. It suggests that everyone has an internal working model which impacts their perception of self, others and the world around them. If a person has encountered multiple negative experiences, they are likely to develop a negative internal working model which can mean they expect the worst from others and the world.

Bowlby's (1997) internal working model links directly to mental health and wellbeing. It helps to shape emotional regulation, self-concept and interpersonal relationships. A secure internal working model, for example, the belief that positive relationships are both possible and valuable, can promote young people's mental health and wellbeing. Conversely, a negative internal working model may be detrimental to a young person's mental health. Importantly, these models are not fixed; supportive and nurturing relationships can help individuals to shift away from negative models that developed through their real-life adverse experiences. This reinforces the need for all YHP to experience positive relationships, and this should be a priority for all professionals working with this population so they can help challenge and reshape negative internal working models that may have developed from past experiences of negative adult interactions or relationship ruptures. Interestingly, Matthew, Sam and Charlie positioned the homeless support staff as supportive. They each spoke about the invaluable holistic and unconditional support provided.

5.4.3 Positioning of the broader homelessness and EET systems

The broader homelessness and EET systems revealed key similarities across the participants. Both Sam and Matthew described feeling ‘trapped’ in an unfair and illogical system for YHP. They spoke about wanting to improve their life circumstances by no longer being homeless, but to do so they required full-time employment to be able to afford to live, which they were not allowed to have whilst claiming Universal Credit. But to give up Universal Credit and their accommodation would risk returning to acute homelessness. This system makes it almost impossible for YHP to escape homelessness, despite their best attempts and intentions to improve their life circumstances. This echoed Charlie’s positioning of the system as fraught with disadvantages for homeless youth. Even Charlie who gained a place at university was blocked from accepting their place due to claiming Universal Credit. Despite this vicious cycle which YHP are subjected to, they each described how their current accommodation was helpful because it enabled them to feel safe and supported.

5.5 Reflective synthesis of results

This section provides a reflective synthesis of the findings, linking them with existing literature, theory, and my own reflections as the researcher.

In summary, I found that the greatest variation between participants related to the kinds of support that enabled their engagement with EET. This reflects the uniqueness of each participant’s story and lived experience. Factors that supported YHP included having hobbies such as football, access to EET opportunities, the stability of daily routines, and having SEND needs met within EET settings. The psychological theory that most strongly resonated with the participants’ stories was Maslow’s (1943) Hierarchy of Needs. What was striking across different forms of homelessness, whether roofless, living in a hostel, or staying with family or friends, was that young people often did not have their most basic needs met. This raises the question: how can they be expected to engage fully in learning under such circumstances? Perhaps the most disheartening realisation for me as a researcher was that, sadly, this finding did not come as a surprise based on the findings of the SLR.

A particularly striking finding across all three participants was their relationships. Where participants reported positive and nurturing relationships, their access to and engagement with EET were also enhanced. This finding was reinforced during the holistic-form phase of the NOI analysis, which captured the regressive and progressive trajectories of their stories; regressive points frequently coincided with fractured or absent relationships. Through the attachment theory lens, I reflected on how forming and sustaining meaningful connections allow individuals to feel valued and understood, which in turn supports their ability to engage in self-development opportunities such as EET when relational needs are met. It was therefore unsurprising that participants described struggling to access or engage in EET when faced with ruptured or absent relationships. A more striking reflection and perhaps a limitation of attachment theory is that the model can appear to position difficulties within the YHP, rather than emphasising the responsibility of the adults around the YHP to build consistent, positive and nurturing relationships with them over time.

Interestingly, the strongest similarities between participants related to the challenges hindering access to and engagement with EET. These echoed the findings of the systemic literature review in Chapter 2 which did not surprise me as the researcher. As highlighted in the literature, YHP frequently face practical barriers associated with homelessness, unmet basic needs, and experiences of discrimination and systemic disadvantage within EET spaces. These same themes emerged across all three participants in my study. In particular, they consistently described the impact of systemic disadvantages linked to homelessness. Another shared theme, consistent with existing research, was the negative experiences participants reported with EET professionals. Often these stemmed from a lack of understanding of YHP's specific needs and circumstances. Positive relationships with professionals were positioned as rare, which I believe highlights a critical area for change. All children and young people have the right to be treated with care and respect, regardless of their circumstances. Unfortunately, as Chapter 2 illustrated, these negative interactions are not uncommon for YHP on a broader level.

Although the SLR highlighted the systemic disadvantage faced by YHP, I felt it did not fully capture the lived experiences of these challenges. One of the most striking findings in my research was the depth and intensity of systemic barriers which my participants described. Charlie shared how they were blocked from attending university due to living in a hostel and claiming Universal Credit at the time. While the literature describes systemic disadvantages, hearing vivid and personal accounts brought home the seriousness of the issue. It was surprising, powerful and deeply concerning that such discrimination is happening to YHP in England. Matthew and Sam similarly shared the broken and illogical system governing EET for YHP, where restrictions on working hours made it difficult to earn enough to pay rent and bills, trapping them into cycles of homelessness. In addition, financial costs associated with further education or training often exclude such opportunities, further limiting their options.

Alongside these challenges, another important finding was the extraordinary resilience and self-compassion demonstrated by each participant. They described facing discrimination, disadvantages, and negative societal perceptions, yet each held onto hope for their future and persevered despite these difficulties. This is strongly connected with the attribution theory which I drew upon throughout the research. I felt it was both powerful and significant that participants positioned themselves as resilient, as this perspective supported them to navigate and overcome adversities they have faced and may encounter again in the future. This was profoundly inspiring to listen to and to represent in their stories. Unlike the SLR, which necessarily synthesised findings into broad themes, my research approach enabled me to foreground each individual's voice and to highlight the resilience that shone through at different points in their narratives. Personally, this was among the most powerful findings. It prompted me to reflect on whether I could show the same resilience and compassion in the face of comparable challenges, something I have never had to consider before. These young people are not only experiencing homelessness but are also individuals with rich, unique stories and significant personal strengths, which this research sought to emphasise, celebrate and honour. The SLR findings shocked me because there was very little on the strengths of YHP in education, so I hope my research can help to flip the narrative by showcasing the strengths.

The central reflection I have taken from this research is that psychological theories, while valuable, can only go so far in explaining complex phenomena—highlighting their fallibility. A recurring pattern in many theories is that they locate explanations within the individual: attribution theory considers the attributions one makes about themselves, attachment theory focuses on the quality of relationships and the internal blueprints these create, and self-determination theory explores intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Each of these frameworks has its place; however, my findings suggested something broader. While participants recognised the personal factors that supported or hindered them, they also illuminated the oppressive systems in which they are embedded. This shifts the emphasis from individual responsibility towards systemic accountability.

Theories themselves can be extended in this way. For example, in relation to attribution and attachment, we might ask: what attributions do adults in EET hold about YHP, and how does this shape the quality of their relationships? Or in the case of self-determination theory: what environmental and systemic conditions act as motivating or demotivating forces, and which of these can be changed? Importantly, why are YHP in England, who wish to engage in EET, still being prevented or blocked from doing so? YHP have the same right to access EET as anyone else. I hope this research contributes to amplifying their voices and lived experiences, while also shifting the focus back onto communities and systems to advocate for meaningful change.

5.6 Strengths and limitations

5.5.1 Methodological considerations

Several limitations exist in all phases of my research. The use of purposive sampling meant that one group of YHP was recruited, for example, those living in a hostel in the North of England. As highlighted by Fitzpatrick et al (2000) there are multiple ways homelessness can be experienced and thus my research does not represent those with other experiences of homelessness. However, each participant had a varied experience of homelessness prior to living in the hostel which they reflected on during their interviews. In addition, I interviewed three YHP for my research. Whilst it is acceptable for as few as three participants to be in a narrative analysis, it means that the findings

are not generalisable. This is balanced by the current lack of research in this area, making it essential to start with those whom it directly concerns—the YHP themselves. However, in narrative research, the goal is never to generalise, but to explore individual experiences in depth. As such, a unique strength of the research is that it emphasises the individual voices and lived experiences of those directly affected by youth homelessness through a narrative approach.

5.6.2 Narrative interview

Wells (2011) acknowledges the potential methodological issues associated with narrative interviews. Patton (2002) states that open questions support the participants to share their experience in their own words. This is central to a narrative interview. I noticed at the beginning of my interview that both I and my participants felt understandably nervous. The use of the life path was completely new to each participant so at the beginning of each interview, it sometimes became a barrier to evoking prolonged storytelling. I believe this may have hindered the openness of the questions I asked and therefore the responses given. Narratives are inherently connected to the questions that precede them and the way the participant's responses are acknowledged both verbally and non-verbally (Wells, 2011). It is possible that despite my efforts of reflexivity, the entire interaction between myself and my participants may have hindered the types of stories shared. I endeavored to ask open questions throughout the narrative interview and used active listening skills to truly listen, respect and empathise with each participant. Alongside this, I illustrated each life path which helped to facilitate the conversation and reduced the intensity of the interview.

Upon completion of each interview, I adopted Poland's (2002) method for transcription based on its suitability to most narrative studies and the guidance on enhanced transcription quality. However, there is no guarantee of a perfect transcription due to the practical challenges of accurately representing oral speech into written text (Poland, 2002). I transcribed each interview manually which I believe supported my familiarity with the transcript but also it may have increased the risk of inaccurately representing the text. Inaccurately representing the interview may result in the loss of the narrative's

meaning. However, I did implement Poland's (2002) strategies for enhanced transcription quality, such as completing a high-quality audio recording, recording basic field notes after an interview and writing a verbatim transcript of each interview.

5.6.3 Narrative analysis

NOI is a relatively new methodology in psychology and there is no single prescriptive framework to complete the analysis. As such, NOI can be approached in several ways. I decided to use Hiles and Čermák's (2008) framework and applied every analytical technique recommended because they were appropriate to my research questions. It is possible that another researcher may have approached the narrative analysis differently. Prior to the narrative analysis, I was new to NOI and so I had to engage in an ongoing process of learning about narrative analysis before applying it to my research. I also created multiple visual symbols to display my findings which originated from my interpretations. This could have impacted on my analysis because other researchers could have interpreted the data in several ways. However, this is recognised within the adopted epistemological position of social constructionism, such that the researcher is an active part in the research process.

At the beginning of my research, I acknowledged my personal rationale for exploring this topic. My initial hesitation was due to the risk that my close emotional connection to the topic would dominate the research process resulting in biased findings, as reflected in my reflective diary (appendices 1). Nonetheless, I felt that my experiences could complement my research if I practiced reflexivity throughout. Whilst I maintained reflexivity as a researcher, it is possible that my own experiences, perceptions and beliefs still impacted on my research. The social constructionist paradigm recognises that the researchers' own life experiences cannot be separated from the research itself, but they can be acknowledged.

5.7 Implications

5.7.1 What are the potential implications for EPs?

My findings raise many implications for EPs within the field of community educational psychology using research, consultation, assessment, intervention and training (Fallon et al., 2010). The participants shared their experience of ruptured or loss of relationships before and since becoming homeless. Often the relational rupture occurred in an EET setting where they felt a professional did not understand their situation or needs. EPs have the skills to facilitate positive and respectful relationships, which, if working alongside a YHP, may offer a valuable pause-point amid their experience of unhelpful and unsupportive adults. EPs are trained to recognise the importance of relationships in all that we do, aligning with Treisman (2020) who asserts that 'every interaction is an intervention' even the smallest, everyday moments. EPs can draw on key psychological theories, such as Bowlby's (1997) Attachment Theory and Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, to facilitate others to recognise fundamental psychological needs and ways to support. EPs can support EET settings to create psychologically informed environments that foster secure, supportive relationships which are essential for YHP to engage with EET.

Through EPs developing their understanding of the links between housing and EET, their practice can be more informed, contextualised and responsive to the lived realities of YHP. For example, using person-centered and strength-based approaches in their assessments, interventions, preparing for adulthood and Post-16 work. EPs can support YHP to reach their goals, facilitating opportunities to elicit their views and have their voices heard, something which YHP have not always been afforded. The Cultural Assets Identifier (Aganza et al., 2015) is a strength-based assessment tool which EPs could use to inform hypotheses formulation and appropriate interventions when working with YHP. Furthermore, EPs have a responsibility to ensure they engage in critical self-reflection, challenging discrimination and social exclusion to ensure that the complex needs of YHP are not overlooked, and their inherent strengths and resources are effectively supported, nurtured and developed.

Aligning with existing literature, the findings suggest there is a lack of professional and societal understanding of YHP's lived experiences and its impact on their education and learning through EET (Edwards, 2023; Moore & McArthur, 2011). As scientist practitioners, EPs can make a valuable contribution to the call for more empirical research about YHP and their SEND needs. There is a need for EET professionals to develop their understanding of homelessness and raise the profile of YHP so there are more opportunities for timely support. EPs are well placed to support YHP through their work with educational and post-16 settings, health and social care, across multiple levels: individual, group and systemic. EPs can use their consultation skills within collaborative relationships to encourage conversations about YHP, raising their profile in EET settings. EPs could also provide training to EET settings about the impacts of homelessness on education and learning, incorporating links with psychological theory and models such as the importance of meeting basic needs, relationships and belonging and factors which support YHP's motivation. Given the complex stories of each participant, EPs can raise awareness of the intersectionality with discrimination YHP face and highlight the added layer of complexity which homelessness brings to a CYP's life.

The SEND CoP (2015) explains the role of EPs in supporting young people with SEND through Post-16 work and Preparing for Adulthood. EPs play a key role in supporting young people to transition from school to EET with a focus on developing skills for independent living and participation in society. However, it is clear from the findings and existing literature that this support is rarely provided to YHP, despite being recognised as one of the most vulnerable groups in society and disproportionately more likely to be NEET compared to their housed peers (Coles et al., 2010). Thus, there is a significant mismatch between the level of need experienced by YHP and the amount of early support they receive from professionals, including EPs. Educational Psychology Services could play a more active role in the Post-16 and youth homelessness field by offering early support to CYP whilst they are still in statutory education.

5.7.2 EET professionals

More CYP are facing homelessness, with and without their families, so it is important that EET professionals start to place homelessness on their agenda for supporting vulnerable groups within their community. Professionals need to be aware of youth homelessness and how it impacts learning. Even the term ‘homeless’ is fraught with inaccurate and harmful stereotypes which fail to consider the lived experience of young people and their humanity (Paat et al., 2021). Lang (2024) highlighted that homeless individuals are often blamed for their circumstances, with homelessness being viewed as something within their control. This perception, as suggested by Weiner’s (1972) Attribution Model, leads to a reduction in empathetic and compassionate responses from adults. EPs can support EET settings by starting with a fundamental understanding of homelessness and the diverse ways it can be experienced, helping to strip back assumptions and create more tailored and effective support strategies. This could be delivered through commissioned services such as training and ongoing support through consultation and supervision.

5.7.3 Local Authorities

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989b) states in Article 27 that all children have a right to an adequate standard of living including safe, secure and stable housing; to enable their physical, mental, spiritual and social development so they can fulfil their full potential. Local Authorities (LA) have a duty under Section 20 (Children Act 1989), Part 7 of the Housing Act (1996) and the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) to ensure that children and young people have accommodation and basic living needs. Despite these rights, increasing numbers of young people experience homelessness which is often to the detriment of their education and learning opportunities.

The findings reinforce the consistent message across existing literature that there is a misconception about homelessness. The term ‘homeless’ is often used by society in a way which dehumanizes homeless people of all ages (Robinson, 2008) and my participants described feeling marginalised and helpless within EET systems. The

stories of my participants illuminate that there is a total lack of awareness and understanding of what it means to be homeless, the impacts of homelessness and appropriate forms of support. One potential solution could be a top-down approach, where LAs collaborate with EET settings to emphasise the importance of supporting YHP and their families.

EPs are well placed to contribute to this work by collaborating with LAs and EET settings to support the development of policies and practices which focus on YHP. EPs could contribute by providing training to LA professionals, such as counselors, who are responsible for the educational and employment outcomes of young people in their local area. This would ensure that these professionals are equipped to understand and support the needs of YHP which can then be shared wider within the LA.

Finally, EPs have a duty to prioritise and advocate for vulnerable young people. Particularly those that are homeless without their families. YHP for varied reasons do not always have supportive adults to offer care, help and guidance. As highlighted through Charlie's experience of not being able to progress to university, a solution was found due to the help of the homeless support staff. This raises an important question: - would a solution have been found without their support? Perhaps EPs can position themselves in more systemic and political spaces to advocate for the rights of YHP.

5.8 Recommendations for future research

My research revealed there is limited research about YHP's EET experience in England. EPs can make a valuable contribution to the call for more empirical research about YHP and their SEND needs. As my research did not explore YHP's intersectionality, such as sex, gender, race and sexuality, this highlights a potential area for future research.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

6.1 Summary

My research highlights the uniqueness of each YHP's voice and story, an otherwise silenced population in society. It affirms existing literature that reveals the significant challenges which YHP face in EET (Buzzeo et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2018; Murran & Brady, 2023; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021; Pescod, 2024). They are more likely to be NEET, yet they remain one of the most invisible, misunderstood and unsupported groups of CYP. There are both similarities and differences in the strengths that facilitate YHP's access to and engagement with EET, and the vulnerabilities which hinder their engagement. A summary of my interpretations includes: -

- Each YHP has unique strengths and resources which support their motivation with EET.
- Positive relationships with a variety of people: - professionals, friends, homeless support workers, support YHP in EET but the absence of or ruptured relationships hinders their access and engagement in EET.
- The limited understanding of homelessness by professionals is unhelpful.
- Homelessness is often accompanied with unmet basic needs, including financial insecurity and lack of essentials like food. Even for YHP living in a hostel, financial pressures can impact their capacity and available resources to engage in EET.
- Systemic issues create barriers for YHP, making it nearly impossible for them to remain in EET, despite their best intention to do so.
- Resilience is a key attribute of each participant, and an attribute which has supported them to persevere in a system which actively disadvantaged them.

Importantly, the findings illustrate that for some YHP, a strength can also be a vulnerability, and vice versa. For example, relationships can be a source of strength for YHP in EET, but conversely, a ruptured relationship can be a vulnerability. A strength can also develop from a vulnerability. For example, all YHP in my research demonstrated their unwavering resilience in the face of their challenges related to

homelessness and EET. This may stem from the significant challenges they have already faced in their lives, challenges that those of us who are housed may not have experienced, considered or even have awareness of. There are key psychological theories which help explain why homelessness can help or hinder access and engagement with EET. Primarily, Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs and that being homeless, in whatever capacity, can mean that YHP need additional support before they are ready to engage in EET.

My findings revealed key themes around YHP's perceptions of their future: -

- Each YHP had plans to engage in EET in the future.
- Stability, independence and freedom were important goals, and EET was positioned as the pathway to achieving it.
- Charlie aspired to be an artist, Sam aspired to be a firefighter and Matthew was skillful in many trades. Despite this, each participant presented a level of fear about their uncertain future given the systemic obstacles.

I interpreted key themes from each participant's narrative about their positionality: -

- YHP feel helpless in the EET system yet remain hopeful for their future.
- The homeless and EET system is illogical and oppressive. The participants felt that they do not belong in academic or learning spaces.
- Adults are generally unhelpful and unsupportive due to a lack of understanding of homelessness. Supportive adults in EET are rare.
- YHP are resilient because they have had to be.

6.2 Unique contribution

My research contributed to the knowledge around YHP's experiences with EET, an area often dominated by negative and challenging experiences (Edwards, 2023). My research illuminated the inherent strengths that each participant had, regardless of their circumstance or background. The use of narrative methodology enabled a rich analysis of each story. For those not currently engaged in EET, blame should not be placed on YHP themselves, but on the systems that actively disadvantage them and fail to provide

adequate support. Sam, Matthew and Charlie each shared an inspiring story. Their narratives reflected a clear ambition for their future, to improve their life circumstances through EET. It is vital to continue thinking about how to support YHP in achieving their goals through drawing on key psychological theories to inform best practice. As part of my research, I published the findings of my SLR in the British Psychological Society (BPS) special edition on Homelessness and Educational Psychology in 2024 (Ferguson and Francis, 2024). My work has contributed to the growing body of literature on homelessness and its impact on EET experiences. I hope that my wider research will facilitate ongoing conversations about youth homelessness.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Summary of personal reflections

Thinking about topic

Why homelessness?

Personal investment. Unfortunately someone very close to me passed away at the end of my first year of the doctorate - and homelessness and substance misuse was a part of their story... this got me thinking about how the outcome of their life might've looked different if they had received support as a younger person who was at risk of homelessness, to present them from becoming a homeless adult.

So, its a topic close to home, but I think has every ounce of importance in today's society.

Reflecting on the Powerful Stories told here - a call to action.

Podcast - POINT MADE by CentrePoint. Interesting reflections shared by HYP on the podcast:

- Homeless people can feel like 'they have nothing' and without the right support, then can turn into 'I am nothing' which is the worst thing for a homeless person to feel/think.
- Homelessness & substance misuse can go hand in hand - substance misuse can provide an escape from reality, a safety net.
- You can offer help to someone who is homeless but they need to be in a place to open that door themselves too.
- There was a YP who was homeless for 2-years on this podcast and he lived in the woods. He didn't turn up to school. But it was never picked up that this YP was in such a vulnerable place & was homeless. He was invisible. Imagine how different things could have been if this was noticed by school.
- There's a myth that all homeless people are unable to look after their physical appearance/hygiene. This is not true. & I think this feeds into why a lot of YP are not being picked up/recognised as a homeless/at risk of homeless YP.
- How, can educational psychologists/teachers, can we look to support a young persons learning if they don't even have a safe roof over their head?! Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Reflecting that all cons are attached to a solution

Pros + cons of researching homelessness

<p>✓ I'm deeply passionate about the topic due to close experiences.</p> <p>✓ My experience could compliment my research.</p>	<p>✗ Is it too close an experience? How will I take care of myself & my participants? <i>Supervision; careful consideration; reflecting throughout</i></p> <p>✗ Will my experience dominate my research. How will I prevent that from happening? <i>Reflexivity; narrative approach in social constructionist-paradigm</i></p>
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5th Feb 2025

Analysis / Findings Reflections

★ I have decided to change the way I present my findings, whilst half-way into analysing my 2nd participant, because I cannot separate the themes neatly into a strength or a vulnerability. Some of the themes that are coming out are both a strength & a vulnerability. So my findings section might be better as:

Theme 1

Strengths

~~~~~

Vulnerability

~~~~~

Theme 2

etc.

Appendix 3: Ethical approval certificate



School of Psychology

The University of Nottingham
University Park
Nottingham
NG7 2RD

tel: +44 (0)115 846 7403 or (0)115 951 4344

SJ/tp

Ref: S1600

Thursday 25th April 2024

Dear Ashleigh Ferguson & Yvonne Francis

Ethics Committee Review

Thank you for submitting an account of your proposed research 'What do the stories of young people living in temporary accommodation tell us about their educational experiences?'

That proposal has now been reviewed and we are pleased to tell you it has met with the Committee's approval.

However:

Please note the following comments from our reviewers.

Reviewer One:

- The sharing of a personal profile is unusual and unorthodox. There is no new important information in Appendix 8 that's not in Appendix 1. Instead, there is a risk that a vulnerable individual will be recruited because they like dogs or because of the promise of free food. Instead of distributing this personal profile, please use the Appendix 1 recruitment poster to recruit participants, exclusively.
- If you promise free food, there is a risk of point 6 as a potential relevant risk - Any inducement for participants to take part other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time - because of the provision of food? I would not mention free food during recruitment.
- Please consider the risk assessment of being alone in a private room with the participant.
- Please consider the risk assessment of providing food to a participant - what if they have allergies or are diabetic?
- The debrief should have contact details for the 3 entities signposted (phone number, website, email).
- Where it says 'your data will be anonymized' in the debrief and information sheet, please make it clear that it will be anonymized after the 4-week period - after which point it will no longer be able to withdraw.

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



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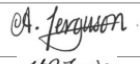
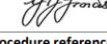
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*Professor Stephen Jackson
Chair, Ethics Committee*

Appendix 4: Health and safety risk assessment


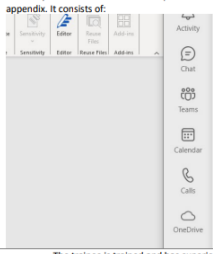
 University of Nottingham UK CHINA MALAYSIA		Activity / Task Risk Assessment Form	
Business Unit:		Location(s) of Activity: YMCA Mansfield. 57 Commercial Gate, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, NG18 1EU. YMCA Goole. Edinburgh Street, Edinburgh Court, Goole, DN14 5EH.	
Risk Assessment Ref:			
Activity Title: What do the stories of young homeless people tell us about their educational experiences?			
Activity Outline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One to one interview with young homeless people (aged between 16-25) in a room at their hostel site. 			
Those at risk / affected parties: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Myself as the researcher. - Young people I am interviewing. 			
Risk Assessor Name: Ashleigh Ferguson (trainee educational psychologist)		Signature:  Date: 11-07-2024	
Responsible person / Line Manager Name: Yvonne Francis (supervising snr educational psychologist)		Signature:  Date: 11.07.2024	
Master Risk Assessment Reference where applicable:		Related procedure references or links: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nottinghamshire Educational Psychology Service Lone Working Guidance 	
Review Period:			

What are the hazards?	List the harm associated with the hazard	Risk Evaluation without controls in place High/Med/Low	What control measures are, or will be put, in place to control the risk? List all elimination, substitution, engineering and/or administrative controls	Risk Evaluation with controls in place High/Med/Low
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Activity/Task Risk Assessment Form: SAF-FOR-RA-HML

Page 1 of 7
Version 1

May 2019
Refer to Health and Safety Office for latest version

 University of Nottingham UK CHINA MALAYSIA		Activity / Task Risk Assessment Form		
Lone working	Colleagues not being aware of the researcher's location and thus not being aware if the researcher is late leaving or missing.	High	The researcher will follow the Lone Working Guidance followed in the Local Authority which the researcher is on placement with. This will be attached as an appendix. It consists of: 	Med
Distress of participant during interview		High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The trainee is trained and has experience of working with young people presenting with anxiety and/or emotional distress. - The trainee has planned and linked up with the protocols of the hostel should the participant become distressed. This consists of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o A key member of staff will be close to the interview room. Their location will be agreed prior to the interview and the trainee and young person will be aware of their location. o The interview will pause or completely stop. The trainee will go and request for their key adult to come and support the participant. o There is CCTV in all the rooms so if a participant became distressed, the key adult would be able to see. 	Med
Hazards in the interview room		Med	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The room used for interviews in Mansfield consists of beanbags, table and chairs, and some fidget toys. I have been assured this is a similar layout at the Goole YMCA site. - The staff have assured that all fidget toys will be kept in a basket and put out of the way. 	Low
Working on a 1:1 basis with the participant.		High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At YMCA, there is CCTV in all the rooms, including the nurture rooms where my interviews would take place – this applies to Mansfield and Goole. - There is a 24hr housing duty worker who looks at the CCTV – this applies to Mansfield and Goole. - There are always members of staff in the hostel building – this applies to Mansfield and Goole. - Where possible, the interview door will be left slightly ajar. 	Med

Activity/Task Risk Assessment Form: SAF-FOR-RA-HML

Page 2 of 7
Version 1

May 2019
Refer to Health and Safety Office for latest version

Activity / Task Risk Assessment Form

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors have to get buzzed in and access to rooms is via a pass, so the trainee will be met by the member of staff and guided around the hostel to reach the interview room. 	
Driving to and from the hostel location		Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The trainee will appropriately plan their route to each hostel and take care when driving. 	Low

Addendum

Date: 27-04-2024

Reviewers' comments from ethics panel members:

Reviewer One Comments:

- ☐ The sharing of a personal profile is unusual and unorthodox. There is no new important information in Appendix 8 that's not in Appendix 1. Instead, there is a risk that a vulnerable individual will be recruited because they like dogs or because of the promise of free food. Instead of distributing this personal profile, please use the Appendix 1 recruitment poster to recruit participants, exclusively.
 - ✓ *Comment 1 noted. Only my participant recruitment poster will be used and my one-page profile [appendix 8] will not be used.*
- ☐ If you promise free food, there is a risk of point 6 as a potential relevant risk - Any inducement for participants to take part other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time - because of the provision of food? I would not mention free food during recruitment.
 - ✓ *Comment 2 noted. Free food will not be mentioned during recruitment.*
- ☐ Please consider the risk assessment of being alone in a private room with the participant.
 - ✓ *Comment 3 noted. The researcher will ensure safety protocols during the interviews with participants. E.g., the door will be left ajar and other professionals will be aware of the researcher in the interview and the location of each interview.*
- ☐ Please consider the risk assessment of providing food to a participant - what if they have allergies or are diabetic?
 - ✓ *Comment 4 noted. When organising snacks to bring, the researcher will check with participants whether they have any allergies or are diabetic prior to bringing any food/snacks. The researcher will also check with the professionals they liaise with from the organisation/charity their participants are recruited from regarding this information.*
- ☐ The debrief should have contact details for the 3 entities signposted (phone number, website, email).
 - ✓ *Comment 5 noted. These amendments have been made to the debrief form. However, the email address for CentrePoint has not been added because they do not use email for accessing help.*
- ☐ Where it says 'your data will be anonymized' in the debrief and information sheet, please make it clear that it will be anonymized after the 4-week period - after which point it will no longer be able to withdraw.
 - ✓ *Comment 6 noted. This amendment to the participant information sheet and debrief form has been actioned.*

Are you a young person living in:

Temporary accommodation?

Hostels?

HELLO!



My name is Ashleigh Ferguson. I'm a trainee educational psychologist at the University of Nottingham. I'm interested in the educational experiences of young people (aged 16-25) living in either temporary accommodation or hostels.

What will it involve?

A 1-2-hour interview with myself on an agreed date. We will talk about your story and your educational experiences.
All personal details will be anonymised.




Interested & want to find out more?

Please contact me on ashleigh.ferguson@nottingham.ac.uk



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School of Psychology


Participant Information Sheet

Title of project: *What do the stories of young people living in temporary accommodation tell us about their educational experiences?*

Ethics approval number: S1600

Researchers name / email: Ashleigh Ferguson - ashleigh.ferguson@nottingham.ac.uk





Supervisors name / email: Dr. Yvonne Francis - yvonne.francis@nottingham.ac.uk




This is an invitation to take part in a research study on the stories of young people living in temporary accommodation, hostels or are sofa surfing, and their experience of education.

Before you decide if you wish to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

If you participate, we will have a one-to-one informal interview where I will ask some questions around these topics:

- Your future hopes 
- Your past, and your education history so far 
- Your strengths 
- How you use your strengths to get through difficult times 


 The interview will be recorded using an audio recording device. I also hope to draw/write some of the things we talk about during the interview. You will have the choice to do this if you like, or I can do it.

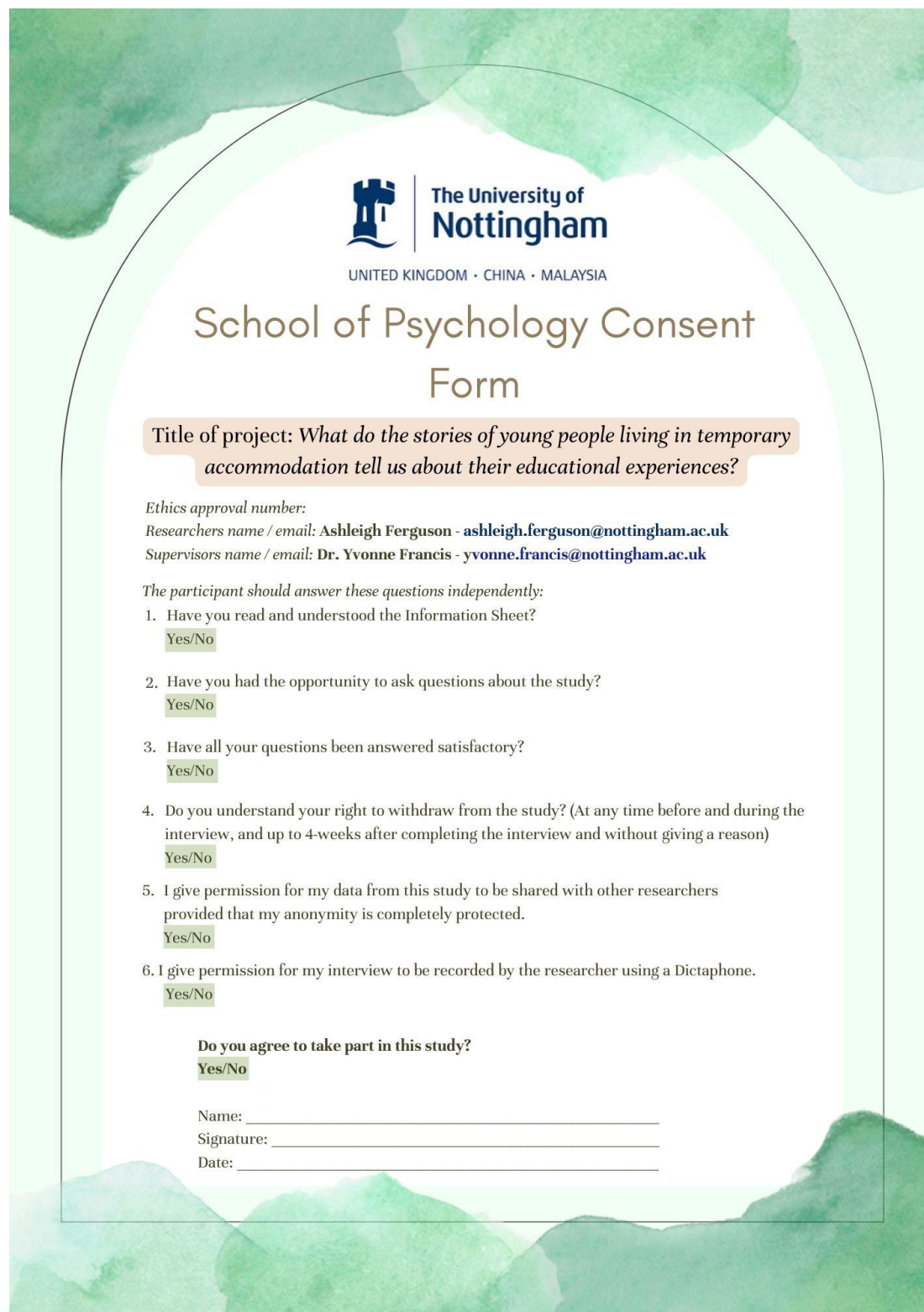
The whole procedure will last between one-two hours.


Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are under no obligation to take part. You are free to withdraw at any point before, during the interview or up to 4-weeks after taking part in the interview. All data will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only. It will be stored in compliance with the Data Protection Act. The data will be anonymised after the 4-week period of you taking part in the interview, so after this point you will no longer be able to withdraw.

If you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to ask now. We can also be contacted after your participation at the above address.

If you have any complaints about the study, please contact:
Stephen Jackson (Chair of Ethics Committee)
stephen.jackson@nottingham.ac.uk





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School of Psychology Consent Form

Title of project: *What do the stories of young people living in temporary accommodation tell us about their educational experiences?*

Ethics approval number:
Researchers name / email: Ashleigh Ferguson - ashleigh.ferguson@nottingham.ac.uk
Supervisors name / email: Dr. Yvonne Francis - yvonne.francis@nottingham.ac.uk

The participant should answer these questions independently:

1. Have you read and understood the Information Sheet?
2. Have you had the opportunity to ask questions about the study?
3. Have all your questions been answered satisfactory?
4. Do you understand your right to withdraw from the study? (At any time before and during the interview, and up to 4-weeks after completing the interview and without giving a reason)
5. I give permission for my data from this study to be shared with other researchers provided that my anonymity is completely protected.
6. I give permission for my interview to be recorded by the researcher using a Dictaphone.

Do you agree to take part in this study?

Name: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____



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School of Psychology Debrief sheet

Title of project: *What do the stories of young people living in temporary accommodation tell us about their educational experiences?*

Ethics approval number:

Researchers name / email: Ashleigh Ferguson - ashleigh.ferguson@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisors name / email: Dr. Yvonne Francis - yvonne.francis@nottingham.ac.uk

Thank you for taking part in the research.

The purpose of this research was to explore the lived and educational experiences of young people who are living in either: temporary accommodation, hostels or are sofa surfing.

It is hoped that by talking about your experiences more, this will help to raise awareness and understanding about how to support young people in education who are living in temporary accommodation.

You are still free to withdraw from the research at any point up to 4-weeks after taking part in the interview. All data collected will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only. It will be stored in compliance with the Data Protection Act. All of your data will be anonymised after the 4-week period of you taking part in the interview, so after this point you will no longer be able to withdraw.

If you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to ask now. We can also be contacted after your participation at the above address.

Finally, if you feel you would like some additional support following taking part in this research, here are some signposts to support services below:



If you're in England and aged 16 to 25, CentrePoint's non-judgemental and experienced Helpline advisors can share advice on your housing situation and rights.

- Helpline: 0808 800 0661
- Website: <https://centrepoin.org.uk/>



Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

YMCA's housing provision in Mansfield provides 24-hour support for homeless young people (aged 16-25) living in Mansfield and the surrounding areas.

- Helpline: 02071869500
- Email: enquiries@ymca.org.uk
- Website: <https://www.ymca.org.uk/>



Together we will end homelessness

Crisis offer support with the following: finding, securing and keeping a home making sure you have the support you are entitled to from the local authority claiming the right level of benefits vocational training and technical qualifications wellbeing and building confidence, including access to support from specialist clinical psychologists.

- Helpline: 0300 636 1967
- Email: enquiries@crisis.org.uk
- Website: <https://www.crisis.org.uk/>

Appendix 10: Summary checklist from Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) (2018)

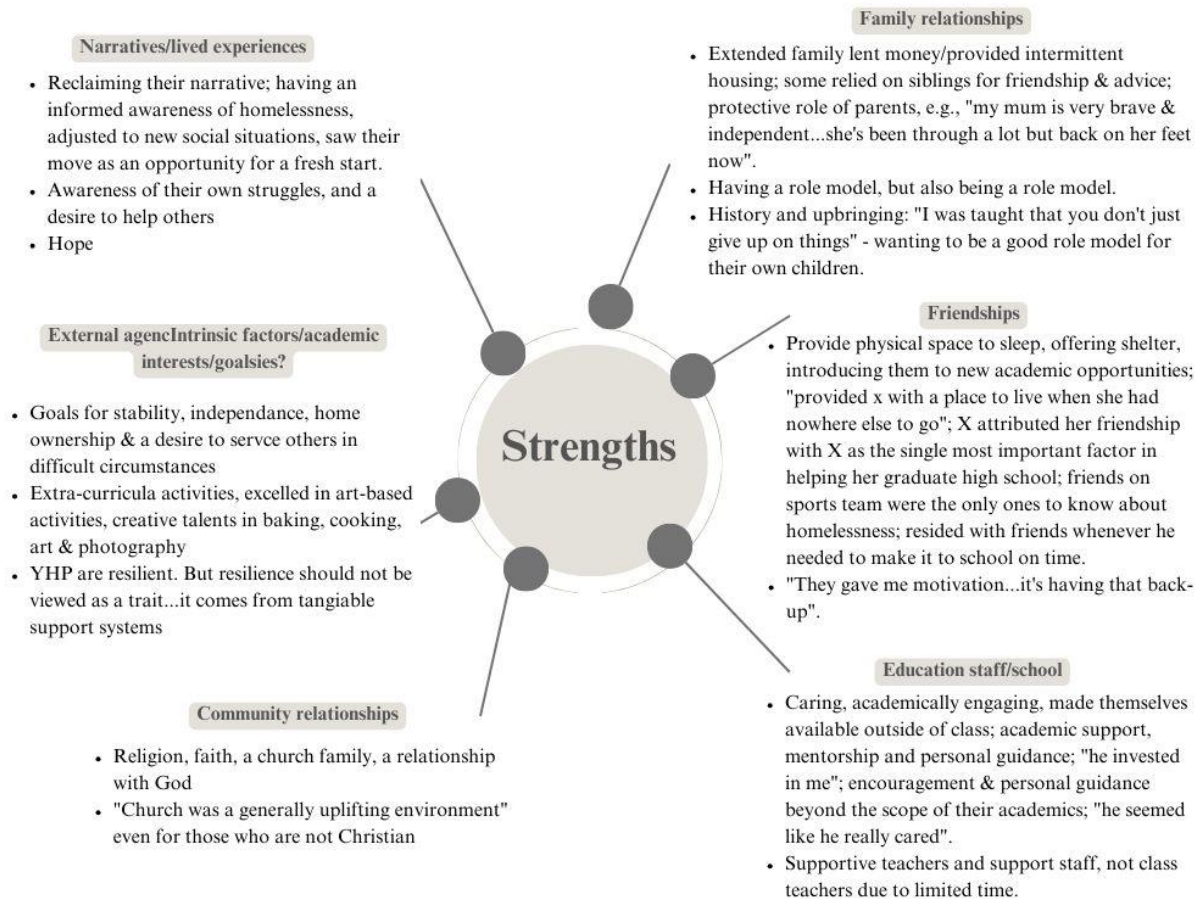
	Clear research aims	Was qualitative methodology appropriate?	Was the research design relevant to the aims?	Recruitment strategy	Data collection	Researcher positionality	Ethical considerations	Rigor of data analysis	Clear statement of findings	Value of findings
Mulrenan et al (2020)	✓	✓	✓	Email to schools for participants to sign up	Interviews and focus groups	X	Informed consent, signpost to further support	TA Researcher revisited data numerous times to check codes	✓	What supports YHP access to higher education Recommendations for universities to support YHP
Jones et al (2018)	✓	✓	✓	Partnered with local youth-serving organisation supporting YHP – they shared research flyers and resources	Questionnaire then interview using life course framework	X	Informed consent	Expertise in research area by team, member checking, multiple coders	✓	Recommendations to improve educational outcomes for YHP

Edwards (2023)	✓	✓	✓	10-month outreach initiative with community stakeholders	Interviews	✓	X	Validity checks – member checks with YP	✓	Challenge the negative discourse of educational outcomes for YHP Highlights protective factors for YHP in education
Pavlaiki & Pryor (2021)	✓	✓	✓	Recruited from homeless charity, invitation to participate	Interviews	✓	X	Multi-step coding process; Separate coding, checklist for alignment of codes before group coding	✓	Understanding experiences of YHP and how this can impact on education Intersectionality with race
Gupton (2017)	✓	✓	✓	Introduced through staff member – recruited from emergency/l	Interviews	✓	X	Extensive field notes provided to external reviewer to check for researcher's	✓	Understanding of YHP experiences and impact on education

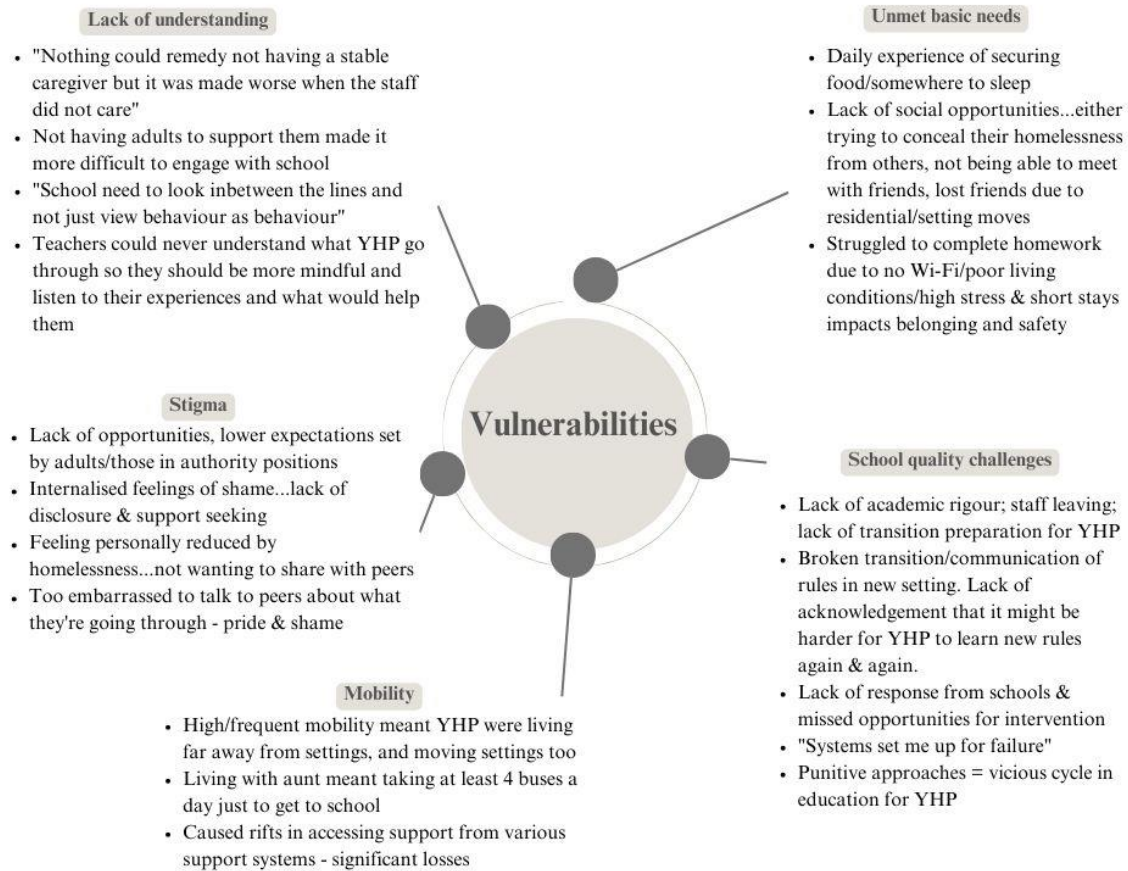
				ong-term shelter				interpretati ons, research reflexivity throughout		
Moore & McArth ur (2011)	✓	✓	✓	Through homelessness and family support networks and children's youth centres. Stakeholders contacted, families shared research invite with other families	Interviews & child friendly approaches	X	X	X	✓	Understandin g of homeless experience and impact on education
Toolis & Hamma ck (2015)	✓	✓	✓	Nonprobability sampling, guests of the shelters approached by researcher	Narrative interviews	X	X	Narrative analysis: bottom-up analysis of each story, line-by-line coding, multiple	✓	Experiences of YHP and how they make meaning of their lived experience; YHP are able

				where they volunteered				readings, drawing patterns from the data, themes repeatedly refined.		to resist and challenge negative perceptions around homeless youth.
Pescod (2024)	✓	✓	✓	Invited to initial meeting with the researcher before giving informed consent	Interviews	✓	Procedural and wider ethics considered	IPA – recorded interviews – researcher transparency	✓	Experiences of YHP in education, drawing links to psychological theory – SDT and the role of motivation
Day (2002) EXCLUDED	✓	✓	Interviews with YP and teachers	Theatre company book to deliver workshop	Not clear	Not clear	Not clear	Not clear	✓	Impact of the workshop on participants being more 'moral' – not much value to my research.

Appendix 11: SLR: Descriptive themes: Strengths



Appendix 12: SLR: Descriptive themes: Vulnerabilities



Appendix 13: SLR: Summary of main themes and findings from chosen papers

Study	Main themes	Summary of findings
Mulrenan et al (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness and education participation • Individual characteristics • Supportive relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Homelessness significantly impacted YHP's education ⇒ YHP have strengths which support them in education, particularly strengths within their relationships ⇒ Self-determination, which may emerge from their personal circumstances supports YHP to engage with & complete their studies ⇒ Having determination and resilience, a purpose and family relationships supported YHP in education ⇒ Family and friendships were supportive of YHPs education.
Jones et al (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive professionals • Relational approaches • Lack of awareness of YHPs situation • Mental health • Discrimination, oppression and stigma • Mobility • Mental health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ The use of relational approaches is important to support YHP in education ⇒ Caring, understanding, supportive adults can provide stability in a YHPs life which supports wellbeing and education ⇒ Importance of YHPs relationship with professionals as key factor for success in education ⇒ The impacts of homelessness are exacerbated when positive staff-pupil relationships are not formed ⇒ YHP experienced high mobility, a lack of agency over their lives, and a distrust towards the systems there to protect them ⇒ YHP reported feeling isolated ⇒ Missed opportunities for intervention by schoolsLack of understanding by education settings and professionals
Edwards (2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religion, faith and spirituality • Practical support • Mobility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Positive relationships are key to education success of YHP ⇒ Adults who are caring, offer time, look beyond pupils' behaviour are supportive of YHP

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ The practical implication of homelessness, mobility, made it more difficult for YHP to attend education ⇒ The importance of physical and psychological safe places for YHP, such as church; Church was a safe place because there was no judgement ⇒ Peer relationships, caring professionals, and attending church supported YHP to graduate high school ⇒ Tangible support such as a place to sleep was valued amongst YHP ⇒ YHP often experienced high mobility meaning accessing education was more difficult
Pavlakakis & Pryor (2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility • Supportive relationships • Discrimination, oppression and stigma • Future aspirations • School structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ YHP have inherent personal strengths which can be built upon ⇒ Interpersonal strengths, such as self-reflectiveness and having aspirations, support YHP in education. ⇒ Relationships from school, with family and in community are key in supporting YHP ⇒ YHP also experienced challenges which can prevent education engagement, such as mobility, systemic failing and intersectionality with racism ⇒ YHP had a greater awareness of socio-political issues ⇒ YHP had hope for a better future and aspirations such as financial security ⇒ Family, school and community support was vital in support YHP ⇒ High mobility often meant YHP were wrenched from support systems ⇒ School quality issues, such as lack of transition preparation for YHP

Toolis & Hammack (2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual characteristics • Discrimination, oppression and stigma • Sense of belonging and community 	<p>⇒ Some YHP engage in narrative transformations where they reclaim their story as a source of strength and resilience</p> <p>⇒ Such narrative transformation is paramount for YHP to have hope and motivation for a better future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YHP have acknowledged and reflected on the social stigma and negative perceptions surrounding homelessness, which may act as a motivator to prove others wrong • YHP constructed alternative narratives of their homelessness story which supported their wellbeing and education • YHP acknowledged that they were constructed as 'bad people' but they were in fact in 'bad circumstances' <p>⇒ Some YHP have a sense of belonging with other homeless people</p>
Moore & McArthur (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility • Homelessness and education participation • Mental health • Individual characteristics • Discrimination, oppression and stigma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending and engaging in education was more difficult when experiencing homelessness due to constant mobility and disruption • YHP were exposed to high stress, loss and grief and social isolation • Challenges in finding and reconnecting to new schools meant some YHP left education early • YHP placed great value on education <p>⇒ YHP were often embarrassed about their circumstances</p>
Gupton (2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness and education participation 	<p>⇒ YHP face many barriers to accessing support</p> <p>⇒ YHP have internalised stigma and shame surrounding homelessness meaning they are less likely to share with others and receive support</p> <p>⇒ Being identified as homeless can be a vulnerability for some YHP due to the shame surrounding it</p> <p>⇒ If a YHP can engage in education, it has the power to be a significant protective factor</p>

		<p>⇒ YHP are invisible in education</p> <p>⇒ Being able to blend in with other students helped to relieve some of the stresses of homelessness</p> <p>⇒ YHP might struggle to access support. The YHP did not seek out the institutional support on offer</p> <p>⇒ Education can provide stability in the lives of YHP which supports their resilience</p>
Pescod (2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding failure • Future aspirations • Motivation • Support in setting • Basic needs 	<p>⇒ Education is a way of building a better future and avoiding further adversity in adulthood</p> <p>⇒ YHP were motivated to engage in education to improve their life circumstances</p> <p>⇒ Some experienced negative shifts in motivation towards education or a lack of drive to engage</p> <p>⇒ YHP felt they needed additional support in school</p> <p>⇒ YHPs SEN needs prevented access to education</p> <p>⇒ Experience of academic failure reinforced difficulty accessing education</p> <p>⇒ Some education professionals were supportive which supported YHP in education, but many had experience of unsupportive education professionals</p> <p>⇒ YHP struggled to access resources to meet their basic needs resulting in reduced capacity to engage in education</p>

Appendix 14: Guided narrative interview prompt cards

What are your hopes and dreams for the future?



If you had a wish for your future, what would you wish for?



Can you tell me about your experiences of education?



How did/does your living situation impact your learning/education?



When in education, what was helpful?



When in education, what was NOT helpful?



What has helped you to get through those experiences in education so far?



Thinking back to your education, what would have helped you more?



Thinking about your future, how might some of your strengths help you?



Interview Schedule



Phase 1 - Eliciting narratives about their hopes for the future.

- *What are your hopes and dreams for your future?*
- *If you had a wish for your future, what would you wish for?*

Phase 2 - Eliciting narratives about their past educational experiences and being homeless.

- *Can you tell me about your experiences of education? How did you feel in education?*
- *How did your experience of not having a long-term home impact your experience/view of education?*
- *When in education, what was helpful? What was unhelpful?*

Phase 3 - Strengths & resources.

- *What helped you to get through your experiences so far? What protective factors helped you get through some of the experiences you've shared?*

Phase 4 - Exploring how can these strengths & resources be used in their future?

- *Can you tell me about how you might use some of your strengths to help you in your future?*
- *How might they help to achieve your future goals?*
- *What would have helped in school?*

field notes after interviews



Matthew

- ✦ He appeared nervous at first. At the end he shared that he was nervous he wouldn't have anything to say.
- ✦ Evident he's been through a lot in his life so far yet he remains somewhat positive about his future life.
- ✦ Lots of pauses and emphasised speech. Possibly because he was sharing some difficult / vulnerable parts of his story.
- ✦ Using the life path helped to track the conversation and enabled Matthew to see how resilient he's really been / are.
- ✦ Feel a little worried that he hasn't been in education however he has engaged in further training, and I think there's valuable lessons to be learned from his story for other YHP and professionals.

Sam

- ✦ The interview focused a lot on football but I think it was deeper than that?
- ✦ Use of humour
- ✦ College education seemed most impacted?
- ✦ Seemed happy, safe + settled in the hostel.
- ✦ But no longer interested in education.

Charlie 

- ✓ Successful college experience
- ✓ Interlink w. SEND → Autism.
- ✓ Gained a place at university
- * Used humour to tell story - wondering if this is around nervousness & sharing difficult stories?
- * Powerful message around not being able to transition to university due to homeless circumstance. This really made me reflect on my privileges.

Appendix 17: Example of a working transcript

<p><i>Story episode 1</i></p> <p>S: A lot of moves and it was really awkward because around the time I'd be doing me GCSEs and I had to like change from the school at been at since I started in year 7</p>	<p>Moving schools due to homelessness</p> <p>Reflecting on challenge of that experience to education</p>
<p><i>Story episode 2</i></p> <p>Well it wasn't just that obviously we were the first set of year 11s that we couldn't do our exams at the normal time</p>	<p>Movement in topic</p> <p>Reflecting on further challenge in education due to impact of pandemic</p>
<p><i>Story episode 3</i></p> <p>They were alright with it at first but then the staff started getting really funny with it</p>	<p>Movement in topic</p> <p>Reflections on support from adults in education setting</p>

Sam's holistic-content analysis

[Holistic-Content Analysis]

Personal reflections

Samuel's transcript

Table 2: Samuel's story analysed

- o Working transcript organised into segments with fabula underlined

Transcription coding:

- o (.) less than a second pause
- o (1.0) length of second pause etc.
- o (-) interruptions
- o (;-(overlapping)) overlapping speech
- o CAPITALS word emphasised
- o (action) non-verbal communication
- o (Oo-o-o) held sounds
- o (xxxx) garbled speech
- o I thought "I'm in control now") paraphrasing others

Fabula underlined

- Fab1 – start of fabula 1 etc.

1

A: So what I normally do (.) to start with-; (overlapping)

S: Yeah

A: Is thinking about like (.) who you are as a person (.) so erm (4.0) so like things that you like doing

S: Is it like a fine marker pen?

A: Yeah (2.0) so theres like (.) that side (presenting pen) and then there's a thinner side;- (overlapping)

S: Its really thin

A: I know (laughing) and you can't see that very well actually (4.0). Are you into drawing and stuff?

S: I've not been a massive fan of it.

Notes/Comments

Blue text: Initial descriptions for entire text of fabula

Purple text: Initial descriptions for entire text of sjuzet

Themes:

T1: Football

T2: Future goals

T3: Relational support

T4: Moves + mobility

T5: Systemic challenges

T6: Competing priorities + basic needs

T7: Lack of staff understanding.

- o Introductory conversation

- o N/A

A: No (.) Are you a good drawer?

S: NO (laughing)

A: (laughing) oh I was going to say don't judge my drawing (laughing)

S: I'm good at drawing stickmen if that counts.

2

A: Yeah I can just about manage stickmen (4.0). Ok so (.) yeah (.) is it ok to start there (.) so what kind of things do you like doing?

S: Playing football.

A: Playing football (2.0) so we've got football (drawing) (4.0) so who do you support?

S: Hull City.

A: Hull City (drawing) (4.0) what else (2.0) do you like doing? (.) or does football dominate everything? (laughing)

S: Football dominates everything but (.) I really like WWE and (.) building Lego:- (overlapping)

A: Oo (2.0) yeah (drawing) do you watch that [WWE] a lot then?

S: Yeah (3.0) and building Lego yano like Lego city

A: Ahh nice (3.0) yeah (3.0) anything else?

S: Spending time with me mates.

3

A: yeah (drawing) cool. And so (.) your (2.0) living here at the minute:- (overlapping)

S: Yeah

A: So how (.) long have you been here now then?

S: So I've been here (.) since January (3.0) so I believe it's actually 10 months today.

Samuel shared that the following things are important to him:

- *Football and Hull City are important to him.*
- *Watching WWE and building Lego*
- *Spending time with friends*

* Football / Sport ⇒ personal interest / hobby.
"Football dominates" suggesting its very important to J.

Connection w. peers is protective

Shift in topic: From important things to current living situation

A: Aww (.) so coming up to a year then?

S: Yeah..yeah.

5

A: Yeah, ten months today (3.0) so yeah (.) I guess it would be good then (.) to find out (.) so (.) if I put like over here (pointing) NOW (drawing) so you're in here (.) YMCA for almost a year (5.0) and what else does life look like for you now at the minute? Are you in college at the minute?

Shift in topic: Talking about life NOW for Samuel

Fab: Samuel is in a voluntary job with the hostel charity he lives with.

S: No I'm not I'm in a voluntary job.

A: Oo-o-o- so what's (.) what's that?

S: YMCA charity.

A: Ahh cool (4.0) so if that something that (.) you saw (.) and thought I;- (overlapping)

Voluntary job through the help of hostel staff.

6

S: Err no it was through the help of X (2.0) so I did have a paid job when I came ere (.) but I was unlawfully sacked when I did me knee

Shift in topic: Talking about when he had a job and knee injury and the impact its had on sleep and wellbeing

Fab: Samuel had a job when he came to the hostel but was sacked due to a knee injury; Samuel plays for a football team; Samuel feels like he is losing at the minute due to not having a job and not being able to play; lack of routine.

A: Ohh you're joking

S: No so I play for a football team as well (.) so (.) and I dis- it (.) I basically (.) I dislocated my knee (xxxx) at the same time.

A: Right

S: And (2.0) it put me off (.) it put me off some time (.) when they sacked me (2.0) in last few months (.) obviously (3.0) err staff had noticed (.) how (.) what's what's the word for it (.) erm (.) I'm just like losing at the minute so I had to stay up till like 4 in the morning 5 in the morning and not wake up til like 1 oclock in the afternoon;- (overlapping)

Feels like he's losing due to not being able to play.

A: yeah

7

S: and then (.) they [hostel staff] do know

Shift in topic: What works well for Samuel and hostel staff understanding and supporting this

Hostel Staff knowing/understanding

that (.) I am (2.0) I am better (.) when I'm busy. On one level I've GOT to keep busy.

Fab: Samuel feels he does better when busy and the hostel staff know this.

A: Yeah (4.0) that's really important (.) having that, some kind of structure or routine;- (overlapping)

S: yeah

A: To feel like you're doing better when you've got that in place

S: yeah

8

A: So how long have you been in that voluntary job then?

Shift in topic: Back to voluntary job

S: Literally star- like today.

Fab: Samuel's official start date for voluntary job was that day; he previously worked for other charities; one of these jobs was impacted by the covid pandemic.

A: Ah-h-h really. So its brand new. Ah-h-h that's great (.) so have you been there today is that what you've been doing?

S: Yeah yeah (.) but I'd say I've got like (.) other (3.0) I've had the experience so its not my first charity.

A: Right yeah yeah so its not your first experience

S: I've worked for autism plus, British heart foundation but that shut down

A: Oh really

S: Yeah one got affected by Covid

A: Ah-h-h a lot of things happened with that didnt it

S: yeah

9

A: So did you say you play for a football team?

Shift in topic: Back to football, Samuel's passion

S: yeah

Fab: Samuel plays for a football team.

A: Good so you've got your football team (2.0) is that like weekly or

10

Shift in topic: Samuel's injury and its impact

S: Weekly but obviously I'm still out on an injury

Fab: Samuel plays weekly with his team but still out on injury which happened in July; hoping to be able to play again in another month.

A: Oh yeah. Is that quite annoying for you and frustrating?

S: I've been now (.) I've been out on injury since (.) July. And its gunna be another month yet (3.0) so my knees just started getting better so (.) its got like (.) giving it time to strengthen itself up

A: yeah thats the thing you don't wanna go back too soon do ya (.) because you dont wanna like (2.0) damage it basically (.) before its fully better

S: yeah but normally (.) we train once or twice a week and play matches on a weekend

**Football features massively in S's life.*

11

Shift in topic: Teammates

A: Aw-w-w (drawing) (7.0) and you've got your teammates and stuff (.) I imagine you get on with;- (overlapping)

Fab: Samuel gets along with teammates

S: yeah yeah i get along- (.) yeah

Teammates

A: (5.0) is there anything else that feels like (2.0) pretty big and important in your life right at the minute (.) so maybe things that you do or?

S: Er-r-r (7.0) you like it colourful? (referring to graphic)

A: Yeah (laughing)

12

Shift in topic: Family pets

S: Er-r-r (3.0) probably my err (.) dogs at home my parents

Fab: Samuel's family dogs at his biological parent's house are important to him.

A: What dogs you got?

S: Erm ive got a new fouler (3.0) two yorkshire terriers and ive got like a (.) staffy

A: Aw-w-w nice (3.0) and also how old are you now?

S: 20

A: 20 now

S was disadvantaged due to Covid + moving schools

Moving schools

S: yeah

13

A: So (.) before you moved in here then (.) where (.) so like where was you before if we are to work backwards

S: well last 3-years i've actually lived in two different places

A: right

S: last year (.) I spend the year back at my parents (3.0) but five years before last year I spent it in foster care

A: right

S: But I have (.) I've I've been in like (.) 3 different foster parents

A: Ah so you've had a lot of moves?

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S: A LOT of moves and it was really awkward because (.) around the time I was moving (.) was around the time I'd be doing me GCSEs and I had (.) I had I had to like (.) change from the school I'd been at since (.) since I started in year 7 (2.0) and then I got transferred to X but it was (.) because in English (2.0) especially it was a completely different like (.) set up to what they were doing

A: yeah yeah that's so annoying isn't it, yeah so that sounds like it impacted you during that time

15

S: Well it wasn't just that (.) obviously (.) we were the first set of year 11s that we couldn't do our exams at the normal time (2.0) like we got based on our mocks before lockdown (2.0) so we had- a lot of us got based on our mocks

A: Hmm (4.0) and was that (.) for some people that worked quite well but for others it didn't really

S: No cos some of em, yano like when you're so many marks off a pass (2.0) and

Shift in topic: Life before hostel, living with biological parents and foster care

Fab: Samuel has had multiple moves so far in his life; last year he was living with his biological parents but before he was in foster care; previously had 3 different foster placements.

Shift in topic: Moving during education, GCSEs

Sjuzet: 'A LOT of moves' - emphasis on the 'LOT' which suggests he recognises he has had a lot of residential moves. Use of the word 'awkward' to imply it was an uncomfortable/challenging time for him.

Fab: Moving homes/placements around time of GCSEs; moved from secondary school to a new secondary school but the English curriculum was entirely different.

Shift: Lockdown, moving and impact on education

Fab: Impact of covid on education - Samuel's results were based on mocks due to being in Y11 at time of lockdown.

its one of them (shrugging)

A: Yeah

Fab: Samuel was a few marks from a pass.

S: Especially for maths and english where its like (.) you've got to go back in september and do it in college

S disadvantaged in covid GCSE process which meant he had to do them in college as well as his chosen course.

Fab: Have to re-do Maths & English if don't get GCSE in secondary school.

16

Shift: Moving schools

A: hmm (4.0) yeah (.) it was such a weird time wasn't it Covid (.) had such a weird affect on things

S: Yeah

A: Okay so (.) different (.) like (2.0) different moves and different foster families, parents, then different moves with different schools (.) is that like;- (overlapping)

S: Yeah yeah so two. I was like 2 primaries and 2 secondaries (2.0) but the two primaries was more down to the fact of (2.0) my parents just moving out of town.

Possible homelessness when living with family?

- UNFINISHED ELEMENT OF STORY!! -

Fab: Samuel went to 4 different schools (2 primaries and 2 secondaries) but primary moves were due to parents' residential moves.

Shift: Birth parents

17

A: yeah yeah (.) erm and then you said so last year you went to live with your parents

Fab: Samuel lived with biological parents last year.

S: Yeah

A: Yeah and do you mean your birth parents then?

S: Yeah

A: Yeah ok. And so when you was living with your parents. I guess as soon as you finished secondary school (.) did you like start any other college or anything?

18

S: I went to college for 2 and half years.

A: Oh did you

S: Yeah

A: So was that whilst-

S: No that was while I was in care.

A That was whilst you was in care
(drawing)

S: Hmm (agreeing sound)

A: And how was college then? Was it a positive experience or

19

S: A bit of both really. Because obviously I passed my level one (.) but obviously when coming into our second year (.) we had a lot of erm (.) issues like (.) people not focusing in practical, and it really bugged us up because (.) we was doing level 1 and 2 and going onto our level 3 (2.0) Level 3 because (.) things broke down with my foster parents whilst I was doing it and I moved back up to X to my parents but the issue is my college (.) I was going to a college in XXX so then I I (.) I did my level 1 and 2 and passed it but when I when I went to do my level 3 (.) I was only there for like about half a year and I cant finish the course cos like travelling from XXX to XXX was too much.

A: Oh yeah that's massive isn't it. So like travel;- (overlapping)

S: It was too much at the time, massive trek

A: Yeah so that sounded like it might have prevented you from completely your level 3

S: Hmm (agreeing sound)

20

A: What about like, did the staff know about homelessness

Shift: College experience

Fab: S went to college for 2.5 years whilst he was in foster care.

Shift: Issues with college

Fab: S had positive & negative experiences in college.

He passed his level 1 qualification.

Other students in cohort were not focusing which made level 2/3 difficult.

Multiple moves → high travel requirements

During S's level 3, his placement at college broke down at the same time as his foster care placement broke down.

S was unable to complete his final year of college due to moving back in with biological parents and being too far away from college which made getting there difficult for him.

The journey was too much for S.

Shift: Education experience at college &

that at the time (.) at college? Did they know you was having to travel?

Worked well at the beginning when staff were supportive.

S: They was alright with it at first but then the staff starting getting really funny with it.

Fab: College staff were supportive at first, but this changed over time.

A: Yeah, hmm (drawing) hmm. So it sounds like staff, yeah, not being helpful. Did you have any adults in college that were supportive?

S: Erm my erm (.) my actual (.) erm (.) course leader XXX.

A: Yeah and how were they supportive?

S: Yeah he understood my situation. He was fine so obviously the issue (.) a lot of my issue getting into college on time would be (.) well (.) you know like a lot of the villages around XXX are really small and the first bus would be like 8 o'clock but they'd be no chance I'd be able to get from XXX to XXX in one hour (.) so (.) the agreement was I'd be, I'd (.) me form tutor (.) he's let me start at 10 but then because of the buses getting back (.) he'd let me finish a bit earlier so I could get home.

The only supportive adult in college was S's course leader.

Form tutor made reasonable adjustments. Positioned as caring.

S's course leader knew him well and made adjustments in provision for him, e.g., later start time and earlier finish to S could make it home safely.

Lived in a small village so public transport links not frequent.

A: How long would it have been in a day then of travelling then to and from college do you think?

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S: Erm, oh now you're asking me summet (laughing) erm (5.0) I'd got a 15-minute bus journey, then I'd got a 45-minute bus journey, and then I've got an half an hour train ride and then a 20 minute walk from the station (.) the train station to the college itself.

Shift: Past travel requirements

Fab: Multiple public transport per day to get to college

A: So that's 1hr 50 one way then so you'd have to do that twice?

S: Yeah coming back.

A: Ohhh, yeah. So that times two (drawing). That's a lot. That is really a lot yeah. So that very understandably made things like quite difficult for you to get to

Travel difficulties

college.

S: Yeah

22

A: Okay so that's helpful (2.0) so then college for 2 and a half years. Was that when, did you finish college, and then moved in with your parents?

S: Erm no they kicked me out so I went to my parents and then I finished (.) I had to drop out of course for a few weeks (2.0) and that was at the start of last year.

A: And then, have you enrolled in anything since then?

S: No no.

A: Yeah, and is there like (.) is there is there a reason for not enrolling (.) have you got other goals or things you want to do?

23

S: Its not that it's more like I just that I wanted to get a paid job.

A: Yeah yeah (drawing) Yeah so its thinking about what is right for you and that will be different for everyone won't it (overlapping)

24

S: And then obviously (.) a lot of time (.) my parents last year it was more like getting settled back into family and stuff cos I hadn't seen any of me family for like 5-years; (overlapping)

A: Yeah different priorities and stuff (drawing) so okay (.) and then you mentioned your parents kicked you out (.) and is that (.) did you then come here?

25

S: Its really odd cos because my parents are one of them where theyd kick you out on the streets for the night (.) and it could happen at like throughout the year (.) a few times I was spending a night on the street (2.0) and then they did it around New Year time this year (.) and then that's when me social worker got involved and went "no that's enough" and then he had to put me in a hotel for about 5 days (.) until the Monday

Shift: Parent relationship breakdown & impact on college

Became homeless = dropped out of college

Fab: Foster placement broke down, S moved back in with biological parents but they kicked him out, preventing him from completing college.

Not enrolled in education since then.

Shift: Current focus on employment rather than education

Fab: Priority is getting a job, not college

Shift: Priority was settling into family, not education

Fab: S not seen family in 5-years so the priority was to settle back into his family, not college.

Competing priorities

Basic needs → safety + shelter.

Shift: Experience of hidden homelessness (being kicked out onto the streets for the odd night) & immediate support from hostel

Fab: When living with parents, they would often kick him out for the night, and he would sleep on the streets; happened over New Year and social worker got involved and placed him in a hotel as emergency accommodation; then moved into the current hostel where S has been ever since.

A challenge to education?

Vulnerability

so that I could come here (.) cus normally (.) here you'd have an interview and then you'd wait and wait for a room but because of me situation it was more like it was interview and same day moving in if that makes sense.

- Supportive intervention from social worker

A: Yeah so it was an immediate kind of support and stuff yeah (2.0) yeah so there was a bit of moving like hotel and your social worker yeah (.) that that kind of like all led to being here

S: Yeah

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Shift: Back to life at the hostel, wanting a job

A: How has it been here then for you?

S: I've settled in yeah (.) but its more like (.) its (.) its trying K- (.) its no disrespect to (.) the hostel or owt but (.) a lot of us do want a job but its like really hard when you've got to stick to the 16 hour (.) working 16 hours a week when (.)

Fab: S has settled into hostel but challenge lies with the 16-hour working rule; S wants to work more if he could.

Rules impede S's goal of working / earning money

A: Ah-h-h so you can't do anymore than 16 hours

S: No

A: Ah-h-h

27

Shift: Challenge with wanting a job but not able to work full-time

S: And that's the bit that I'm finding hard at the minute

A: Yeah (overlapping)

S: I tryna find a paid job (2.0) cos a lot of places nowadays (.) they're wanting fulltime workers you know like 40 hours a week (overlapping)

Fab: S is struggling to find a job which will give him 16-hrs because most want full-time workers.

A: Yeah (2.0) yeah (drawing)

S: But its harder for me cos obviously (.) I used to work last year (.) I used to do 5 or 6 shifts a week (.) in and so im like used to working (.) full time if that meks sense

Can't work as much as they'd like due to living circumstances.

A: Yeah so it must feel like quite a shift in, a S used to work full-time last year so this gear change basically cos you can't do transition has felt difficult.

more than 16-hours.

S: Yeah

A: Yeah yeah (.) and is that (.) so if you did do more than 16-hours would you not be able to live (.) here?

S: I don't think its (.) not (.) I don't think its more like right you've got a fulltime job now we're gonna kick you out I think its like (.) I think if there's some agreement then your rent would probly go up which is fair that's fine (.) but like obviously (.) at the same time if you've got a fulltime job and youre wanting to move they will support ya (.) yano to like look for a place and make sure you're settled in (.) like obviously (.) they aint gonna like (.) give you a date and if you ant got nowhere to live by then then they just chuck you out on street (.) they're just gonna keep extending it until you have somewhere to live

→ Hostel staff will support even with moving out.

Fab: If a YP secures a full-time job, the hostel will support them to either move out or their rent and bills will go up. The hostel will never kick someone out because of this, they will make sure you are settled and safe first.

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A: yeah yeah (.) it sounds like (.) the staff are quite supportive here

Shift: Support from staff, humanness in relationships

S: I would say that from my experience (.) but every now and then (.) yano its one of them where everyone gets on everyones nerves (.) every now and then

→ Family-like relationships?

Fab: Hostel staff have been supportive for S but they have their moments too.

A: Yeah-h-h-h and that's normal isn't it (overlapping)

S: Especially when youre seeing em (.) the same people every day

A: Yeah (.) yeah (.) rhats it cos you get that relationship and then (.) you can kind of like, not that politeness goes but yano with that you can like speak more freely (overlapping)

Seeing hostel staff every day because that is his home.

S: You become more (.) yourself (.) don't you

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A: Yeah (2.0) What else is helpful about living here then? What what helps you?

Shift: Support from staff re. all issues

S: You've always got the support of the staff so you know like if you if you've got any like issues (.) where its personal or (2.0) dealing with girlfriend or boyfriend issues if you've got a partner (.) there like (.) they are there to like support ya.

Fab: Hostel staff provide all forms of support

Unconditional support from hostel staff from all angles.

A: Hmm.

S: and its one of them like (.) 9 times out of 10 (.) you can go to the office whenever you want and ask for a chat

Reliable, easy, safe.

A: Ah-h-h, hmm. And I suppose its probably not like that (.) everywhere you go *Can ask for a chat at the office.* really is it

S: No (.) no (.) but either ya know (.) ya know for example if I (.) if I went to XXX at some point and then I (.) said I need help to manage me money better then they would do that.

A: Ah yeah so they kind of offer support (overlapping)

Help with managing money.

S: All angles (.) or like (.) you know if you went to XXX (.) giving her like (.) you know for example you know how lads will probably just go buy a takeaway go and eat a load of crisps and chocolate (.) you know like if you wanted to (.) like make a (.) yano start eating proper meals and start eating healthier (.) they will ACTUALLY go to shop wi ya and help ya do what (.) they WILL do that.

→ Parental roles taken by staff? Supporting independent living / healthier lifestyles

A: So its like that support from lots of different angles really int it.

Holistic support provided, e.g., eating healthier.

Emphasis on 'ACTUALLY' to suggest they really do provide that support; they follow through with what they say they will do.

30

S: and then (.) you know like if in (.) yano cos obviously a lot of us are gonna be on

Shift: Problems with universal credit

Fab: Most YP living in hostel will be on UC to

universal credit living here for our rent and obviously (.) we pay our rent and our own electric and that (.) but erm cos I (.) cos I'm like being a care leaver being in foster care (.) like they pay for that in full (.) so I don't have to start paying that [council tax] out till I'm 21.

support their rent and bills.

S is a care leaver, so his council tax is paid for until he turns 21 in 6-months.

A: Yeah yeah.

S: It's kind of scary (.) its like 6 months and I've got to start paying it

Emotion: More financial responsibility causes disharmony in S.

A: Oh yeah it will be, yeah, and then things might feel a bit different (.) its like the systems int it (.) you know how you was saying about it's a struggle that you want to work full time but there's a 16 hour rule and its like the systems sometimes aren't (.) they don't make sense sometimes do they (.) it makes things difficult (overlapping)

S is scared about having to pay his council tax.

S: Yeah No yeah I know yeah

A: Erm (.) yeah (drawing)

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S: The only reason I kinda disagree about the 16 hour rule (.) is because you know (.) this is not to (.) its more like (.) we're gonna get used to budget- (.) obviously 16 hours you probably looking at like five six hundred quid a month

Shift: Problems with 16-hour rule and universal credit

Fab: S disagrees with the 16-hr rule

A: Hmm

S: But like if you're going into like fulltime working and you've (.) if you've lived here for two years but you've been working part time for two years (.) you're gonna get used to budgeting (.) ON (.) sixteen hours a week (.) but if you start bringing like a grand and half home (.) a month (.) you're just gonna flunk it.

*Transition from working part-time to full-time means YP in hostel are not prepared for managing money.
Emphasised 'ON'*

A: Yeah cos its almost like if youre doing that you need a bit of a transition but you're just gonna go from one to the other really aren't ya

S: Yeah (.) and people do do that (.) they just go and splash the cash free willy nilly.

Lack of preparedness for adulthood / independent living.

A: Yeah yeah. So its like (.) I suppose in one way it sounds like it might be quite helpful for some people to learn how to budget their finances but that can actually be difficult when you come to get a fulltime job because (.) theres been no like bridging the two

S: Yeah yeah

Difficulties with managing money.

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Shift: Social life at hostel

A: Hmmm (.) have you made friends living in here like other residents that you (.) what does that look like for you?

Contradiction

S: Two sides really (.) cuz obviously (.) staff do it (.) like (.) they there like (.) they don't like come and knock and force you to come out your room (.) like they will give ya your own space and everything but (.) yano like I don't know (.) every now and then they might try (.) and give you yano a bit of encouragement to come out your room and socialise just for your own benefit your own sake and your socializing skills (2.0) nine times out of ten I DO (.) come out me room a lot (.) but cuz obviously I get along with pretty much (.) everyone in here (.) so (.) they all know me (.) if I if I stay in my room sometimes (.) chances are they know (.) they probably just know I'm in a really bad mood

Fab: Has friends in hostel and gets on with everyone but likes his own space. Hostel staff will encourage ppl to come out their rooms to socialise.

Staff want the best for their yp + try encourage yp to socialise.

→ knowing S + what his non-verbal communication means.

Emphasis on 'DO' to suggest he does mainly come out his room to interact with others. Exceptional circumstances when he doesn't.

A: Yeah yeah

S: Which is normally what id do

A: Yeah

When S stays in his room, it is likely because he's in a bad mood and people who know him well can anticipate this.

S: If I'm in a mood I just will not I will refuse to just come out my room

A: So like and I guess cos people know ya (.) and know you well enough to know (overlapping)

Likes own space when experiencing

uncomfortable emotions.

Shift: Living with others in hostel

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S: I mean don't get me wrong (.) you live with em so every now and then you are gonna get one or two where they will they will try they will just randomly come and try push your buttons (overlapping)

Fab: Normality around living with others & pressing each other's buttons.

A: Yeah (laughing)

S: I mean I'm guilty of it as well (.) about (.) ill have mates that are in a mood and ive just gone and tried it and that's it

→ Safety in relationships due to having an established relationship

A: Yeah yeah (.) like you say its kind of part and parcel when you live with somebody isnt it

S: Yeah yeah

A: its kind of what happens I get that (.) so its kind of a bit of both then like you say but the key thing I heard was people know you and know what (.) if you're in your room (.) what that means and stuff (3.0) is there anything else living here that's been helpful or not helpful as well?

Shift: Benefits of counsellor in hostel

34

S: Erm (.) the (.) in house counsellor (.) that they had

A: Aww cool how was that helpful?

S: Yeah at the minute it's a bit confusing all I know on my last appointment she said she wont be able to come for a bit (.) but its really good cos its one of them where you've got someone to talk to (.) and its 45minutes slot so its like if you've got any issues you can talk to her if you don't feel like talking to the staff

Fab: S can speak to the counsellor about any issues which he might otherwise not share with hostel staff – finds this helpful and supportive.

A: Yeah and that's good and I suppose because that person is a counsellor they will have some different skills, knowledge and training they can use to support you which might be quite helpful

S: Yeah

A: that sounds really helpful (.) again (.) not

many places have that (drawing)

S: No

A: Yeah so that's been helpful (.) is there anything (.) so we've talking about like the jump from working now and what you'll be able to work in the future (.) that is maybe less helpful for different reasons (overlapping)

Recognises that having access might be unique to this hostel's provision.

S: Yeah

35

A: Is there anything else that has felt like more of a challenge?

Shift: Jobs suitable to Samuel's interests, problems with job requirements and finance implications of education & qualifications

S: Bit of confusing cos obviously (.) everyone's got like (4.0) noones not (.) lads probably being lads but they probably not wanting to go out and be like yeah im gonna go work in an office nine to five like me myself (.) that's not for me I like to (.) I (.) where I was last year I don't mind it (.) it was good and I'd go back but its mor elike a lot of people erm (.) a lot of young people are wanting to be (.) yano like builders or something like that where you're out (.) like physical doing jobs but obviously (.) along the line (.) some of em are impacted cus obviously you gotta pay for your CSC (.) JSC and that and obviously (.) some some places to require you to go back to college but if youre like at my age where you've gotta pay for it yourself and you need that money youre kind of a like a standstill

Fab: Working 9-5 is not for S. A lot of YP want to have physical jobs but these require qualifications which need to be paid for.

Working 9-5 office job is not what S wants.

Systemic challenge of wanting to learn / gain qualifications but unable to do it due to finances.

A: Yeah-h-h-h that's really really helpful (drawing) again it's like cos of the system (3.0) and if you needed to go back to college but due to your age and the finances and stuff like that so its like (overlapping)

Dead-end for YP without the finances to get qualifications.

Shift: Dream job as a firefighter

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S: you see like cus obviously my dream job is a firefighter but obviously (5.0) the issue ive got is im sure (.) im not too sure if I do or not (.) so im still like you know like looking at like all about it and everything (.) but I don't know if you've gotta go back

Fab: Dream job is to be a firefighter but unsure if you need to go back to college.

Barrier for dream job is going back to college

college

A: Hmm and is there anyone here that has career advise?

S: Any job centre and that's where they [hostel] get a lot of their info (pointing to poster display on walls) like they'll use that "follow volunteering"

A: So like they've got good links with the job centre and stuff

Hostel link with the job center for information/careers advice.

S: Yeah

A: and how is that for you?

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Shift: Back to universal credit and problems with it

S: Well if you're on UC then nine times out of ten you'll be using it

A: Yeah yeah

S: But like if you got to (.) like if you go to a sixteen year old that's (.) living on his own and ya (.) you give him the option to apply for UC (.) chances are he probably (.) he might not even have a clue what you're on about

Fab: 16 YHP unlikely to understand UC

→ *Lack of agency, autonomy, informed consent - ?*

A: And I suppose sometimes (overlapping)

S: Cus obviously a lot of people at their age if you mention the word job centre (.) it feels like you're tryna give them that boot just to get them to work

→ *YP feeling forced to get into work before basic needs are met.*

A: Yeah yeah and sometimes that must be the least of someones priorities

Fab: Linking with job center can feel like forcing YP to work

S: Yeah yeah theres more basic things that come first (.) cus obviously if you (.) obviously job centre on UC give ya like payments every month don't they

A: Yeah

Fab: There are other priorities for YP

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S: if you're like (.) for example (.) if I was like sixteen seventeen and id just got kicked out or Im moving in (.) last thing id wanna do is someone moaning at me to get a job

A: Exactly

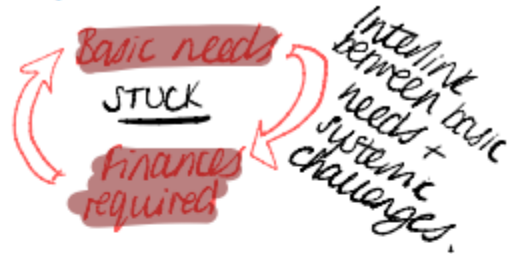
S: You'd wanna get your place sorted first wunt ya

A: Yeah

S: But at the same time you need money to do that as well

Shift: Priorities of a homeless young person

Fab: Different priorities



Want to get living situation sorted first – basic needs.

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A: Yeah (.) and also you wanna feel like (.) yano you're wanted and people care about you that's like really important (overlapping)

S: Yeah

A: Yeah and if you're getting those words at ya like straight away that sometimes can give you opposite message can't it

S: Yeah

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A: Yeah that's really good though that you're starting to think and wonder about being a firefighter so like (overlapping)

S: Well it's a lot if it (.) is due to (.) what happened to me

A: Hmm

S: So obviously (.) when I wa young (2.0) my great grandma actually (.) died in a housefire

A: Ohh gosh;- (overlapping)

S: So its more (.) a lot from that yano like

Shift: Wanting to feel cared for

Relationships + safety

Shift: Personal reasons for aspiring to be a fireman

→ Family trauma → S has used to inspire a career from Post-traumatic growth?

trying to stop other people losing family and friends (.) in a housefire

A: Oh wow gosh yeah, that is a lot (2.0)
Yeah so that's like;- (overlapping)

S: So I've like the reasoning for me like is not like ah its cool and everythink, I've got personal reasons.

A: Yeah really personal (.) and actually that's a real strength of yours that (.) that you've kind of had that really awful experience that I can't even imagine what that felt like (overlapping)

S: Yeah

A: But you've kind of like took that and (.) almost like (.) reframed it into using it as a strength like a personal strength like actually from that horrible experience you've kind of got this goal or dream of something you'd like to do to help others

Fab: Great grandma died in a house fire.

Want to help prevent others from going through what S went through.

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S: Yeah and not only that (.) that would like (.) not only are ya paid ff (.) it's a job (.)
yeah you're working 24 hours on but then (2.0) you have 24 hours off but then ya don't work for three days so in between

Shift: Benefits of being a fireman

Fab: Work schedule of firefighter means there's opportunity to have an additional job as well.

them three days off you can also have a part-time job as well

More opportunities to work in addition.

A: Yeah

S: But then with firefighters you get (.) you get access to the gym which is useful to keep fit

keeping fit in work

A: Yeah my uncle is a fireman actually (.) he doesn't do the fire side of things he does like the yano like the road traffic

Access to the gym to keep fit when working as a firefighter.

S: RTCs?

A: Yeah and saving cats up a tree and stuff like that and they do a lot of training in rivers they do really physical stuff like you say so yeah access to the gym or you can even do like flexible working

S: So basically he won't be in a pump engine

N/A

A: No (.) I don't think so (.) what's a pump engine? (laughing)

S: (laughing) a pump engine is a fire engine which will carry water which is the usual engine which will go to a house fire

A: Ah right okay

S: But the bit he's doing

A: Yeah

S: Won't have water if that meks sense itll have like tools for cutting roofs off cars

A: Ahh so different fire engines (.) some will be carrying water and some wont?

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Shift: Talk about fireman roles

S: Yeah

N/A

A: I didn't know that

S: So like if there's an RTC (.) on the M62 or summit

A: Yeah

S: but a cars had an accident but there's flames

A: Yeah

S: They'll have to send out two units

A: Yeah (.) oh gosh I didn't realise that

S: Yeah

A: No I didn't realise that

S: Not every fire engine carries water (laughing)

A: And it makes a lot of sense now you've said that (laughing) like yeah makes sense (.) yeah that's really good (2.0) so (.) is like staying fit, active (.) is all that stuff quite import;- (overlapping)

S: Cuz obviously (.) obviously they don't do a lot of like (.) responding to house fires but they do (.) if they're needed

A: Yeah they'll always have to be available won't they

S: Yeah

A: Yeah, yeah. Wow so yeah you've got like very personal (.) sort of (.) lived experiences really (drawing whilst talking) (4.0) what's like (.) this is a really big question (.) erm (.) so like, that experience (.) like I say I can't even imagine what that was like

S: Yeah

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A: And (2.0) some of your other experiences that may have been challenging at the time as well (.) what's helped you to like (.) keep going?

S: My mates from football

A: Have they?

Shift: Samuel's peers as source of support, bonding through football

→ * Link between friends + football

Fab: Friends from football have been supportive.

S: Yeah

A: Aw-w-w (drawing)

S: So like obviously they're (.) three of em
going (.) my mates from football (.) so we're
going away with our girlfriends to XXX (3.0)
we g we leave (.) we go Friday then we
don't come back till next Thursday.

→ *Holiday plans with friends
from Fairball*

Plans with friends to go away on a holiday.

A: Aw-w-w so you're going as well then
you're part of that?

S: Yeah

A: Aw-w-w nice

S: There's (4.0) there's a group of four of
us (.) that are staying (.) the full six nights

A: Yeah

S: But there's a small there's (.) like
another three or four of em

A: Yeah

S: That aren't able to book in but they can
still come down to watch XXX city play (.)
we all go to the games together if that
makes sense

Friends watch the football games together.

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Shift: Longevity of friendships

A: Yeah yeah (drawing) (4.0) and they sound like a supportive bunch of friends

S: Oh we we we've been mates for nearly (4.0) well me (.) and the (.) the boys that are going (2.0) we we've been (.) if we pop all (2.0) if we put (.) if I put erm mine and XXXs and mine and XXXs together (.) in total if you added it all together it'd be about thirteen years of friendship

Described as 'proper mates' due to longevity of friendships.

Friends → stability over the years.

A: Aw-w-w (3.0) wow (2.0) proper mates

S: Yeah

A: (drawing) hm-m-m (2.0) so they sound like (1.0) they've been there throughout it all really

S: Yeah

A: Erm yeah and yeah they sound like a good supportive;- (overlapping)

S: Especially X he's been there right from the start.

A: Aw-w-w (drawing) so yeah you've got some really good supportive strong knitted group of friends and X in particular has really helped you;- (overlapping)

S: Yeah

Best friend who has been there from the start

for S.

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A: What sorts of things (2.0) like to do with them has helped you like it is about being together or;- (overlapping)

Shift: Spending time together, talking about issues is supportive

S: Being together and like obviously (2.0) we all like to do things with our mates like if you need a walk we we'll all try to do it and so you can like (.) take your mind off it

Fab: Spending time together, going for walks, takes mind off problems.

A: Yeah yeah (drawing) (3.0) that's so important as well cos I think sometimes like men are not the best at like (1.0) talking (1.0) so if you've got like a supportive group then that's really really good (drawing)

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A: Is there anything else that's been like (.) helped you to get through some of these;- (overlapping)

Shift: Same social worker for 2 years has been helpful

S: Social worker

Fab: The same social worker S identified as supportive.

A: Social worker (drawing) (4.0) can you tell me a bit more about that?

S: I've had this social worker for nearly two years but obviously (2.0) the different stages you seem to get a different social worker (.) then I had one or two that I (2.0) that had randomly left and then I had to get a new one

→ stable relationships

S has had multiple social workers. 2 randomly left and he had to get a new one.

A: Yeah

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S: But this one I've had her for nearly two years

Shift: Changes in social worker has been difficult

Fab: S had same SW for nearly 2 years.

A: Yeah that's great cos like you say sometimes they can change often can't they

S: Yeah

A: And how have she supported you then?

S: I mean don't get me wrong in the foster care system basically i-i-i it is basically like you get used to one social worker and then

they'll go "right you're getting a new social worker" and you're just like (.) are you kidding I've just got used to this one social worker (2.0) and now I've gotta get used to another

→ Lack of continuity in SW relationships

Problems with getting a new SW frequently.

A: Yeah now its another adult that's coming into my life

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S: Yeah (.) especially if you've just gone into the care system and its happening when you're thirteen or fourteen

Shift: Changes in social worker was difficult when younger

Fab: Worse when younger in the care system.

A: Yeah

S: It wont the easiest time for me either because it was (.) I literally went into care on Christmas Eve

S went into care on Xmas Eve.

A: Did ya

S: Yeah

A: Wow

S: So it wont the easiest but the foster family at the time tried to make it (2.0) welcoming as possible yano like I'd been there for a while

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Shift: Painful memories

A: Hm-m-m yeah (2.0) yeah (.) that must've been really hard for you

S: Yeah and those memories stay with you in a way (5.0) cos obviously if you think about it too much (2.0) the chances are its gonna get you down again

Fab: Thinking about past can be challenging for S.

A: Yeah yeah (3.0) do you try and like (2.0) think about (1.0) your future like as opposed to your past or is it helpful for you to think about your past as well?

S: The issue is I'm constantly jumping between the two

A: Hm-m-m

S: And a lot of it will determine (1.0) yano like it really depends on what mood I'm in

Impact on mental health?

A: Yeah

Mental health impact

S: Like if I'm feeling a bit down in the dumps chances are I'm probably gonna think of all the (1.0) bad stuffs that's happened in ma life

A: Yeah that can happen when we're feeling down

S: Yeah

Snowball effect of feeling down = think about all challenges experience in life.

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Shift: Current family relationships

A: And do you have relationships with your family now and as always you only share what you feel comfortable sharing

S: Er-r-r I am and I'm not

Fab: Family relationships continue to be difficult

A: Yeah

S: Like I'm in contact with my brother but then again even while me and me dad was neck and neck wi eachother we used (1.0) me nd me brother (1.0) we've never really separated if ya know what I mean

Unconditional bonds with some family

Always close with brother

A: Yeah

S: Like I'll not see a lot of him but obviously like we never like drop contact

A: Yeah

S: But like I'm the eldest erm (1.0) my dad (2.0) we're slowly rebuilding the relationship to somewhat

Relationship with brother is important to S and continues despite not seeing one another frequently

A: Yeah

S: Me and me mum (2.0) it's done (1.0) on a really rocky road and one of me sisters I don't talk to and the other one (1.0) it really depends what mood she's in

Some family rels are ruptured.

S is the eldest out of him & his brother; S is slowly rebuilding relationship with his birth dad.

A: Yeah so its sort of taking it as it is

S: Basically tekin it with a pinch of salt

S trying not to get down about it?

Contradiction - not all family rels are supportive

Currently no relationship with mum and difficult relationship with his sisters.

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A: Yeah yeah yeah but actually you've got real strength and support in those other systems and relationships you spoke about like the staff her;- (overlapping)

Shift: Back to friendships

Football has facilitated friendships

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S: Best thing wo football and me mates cos obviously (1.0) we're like proper loyal XX city fans

Shift: Back to football and friendships as important to Samuel

Fab: S positions his friendships as his source of strength and the common shared interest of football have helped this to develop over time.

A: Yeah are ya

S: Like like I have all the kits (2.0) we're not one of these where we we've started supporting them in like 2013 when they won and we've been (.) a lot of us have been going to games since we were three four (1.0) like proper loyal (1.0) I remember me and X (.) we were sat there and got thumped by one of our roughest seasons and we were still there sit there at fulltime to see the players off the pitch

Shared core values: Loyalty

Fab: Been going to games since young age. S positions himself as a loyal fan, he's seen his team and their highest and lowest points.

A: Oh gosh

S: And then and then you have the times when you ball your eyes out cos you lost in the FA cup final in extra time and obviously like we'll follow England as well like I watched them last night but please don't ask me how it went down

His friend is alike in that he classes him as a loyal fan of their football club.

A: (laughing)

Follow England football too.

S: I get that some people might say that me and me mates take football too seriously but me and me mates would happily die for our team

Football is core to S's friendship circle + his identity. Positioned as couldn't live without it.

A: Yeah, yeah it sounds so important to you

Importance of football as protective factor

playing football as well

Football is positioned as crucial to S and his friends' life.

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S: Like people think obviously the thing that annoys me the most is when your team has lost and ya in a foul mood (1.0) the worst thing you can say to me then is (.) its just a game (.) no its not NO its not

Shift: Back to football as his no. 1 passion

Fab: Losing game is bad enough; even worse when someone says, 'it's just a game'.

Sjuzet: Emphasis on 'NO' to demonstrate his strength of feeling regarding this.

A: Oh yeah

S: That is just like a girl being really obsessed w/ makeup and we go to her "its just a bit of colour"

A: Yeah yeah (laughing) (2.0) well that's helpful to put it into perspective;- (overlapping)

Comparison to girls with makeup to again demonstrate how important football is to him & his identity.

S: It is tho innit you have got girls out there like that like literally cannot live without makeup and they'll wakeup at 4am to (.) put it on when they don't have to go out till ten

A: But it sounds like football has made a massive positive like;- (overlapping)

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S: You get you get like 2 hours of (2.0) not feeling any emotion (1.0) you're just there (.) chanting jumping celebrating (1.0) every now and then you have a bad game but still

Shift: Mental health benefit of football

Fab: Football positioned as an emotional escape for S – 2hrs of not feeling any emotion due to being fully immersed in the match.

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A: and is it as helpful when playing?

Shift: Playing football but starting from scratch due to recent injury

S: I LOVE playing it I love playing it

Fab: Playing football positioned as important to S as well as watching.

Sjuzet: Emphasis on 'LOVE' to showcase S's level of passion for football.

A: Have you always played as well?

S: Like I was in I was on the primary school team I was on the secondary school team (2.0) and then with the moving and foster care (1.0) I kinda like cunt continue through college (1.0) which has like put me back so when I go back after this injury I'm practically gonna feel like I'm back at square one with football so (1.0) guarantee

Fab: S was on football team throughout his primary and secondary education. But this couldn't continue due to his frequent residential moves & it ended in college. S feels this has put him behind in his football skill development.

An emotional escape.

like my touch is gonna be all over

A: Yeah

S: I'll have to build it back up and knowing
ma luck it'll take the coaches a while to
work out a position I'm comfy in as well

A: Yeah that's it (1.0) yeah (2.0) so
hopefully you're hoping in about a months
time you'll be able to get back into it

S: Yeah

A: Cos that must've been (.) felt like quite a
big loss not playing when its such a big part
of your life

S: But like havin a random kickabout with
me mates (1.0) that's like summer I've
always done

A: Yeah

* Football has been the 1
constant thing in S's life,
amongst all the changes he's
experienced. (Is this about the
football - or is it the safety?)

* Such a loss atm to not be
able to play due to his
injury.

Fab: Time is going to be key for S to build up
his skills and for his coaches to get to know how
to use him best on the pitch.

→ The interplay between football
& peers / connection.
Connection through football

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S: But obviously this is like like this is like
(1.0) probably me first ma- major team

A: Yeah

S: Yano like Saturday and Sunday league
team (.) I've never played in these before
because I never got these opportunities as
a kid with the issues I've gone through with
me story but obviously (1.0) I was like in
year 7 and 8 I was on the school football
team and everything so

A: So it sounds like its always been there in
your life

Fab: Bonding with friends through informal
football is important to S.

Shift: New opportunities which Samuel didn't
have during his childhood

Fab: S talks positively about his current
position with his football. First major team
which is in a Saturday/Sunday league. He
reflects that he never had these opportunities as
a child due to his circumstances.

Lack of opportunities due to
family / personal issues
throughout his childhood

S: yeah yeah

A: Sounds like it's been really important

Football has been central to S's life for as long as he can remember – central to his identity.

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A: So before we finish erm (2.0) are there any other like long-term or short-term goals or hope for your future

Shift: Long-term aspiration of a job and a permanent home

S: I (2.0) I don't know (1.0) it's gonna be long-term innit (2.0)

S was looking for reassurance – did he think it's possible? Looking for reassurance. Stability of full-time work + having a permanent home

A: What you thinking?

S: Full-time job and me own place

A: Yeah

S: That's more long-term innit

Fab: S is focused on getting a job and a place to live – stability.

A: Erm I don't know you could be hoping for that pretty soon

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S: I mean it'd be nice (1.0) cos like I say don't get me wrong I like it here (1.0) but the way I see it is that I'm more than ready to live on me own and my room (1.0) can be used for someone else that is literally struggling

Shift: Ready to live on his own

Fab: S feels ready to live on his own and feels his room could be used for some other YHP who needs it more than him. Despite liking the hostel he lives at.

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A: Yeah yeah

Shift: Wanting to give back to other homeless YP

S: Especially when you see all this on the news about 16 to 21 year olds are on the streets (2.0) and the numbers are getting bigger

Fab: High number of YHP on the news which S has reflected on.

A: Yeah (2.0) so that's the goal and they sound like some good goals

A: Is there anything else that we've not spoken about that you think is missing from our picture?

S: I think you've done a better job than me drawing it

A: I'll take that

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S: The issue I had a lot in school (1.0) was bullying (1.0) like some schools are really dodgy on what they deal with

Shift: Bullying experienced in school and lack of support/intervention by school staff

Fab: S talks about bullying being a central problem for him in school and feeling unsupported by his school at the time in dealing with those issues which left him feeling vulnerable.

A: Yeah (4.0) and I guess that sort of feeds into some of the other experiences you had making some of your moves more difficult

S: It happened at high school and staff didn't deal with it so it was the only bonus of moving (.) leaving that school

*The only positive of moving
→ A contradiction to the theme of mobility as a challenge.*

A: Before I pause I'd just like to summarise our conversation with the theme of resilience which springs from this page (.) like you've overcome so much and are doing really well and you should be really proud of yourself.

Fab: S talks about the only bonus of moving schools so much was leaving behind the bullying and lack of intervention by the school.

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Shift: No bullying in college

A: Yeah (drawing) (2.0) and did it happen at college?

Fab: No bullying happened in college for S.

S: No college was fine

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End of interview

A: Okay (4.0) is there anything else?

N/A

S: No we've talked about a lot (laughing)

A: We have! How does it feel to see all of this page full and I guess its like about your story isn't it?

S: Well when X said to come down because you were ready for me I was like oh god I haven't had time to think on what I'm gonna say so I thought yano what I'm just gonna have to wing this

A: Oh-h-h (laughing) well honestly its been great to speak to you. I would feel really nervous if someone wanted to speak to me about X, Y and Z.

S: Yeah

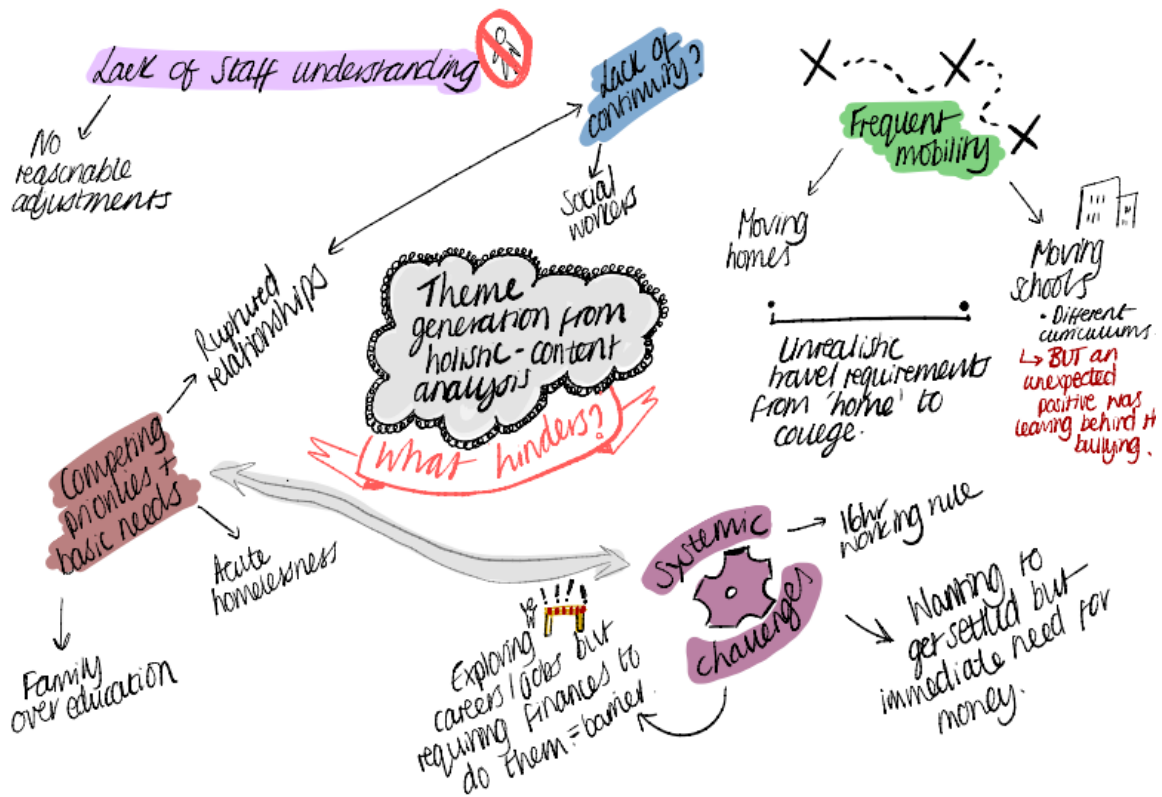
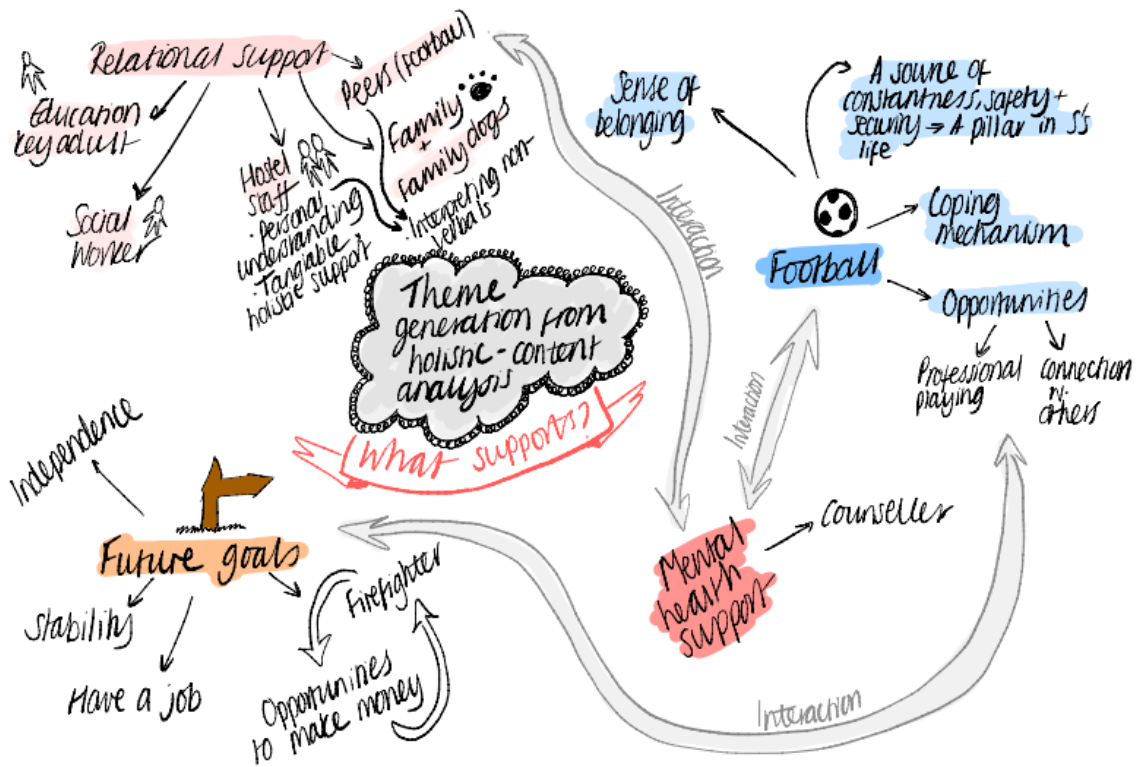
Initial Global Impressions

- * S has experienced many challenging experiences, but has reclaimed his narrative + using as a source of strength + hope.
- * S has experienced homelessness for many years, including a very hidden form of homelessness e.g., being on the streets for the odd night.
- * Issues related to S's homelessness disrupted + prevented his access + engagement with education, more recently his college education.

I have experienced many challenges in my life so far, but I am resilient and hopeful for my future. All I need is a chance.

Global Impression

- * Samuel has experienced many challenges in his life so far and has been let down by people + systems. Such as the education system. But with the help of others, he is resilient + hopeful for a better future. Samuel needs a chance against a national system which does not work well for YHP who want to create a better future whilst they are homeless.



Appendix 19: Example of descriptive and interpretive summary tables that were created for each participant

Matthew's holistic form analysis

Descriptive and interpretive summary table for each participant as part of holistic-form analysis – thematic focus was living circumstances and education experience.

Life phase	Researcher summary	Key supporting evaluative extracts	Researcher reflections
Primary (5-11)	<p><u>Living circumstances:</u> Matthew was living with his parents.</p> <p><u>Education:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home schooled 	<p><u>Living circumstances/education:</u></p> <p><i>“...my mum (2.0) didn't agree with me and me brother going to school (3.0) that was the ONLY reason why we didn't go”</i></p> <p><i>“...it had a knock on effect (1.0) so when I got older I was like (.) I can't even add up (.) I can't do anything (.) and I taught myself how to add up (.) and the first thing I used was a calculator (1.0) to teach myself and then I started doing it on paper (.) doing it the old school way...”</i></p>	<p>Unfinished/untold part of M's story – his experiences of homeschooling and why he was homeschooled. I wonder if the family experienced any homelessness during his primary-secondary education and perhaps mum didn't want to send them to school due to fears of judgement around this?</p> <p>Nonetheless, M describes the educational disadvantage he feels he experienced due to having missed lots of education. Perhaps the trajectory into employment ASAP started here?</p>
Secondary (11-16)	<p><u>Living circumstances:</u> Matthew was living with his parents.</p> <p><u>Education:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home schooled • First job aged 16 until 19. • Quit his first job and went into another job as a forklift 	<p><u>Living circumstances/education:</u></p> <p>(First job)</p> <p><i>“Yep so when I got to (3.0) 16 I decided myself (.) I'm gonna go get a job (.) I got a job (.) I literally got a job like (clicked fingers) that (.) STRAIGHT away”</i></p>	

	<p>driver from age 19 – 21...but it became too much for him and he couldn't do the job anymore due to many combined factors in his personal life, including being a full-time carer to his ex-partner.</p>	<p><i>“...erm I got on with the supervisor really well and she was like “if you need anything yano ring me whatever text me whatever” (2.0) erm I did that till I was about (2.0) 19...it kinda went from there (.) and then stuff started going wrong”</i></p>	<p>Whilst the relationship was good, Matthew was managing well in his job. But as soon as the relationship started to deteriorate, he felt stuff started to go wrong at work.</p>
College (18 years+)	<p><u>Living circumstances:</u> Matthew was living with his Mum but after a difficult relationship and his personal problems with alcohol and drugs, and drink driving offence, he become homeless and was living on the streets for around 3-months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matthew had a serious car accident which caused him a lot of traumas both physical and psychological. Problems with alcohol and drugs Ruptured relationship with Mum End of relationship with ex-partner Family dog passed away <p>After his incident with drink driving, he was allocated a probation</p>	<p><u>Living circumstances/education:</u> (Drink driving incident & homelessness)</p> <p><i>“...then the next day I did same thing again but because I wasn't in contact with ma mum and I didn't have anywhere to LIVE (2.0) it was a cry out for help...”</i></p> <p>(Multiple moves/homeless experience)</p> <p><i>“It was (1.0) so (.) at first (.) I ended up (1.0) when after I lost my car (1.0)...erm (1.0) I ended up (2.0) living on the street (1.0) for 3-month (1.0) erm that I gets a phonecall from my probation worker (2.0)...”</i></p>	<p>My reflection here is that M possibly had a really difficult time here with the ruptured relationship with his Mum, and it appears that when his relationships aren't functioning well, he also does not function very well, hence the interlink with other risk factors such as alcohol and drink driving.</p>

	<p>officer who referred him to be given emergency housing in a BnB for 5 nights. He then moved to a different BnB, before being offered a place in a house share by a homeless charity.</p> <p>Here, Matthew was exposed to physical, emotional and financial abuse and was later offered a place in the hostel where he currently lives.</p> <p><u>Education:</u> Not in education In and out of employment since age 16</p>	<p><u>"...I gets a phone call saying "you need to go to X" (1.0) so I had my appointment in B and then they found me some accommodation in like a BnB for 5 days in B (.) it was to get (1.0) me sorted to get to go somewhere else (1.0) so once I'd been in B for 5 days I ended up getting another phone call from my probation worker saying "we've got you somewhere in X (1.0) in a BnB (1.0) so I stayed in there for (1.0) about 2-months"</u></p> <p>(Talking about house share experiences and abuse)</p> <p><u>"...and I moved into there and (.) I'd been (.) I was (.) as soon as I got there I settled in really well (2.0) then I started like few months down the line I started noticing stuff wo goin missing and (1.0) money was going missing out my bank account and all sorts (2.0)..."</u></p> <p><u>"...the amount of times I got threatened in my room with a knife (1.0) and other things (3.0) and people wanted money out of</u></p>	
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		<p><u>me and I'm just like no I can't (2.0) I've got to live..."</u></p> <p>(Training qualifications gained whilst living in house share and hostel)</p> <p><u>"I've got all my qualifications...yeah so I've got (.) my first aid level 3...I've got (1.0) erm (.) oh what's it called (.) erm catering...level 2...fire safety level 2 (2.0) health and safety level 2 (1.0) erm (.) and I've got (.) erm a boat (.) a certification in boating"</u></p> <p><u>"It was through the job centre (.) the job centre referred me to CAT0 because they thought (.) they thought it was gonna be great for em to do this kind of thing (.)..."</u></p> <p><u>"And I did that for 12-weeks and it was the BEST 12-weeks I've ever had because every week there was somefing for me to do"</u></p> <p>(Support from staff from training programme)</p>	
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		<p><u>"Yeah definitely definitely (.) they helped me a lot when I was struggling"</u></p> <p><u>"They did at the time (.) I was telling them what was going on and they were like (.) "you can't live there""</u></p> <p>(Issues with alcohol and drugs, explicitly linking with homelessness)</p> <p><u>"Last year for me (1.0) I was drinking every single day"</u></p> <p><u>"From morning till night and my rucksack used to be ABSOLUTELY FULL of booze (.) literally (.) and I used to sit there and drink (.) but because I was living on my own and I was living on the streets (.) it was the only thing that was keeping me feeling normal"</u></p> <p><u>"...I used to be a cocaine addict (2.0) erm (.) and that was very hard (.) VERY hard (.) I've been clean for 3-years"</u></p> <p><u>"Erm and one day (.) me mum found it that I was doing ff-it in my</u></p>	<p>I think the interlink with homelessness and other risk factors is so easily done, and Matthew summarises it beautifully here that it was about surviving and numbing the pain which he was experiencing. So, alcohol and drugs in that moment helped him to cope with his circumstances at that time, but they were very harmful ways of managing which he later had to address (and I imagine, made the cycle of homelessness much harder to break – particularly because no</p>
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		<u>bedroom and that was the WORST day of my life because she was like "you need to get off it"</u>	professionals wanted to help him)
Now	<p><u>Living circumstances:</u> Matthew is currently living in a supported hostel.</p> <p><u>Education:</u> Matthew is prioritising employment rather than further education. However, with the support and signposting of the hostel staff and the job center, he has enrolled in many different training qualification programs.</p> <p><u>Employment:</u> Not currently working but wanting to get back into full-time employment.</p> <p>Frequent visits to the job center as per his commitments.</p>	<p>(Current worries)</p> <p><u>"Erm erm (2.0) it is difficult living in here (2.0) not so much being in here (3.0) its money that's the issue (1.0) because I want to try and get back to work"</u></p> <p>(Current training)</p> <p><u>"And they've been brilliant (1.0) erm (.) so I've been doing that for about a week and half (.) doing cyber security personal wellbeing and health and safety (.)..."</u></p> <p><u>"Erm and then I've got my proper CSCS card test (.) hopefully at the end of this month and once I've got that there's that many opportunities I can have".</u></p> <p>(Coping with day-to-day)</p> <p><u>"Yeah I try and keep I try and go day by day and see what happens because if I don't (.) if I plan too</u></p>	<p>Despite seeming more settled, Matthew shared that he has worries about his financial situation whilst living in the hostel and receiving universal credit.</p> <p>Expectation that something will go wrong – based on life experiences so far.</p>

		<p><u>much ahead (.) something will go wrong (2.0) so I just have to keep (.) a level head and think right (.) this is what today's gonna be (.) I'm gonna do this do that (.) and then the next day will probably be (.) I'll have to go and do something else"</u></p> <p><u>"...to help me (1.0) keep going is I've had to like think about what I want (.) in future because (1.0) I cant (2.0) get stuck back in time (2.0) yano its one of them where (.) if you get stuck back in time (.) and you keep going round and round and round which is what I used to do I used to do it whilst I was in here and I used to get TOLD I used to get told in ere there's no point"</u></p> <p><u>"...and for me (.) getting through day to day life (1.0) I have a routine on a morning (.) I get up make a coffee come downstairs (.) go and have a fag (.) come in here (.) make X a coffee (.) talk with X for a bit go back outside for another fag and then (1.0) that's my routine for morning and I do that EVERY SINGLE day"</u></p>	<p>Routines & predictability help Matthew to feel safe and cope with everyday life.</p>
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		<p>(Feeling socially isolated)</p> <p><u>"...they're stupid really because I mean I don't know anyone round here so I don't really go out but (3.0) yano (1.0) it's enough to try and make things better with my partner (.) cos my partner is going through a bit of stuff at the moment erm (1.0) yano so"</u></p> <p><u>"I just isolating myself away from (.) THEM kind of people (.) yano the people I used to hang around with (.) they're not very nice people and they try to be your friend at the time (1.0) but they're not because you work with them..."</u></p> <p>(Feeling isolated following becoming sober)</p> <p><u>"...and then once I started coming back round into reality (.) I started feeling better (.) I started (1.0) yano (1.0) the urge was still there but I wouldn't go out (.) I don't really go out now"</u></p> <p>(Negative experiences at the job centre)</p>	
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	<p><u>"Yep I mean the job centre they're alright (.) there's times where I get stressed over something cos if like (2.0) sometimes they don't help"</u></p> <p><u>"I'm a human being I can't (2.0) It's I said to them before (.) I can't (.) I can't physically put my life on hold just so you want me to put jobs on"</u></p> <p><u>"...they just (.) they like (.) they try to belittle you a little bit and you'll SIT there and I dread every time I go to the job centre I absolutely DREAD it"</u></p> <p><u>"I absolutely just like (3.0) oh what's he gonna to- say today"</u></p> <p>(Issues with alcohol)</p> <p><u>"I've had my issues with alcohol recently (.) yano I'm not proud of it but there's no point lying about it"</u></p> <p>(Loss of family dog a few months ago)</p> <p><u>"...I mean (.) the WORST day I had a few months ago was when my dog died"</u></p>	
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		<p><u>"...my dog had died (.) it was living at me mums (1.0) and I never cried so much over a dog"</u></p> <p><u>"...he was suffering yano and I sometimes wish I was actually there to see the dog"</u></p>	
Future	Matthew is aiming to get back into full-time work and to have a place to call his home and live independently.	<p>(Future goals)</p> <p><u>"It's just (.) things are a bit (.) trying to get myself sorted and getting ma sen ready to get moved on cos this isn't forever (2.0) it's a pitstop to try and get .e back into (.) cos I've never lived on my own (.) so for me living on my own in ere (.) it took a lot of getting used to"</u></p> <p><u>"Hopefully getting back to work...that's the one goal...that's the MAIN focus at the moment (.) and getting my own place"</u></p> <p><u>"Erm where I can be independent and not having to worry about (1.0) putting (.) if I go do something (.) if I go out on a night and go somewhere (.) I don't have to worry about getting back so</u></p>	<p>I feel like Matthew's goals are things that often we might take for granted, because most people have never experienced what he has experienced, or may never have been homeless, so we've been able to have different aspirations, such as the type of career we want or working on hobbies etc. I have interpreted Matthew's goals as one's which represent physical and psychological safety and secureness.</p>

		<i>early (1.0) cos in ere you have to (.) the rules in here are stupid (.)..."</i>	
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My reflections at this point:

- Matthew appears to have got his basic needs met at his current hostel, which has facilitated him to then explore learning opportunities.
- I think it is a shame there isn't much earlier support for young people experiencing homelessness, or at risk of homelessness, preferably whilst they are still in the age of statutory education (as we know education is protective factor in people's lives!)
- The interlink between homelessness and other risk factors, e.g., alcohol and substance use, which I think is so easy to happen but inevitably makes the cycle of homelessness much harder to break. It appears with the right support, living arrangements and hope for a better future, Matthew has been able to stop and manage some of his substance addictions.
- I was worried at first analysing this interview because I remembered that he had not experienced much 'formal' education. But this in itself is a valuable contribution to my research because not all young people who experience homelessness will be in education, and it is important to understand what their experiences look like so practitioners like educational psychologists can better understand how to support them.

Sam's categorical-content analysis

Category 1: Football

Principal sentences	Sub-categories	Reflections
<p>Example from text (2)</p> <p>A: Yeah I can just about manage stickmen (4.0). Ok so (.) yeah (.) is it ok to start there (.) so what kind of things do you like doing?</p> <p>S: <u>Playing football.</u></p> <p>A: Playing football (2.0) so we've got football (drawing) (4.0) so who do you support?</p> <p>S: <u>Hull City.</u></p> <p>A: Hull City (drawing) (4.0) what else (2.0) do you like doing? (.) or does football dominate everything? (laughing)</p> <p>S: <u>Football dominates everything</u> but (.) I really like <u>WWE</u> and (.) <u>building Lego</u>:- (overlapping)</p> <p>Example from text (6)</p> <p>S: No <u>so I play for a football team as well</u> (.) so (.) and I dis- it (.) I basically (.) I <u>dislocated my knee</u> (xxxx) at the same time.</p> <p>A: Right</p> <p>S: And (2.0) it put me off (.) <u>it put me off some time</u> (.) when <u>they sacked me</u> (2.0) in last few <u>months</u> (.) obviously (3.0) err staff had noticed (.) how (.) what's what's the word for it (.) erm (.) <u>I'm just like losing at the minute</u> <u>so I had to stay up till like 4 in the morning</u> <u>5 in the morning and not</u></p>	<p><u>Sub-category:</u></p> <p>Football is important to sense of self and identity.</p>	<p>Without football, life is more difficult for Samuel, e.g., feeling like he's 'losing' at the minute and lack of routine</p>

<p>wake up til like 1 oclock in the afternoon;- (overlapping)</p> <p>Example from text (10)</p> <p>A: yeah thats the thing you don't wanna go back too soon do ya (.) because you dont wanna like (2.0) damage it basically (.) before its fully better</p> <p>S: yeah but normally (.) <u>we train once or twice a week and play matches on a weekend.</u></p> <p>Example from text (52)</p> <p>S: <u>Best thing wo football and me mates cos obviously (1.0) we're like proper loyal XX city fans</u></p> <p>A: Yeah are ya</p> <p>S: Like like <u>I have all the kits (2.0) we're not one of these where we we've started supporting them in like 2013 when they won and we've been (.) a lot of us have been going to games since we were three four (1.0) like proper loyal (1.0) I remember me and X (.) we were sat there and got thumped by one of our roughest seasons and we were still there sit there at fulltime to see the players off the pitch</u></p> <p>Example from text (53)</p> <p>S: <u>I get that some people might say that me and me mates take football too seriously but me and me mates would happily die for our team</u></p> <p>A: Yeah, yeah it sounds so important to you</p>		<p>Regular football practice, again reinforcing that football plays a central part of Samuel's life</p> <p>Football team is a shared passion and has shared values for Samuel and friendship group which have supported their relationships.</p> <p>Football is positioned as one of the most important things in Samuel's life</p>
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<p>Example from text (43)</p> <p>A: And (2.0) some of your other experiences that may have been challenging at the time as well (.) what's helped you to like (.) keep going?</p> <p>S: <u>My mates from football</u></p> <p>A: Have they?</p> <p>S: <u>Yeah</u></p> <p>A: Aw-w-w (drawing)</p> <p>S: So like obviously they're (.) <u>three of em going (.) my mates from football (.) so we're going away with our girlfriends to XXX (3.0) we g we leave (.) we go Friday then we don't come back till next Thursday.</u></p> <p>A: Aw-w-w so you're going as well then you're part of that?</p> <p>S: <u>Yeah</u></p>	<p><u>Sub-category:</u></p> <p>Football has facilitated opportunities to build and maintain positive relationships, sense of belonging</p>	<p>These relationships were positioned as a real source of strength for Samuel throughout his life. Links with Category 2: Relationships.</p> <p>Has led to new relationships and opportunity to maintain peer relationships, e.g., watching the games together and going away on a holiday with friends.</p>
<p>Example from text (53)</p> <p>A: Oh gosh</p> <p>S: And then and <u>then you have the times when you ball your eyes out cos you lost in the FA cup final in extra time and obviously like we'll follow England as well like I watched them last night</u> but please don't ask me how it went down</p>	<p><u>Sub-category:</u></p> <p>Football as a safe way to feel and express emotion</p>	<p>Samuel showcases he is able to express emotions safely through football</p>

<p>A: (laughing)</p> <p>Example from text (54)</p> <p>S: You get you get like <u>2 hours of (2.0) not feeling any emotion (1.0) you're just there (.) chanting jumping celebrating (1.0) every now and then you have a bad game but still</u></p>	<p><u>Subcategory:</u></p> <p>Football as a form of emotional escapism</p>	
<p>Example from text (55)</p> <p>A: and is it as helpful when playing?</p> <p>S: I LOVE playing it <u>I love playing it</u></p>	<p><u>Sub-category:</u></p> <p>Playing football is as important to Samuel as watching it</p>	<p>Perhaps this belonging with first theme?</p>
<p>Example from text (55)</p> <p>A: Have you always played as well?</p> <p>S: Like I was in <u>I was on the primary school team I was on the secondary school team (2.0) and then with the moving and foster care (1.0) I kinda like cunt continue through college (1.0) which has like put me back so when I go back after this injury I'm practically gonna feel like I'm back at square one with football so (1.0) guarantee like my touch is gonna be all over</u></p> <p>A: Yeah</p> <p>S: I'll <u>have to build it back up and knowing ma luck it'll take the coaches a while to work out a position I'm comfy in as well</u></p>	<p><u>Sub-category:</u></p> <p>Football as source of constancy</p>	<p>Links with moves and mobility: Due to moving and issues in personal life, he couldn't continue with football during that time</p>

<p>Example from text (56)</p> <p>S: But obviously this is like <u>like</u> <u>this is like (1.0) probably me first</u> <u>ma- major team</u></p> <p>A: Yeah</p> <p>S: Yano like <u>Saturday and</u> <u>Sunday league team (.) I've never</u> <u>played in these before because I</u> <u>never got these opportunities as</u> <u>a kid with the issues I've gone</u> <u>through with me story but</u> <u>obviously (1.0) I was like in year 7</u> <u>and 8 I was on the school football</u> <u>team and everything so</u></p> <p>A: So it sounds like its always been there in your life</p> <p>S: <u>yeah yeah</u></p> <p>A: Sounds like it's been really important</p>	<p><u>Sub-category:</u></p> <p>Football has facilitated new opportunities</p>	

Category 2: Relationships

Quotes linked to theme	Sub-categories	Reflections
<p>Example from text (2)</p> <p>A: Oo (2.0) <u>yeah</u> (drawing) do you watch that [WWE] a lot then?</p> <p>S: Yeah (3.0) and <u>building Lego</u> <u>yano like Lego city</u></p> <p>A: Ahh nice (3.0) yeah (3.0) anything else?</p> <p>S: <u>Spending time with me mates</u></p>	<p><u>Sub-category:</u></p> <p>Friends are important sources of relational support for Samuel</p>	

<p>Example from text (11)</p> <p>A: Aw-w-w (drawing) (7.0) and you've got your teammates and stuff (.). I imagine you get on with;- (overlapping)</p> <p>S: <u>yeah yeah i get along- (.)</u> <u>yeah</u></p>		<p>Links with Category 1: Football (e.g., football has led to social opportunities)</p>
<p>Example from text (6)</p> <p>S: Err no <u>it was through the help of X (2.0) so I did have a paid job when I came ere (.)</u> but I was <u>unlawfully sacked when I did me knee</u></p> <p>A: Ohh you're joking</p> <p>Example from text (7)</p> <p>S: and then (.). <u>they [hostel staff] do know that (.)</u> I am (2.0) I am <u>better (.)</u> when I'm busy. On one level I've GOT to keep busy.</p> <p>A: Yeah (4.0) that's really important (.). having that, some kind of structure or routine;- (overlapping)</p> <p>S: <u>yeah</u></p> <p>A: To feel like you're doing better when you've got that in place</p> <p>S: <u>yeah</u></p> <p>Example from text (28)</p>	<p><u>Sub-category:</u></p> <p>Hostel staff provide valuable relational and tangible support to Samuel</p> <p>Due to their established relationship, the staff in the hostel have an awareness & understanding of what works well for Samuel</p> <p>Family-like relationships, e.g.,</p>	<p>Almost curating family-like/ parent-to-child relationship and support which Samuel may have not had until living at the current hostel.</p>

<p>A: yeah yeah (.) it sounds like (.) the staff are quite supportive here</p> <p>S: I would say that from my experience (.) but every now and then (.) <u>yano its one of them where everyone gets on everyones nerves (.) every now and then</u></p> <p>A: Yeah-h-h-h and that's normal isn't it (overlapping)</p> <p>S: <u>Especially when youre seeing em (.) the same people every day</u></p> <p>A: Yeah (.) yeah (.) rhats it cos you get that relationship and then (.) you can kind of like, not that politeness goes but yano with that you can like speak more freely (overlapping)</p> <p>S: You become more (.) yourself (.) don't you</p> <p>Example from text (29)</p> <p>A: Yeah (2.0) What else is helpful about living here then? What what helps you?</p> <p>S: You've always got the support of the staff so you know like if you if you've got any like issues (.) <u>where its personal or (2.0) dealing with girlfriend or boyfriend issues if you've got a partner (.) there like (.) they are there to like support ya.</u></p> <p>A: Hmm.</p> <p>S: and its one of them like (.) <u>9 times out of 10 (.) you can go to the office whenever you want and ask for a chat</u></p>	<p>due to living with each other they can sometimes annoy each other, normalizing this</p> <p>Unconditional support, parent-to-child relationship and support, reliable, constant</p> <p>Safety in relationships</p>	
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<p>S: No (.) no (.) but either ya know (.) ya know for example if I (.) <u>if I went to XXX at some point and then I (.) said I need help to manage me money better then they would do that.</u></p> <p>A: Ah yeah so they kind of offer support (overlapping)</p> <p>S: <u>All angles (.) or like (.) you know if you went to XXX (.) giving her like (.) you know for example you know how lads will probably just go buy a takeaway go and eat a load of crisps and chocolate (.) you know like if you wanted to (.) like make a (.) yano start eating proper meals and start eating healthier (.) they will ACTUALLY go to shop wi ya and help ya do what (.) they WILL do that.</u></p> <p>A: So its like that support from lots of different angles really int it.</p>	<p>Holistic support provided</p> <p>Actually doing what they say they are going to do, trust</p>	
<p>Example from text (12)</p> <p>S: Er-r-r (3.0) probably my err (.) <u>dogs at home my parents</u></p> <p>A: What dogs you got?</p> <p>S: Erm ive got a new fouler (3.0) <u>two yorkshire terriers and ive got like a (.) staffy</u></p> <p>Example from text (50)</p>	<p><u>Sub-category: Links</u></p> <p>with family relationships are important to Samuel, e.g., through some family relationships and pets</p>	

<p>A: And do you have relationships with your family now and as always you only share what you feel comfortable sharing</p> <p>S: Er-r-r <u>I am and I'm not</u></p> <p>A: Yeah</p> <p>S: Like <u>I'm in contact with my brother</u> but then again <u>even while me and me dad was neck and neck</u> wi eachother we used (1.0) <u>me nd me brother (1.0) we've never really separated</u> if ya know what I mean</p> <p>A: Yeah</p> <p>S: <u>Like I'll not see a lot of him but obviously like we never like drop contact</u></p> <p>A: Yeah</p> <p>S: But like <u>I'm the eldest erm (1.0) my dad (2.0) we're slowly rebuilding the relationship</u> to somewhat</p>		
<p>Example from text (20)</p> <p>A: Yeah, hmm (drawing) hmm. So it sounds like staff, yeah, not being helpful. Did you have any adults in college that were supportive?</p> <p>S: Erm my erm (.) my actual (.) <u>erm (.) course leader XXX.</u></p> <p>A: Yeah and how were they supportive?</p> <p>S: Yeah <u>he understood my situation.</u> He was fine so</p>	<p><u>Sub-category: One</u> key adult in education provided support</p>	

<p>obviously the issue (.) a lot of <u>my issue getting into college on time</u> would be (.) well (.) <u>you know like a lot of the villages around XXX are really small and the first bus</u> would be like 8 o'clock but <u>theyd be no chance id be able to get from XXX to XXX in one hour</u> (.) so (.) the agreement was I'd be, Id (.) <u>me form tutor</u> (.) <u>he's let me start at 10 but then because of the buses getting back</u> (.) <u>he'd let me finish a bit earlier so I could get home.</u></p>	<p>Reasonable adjustments made by one member of staff but these were unable to continue due to decisions made by the college</p>	
<p>Example from text (25) S: Its really odd cos <u>because my parents are one of them where theyd kick you out on the streets for the night</u> (.) and it could happen at like throughout the year (.) a <u>few times I was spending a night on the street</u> (2.0) and then <u>they did it around New Year time this year</u> (.) and then that's when <u>me social worker got involved and went "no that's enough"</u> and then he had to <u>put me in a hotel for about 5 days</u> (.) <u>until the Monday</u> so that I <u>could come here</u> (.) cus normally (.) <u>here you'd have an interview and then you'd wait and wait for a room but because of me situation it was more like it was interview</u></p>	<p><u>Sub-category:</u> Family relationships break down and negative impact on Samuel's wellbeing and education</p>	<p>A hidden form of homelessness – sleeping on the streets for the odd night when the family relationships had significantly ruptured.</p> <p>Multiple moves showcased here: Family home; living on the streets; living in a hotel; living in a hostel.</p> <p>How can Samuel be expected to consistently engage in education/college during this time? Relates to other category of competing priorities and basic needs.</p>

<p><u>and same day moving in</u> if that makes sense.</p> <p>A: Yeah so it was an immediate kind of support and stuff yeah (2.0) yeah so there was a bit of moving like hotel and your social worker yeah (.) that that kind of like all led to being here</p> <p>S: <u>Yeah</u></p>		
<p>Example from text (50)</p> <p>S: But like I'm the <u>eldest erm</u> (1.0) <u>my dad</u> (2.0) <u>we're slowly rebuilding the relationship</u> to somewhat</p> <p>A: Yeah</p> <p>S: <u>Me and me mum</u> (2.0) <u>it's done</u> (1.0) on a really rocky road and <u>one of me sisters I don't talk to</u> and the other one (1.0) <u>it really depends what mood she's in</u></p> <p>A: Yeah so its sort of taking it as it is</p> <p>S: Basically <u>tekin it with a pinch of salt</u></p>	<p><u>Sub-category:</u> Lack of relational support from some family members as an unprotective factor</p>	<p>Lack of relationship with family</p>

Category 3: Future goals

Quotes linked to theme	Sub-categories	Reflections
<p>Example from text (23)</p> <p>S: Its not that it's more <u>like I just that I wanted to get a paid job.</u></p>	<p><u>Sub-category:</u> Samuel aspires for independence and stability</p>	<p>Firefighter</p> <p>Opportunities to make money</p> <p>Reclaiming narrative</p>

<p>A: Yeah yeah (drawing) Yeah so its thinking about what is right for you and that will be different for everyone won't it (overlapping)</p> <p>Example from text (41)</p> <p>S: Yeah and not only that (.) that would like (.) <u>not only are ya paid ff (.) it's a job (.) yeah you're working 24 hours on but then (2.0) you have 24 hours off but then ya don't work for three days so in between them three days off you can also have a part-time job as well</u></p> <p>A: Yeah</p> <p>S: But then with <u>firefighters you get (.) you get access to the gym which is useful to keep fit</u></p> <p>A: Yeah my uncle is a fireman actually (.) he doesn't do the fire side of things he does like the yano like the road traffic</p> <p>Example from text (57)</p> <p>A: So before we finish erm (2.0) are there any other like long-term or short-term goals or hope for your future</p> <p>S: I (2.0) I don't know (1.0) it's gonna be long-term innit (2.0)</p> <p>A: What you thinking?</p> <p>S: <u>Full-time job and me own place</u></p>	<p>Samuel is aiming for as many opportunities to get additional jobs and earn more money – more financial stability</p> <p>Wants a permanent home and a full-time job</p>	
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<p>A: Yeah that's really good though that you're starting to think and wonder about being a firefighter so like (overlapping)</p> <p>S: Well it's a lot if it (.) is due to (.) <u>what happened to me.</u></p> <p>A: Hmm</p> <p>S: So obviously (.) <u>when I was young (2.0) my great grandma actually (.) died in a housefire</u></p> <p>A: Ohh gosh;- (overlapping)</p> <p>S: So its more (.) <u>a lot from that yano like trying to stop other people losing family and friends (.) in a housefire</u></p> <p>A: Oh wow gosh yeah, that is a lot (2.0) Yeah so that's like;- (overlapping)</p> <p>S: So I've like the reasoning for me like is not like ah its cool and everythink, <u>I've got personal reasons.</u></p> <p>A: Yeah really personal (.) and actually that's a real strength of yours that (.) that you've kind of had that really awful experience that I can't even imagine what that felt like (overlapping)</p> <p>S: <u>Yeah</u></p> <p>A: But you've kind of like took that and (.) almost like (.) reframed it into using it as a strength like a personal strength like actually from that horrible experience you've kind of got this goal or</p>	<p>inspired by his challenging past through a reclaim of his narrative</p> <p>Wanting to help others</p> <p>Narrative transformation, inspiration for future</p>	
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<p>dream of something you'd like to do to help others</p> <p>Example from text (58)</p> <p>S: I mean it'd be nice (1.0) <u>cos like I say don't get me wrong I like it here (1.0) but the way I see it is that I'm more than ready to live on me own and my room (1.0) can be used for someone else that is literally struggling</u></p>	<p>Wanting to give back/help other young people whose position he was once in</p>	
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Category 4: Frequent moves and mobility

Quotes linked to theme	Sub-categories	Reflections
<p>Example from text (14)</p> <p>S: <u>A LOT of moves</u> and it was really awkward because (.) <u>around the time I was moving (.)</u> was around the time I'd be doing me GCSEs and I had (.) <u>I had I had to like (.) change from the school I'd been at since (.) since I started in year 7 (2.0)</u> and then I got <u>transferred to X</u> but it was (.) <u>because in English (2.0)</u> especially it was a completely different like (.) <u>set up to what they were doing</u></p> <p>A: yeah yeah that's so annoying isn't it, yeah so that sounds like it impacted you during that time</p> <p>Example from text (15)</p> <p>S: Well it wasn't just that (.) obviously (.) <u>we were the first set of year 11s that we couldn't do</u></p>	<p><u>Sub-category:</u></p> <p>Samuel has moved homes and schools many times which had a negative impact on him</p> <p>Unfair disadvantage from moving was his</p>	<p>Interaction with timing on his moves, e.g., during his GCSEs and covid pandemic which contributed to him not passing his maths & English GCSE</p>

<p><u>our exams at the normal time (2.0) like we got based on our mocks before lockdown (2.0) so we had- a lot of us got based on our mocks</u></p> <p>A: Hmm (4.0) and was that (.) for some people that worked quite well but for others it didnt really</p> <p>S: No cos some of em, yano like when <u>you're so many marks off a pass (2.0) and its one of them (shrugging)</u></p> <p>A: Yeah</p> <p>S: Especially for maths and english where its like (.) <u>you've got to go back in september and do it in college</u></p> <p>Example from text (16)</p> <p>A: hmm (4.0) yeah (.) it was such a weird time wasnt it Covid (.) had such a weird affect on things</p> <p>S: <u>Yeah</u></p> <p>A: Okay so (.) different (.) like (2.0) different moves and different foster families, parents, then different moves with different schools (.) is that like;- (overlapping</p> <p>S: Yeah yeah so two. <u>I was like 2 primaries and 2 secondaries (2.0) but the two primaries was more down to the fact of (2.0) my parents just moving out of town.</u></p> <p>Example from text (22)</p>	<p>new school had a different syllabus so receiving a grade from mock tests was unfair for Samuel</p> <p>Showcasing multiple moves – even when he was living with his family</p>	<p>Incomplete part of story – moving with birth parents. Possible family homelessness?</p>
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<p>A: Okay so that's helpful (2.0) so then college for 2 and a half years. Was that when, did you finish college, and then moved in with your parents?</p> <p>S: Erm no <u>they kicked me out so I went to my parents and then I finished (.) I had to drop out of course for a few weeks (2.0) and that was at the start of last year.</u></p> <p>A: And then, have you enrolled in anything since then?</p> <p>S: <u>No no.</u></p>		<p>Another example of a move (family home to rooflessness) and the direct impact on access to education.</p>
<p>Example from text (19)</p> <p>S: <u>A bit of both really. Because obviously I passed my level one (.) but obviously when coming into our second year (.) we had a lot of erm (.) issues like (.) people not focusing in practical, and it really bugged us up because (.) we was doing level 1 and 2 and going onto our level 3 (2.0) Level 3 because (.) things broke down with my foster parents whilst I was doing it and I moved back up to X to my parents but the issue is my college (.) I was going to a college in XXX so then I I (.) I did my level 1 and 2 and passed it but when I when I went to do my level 3 (.) I was only there for like about half a year and I cunt finish the course cos like travelling from XXX to XXX was too much.</u></p> <p>A: Oh yeah that's massive isn't' it. So like travel;- (overlapping)</p>	<p>Sub-category: Mobility meant that Samuel lived far away from college setting, impacting his accessibility</p>	<p>Unrealistic travel expectations, he couldn't keep it up</p> <p>Interaction with personal challenges he was facing meant that he felt he couldn't continue with college</p>

<p>S: It was too <u>much at the time, massive trek</u></p> <p>A: Yeah so that sounded like it might have prevented you from completely your level 3</p> <p>S: <u>Hmm</u> (agreeing sound)</p> <p>Example from text (20)</p> <p>A: Yeah and how were they supportive?</p> <p>S: Yeah <u>he understood my situation</u>. He was fine so obviously the issue (.) a lot of <u>my issue getting into college on time</u> would be (.) well (.) <u>you know like a lot of the villages around XXX</u> are really small and the first bus would be like 8 o'clock but <u>theyd be no chance id be able to get from XXX to XXX in one hour</u> (.) so (.) the agreement was I'd be, Id (.) <u>me form tutor</u> (.) he's let me start at 10 but then because of the buses getting back (.) he'd let me finish a bit earlier so I could get home.</p> <p>Example from text (21)</p> <p>S: Erm, oh now you're asking me summet (laughing) erm (5.0) <u>Id got a 15-minute bus journey, then I'd got a 45-minute bus journey, and then I've got an half an hour train ride and then a 20 minute walk from the station</u> (.) <u>the train station to the college itself</u>.</p> <p>A: So that's 1hr 50 one way then so you'd have to do that twice?</p> <p>S: <u>Yeah coming back.</u></p>		
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<p>A: Ohhh, yeah. So that times two (drawing). That's a lot. That is really a lot yeah. So that very understandably made things like quite difficult for you to get to college.</p> <p>S: <u>Yeah</u></p>		
<p>Example from text (60)</p> <p>S: <u>The issue I had a lot in school (1.0) was bullying (1.0) like some schools are really dodgy on what they deal with</u></p> <p>A: Yeah (4.0) and I guess that sort of feeds into some of the other experiences you had making some of your moves more difficult</p> <p>S: <u>It happened at high school and staff didn't deal with it so it was the only bonus of moving (.) leaving that school</u></p>	<p><u>Sub-category:</u> The bonus of high mobility was escaping bullying and lack of school support</p>	

Category 5: Competing priorities and basic needs

Quotes linked to theme	Sub-categories	Reflections
<p>Example from text (22)</p> <p>A: Okay so that's helpful (2.0) so then college for 2 and a half years. Was that when, did you finish college, and then moved in with your parents?</p> <p>S: Erm no <u>they kicked me out so I went to my parents and then I finished (.) I had to drop out of</u></p>	<p><u>Sub-category:</u> Facing acute homelessness (including rough sleeping)</p>	<p>When facing acute homelessness, I made the assumption that other basic needs will come before accessing education, e.g., safety, a</p>

<p><u>course for a few weeks (2.0) and that was at the start of last year.</u></p> <p>A: And then, have you enrolled in anything since then?</p> <p>S: <u>No no.</u></p> <p>A: Yeah, and is there like (.) is there is there a reason for not enrolling (.) have you got other goals or things you want to do?</p> <p>Example from text (37)</p> <p>A: Yeah yeah</p> <p>S: But like if you got to (.) <u>like if you go to a sixteen year old that's (.) living on his own and ya (.) you give him the option to apply for UC (.) chances are he probably (.) he might not even have a clue what youre on about</u></p> <p>A: And I suppose sometimes (overlapping)</p> <p>S: Cus obviously <u>a lot of people at their age if you mention the word job centre (.) it feels like youre tryna give them that boot just to get them to work</u></p> <p>A: Yeah yeah and sometimes that must be the least of someones priorities</p> <p>S: Yeah yeah <u>theres more basic things that come first (.) cus obviously if you (.) obviously job centre on UC give ya like payments every month don't they</u></p> <p>A: Yeah</p>	<p>Just entered a hostel as a young person – basic needs come first before education or employment</p>	<p>place to sleep, food and water etc.</p>
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<p>Example from text (25)</p> <p>S: Its really odd cos <u>because my parents are one of them where theyd kick you out on the streets for the night</u> (.) and it could happen at like throughout the year (.) a few times I was <u>spending a night on the street</u> (2.0) and then <u>they did it around New Year time this year</u> (.) and then that's when <u>me social worker got involved and went "no that's enough"</u> and then he had to <u>put me in a hotel for about 5 days</u> (.) <u>until the Monday</u> so that I <u>could come here</u> (.) cus normally (.) <u>here you'd have an interview and then you'd wait and wait for a room but because of me situation it was more like it was interview and same day moving in</u> if that makes sense.</p> <p>A: Yeah so it was an immediate kind of support and stuff yeah (2.0) yeah so there was a bit of moving like hotel and your social worker yeah (.) that that kind of like all led to being here</p> <p>S: <u>Yeah</u></p>	<p>Acute homelessness, multiple moves – basic needs come first – not in a physical or psychological place to access education</p>	
<p>Example from text (38)</p> <p>S: if you're like (.) for example (.) if I was like <u>sixteen seventeen and id just got kicked out or Im moving in</u> (.) <u>last thing id wanna do is someone moaning at me to get a job</u></p> <p>A: Exactly</p>	<p>Reflecting that education & employment is the last thing you want to focus on when you've just had a residential move as a homeless young</p>	

<p>S: You'd wanna get your place sorted first wunt ya</p> <p>A: Yeah</p> <p>S: But at the same time you need money to do that as well</p> <p>Example from text (24)</p> <p>S: And then obviously (.) a lot of time (.) <u>my parents last year it was more like getting settled back into family and stuff</u> cos I hadn't seen any of me family for like 5-years;- (overlapping)</p> <p>A: Yeah different priorities and stuff (drawing) so okay (.) and then you mentioned your parents kicked you out (.)and is that (.) did you then come here?</p>	<p>person, but acknowledging that money is required in order to do that</p> <p>Priority was on settling back in with family, not college education</p>	
<p>Example from text (23)</p> <p>S: Its not that it's more like I just that I wanted to get a paid job.</p> <p>A: Yeah yeah (drawing) Yeah so its thinking about what is right for you and that will be different for everyone won't it (overlapping)</p>	<p><u>Sub-category: Such competing demands has contributed to Samuel's future goals, e.g., it is now not about education, the focus is on gaining employment</u></p>	<p>Not sure where this belongs – does this belong here or in future goals?</p>

Category 6: Systemic challenges

Quotes linked to theme	Sub-categories	Reflections
<p>Example from text (26)</p>	<p><u>Sub-category: A flawed system for YHP</u></p>	<p>E.g., unable to fulfil aspirations of getting a full-time job which Samuels</p>

<p>A: How has it been here then for you?</p> <p>S: I've settled in yeah (.) but its more like (.) its (.) its trying K- (.) its no disrespect to (.) the hostel or owt but (.) a lot of us do want a job but its like really hard when you've got to stick to the 16 hour (.) working 16 hours a week when (.)</p> <p>A: Ah-h-h so you can't do anymore than 16 hours</p> <p>S: No</p> <p>Example from text (27)</p> <p>S: And that's the bit that I'm finding hard at the minute</p> <p>A: Yeah (overlapping)</p> <p>S: Tryna find a paid job (2.0) cos a lot of places nowadays (.) theyre wanting fulltime workers you know like 40 hours a week;- (overlapping)</p> <p>A: Yeah (2.0) yeah (drawing)</p> <p>S: But its harder for me cos obviously (.) I used to work last year (.) I used to do 5 or 6 shifts a week (.) in and so im like used to working (.) full time if that meks sense</p> <p>A: Yeah so it must feel like quite a shift in, a gear</p>		<p>feels he needs in order to improve his living circumstances</p> <p>Difficult not being able to get a job</p>
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<p>change basically cos you can't do more than 16-hours.</p> <p>S: <u>Yeah</u></p> <p>A: Yeah yeah (.) and is that (.) so if you did do more than 16-hours would you not be able to live (.) here?</p> <p>Example from text (35)</p> <p>A: Is there anything else that has felt like more of a challenge?</p> <p>S: Bit of confusing cos obviously (.) everyone's got like (4.0) noones not (.) <u>lads probably being lads but they probably not wanting to go out and be like yeah im gonna go work in an office nine to five like me myself (.) that's not for me I like to (.) I I (.) where I was last year I don't mind it (.) it wo good and Id go back but its mor elike a lot of people erm (.) a lot of young people are wanting to be (.) yano like builders or something like that where you're out (.) like physical doing jobs but obviously (.) along the line (.) some of em are impacted cus onbiously you gotta pay for your CSC (.) JSC and that and obviously (.) some some places to require you to go back to college but if youre like at my age where</u></p>	<p>Opportunities that Samuel is interested to explore for his future require financial resource due to his current age, causing him to feel at a standstill because he does not currently have those resources</p>	
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<p>you've gotta pay for it yourself and <u>you need that money you're kind of a like a standstill</u></p> <p>A: Yeah-h-h-h that's really really helpful (drawing) again it's like cos of the system (3.0) and if you needed to go back to college but due to your age and the finances and stuff like that so its like (overlapping)</p> <p>Example from text (38)</p> <p>S: if you're like (.) for example (.) <u>if I was like sixteen seventeen and id just got kicked out or Im moving in (.) last thing id wanna do is someone moaning at me to get a job</u></p> <p>A: Exactly</p> <p>S: <u>You'd wanna get your place sorted first wunt ya</u></p> <p>A: Yeah</p> <p>S: <u>But at the same time you need money to do that as well</u></p>	<p>A 'stuck' system of not feeling ready to engage in education or employment due to needing to fulfil more basic needs but requiring finances to be able to do that</p>	
<p>Example from text (31)</p> <p>S: <u>The only reason I kinda disagree about the 16 hour rule (.) is because you know (.) this is not to (.) its more like (.) we're gonna</u></p>	<p><u>Sub-category: The system causes a lack of preparation for adulthood for YHP</u></p>	<p>Samuel feels that being unable to work full-time means he will not have had the opportunity to</p>

<p><u>get used to budget- (.)</u> <u>obviously 16 hours you</u> <u>probably looking at like five</u> <u>six hundred quid a month</u></p> <p>A: Hmm</p> <p>S: <u>But like if you're going</u> <u>into like fulltime working</u> <u>and you've (.) if you've</u> <u>lived here for two years but</u> <u>you've been working part</u> <u>time for two years (.)</u> <u>you're gonna get used to</u> <u>budgeting (.) ON (.) sixteen</u> <u>hours a week (.) but if you</u> <u>start bringing like a grand</u> <u>and half home (.) a month</u> <u>(.) you're just gonna flunk</u> <u>it.</u></p> <p>A: Yeah cos its almost like if youre doing that you need a bit of a transition but you're just gonna go from one to the other really aren't ya</p> <p>S: <u>Yeah (.) and people do</u> <u>do that (.) they just go and</u> <u>splash the cash free willy</u> <u>nilly</u></p> <p>A: Yeah yeah. So its like (.) I suppose in one way it sounds like it might be quite helpful for some people to learn how to budget their finances but that can actually be difficult when you come to get a fulltime job because (.) theres been no like bridging the two</p> <p>S: <u>Yeah yeah.</u></p>		<p>manage money on a full- time wage</p>
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<p>Example from text (36)</p> <p>S: you see like cus obviously <u>my dream job is a firefighter</u> but obviously (5.0) the issue ive got is im sure (.) <u>im not too sure if i do or not (.)</u> so im still like you know like looking at like all about it and everything (.) but I don't know if you've gotta go back college</p> <p>A: Hmmm and is there anyone here that has career advise?</p> <p>S: <u>Any job centre and that's where they (hostel) get a lot of their info</u> (pointing to poster display on walls) like they'll use that "follow volunteering</p>	<p><u>Sub-category: Barrier to reaching future career goals</u></p>	

Reflections during categorical-content analysis (10th Jan 2025):

- Some strengths and also vulnerabilities and vice versa, cannot be separated
- Some unexpected themes for me came up, e.g., a positive of moving schools so much was leaving behind negative experiences. And also
- Are young homeless people pushed out of education and into employment due to their living circumstances and lack of financial support? E.g., needing money for basic needs/pay hostel rent and bills/sort of their bedroom and make it "home-like/homely".

We know that all young people, all humans, need a 'home' not just a house. So how do we help them access education still in a system which by circumstance forces them out of it?

Appendix 21: Example of categorical-form analysis notes and summary of cognitive skills and emotional content that was completed for each participant

Charlie's categorical-form analysis

Categorical-form analysis

(Notes in comments regarding my reflections of Charlie's positions as a learner)

The episodes 6 and 7 were selected due to the content reflecting Charlie's experience in college and their identity as a learner.

6

A: Okay so art and design was your course was it?

C: Yeah

A: (drawing) and how long was your course?

C: It was two

A: (drawing) so how did you find college?

C: Yeah I quite enjoyed it (1.0) my tutors were really nice (.) and (.) I (1.0) my (.) a lot of my friends won't agree because they (.) didn't really go (.) get a long with a- a lot of tutors but ah (.) I did I think it's because I'm quieter and more reserved than my friends are (.) ma my friends can be more (.) they need more help and can be a bit more combative if they don't receive said help

A: Hm-m-m-m

C: Which like I und- I everybody has their own nee-e-eds and while mine were met (.) my my friends weren't

A: Yeah yeah but you felt your needs were met and that's great

7

Commented [AF1]: •Quiet & reserved = liked by college staff;
•Loud & combative = not liked as much by college staff.

C: Yeah it is (.) I am very lucky to be to have like very low support needs (.) THOUGH that doesn't mean that I don't struggle

Commented [AF2]: Positioned as low support needs but struggled in education; an invisible student.

A: Yeah of course (.) can you tell me more about that?

C: Cos that's err-r-r-r (.) sometimes I do wish my autism was like slightly a bit more disabling so people take me seriously

A: Hm-m-m-m that's a really good point

C: Either I was- sometimes I would rather (.) not be disabled at all so I can get (.) so I can just get things done OR I would wanna be a bit more have need a bit more help so that people actually give me the help I need

Summary of Notes

Cognitive Skills:

- C shows self-reflection by acknowledging that his needs were met whilst at college. I interpreted this to be a contributing factor to his successful placement and positive experience at college – which was districting different to his secondary education where he struggled with his needs, mental health and self-identity.
- He also demonstrates metacognition by sharing that the picture is much wider than just him. He makes comparisons to his friends who he believed did not have their needs met and that is why there was a difference in the presentation of their needs through their behaviours.
- C also reflected that whilst his needs were met there were moments of struggle which went undetected by education professionals – here C is linking his experiences with examples of why that was problematic for him. He goes on to add that he wishes his needs were more profound so he would get the help that he needs OR have no needs at all. Either way, C uses this example to position himself as 'in the middle' – e.g., he is 'okay enough' but does sometimes struggle and need help.

Emotional Content:

- C also reflected that whilst his needs were met there were moments of struggle which went undetected by education professionals – emphasis on the word 'THOUGH' to draw attention to the fact that he really did struggle, and perhaps this was more often than C verbalised? It is interesting to me that C talks about how his needs were met yet he talks about finding it difficult because he did not get the support he needed. Nonetheless, this suggests it was difficult for C and

perhaps prevented him from progressing further in some aspects of his learning and development.	
Episode 13 was selected because it reflects Charlie and his friends (also experiencing homeless) experience of college education. This is an important episode in the transcript because it details instances of where it worked well for Charlie but not for him friends.	
<p>13</p> <p>A: So do you (1.0) did you find that attending college (.) did it feel any different living here or</p> <p>C: Err-r-r-r not no not really but I do (.) understand that like (1.0) for some people especially err-r-r-r (2.0) like my friend X (.) and somebody who used to live here X (.) err-r-r-r went to the same college (1.0) and they they've had experiences where (2.0) err-r-r-r like (.) especially wh- (.) the head of the art department X (1.0) err-r-r-r err-r-r-r-r-r b- basically like (.) outed them as homeless (1.0) in front of (1.0) like all of the class and like X and X's class was ruthless (1.0) I wasn't in the same one (1.0) but there was this one dude in there who harassed me for over a year on the bus before I could drive (2.0) err-r-r-r (.) basically because I dress alternatively (.) he would like bark and growl at me (1.0) which then (1.0) like (1.0) I'm the one who's supposed to be a furry not you (laugh) and THEN I MADE ONE noise back to him and now every time I see him he goes "er-r-r-r that thing growled at me" (laughing) and then and then he somehow (.) like found out that I was a therian (1.0) which is like you know (.) you have a spiritual connection to animals and you feel like you are one in a human body</p> <p>A: Yeah</p> <p>C: And then (.) so then he got one of his like (1.0) kind of (1.0) underlings (1.0) to come up to me and go erm "do you identify as a racoon-o-o-on" so (.) I went I'm (1.0) I don't identify (1.0) I AM a racoon (laughing)</p> <p>A: And did that sort of stop that conversation there</p>	<p>Commented [AF3]: •Young homeless people positioned as vulnerable yet resilient •Charlie's friends positioned as marginalised, disrespected and harassed in educational spaces - highlights their invisibility and lack of understanding of their needs in relation to being homeless (and having alternative identities) •Charlie positions the system as difficult for YHP - he and his friends are trying to progress in a system which does not accommodate or understand their needs or identities as learners.</p> <p>Commented [AF4]: His alternative identity intersects with the challenges he already faces due to homelessness e.g., being therian, and being bullied/targeted because of this</p>

C: Erm pretty much but apparently they were still talking smack behind my back which is like erm (.) at least have the bravery you cowards

A: Yeah-h-h-h

C: I'm too cool for them (laughing)

A: (laughing) you ARE you're amazing

Summary of Notes

Cognitive Skills:

- Charlie displays self-awareness, reflecting on his own experiences and others, and how they intersect with different parts of himself such as his alternative identities. He contrasts his own experiences with that of his friends.
- Charlie displays abstract thinking when talking about his identity as a therian – reflects his capacity for articulating complex concepts. He also relates this to his experience of homelessness and education.
- Charlie repeatedly uses humour and laughing throughout the extract (and entire interview) which may be his way of masking and/or coping with some of the uncomfortable emotions from some difficult times, such as being bullied for being essentially 'different'. Is this a way of maintaining a level of control in a difficult context/reliving a difficult experience?

Emotional Content:

- Empathy and perspective taking for his friends – e.g., when speaking about their harmful experience of being outed as homeless in front of the entire class. C is able to relate to the emotions of others and positions himself as LUCKY to have had a positive experience which makes it sound like having a positive education experience is rare for young people like Charlie – does this mean homeless young people?

Episode 39 was selected to analyse because Charlie talks about her experience of getting into university and relates to her identity as a learner/student.

39

A: Is there anything like thinking about college and thinking about living here that's felt like more of a challenge

C: Er-r-r definitely (1.0) not (1.0) not being able to move onto er-r-r-r (2.0) uni while here has been a bit of a setback but that's more (.) of a fault on UCs' part not (.) m- making me not qualify for it unless I am (.) too disabled to work (4.0) cos apparently that's the only way you can get- (.) you can have your cake and eat it too

A: So (2.0) I'm being a bit daft now (1.0) did they say you couldn't (.) go on this year because-

C: They said I couldn't have (.) UC I couldn't claim it (1.0) if I was in (1.0) higher education (3.0) because reasons (laughing) I don't know (2.0) I don't know **WHY** (2.0) but like I'm like the only exception to that (.) would be if I had a fit note saying I was outright too disabled to work (1.0) which clearly I'm not

A: Hm hm-m-m

C: So like I KIND of get it (.) but also WHY

A: Yeah (2.0) that's like the systems just like don't make sense sometimes

C: Yeah (2.0) even like the head of the college finance was there like "yeah that's downright evil I'm so sorry"

A: Hm-m-m aw how did you feel like when that happened then

C: Er-r-r (.) I I cried a **BIT** er-r-r-r I say a bit **A LOT** (laughing)

A: Oh

C: Yeah like every time I like had to go talk to somebody about it (.) ohh-h-h-h there goes the tears ohh-h-h-h **BOY-Y-Y-Y** it's happening (laughing)

A: That's understandable int it's such a big thing

C: It it was er-r-r-r emotionally devastating because it's like well I wannu (1.0) I want to do this (1.0) so that I can further my education so that I can be able to get a good job and NOT have to rely on benefits (1.0) and then it's like "okay erm well you're trying to be good at something so we're gonna to take away the benefits you need"

A: (shaking head shocked) it just doesn't make sense

C: Yeah

Summary of Notes

Cognitive Skills:

- C demonstrates critical thinking and the ability to make a criticism with evidence to substantiate it. E.g., when talking about the issue relating to university, C thoroughly explains the issue and why is prevented him for accessing further education for another year. He talks about how unfair the system has been for him due to this as they did not give him enough time to sort the issue out unless he was to drop out of university all together.
- Perspective taking – C demonstrates being able to see the perspective of others. E.g., 'like I KIND of get it but also WHY'. This implies that C can rationally understand how the issue happened but also acknowledged that it does not have sense, and it is a very unfair system. This also relates to the emotional content because it reflects C's level of frustration.

Emotional Content:

- Emphasis on 'WHY' to point out how unfair the system is – this suggests that C found this very difficult to deal with and comprehend at the time – and possibly still now to some degree.
- 'I cried a BIT err-r-r-r-r I say a bit A LOT (laughing)' – emphasis on A LOT shows how upset C was at the time. Again, C uses humour and laughter when talking about these difficult experiences which on the surface makes it look and sound like he is okay and has dealt with the uncomfortable emotions from this experience but actually this could be a way of dealing with these strong emotions and maintaining some level of control and autonomy when thinking and discussing them.
- C described this as emotionally devastating which shows the level of emotional trauma which was caused to him from this experience.

Commented [AF5]: •C positioned as resilient and determined to further his education despite the obstacles from systemic barriers.

•He views education as the path to independence and a better future. E.g., not having to rely on benefits.

•Also positions himself as frustrated by the system

•Marginalised & vulnerable by the system

•Positions the system as unfair and oppressive - when in fact it should be the opposite!

Episodes 40 and 41 were selected due to continuing the conversation about his issues with university – relates to identity.

40

A: So how did you (2.0) like (1.0) what supported you to bounce back from that

C: Er-r-r-r I def- (1.0) X and X were very supportive and they (1.0) you know helped (1.0) like calm me down and like (1.0) so that I could get everything in order

A: Hm-m-m-m

41

C: And er-r-r-r (.) when I spoke to X the head of college finance (1.0) er-r-r-r (.) he was like “yeah I’m really sorry about that but like (.) we can er-r-r-r withhold your place until next year (3.0) so” so so that’s er-r-r-r great for me

A: Yeah (.) so that meant that okay whilst that’s still really devastating-; (overlapping)

C: It is **STILL** devastating but;- (overlapping)

A: It’s still gonna happen

C: Yeah it’s a minor step back (1.0) because I’m still young (.) there’s still plenty of time for me to (.) like (.) earn a degree

A: Absolutely

C: And one year isn’t gonna kill me

Commented [AF6]: C positioned as resilient and determined to further his education despite the obstacles from systemic barriers.

A: Yeah that's a really good (.) mindset to have about it as well

C: Yeah

A: Erm but yeah I can imagine at that time when you first get that news-; (overlapping)

C: AH-H-H-H (hands over face)

A: Yeah

C: Yeah

Summary of Notes

Cognitive Skills:

- C displays perspective and metacognition such that he is able to look beyond the immediacy of the situation. He acknowledged a difficult situation of being held back at year from going to university but then reflected that a year is a minor setback, and there's still plenty of time for him to earn a degree and reach his goals.

Emotional Content:

- C expresses how difficult that experience was both verbally and non-verbally. E.g., 'AHH-H-H-H (hands over face) to imply how emotionally taxing the experience was on him.
- 'It is STILL devastating but' – the emphasis on STILL to draw attention to how the impact of that experience still hurts him today.

Self

- Matthew positions himself as a worker, not an academic. He has been on an employment pathway ever since he was sixteen years old (8). This positionality has previously excluded further education as an option for him, which relates to his identity of being an underperforming, struggling student.
- He shared his journey with homelessness, including sleeping on the streets. He used alcohol and drugs as a mechanism to cope and feel somewhat 'normal' about his circumstances (13). By doing so, this positions him and his circumstances at that time as abnormal which is a detrimental perception to have about oneself (13).
- He positioned himself as 'alone' (4, 32) and 'better off alone' (15, 32) throughout his narrative. He shared about his relationship breakdown with his family, and how he prefers to keep to himself now in order to keep himself safe and away from risky situations he has previously been in, such as those involving drugs and alcohol. Matthew talked about wanting to keep his head down and work towards a better future so keeping himself to himself whilst being in the hostel felt appropriate for him at that time.
- The combination of challenging experiences have meant that he positioned himself as vulnerable, particularly at his lowest point when he became homeless and was using drugs and alcohol and received a drink driving offence (3).
- However, Matthew positioned himself towards the latter of his narrative as resilient (17). He is committed towards his goals of getting back into full-time work and securing a permanent place to live. With the support of others, he has accessed and engaged with further training which he hopes will unlock many work opportunities for him. He shared about how he has taught himself many skills (due to feeling like he was educationally disadvantaged) and therefore he positions himself as very capable of learning and achieving (27, 28)— he just needs the opportunity.

Others

- Matthew positions other people in his life, such as his mother and members of his family, to have let him down — linking with his personal identity of feeling alone and abandoned (3).
- Whereas, since living at the hostel, he has experienced more positive relationships with the hostel staff and further training staff, which he positioned as helpful and supportive (30).
- However, linking with systemic issues, those professionals who are a part of the system for YHP, such as job centre staff, are positioned as harmful to YHP as they cause Matthew to feel dehumanised (25, 26).

System

- Matthew positions the education system as out of reach for him — he is focused on an employment pathway because he needs to earn quick money to be able to live and that is his priority (29).
- He spoke about the systems for YHP who want to better themselves and move out of the hostel (no longer being homeless) but positioned this system as broken and illogical. Living in the hostel and claiming universal credit means the YHP cannot work full-time, which makes breaking the cycle of homelessness even more difficult (5). This represented one of Matthew's greatest personal challenges, some days having to go without food to make ends meet. He passionately spoke about the unfairness of the system and offered a better idea of YHP being able to work full-time, pay their rent and bills and progress towards more stable living circumstances. This represents the overlap between Matthew's self identity and positioning of the system where he feels trapped in a vicious cycle — causing him to feel hopeless and disempowered in his life (27). In addition, he spoke about the systems which are meant to be there to protect him, have sometimes hindered him or put him at risk. In one example, Matthew shared how he was subjected to physical threats and violence whilst living in a shared house — causing further harm and disruption to his life which I interpreted as a hindering factor to accessing education or training.
- His current hostel was positioned as helpful; it meets his basic needs and the staff provide valuable support and a sense of predictability and safety (30). However, it was also positioned as unhelpful because of the wider systemic issues of having restrictions on his autonomy and freedom and the ability to work and earn money, which he wants to do. He constructed the homelessness system for young people as confusing and mixed. However, there was also a sense of hope for Matthew's future. He positioned the hostel as a pitstop in his life which has helped him to get back onto his feet and reengage with further training. It has offered him a sense of hope and optimism, despite its challenges and drawbacks.

Reflective considerations

- His identity positionings all link – feeling and being alone = being vulnerable.
- Matthew had experience a lot in his life so far — traumatic events — which have impacted his ability to access and engage with opportunities. It appears he has also been on an employment journey right from an early age, suggesting that this has played a significant role in him not accessing further education.
- I have definitely inferred from Matthew's story that due to his living and wider-life circumstances, he was not in the physical or psychological place to access education and this is important to highlight for YHP. This is my assumption and interpretation and has influenced the lens I view Matthew from. But ultimately I think it is a helpful lens; it removes the blame from Matthew and places the spotlight back onto the

