Exploring Designated Safeguarding Leads' experiences of working with children and young people associated with knife crime: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

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Abstract

The increasing level of knife crime taking place across the UK is of growing concern, nationally and locally. It is recognised that knife crime affects young people, impacting not only those directly involved but also their families, friends and the wider communities around them. Legislation and guidance has highlighted the role schools play in educating, safeguarding and supporting pupils associated with knife crime. Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) are professionals in school who hold key responsibility for the safeguarding and protection of their pupils.

There is a paucity of published research into the experiences of school staff working with children and young people associated with knife crime, in particular there is a lack of research specifically exploring the experiences of Designated Safeguarding Leads, despite the prominence of their role. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the experiences of DSLs working with children and young people associated with knife crime and hear their voice.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used to explore the experiences of five secondary school DSLs working in one Inner London Borough. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and superordinate themes from each of the DSLs emerged from the analysis. Five overarching themes were identified across the participants; 'socio-economic factors', 'school as protector', 'tensions in role', 'a myriad of emotions' and 'the need for support'.

The themes which emerged from the analysis are discussed in the context of existing literature and relevant psychology theory. The limitations of the research are considered, and implications of the findings for EPs are explored including providing

supervision, support and training to DSLs and using their psychological knowledge and skills at the wider group, system and community level. Suggestions for future research are provided.

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Glossary of Terms

CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CCE	Child Criminal Exploitation
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CYP	Children and Young People
DfE	Department for Education
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
KC	Knife Crime
LA	Local Authority
NHS	National Health Service
PRU	Pupil Referral Units
SEN	Special Educational Need
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SSO	Safer Schools Officer (Police)
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist
UK	United Kingdom
YOS	Youth Offending Service

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1 INTRODUCTION

The increase in incidents of knife crime across the UK in the past few years is of national significance and has become an increasing and worrying concern. Statistics indicate that the majority of individuals impacted by knife crime are young people under the age of 25 (The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime [MOPAC], 2017). Knife crime is a complex, societal issue affecting not only those directly involved, but also their families and the wider community including schools. Statutory guidance has highlighted the role of schools in reducing knife crime and providing support and education to their pupils, whilst emphasising the key need for effective partnership working across agencies (MOPAC, 2017; Department for Education, 2018a).

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in schools is "to take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection" (DfE, 2018a, p.89). This is a complex and demanding role and despite this, there is a paucity of research exploring DSLs' experiences in role. This research set out to gain their views, in order to try and understand their experiences of working with children and young people associated with knife crime in secondary schools in an Inner London Borough.

1.1 Chapter Overview

The aim of this to chapter is to introduce the area of study. First, definitions of the key terms relating to the research will be provided. An examination of legislation and policy will follow and the national and local context, where the research took place, will then be set. Finally, a rationale for the research will be provided and the research aims set out.

1.2 Clarifying key terminology

1.2.1 What is knife crime?

Knife crime is defined as any offence that is both:

- an offence of murder, attempted murder, assault with intent to cause harm, assault with injury, threats to kill, sexual offences (including rape) and robbery

- where a knife or sharp instrument has been used to injure, threaten, or when the victim was led to believe a knife was present during the offence

(MOPAC, 2017)

Relating to possession of knives, the law states that under Section 1 of the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 it is an offence for a person to have an offensive weapon with them in any public place without "lawful authority or reasonable excuse". Section 139A of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 states that it is an offence for a person to have an offensive weapon or a bladed/pointed article on a school premises without good reason or lawful authority.

For the purpose of this research, the focus with the participants will include working with both potential victims and perpetrators of the above, including children and young people who might carry knives. This research also seeks to explore the experiences of working with those children and young people associated with knife crime.

1.2.2 What do we mean by associated with knife crime?

An incident involving knife crime has an impact not only on the individuals directly involved but also their friends, family and wider community. Those associated could

be the friend or relative of someone involved, someone who witnessed an event or who is involved in the community in some way. This could be through where they live or through an event taking place in their school or wider community. Evidence shows that young people's feelings of safety are negatively affected following a knife crime incident. A MOPAC Survey of 400 young people in London identified that 42% were concerned about knife crime in their area, 22% knew someone who had been a victim and 3% had been a victim themselves (MOPAC, 2017).

1.2.3 Why use the term 'knife crime'?

It is acknowledged that knife crime is a politically laden and, some argue, a sensationalised term. Research describes the heightened public concern over the increase in knife crime (Grimshaw & Ford, 2018) and the influence of the media in the conception of the term is well documented (Stone, 2018; Clement, 2010). Despite this, it is felt that knife crime is the most appropriate term to describe the phenomenon under discussion. There are many other weapons used to cause injury such as guns, bottles and acid (MOPAC, 2017). However, the scale of the crimes committed involving knives in comparison is significant and the issue has been found to be a particular concern for young people (MOPAC, 2017). The Make Your Mark 2018 survey of over one million young people aged 11-18 across the UK, found that ending knife crime was the biggest priority amongst those surveyed (Youth Parliament, 2018).

In the literature, the terms 'youth crime', 'youth violence' and 'gang violence' are also used at times where the definition of knife crime affecting young people as stated above would be applicable.

1.3 Statistics

- Despite overall crime rates continuing to fall, there has been a 16% increase in the year ending March 2018 in offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in England and Wales compared to the previous year, with 40,100 offences recorded (Office for National Statistics, [ONS], 2019). This has been shown to be the highest number of offences since comparable records began in 2011 (ONS, 2019).
- Nationally, police recorded offences for possession of a knife or sharp object rose by 21% to 22,169 in the year ending March 2019 (ONS, 2019). Whilst in London, 4,000 people were arrested for carrying a knife in the year leading up to March 2017 (MOPAC, 2017).
- National Health Service (NHS) admissions data for hospitals in England report that there were 4,986 admissions for assault by a sharp object between 2017/2018, an increase of nearly a third since 2012/2013 (NHS England, 2019). Whilst admissions for young people aged 10-19 with similar injuries increased by 55% in the same period (NHS England, 2019).
- Although London has a disproportionately high number of knife crime offences, it is an issue across the whole country with reported increases in areas such as Manchester, the West Midlands and Yorkshire (ONS, 2019).
- In the last four years, the number of knife incidents against under-25s in England and Wales has risen from 3,857 in 2013-14 to 6,503 in 2017-18, according to data obtained by The Independent through freedom of information requests (Bulman, 2018).
- Young people aged 10-17 represent approximately 21% of those cautioned or convicted of knife possession offences (Allen & Audickas, 2018). This figure has

increased by almost half (48%) between the year ending March 2015 and the year ending March 2019 (Ministry of Justice [MoJ], 2019).

- There has also been a rise in the number of sharp objects found in schools, with 363 found in 2017-2018 compared to 94 in 2013-2014, according to data from 21 police forces across England and Wales (Butcher & Schraer, 2019).
- The most common time for knife crime violence involving young people to take place is after school between 4pm and 6pm (Mayor, 2018).

1.3.1 A note of caution

There is an abundance of different statistics available relating to knife crime, with each dataset interpreted in many different ways. There are some difficulties inherent in data provided on knife crime. Reporting on offences involving knives only began in 2009, following an increase in fatal stabbings when the government decided to change the way that knife crime is officially recorded. It is also acknowledged that data is not the most reliable indicator of how many people actually carry knives in society, as there is a large amount of criminal activity that goes unreported (Silvesrtri, Oldfield, Squires & Grimshaw, 2009). Whilst the Office for National Statistics caveat that some of the recorded increase can be attributed to changes in how crimes are recorded, they state there is still a significant increase in the figures (ONS, 2019).

1.4 Knife Crime Legislation

Over the last twenty years, knife crime has frequently been on the political agenda and a range of policy and guidance has been enacted relating to the issue. Relevant criminal legislation relating to knife crime includes the Prevention of Crime Act

1953, Criminal Justice Act 1988 and the Offensive Weapons Act 1996. These set out the law surrounding possession and use of knives and bladed tools as a weapon.

Those involved in knife crime are vulnerable children and young people with a higher than average number having a Special Educational Need (SEN) (Silvestri et al., 2009; Ofsted, 2019; MoJ, 2018). The Children Act 2004 imposes a duty on every Local Authority (LA) to safeguard vulnerable CYP in need. The act also requires all LA's to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) which comprise multi-agency members and play a strategic role in safeguarding children in their area. Safeguarding Boards are also held at regional and national levels. They lead on the development of procedures for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of CYP including those involved in knife crime. This law also states that LAs and partner organisations need to work collaboratively to support CYP in need. The Children and Families Act 2014 set out to reform services for vulnerable CYP including those with SEN in a new SEND Code of Practice (2015). This included a new Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to replace statements, a statutory document which sets out the provision required for CYP experiencing difficulties impacting on their education, health and social care needs. EPs work was also extended to support and work with young people up to the age of 25.

Following the increase in knife crime and violence around 2008, the government released national guidance, 'Ending Gang and Youth Violence: A cross-government report' (Home Office, 2011). More recently, in June 2017 the Mayor of London's Police and Crime Commission launched a Knife Crime Strategy to specifically target this issue in London (MOPAC, 2017). Following this in April 2018, the government introduced the Serious Violence Strategy (HM Government, 2018a). Both these strategies stress that all agencies working together (including schools) to support

children and young people (CYP) is key to addressing issues with knife crime. A range of guidance has been produced for schools relating to knife crime including:

- Preventing youth violence and gang involvement: practical advice for schools and colleges (Home Office, 2013)
- Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England. Statutory guidance for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion (DfE, 2017)
- Searching, screening and confiscation. Advice for headteachers, school staff and governing bodies (DfE, 2018b)

1.5 National context

Knife crime is a complex and contentious societal problem with the cause and contributing factors frequently debated. The election of a new government in 2011, led to a change in public policy with a greater emphasis on retrenchment in public spending in order to prevent further growth in national debt. This has resulted to ongoing cuts over the last eight years to public services affecting local authorities and schools, as well as the police and other public bodies (Spielman, 2018). The Institute for Fiscal Studies (2018) identified how funding for early intervention and preventative work, such as Sure Start centres, and services for young people had reduced by 60% in real terms between 2009/10 and 2016/7.

Charities and community organisations, which have a key role in preventing and supporting young people associated with knife crime, have also been impacted by funding cuts (Directory of Social Change, 2016). Data from the Department for Education (DfE) published in 2018, highlights how spending on youth services

decreased by a third in 2017-2018 compared to 2014-2015 (BBC News, 2019). In London, data provided by 26 out of 42 London boroughs through a freedom of information request by the Guardian, showed that the number of youth centres has halved in the year leading up to 2019 compared to 2011, with nearly 560 youth workers losing their jobs (Hancox, 2019).

Changes to local authority education systems, with the rising number of academies has meant that LAs have had to adjust and adapt how they work, including their role in safeguarding (Ofsted, 2019). A £200 million Youth Endowment Fund has recently been launched to fund interventions with children and young people at risk of involvement in crime and violence (Home Office, 2019)

The possible reasons why CYP become involved in knife crime are numerous. Knife crime is driven by the interaction between factors at the individual level, community and societal level and the relationships between people and groups (Sethi, Hughes, Bellis, Mitis & Racioppi., 2010). Grimshaw and Ford (2018) conducted a detailed review of literature in the field concluding that "fundamental social relationships – inequality, deprivation and social trust – as well as mental health" (p.1) are some of the key drivers of knife crime which are closely related to the issues of gangs and drugs.

1.5.1 Knife carrying

Multiple studies have shown that children and young people who carry a weapon such as a knife, choose to do so for their own protection (Kinsella, 2011; Lemos, 2004; Squires, Silvestri, Grimshaw & Soloman, 2008). A study exploring the views of young offenders in London involved in knife crime found that they believed the

experience or the threat of street robbery was a key reason people carried knives (MOPAC, 2017). The offenders reported that individuals may have been victims of crime previously or have a strong fear of crime driving them to carry knives for protection. However, early data has shown that a third of knife crime victims are harmed by their own knife (McVie, 2010). Other factors involved in knife carrying include intimidation, to enable robbery, to injure and also for power and status on the streets (Palasinski, 2013).

1.5.2 Gangs and youth violence

Criminal gangs which operate across the UK can be sophisticated operations, involving drugs, criminality and violence (Children's Commissioner, 2019). The term 'gang' is a controversial and a subjective term, closely linked to political and social agendas (Alexander, 2008). Whilst it is acknowledged that the majority of knife crime is not gang related, the issue of knife crime is often closely linked in the literature to gang involvement (Squires et al., 2008, Aynsley-Green, 2009; Palasinksi, 2013) and research has identified that gang members are more likely to carry knives than people not in gangs (McVie, 2010).

1.5.3 School exclusions

7,900 pupils were permanently excluded from schools across the UK in the year ending 2018 (DfE, 2019) and data shows that rates of fixed-period exclusions in schools across the UK have increased compared to previous years (DfE, 2019). In London, the number of children excluded from secondary schools has also risen in the last three years (London Assembly, 2019). Data from the Department for

Education indicates that exclusion rates in primary, secondary and special academies are higher than LA maintained schools, with the highest rates of exclusion found in schools in areas with high levels of deprivation (DfE, 2019).

In May 2019, Edward Timpson published a review into school exclusions highlighting national trends in particular groups of children who are more likely to be excluded from school (Timpson, 2019). This included boys, children with a special educational need, those who had social care involvement and children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Children from Gypsy/Roma, Irish Traveller and Black Caribbean backgrounds were most likely to be excluded. The review also found that 78% of pupils who were permanently excluded from school either had a SEN or were eligible for free school meals (Timpson, 2019). Recommendations from the review included a focus on early intervention for pupils at risk of exclusion and called on leaders to work collaboratively. Timpson (2019) also highlighted the safeguarding concerns and significant risks for CYP who experience exclusion from school.

Research has shown that a higher proportion of young offenders convicted of knife possession have been persistently absent or excluded from school (MoJ, 2018). Pupil Referral Units have been described as ‘grooming grounds’ for gangs, violence and criminal exploitation (Children’s Commissioner, 2019). However, it may be that the causal factors that drive exclusion are the same as those that drive knife crime.

1.5.4 Child Criminal Exploitation

The issue of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) has been increasing on the national agenda. Vulnerable children are often enticed into gangs and are groomed and coerced into carrying knives and other criminal activities on behalf of a gang (Stone,

2018b). County Lines whereby *"gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK...are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons"* (Home Office, 2018, p2).

1.5.5 Demographic of those involved

Exploration of Metropolitan Police crime data from 2016/2017 for London found that three quarters of victims of knife crime are male, mostly younger than 25, and that nearly half were from black and minority ethnic backgrounds (MOPAC, 2017). Whilst the majority of those directly involved in knife crime tend to be male, MOPAC (2017) highlights the effect knife crime can have on females in the context of domestic abuse and violence in relationships. The vast overlap between victims and perpetrators is repeatedly stated in the literature along with the difficulties in differentiating between the two groups (Squires et al., 2008; Home Office, 2017).

Research into risk factors indicates that those involved in knife crime and knife carrying have been found to have:

- lower educational attainment
- a greater likelihood of being persistently absent or excluded from school
- a higher than average amount having a Special Educational Need
- experienced poverty, abuse and neglect
- experienced a challenging home situation

(Silvestri et al., 2009; Ofsted, 2019; MoJ, 2018; HM Government, 2018a).

1.6 Local Context

The research took place in an Inner London Local Authority (LA) where the author practices as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) within an Educational Psychology Service. The LA was amongst the highest placed boroughs for knife crime and violent crime in 2017/8. The borough contains an ethnically diverse and young population and is densely populated with areas of significant deprivation (LA, 2018). In the LA, research has found that CYP carry knives for protection, to commit crime, for attention and as a result of peer pressure (LA, 2017). In line with national data, the peak period for knife crime was found to be between 3pm and 6pm and males were predominantly involved (LA, 2019).

The LA has provisions in place including a specialist anti-violence unit, educational programmes and police meetings held fortnightly leading on gang interventions (LA, 2019). A Safeguarding Forum for schools was held in June 2018 on the topic of Knife Crime and brought together Designated Safeguarding Leads from settings across the borough to discuss the issues and how best to support the children and young people in their schools.

1.6.1 Knife Crime and Knife Carrying Action Plan

Knife crime is a priority of the safeguarding board in the local authority. A knife crime and knife carrying action plan has been established which aims to provide a coherent and coordinated response to reducing knife crime in the area (LA, 2017). It places emphasis and policy on tackling violent crime and supporting young people. The document highlights the collective responsibility of all services in reducing knife crime and supporting those affected, including schools. The LA is currently

developing a school-wide protocol for how to address knife crime and knife carrying in the borough.

1.7 The Role of schools

1.7.1 Schools and knife crime

In London, MOPAC's Knife Crime Strategy highlights the key role schools play in reducing the risk factors that can lead to CYP being exposed and enticed into violence and criminality (MOPAC, 2017). It emphasises the safeguarding and educational responsibilities schools hold for CYP and their families relating to knife crime, and that schools must be places of safety for pupils. The strategy states that MOPAC will be lobbying Ofsted and the government to produce specific recommendations for schools in how to safeguard pupils at risk of becoming involved in knife crime and offer appropriate support and guidance for staff and parents. The national Serious Violence strategy proposes ways it will help parents, teachers and schools to feel "equipped to identify and tackle serious violence issues that may present themselves in their schools" (HM Government, 2018a). However, Ofsted (2019) highlight that knife crime is a complex, societal issue and not one that can be tackled by schools alone.

The increasing level of knife crime and the fear it generates among CYP has an impact on schools and the communities that they serve. It is well-acknowledged in the literature that mental health needs, including anxiety and fear, impact on CYP's ability to learn (Bomber, 2007). Pupils need to feel safe and secure to engage with their learning at school (Youell, 2006). Evidence has demonstrated that events happening outside school in relation to violence and gang involvement can affect a

student's ability to concentrate on their work (Broadhurst et al., 2009; Irwin-Rogers & Harding, 2018).

Fear has been said "to play the most significant role in a young person's decision to carry a knife" (Eades, Grimshaw, Silvestri, & Solomon, 2007, p.22). The fear of crime present amongst young people has been documented in the literature and is linked to the increase in knife carrying (Eades et al., 2007).

1.7.2 Government Consultation

In April 2019, the Prime Minister and Home Secretary launched a consultation over whether there should be a 'public health duty' on schools to report concerns over children at risk of knife crime (Home Office, 2019). The proposals suggest that teachers would have a legal duty to report children they fear are caught up in youth violence and would be held accountable if they did not. The idea has been met with criticism from school staff who feel that more pressure and responsibility is being placed on teachers who are already overstretched and under resourced (Greierson & Booth, 2019).

1.8 Designated Safeguarding Leads

1.8.1 Role of DSL

The Designated Safeguarding Lead role was first set out in the Children Act (DfE, 2004) and further clarified in statutory guidance including 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (DfE, 2018a). The legislation and guidance states that the DSL is the key person in a school responsible for the safeguarding and protection of pupils. They are

responsible for enacting change around school systems, supporting children and young people and helping to ensure their safety (DfE, 2018a).

Several new pieces of legislation and guidance have been introduced in the last ten years surrounding safeguarding in schools. The statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (HM Government, 2018b) sets out the need for joined-up working amongst professionals.

The DSL role is complex with many different aspects (DfE, 2018a) including:

- managing referrals and following up any concerns
- working with other professionals
- managing files and ensuring effective information sharing
- training
- ensuring they are available to all staff in school

There is a high level of responsibility in this role as the DSL is the lead person who holds the responsibility for safeguarding in school.

Statutory guidance states that "[The DSL] should be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters, take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or to support other staff to do so, and to contribute to the assessment of children" (DfE, 2018a, p.89)

1.9 Why is this relevant to Educational Psychologists? (EP)

The research is of interest to many agencies working in this area, as a TEP the author will now highlight the relevance to Educational Psychologists (EPs). EPs work with children and young people, families and professionals in a wide range of settings, offering support and advice to promote the well-being and development of CYP and foster positive outcomes. Part of the EP role involves supporting organisations such as schools to manage vulnerable pupils and those with additional needs, working closely with staff (Division for Education and Child Psychology [DECP], 2002). There are five core aspects of the EP role including consultation, assessment, training, intervention and research. EPs also provide critical incident support to schools in times of crisis, such as when a pupil is involved in a knife crime incident.

EPs use their psychological knowledge, skills and understanding in their work at three different levels (individual, group and organisational) across different systems (DECP, 2002). This includes working directly with children and young people and their families. These could be vulnerable pupils associated with knife crime at risk of exclusion who require support and interventions to be put in place. EPs also work in multi-agency teams, for example joining Team Around the Child meetings to think together about how the needs of a CYP can be best met. At the group level, EPs provide training on topics such as attachment, cognition and social and emotional wellbeing to meet the needs of school staff, parents and professionals. At an organisation level, EPs work strategically advising on how best to support CYP, for example attending safeguarding boards or working with Youth Offending Teams (Fallon, Woods, & Rooney, 2010).

1.10 Research Rationale and Aims

The rising trend of knife crime incidents is of significant national and local concern. A range of policies and legislation have been implemented with the impact on schools and their role in preventative, educational and supportive work related to the issue of knife crime highlighted. Despite the level of responsibility the DSLs hold, there is a lack of research into their views and experiences in role. Therefore, this research aims to ensure their voice is heard and seeks to explore the following research question.

What are the experiences of DSLs working with children and young people associated with knife crime in secondary schools in an Inner London borough?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter will systematically explore the existing literature in relation to safeguarding leads' experiences of working with CYP associated with knife crime. A critique of the identified papers will be provided. Fitting with the methodology adopted for this research, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, the literature review was carried out after the analysis to ensure that the researcher was not influenced or biased by the prior literature during these stages.

2.2 Formulation of the literature search question

The literature search question aims to identify key themes and explore findings within existing research, and identify the gaps in knowledge needing to be filled (Aveyard, 2014). The researcher was initially interested in finding out what the existing research says about DSLs' experiences of working with CYP associated with knife crime.

2.2.1 Scoping strategies

Initial exploration found that the terms "designated safeguarding lead", "safeguarding person" or "safeguarding lead" produced no relevant results, despite the importance of their role in school (see Appendix A). The DSL role is often a joint role held by senior members of staff and teachers, so it was felt necessary to broaden the search terms to look at research which explored the experiences and views of a range of school staff. Therefore, the literature review question was expanded to identify relevant literature to answer the following question:

What does the literature tell us about the experiences of school staff working with children and young people associated with knife crime?

2.3 Systematic Literature Search

A 'systematic approach' to reviewing the literature was adopted (Aveyard, 2014) to identify all the available research on the topic. Each stage of the approach will now be discussed.

2.3.1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion and exclusion criteria, provided below, were agreed before conducting searches of the literature to ensure the most relevant research was included.

TABLE 1. INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
▪ Published between 2004-2019 ▪ Article is in English ▪ Based in the UK ▪ Empirical research ▪ Research gains the views of school staff about knife crime or youth violence	▪ Research did not gain the views of school staff about knife crime or youth violence ▪ Staff views not the focus or minor part of the study's main aim

The Designated Safeguarding Lead role was introduced in 2004 as specified in the Children Act (DfE, 2004) so it was felt appropriate to limit articles to those published after that time. It was decided that the research needed to be conducted in a UK

context to ensure that it is applicable and relevant to current practice. The research needed to gain the views or experiences of school staff about knife crime.

2.3.2 Literature Search Strategy

The search was conducted using EBSCO Discovery online to search a wide range of databases relevant to the topic from the fields of psychology, education, sociology and criminology amongst others. Google Scholar and the British Library Catalogue were also searched and hand searching of relevant journals and books was undertaken. Snowballing was used, whereby the reference list and articles cited by an article are explored, in order to identify further relevant research. The initial search was conducted in March 2019 and repeated in May 2019.

2.3.3 Search Terms

Aveyard (2014) advises the use of keywords and their associated search terms. To enable a thorough approach to the literature search, the author began with narrow searches including keywords for 'safeguarding leads', 'experiences', 'schools' and 'knife crime'. However, due to the small number of results returned, of which none were deemed relevant, the search was expanded and the term for 'experiences' was removed. The initial search terms for DSL produced no relevant results as discussed, therefore the search terms were broadened to include school staff, senior leadership, teachers and schools.

An initial scoping search using the term "knife crime" also produced few results, however when the criteria was expanded to include relevant terms such as "crime" and "violence" this led to a huge number of results which were nearly all irrelevant to

the topic of study. The researcher acknowledges that although this research uses the term ‘knife crime’, other terms are frequently used such as ‘youth violence’ and ‘gang’ to describe the topic. The complex relationship between gangs and knife crime was discussed in the introduction. It is acknowledged that knife crime and violence is a key feature of the behaviour of gang affiliated youths and the literature on gangs makes frequent reference to knife crime throughout. Therefore, examining the relevant abstracts identified that the most appropriate search terms, which produced relevant results, were “knife crime”, “youth violence” and “gang”.

As the abstract in a piece of research aims to provide a summary of the aims, methodology, findings and conclusions, it was felt appropriate to search for words limited to this field. The terms reported below were the finally agreed search terms using the Boolean AND. It was identified as necessary to use a search term for the UK due to the database country limiters not always being consistent and the necessity for research to relate to only the UK context.

TABLE 2. SEARCH TERMS

School staff	**Knife Crime**	**UK**
Safeguarding “designated safeguarding lead" "school staff" "Designated safeguarding leads" Teacher* "Senior leadership" school education	"knife crime" "youth violence" gang	"United Kingdom" Britain UK England Wales Scotland Northern Ireland

The search returned 114 results once duplicates were removed. Limiters were applied for the year published and the need for empirical research, leaving 56 studies

remaining. The title and abstracts of the studies were scanned, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. If the abstract did not provide sufficient evidence of its relevance, the full article was reviewed.

Details of the excluded research and reasons for exclusion are provided in Appendix C. The most common reasons for exclusion were that research did not explore issues related to knife crime and youth violence or did not gain the views of school staff. Following this process, one paper was identified (Irwin-Rogers & Harding, 2018). During reading of the titles, a news article was found which described a study exploring the impact of gangs and knife crime in schools (British Journal of School Nursing, 2019). Whilst this article did not meet the inclusion criteria, it did direct the researcher to a report that did (Irwin-Rogers, 2016).

2.3.4 Revised search strategy

Due to the lack of literature identified from the systematic search strategy, it was felt best to use alternative means such as Google Scholar, Google and hand searches to search for relevant literature. Through these methods, snowballing and examining reference lists and citations, a further three studies were identified (Broadhurst et al., 2009; Ofsted, 2019; Waddell & Jones, 2018) resulting in five studies in total (see Appendix D). A summary of the characteristics of these studies is provided in Appendix E. Articles citing these studies and their reference lists were closely examined and further searches continued, however no more relevant literature was identified to answer the literature review question.

2.4 Critical Review of the research

A critical review aims to carry out a structured analysis of the strengths and limitations of each study to allow evaluation of its relevance to the literature review topic (Aveyard, 2014). The research identified was assessed using a critical appraisal tool by Walsh and Downe (2006), which provides a comprehensive criteria for appraising qualitative research studies. The areas relate to the scope and purpose, design, sampling strategy, analysis, interpretation, reflexivity, ethical dimensions and the relevance and transferability of the research. Appendix F provides a summary of the critique for each paper under these areas.

All the studies identified from the search explore a multiplicity of perspectives, as well as staff members; pupils, stakeholders and parents' views were also obtained. However, the findings relating to the views of school staff are the focus of the discussion in order to answer the research question pertaining to their experiences. All five studies provided a useful perspective of views of school staff, despite flaws that will each be exemplified in turn. Each study will be discussed before a summary of the key findings are provided at the end of this chapter.

2.4.1 Ofsted (2019) Safeguarding children and young people in education from knife crime, Lessons from London

Aims

Ofsted (2019) sought to identify ways in which policy makers and school leaders can support safeguarding CYP in education from knife crime more effectively. They acknowledged the complexities inherent in dealing with the issue and aimed to

explore what schools are doing to safeguard pupils from knife crime whilst in school, how they are educating CYP about knife crime and how exclusions are managed when children and young people bring knives into school.

Researcher Orientation

The researcher's orientation is not explicitly stated, although they used a mixed-methods design, gaining both qualitative and quantitative data.

Methodology

A mixed-methods design was employed involving a survey sent to all secondary settings in London, individual in-depth interviews with members of staff from 29 secondary schools and focus groups with pupils and parents. The settings where the research took place included pupil referral units (PRUs), further education colleges and mainstream secondary schools. This critique will focus on the qualitative aspect of the research, the in-depth interviews with school staff as this is most relevant to the literature search question.

The initial survey was sent to all 600 secondary settings in London and 107 responses were received. Responders were given the option to be included for consideration in the next phase, involving more in-depth interviews with school leaders. From those who agreed to be considered for the next stage of the research, 29 settings were chosen. By only interviewing those who responded to the survey, a potential bias may be present in the schools, which comprised the sample. Schools that came forward may have been more willing to discuss the topic and share their practice with Ofsted and therefore have had a certain opinion about their work. However, the authors

acknowledge this to some degree, sharing that they wanted schools to put themselves forward due to the sensitive nature of knife crime. The researchers wanted to gain the views of those most engaged with knife crime in schools, rather than gain an understanding of what all schools are doing.

The researchers asked to speak to head teachers and principals in schools and stated that some of these chose to bring the DSL or others with responsibilities relevant to the topic. It is worth noting that often the DSL role is undertaken by the head teacher or deputy head teacher in a school. No further details were provided about the members of staff interviewed or their role making conclusions specifically about the DSL's views difficult.

Analysis approach

Interviews were transcribed and thematic analysis conducted leading to recommendations for policy and future planning. Ofsted gained the advice of experts in the field throughout the process to support the development of the research and analysis. Whilst the author stated thematic analysis was used to analyse the interview data, no clear audit trail or further details are provided making it hard to determine whether the analysis was sufficiently rigorous.

Findings

The findings that were identified led to recommendations in the areas of partnership working, exclusions and managed moves, early help and prevention, information sharing and education. The data was integrated across staff members, pupils and parents and it was made clear where the views came from. The data appears well

considered with findings contextualised and verbatim extracts provided throughout the text allowing participants' voices to be heard.

Limitations

A clear justification is provided for the research and its relevance and importance, with the explicit purpose of influencing policy given. There is no systematic literature review described, which may be due to the nature of the report. The rationale for the research design, including the desire to explore schools' perspective, is provided. Whilst the data collection method appears appropriate, it is unclear who conducted the interviews and their relationship to the participants. This is worthy of consideration due to the power Ofsted and their inspections have on schools and the potential influence this might have on participants' willingness to be honest about their views and practice for fear of negative repercussions.

The ethical and safeguarding procedures were stated to be published shortly on their website, however these were not available at the time of writing. The authors did appear mindful of ethical issues including who was selected for focus groups and the perceived unethical nature of interviewing those involved in knife crime directly. The authors also appeared sensitive to the needs of the children and young people and schools. Consideration was given by the researchers of the issue of schools being seen to have a problem with knife crime and the potential damage this could do to their reputations. The implications for practice are discussed in depth and suggestions provided for how these might be implemented.

Overall, this research has produced some valuable and relevant findings to the issue of safeguarding and knife crime in secondary schools and contributes to existing knowledge and understanding about school staff members' work in this area. The identification that schools are feeling unsupported by other agencies and local authorities and desire more training is a salient finding. However, the study does lack transparency in some areas and fails to consider or make clear some key aspects of the research design.

2.4.2 Waddell & Jones (2018). Intervening Early to Prevent Gang and Youth Violence: The role of primary Schools

Aims

This study is part of a larger piece of research commissioned by the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF), which aims to explore the current situation in primary schools to identify and manage risks around gang and youth violence. The project was supported by the Battersea Power Station Foundation, which is an independent charity that aims to support its local communities in Lambeth and Wandsworth. This may explain why these two boroughs in particular were chosen, however this is not explicitly stated to be the case.

The EIF is part of the government's network for providing evidence and advice regarding effective early intervention to CYP. Prior to this study, the EIF completed a piece of research reviewing 'What works to prevent gang involvement, youth violence and crime' (O'Connor & Waddell, 2015) which identified that risk factors

can be found in children as young as seven and that there is a potential critical opportunity for early intervention to target vulnerable pupils and families.

The research discussed is the first stage of a three-year project. It aimed to explore the role of primary schools in supporting and working with CYP at risk of becoming involved in youth violence and gangs. Primary school staff members and stakeholders' (including local authority staff, community and voluntary services and the police) views were explored.

Researcher orientation

Although there is no acknowledgment of the epistemological or ontological position, the desire to gain the experience and views of school staff suggests the researchers hold a social constructionist worldview.

Methodology

Twenty-eight in-depth interviews were conducted both in person and over the telephone using pre-arranged topic guides. Head teachers from six schools each selected three staff members who had a diverse range of experience, including someone working with vulnerable pupils (such as a DSL, SENCo or learning mentor). The research took place across Lambeth and Wandsworth (LAs identified as having issues with gangs and youth violence) where stakeholders were selected using a purposeful sampling strategy. School staff members frequently had a dual role, such as deputy head teacher and safeguarding lead, though often only reported one of the roles to protect their confidentiality, making identification of the number of DSLs interviewed challenging.

Analysis

Waddell and Jones (2018) report that the framework analysis method was used and the steps taken in this to ensure a systematic and comprehensive approach to analysis. However, a clear description of what the framework analysis method involved is not provided. This could have been described in greater depth to offer the reader the ability to replicate the research. However despite this, the analysis method was appropriate and appears to be a useful tool to be used with this type of research.

Findings

The findings were provided with verbatim extracts used to support the descriptions and place the findings in context. The authors concluded that staff clearly had a good knowledge of their pupils and their families and worked very hard to provide a good example for the children to support their social and emotional wellbeing. However, they noted that some school staff felt extremely frustrated and unsupported in their work with this group of individuals. They also described feelings of anger and sadness that despite their best efforts they could not prevent the path that these children would follow.

Limitations

Waddell and Jones (2018) provided a clear focus for the study and outline a range of reasons why the study is relevant including their previous research in the field. The links to previous literature are discussed however, they fail to describe a systematic approach to reviewing the literature calling into question the rigour of the research. A description of the methodology used is provided and the authors discuss the relevance of using a qualitative method to explore the participants' views. They are transparent

when issues arose surrounding the sampling method and explained why they had to adjust their criteria to meet the needs of the area where the research took place. The authors describe using topic guides, which varied for the different participant groups, however these were not shared. In each interview, it appears a researcher and a note-taker were present with the individual participant. The researchers do not appear to have considered the potential impact of this on what was produced during the interview.

The inclusion of detailed quotes frequently throughout the findings further adds to the trustworthiness of the research and ensures that the participant's voices have been captured. A clear exposition is given into how the interpretation of the data lead to the conclusions reached. Whilst there is no formal acknowledgment of ethical approval being granted, the authors demonstrate a good awareness of ethical issues throughout the research, including respect, confidentiality and transparency through how they speak about the participants. They strive to ensure that autonomy and confidentiality are maintained for participants and schools. The limitations of the research area are acknowledged; such as issues relating to the element of self-selection of schools and that they could not compare stakeholders' views across the boroughs. Due to a lack of specificity regarding whose views were whose, it is difficult to ascertain whether more weighting was given to certain staff members.

Overall, Waddell & Jones (2018) have produced a high quality, relevant and informative study in helping to understand primary school staff's experiences working with children affected by gang and youth violence. A strength of the research is how it empowers the voices of school staff such as teachers, learning

mentors and those responsible for safeguarding; a group who often work most closely with pupils affected by knife crime but whose voices are rarely heard. The findings help to understand the experiences of staff working with younger pupils who are at potential risk of future gang and youth violence. Although commissioned and part of a government project, it was considered whether there may be a political element in the data, for example only looking for what was working well. However, the researchers appear to provide a balanced view of the situation, commenting on the pressures on schools from budget restrictions and the emphasis placed on academic performance.

2.4.3 Broadhurst, Duffin & Taylor (2009). Gangs and Schools: A report for the NASUWT

Aims

This research is part of a study commissioned by the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) and undertaken by a research company, Perpetuity Research, who specialise in crime reduction and community safety. It sought to explore the impact of gangs and the culture surrounding gangs on schools in the UK. Whilst the focus was on gangs, knife crime and weapon carrying were frequently discussed throughout and therefore it was deemed appropriate to include in the review.

Methods

Previous literature was reviewed, and a case study approach was adopted in four schools in England known to have issues with gangs. All schools were in urban areas

across the country and the researchers conducted focus groups with pupils and semi-structured interviews with school staff in each school. The number of school staff interviewed in each school varied from 8-10 and despite speaking to a range of staff there was no report of interviewing a DSL in any of the four case studies. However, it may be that the frequent dual role of DSL with other roles, such as deputy head teacher, meant that this was not explicitly stated. Whilst still applicable to the research question, this does mean that the findings do not represent DSLs views specifically.

Researcher orientation

A thorough rationale is provided for using a qualitative design, however the author's worldview is not stated.

Analysis approach

The researchers used content analysis and organised their findings into themes. Participants were involved in the analysis process with findings shared with head teachers at each school to ensure accuracy and that sufficient anonymity for schools and participants was granted. A clear outline is provided of the makeup of the groups and how they were conducted.

Findings

The findings are clearly presented within each case study, separated by the views shared by staff and those shared by pupils, and then brought together and summarised. Data was also used to support the researchers' interpretation with

verbatim quotes provided and contextualised, evidencing well how their conclusions were reached.

The authors found that staff felt the problem had worsened with gang members becoming younger and more dangerous. They described how some gang-related activities are racial and there need to be measures put in place to promote equality. They highlighted the need for a holistic approach involving CYP, families, communities and the school. They stressed the importance for the professionals involved in understanding the local context through partnership working.

Limitations

The authors highlight the importance of reviewing the literature and state that a review was undertaken structured around several key themes. However, no search terms or descriptions of databases searched are provided. Broadhurst et al., (2009) are transparent in the difficulties they encountered in accessing schools willing to be part of the research due to a reluctance of the schools to be labelled as having a difficulty with gangs. A detailed description of the recruitment process is provided and the authors are clear about the disparity between the intended sample and the participants and carefully consider why this may be.

The results are well supported by evidence with triangulation across pupils and staff. Some reflexivity is provided with the authors considering the relationship between the research topic and the participants. There is evidence of insight given the sensitivity of the context. There is no description of ethical approval being granted, however throughout the authors display a clear commitment to integrity, honesty and

mutual respect when working with participants. There is plentiful discussion about consent and confidentiality and extensive efforts made to ensure anonymity is preserved. A robust discussion of directions for future work and implications of the findings for policy and practice are provided.

Overall, this is a detailed and informative piece of research allowing the voices of school staff to be heard and considered in context. A strength of the case-study design is in the detail and depth allowed and consideration of the context within which the views are given. It is valuable in terms of understanding the nuance around communities and cultures outside of school, which can get lost in a broader research design. A weakness of this study is the length of time since it was undertaken, as there may have been considerable changes in practice and context in the ten years since the study took place.

2.4.4 Irwin-Rogers & Harding (2018) Challenging the orthodoxy on pupil gang involvement: When two social fields collide and Irwin-Rogers (2016) Safer schools: keeping gang culture outside the school gates.

These two papers are written by the same author and report on the same research study. Irwin-Rogers & Harding (2018) is an article published in a peer-reviewed journal whereas Irwin-Rogers (2016) is a report by Catch-22 who describe themselves as a ‘social business’ that aim to support and build resilience in communities. The papers differ slightly in their aims and ways of viewing and

reporting the findings, however it was still deemed appropriate to discuss them together.

Aims

Irwin-Rogers (2016) aimed to explore the ways in which gang involvement creates challenges for schools and to highlight best practice for schools in responding to these challenges. Irwin-Rogers & Harding (2018) aimed to explore the views and experiences of students and staff members in the way gang involvement affects pupils' attitudes and behaviours. They were particularly interested in exploring the issues relating to the school social field and the gang social field, and the differences inherent in these.

Researcher orientation

Whilst the researcher orientation is not explicitly stated, a social constructionist worldview is implied due to the exploratory nature of the research, seeking to gain the views of participants using a qualitative design.

Methodology

The authors employed a case study design in five alternative provisions (APs) in three major cities in England. The APs varied in size and were all mixed gender. 14 male and 11 female members of staff were interviewed, observations of the participants conducted in each school and 20 young people interviewed. The staff interviews will be the focus of this critique. No information is provided on role and this lack of specificity is a weakness of the research. The authors do note however, that the

participants spoke about their previous work in mainstream settings and PRUs so state that the findings are also based on experiences in these settings.

Analysis approach

No information on the analysis approach is provided in the report (Irwin-Rogers, 2016), whereas the peer-reviewed article (Irwin-Rogers & Harding, 2018) describes how data was transcribed and coded and how they integrated their data with social field theory using Adaptive Theory. However, neither paper offers a detailed description of the method of analysis to enable it to be replicated.

Findings

Irwin-Rogers & Harding (2018) explore their findings in relation to social field theory. This theory posits that the opinions, experiences and behaviours of the individual should be understood in the context of the areas they inhabit – their 'social fields' (Hilgers & Mangez, 2014).

Both studies conclude with the challenges inherent in educating gang-involved CYP including violence and a lack of educational engagement. However, they note that the impact of gang involvement on pupils in school is more "contingent and nuanced" than the previously assumed negative impact. When provided with the chance in school to move away from this 'social field', they will often embrace it. The authors place particular emphasis on the importance of supporting and trusting relationships between members of staff and their pupils. They also highlight the numerous strengths and positive attributes the gang-involved young people displayed. Whilst

many were currently directed towards negative and often criminal activities, they noted that several had a desire to change and move away from this way of living.

Limitations

In both papers, the findings of the study are contextualised, and verbatim quotes provided, often triangulated across pupils and staff. The researchers were mindful of the subjective nature of the term ‘gang’ and therefore permitted participants to define this themselves rather than impose their definition on them. The innovative way of thinking about the topic through social field theory creates new ideas and differs from the traditionally-held, deficit lens gang affiliated youths are viewed through (Irwin-Rogers & Harding, 2018).

The lack of specificity regarding role makes it is difficult to infer whether safeguarding leads were involved. No description around whether ethical approval was granted is a concern and no detail is provided of how consent was obtained and anonymity preserved. However, it is apparent that they granted integrity, honesty and transparency with the participants.

Another critique of this research is the lack of clarity surrounding who the researchers were and whether this was the authors themselves. No reflexivity is demonstrated regarding this. Limitations for Irwin-Rogers & Harding (2018) that were discussed included an acknowledged potential issue with the lens adopted being too reductionist in nature. Irwin-Rogers (2016) do not identify any limitations in the study.
Irwin-Rogers (2016) states that the research “provides an overarching portrait of the UK’s educational landscape” (p.12) as school staff interviewed had also had previous

experiences working in other settings. This is a bold claim that is unsubstantiated and contradicts their previous assertion that the study is not representative of practice in APs across the country.

Despite these critiques, this research presents new insights into the relationship between gang members and schools and illuminates a different way of thinking about the topic, emphasising the importance of not only viewing gang-affiliated young people through a deficit focused lens. Both authors highlight the key role of relationships when supporting young people associated with gangs and violence.

2.5 Summary of previous literature findings

Having discussed in turn each of the five studies identified from the literature search, key themes apparent across studies will now be discussed in depth. The focus of this summary is on commonalities across staff members' views.

2.5.1 Safety

All the studies found that staff believe that some pupils do not feel safe outside of school and therefore carry knives for protection (Irwin-Rogers, 2016; Broadhurst et al., 2009; Irwin-Rogers & Harding, 2018; Ofsted, 2019; Waddell & Jones, 2017). The period of time spent travelling to and from school appears to be a particularly dangerous time for pupils (Irwin- Rogers, 2016; Irwin-Rogers & Harding, 2018), with staff providing supervision at bus stops to protect them (Irwin-Rogers, 2016).

On the whole, staff did not share these concerns about safety themselves (IR& H, 2018; IR 2016). Staff members spoken to viewed the protection of pupils as their

personal responsibility, with the importance of relationships key to ensuring their pupils feel safe in school (Irwin-Rogers, 2016).

Despite sharing these feelings of a lack of safety outside of school, three studies found that school was a 'safe haven' for pupils associated with knife crime (Ofsted, 2019; Broadhurst et al., 2009; Irwin-Rogers, 2016). Knife crime incidents in school were rare and would mainly take place outside the school gates with pupils reported to hide weapons outside school rather than bring them inside (Irwin-Rogers, 2016; Irwin-Rogers & Harding, 2018).

2.5.2 Concerns around knife crime

Staff in all five studies shared high levels of concern about the risks of knife crime on their pupils. They expressed particular concern about knife carrying with staff interviewed feeling that the situation had worsened, with those involved becoming younger (Broadhurst et al., 2009; Waddell & Jones, 2018). In research by Waddell and Jones (2018) participants shared feelings of anger, sadness and frustration with the current situation affecting CYP.

2.5.3 Socio-economic factors

Socio-economic factors were also found to impact on staff experiences of working with CYP associated with knife crime. The negative impact of the limited budgets on schools' capacity to provide appropriate support to CYP, both inside and outside of school was shared by staff (Ofsted, 2019; Waddell & Jones, 2018). The raising of thresholds for social care and CAMHS was discussed (Waddell & Jones, 2018) and

schools reported having to pay for more services that were previously free (Ofsted, 2019).

Members of staff also spoke about the impact of financial pressures on parents. They believed potential drivers of knife crime included a lack of positive role models, parenting difficulty, deprivation and a lack of opportunities (Broadhurst et al., 2009).

The role of social media was also highlighted including gang videos and websites such as YouTube (Irwin 2016; Broadhurst et al., 2009). In one study, a staff member described how a pupil had been stabbed in a revenge attack after appearing in a music video uploaded online to denigrate a rival gang (Irwin-Rogers, 2016; Irwin-Rogers & Harding, 2018). There was a worry that these events on social media would come into the school. Waddell & Jones (2018) stated that primary pupils would become distressed and scared by what they see and hear online.

2.5.4 Multi-agency working

Working with other agencies was identified as a key issue in all the studies. Staff members valued the support they received but desired closer links with other services such as local authorities and the police (Waddell & Jones, 2018; Broadhurst et al., 2009; Ofsted, 2019).

Staff members reported feeling unsupported by other services, professionals and local authorities (Broadhurst et al., 2009), sharing feelings of being ‘left in isolation’ to deal with serious concerns (Ofsted, 2019). Relationships with other agencies varied

(Waddell & Jones, 2019) with school staff not always feeling involved in discussions (Ofsted, 2019; Irwin-Rogers, 2016).

Information sharing was viewed as key and effective communication across agencies was crucial to gain a good understanding of their pupils but there was a feeling that this could at times be lacking (Irwin-Rogers, 2016) or could not always be trusted (Ofsted, 2019; Irwin-Rogers, 2016; Waddell-Jones, 2018).

Primary school teachers were not always sure how to refer and what action to take with children at risk who did not meet the criteria for statutory services (Waddell & Jones, 2018). Ofsted (2019) also found that staff at times lacked understanding of which services they could access to support CYP, particularly when they lived in different boroughs.

2.5.5 Relationships

The development of positive pupil-staff relationships were identified as key to supporting CYP associated with knife crime. Irwin-Rogers (2016) and Irwin-Rogers & Harding (2018) described this as critical to ensuring pupils felt safe and engaged in school. Positive relationships meant that staff members understood students and their needs better and were therefore able to provide more appropriate support and identify any warning signs (Waddell & Jones, 2018; Irwin-Rogers, 2016; Broadhurst et al., 2009).

2.5.6 Educating pupils

The role of schools in educating pupils about knife crime was highlighted by staff in all five studies. They felt a responsibility to educate pupils to the risks of being involved in knife crime but they frequently felt an external provider was better placed to do this work (Waddell & Jones, 2018; Ofsted, 2019). Participants spoke of the broad range of interventions run by school staff, such as mentoring (Waddell & Jones, 2018; Broadhurst et al., 2009). However, these interventions are not always evidence informed and evaluated (Ofsted, 2019; Waddell & Jones, 2018). The transition period between primary and secondary school was raised as a key time for those at risk of becoming involved in knife crime and highlight the need to ensure effective preventative work takes place (Irwin-Rogers, 2016; Waddell & Jones, 2018)

2.5.7 Desire for more training

School staff expressed a desire for more support and training in this area with several staff members sharing they felt ill-equipped to deal with the issue of knife crime in their work (Waddell & Jones, 2018; Broadhurst et al., 2009; Ofsted, 2019; Irwin-Rogers, 2016). This lack of knowledge was a concern for staff, in one study describing how they "haven't got a clue about it" (Irwin-Rogers, 2016, p.23).

2.5.8 School exclusions and managed moves

Participants raised the issue of exclusions and managed moves taking place due to knife crime, and the increased risks involved for pupils (Broadhurst et al., 2009; Irwin-Rogers, 2016; Ofsted, 2019). Challenges with the zero-tolerance approaches adopted by schools were highlighted (Ofsted, 2019; Broadhurst et al., 2009).

2.5.9 Academic performance

Staff members also described the difficulties inherent in keeping the 'hype and hysteria' surrounding events that had happened in the school community from interfering with school. Knife crime events impacted on students' ability to concentrate (Irwin-Rogers, 2016; Broadhurst et al., 2009; Irwin-Rogers & Harding, 2018).

2.6 Resume of previous research

The literature review process has highlighted the paucity of research in the field exploring school staff's experiences of working with CYP associated with knife crime. Five studies were identified exploring the views of a range of school staff. Two included DSLs amongst staff members interviewed, (Ofsted, 2019; Waddell & Jones, 2018), two did not state the role of staff members (Irwin-Rogers & Harding, 2018; Irwin-Rogers, 2016) and one spoke to a range of school staff not including DSLs (Broadhurst et al., 2009).

The research discussed took place in primary schools (Waddell & Jones, 2018), secondary schools (Broadhurst et al., 2009), alternative provisions (Irwin-Rogers & Harding, 2018; Irwin-Rogers, 2016) and across a range of secondary schools, colleges and pupil referral units (Ofsted, 2019**)**.

Three of the research studies found form part of research reports by government institutions (Ofsted, 2019), charities (Waddell & Jones, 2018) or unions (Broadhurst et al., 2009). Whilst the remaining peer-reviewed article (Irwin-Rogers & Harding, 2018) and report (Irwin-Rogers, 2016) reported on a research study undertaken by a

‘social business’. This has implications on how the research is presented and the subsequent confidence that can be in its trustworthiness, as the funders may have influenced how data is presented or how conclusions are reached. All studies except for Irwin-Rogers & Harding (2018) identified are written with the purpose to affect policy and change and provide practical recommendations in how to do so.

A commonality across the papers identified was a lack of researcher reflexivity, as reflections on the research process and the potential impact of the author on the research process were not provided. This may be due to the intended audience of the research and whether the authors were involved in conducting the fieldwork, which is not made clear.

A key issue with all research identified is the lack of transparency of reporting their data analysis or methodology in depth. This may be a result of the intended audience of the research, however this makes it difficult to verify the rigour of the analysis undertaken. Whilst all the research was placed in context and existing knowledge provided, there were no systematic searches of existing literature explicitly reported and detailed. It is of concern that there was no discussion in any research about the potential harm to participants in taking part and how they ensured their psychological wellbeing before, during and after the interviews, considering the sensitive and potentially stirring nature of the topic.

There was a varying level of clarity surrounding participant role but more details on experience, gender, ethnicity and other roles held may have been helpful for understanding the context of the findings. Despite the nature of the issue, none of the

literature that was found offers a psychological perspective of the experiences of school staff working with children and young people associated with knife crime, highlighting a key gap in the literature.

2.7 Chapter summary and Rationale for the proposed study

This literature review reviewed sought to answer the question:

What does the literature tell us about the experiences of school staff working with children and young people associated with knife crime?

The literature identified in the field offers an insight into the views and experiences of school staff working with children and young people associated with knife crime in a range of areas, ages and settings. Key findings across studies include staff feeling concerned about their pupils, CYP feeling fearful and therefore carrying knives for protection and challenges with multi-agency working. Issues around exclusions were highlighted and the importance of positive relationships with pupils and their families. Staff members shared a desire to educate CYP about knife crime and the risks involved but also be educated themselves and receive more training.

This review has identified a gap in the literature specifically exploring the experiences of Designated Safeguarding Leads and enabling their voices to be heard on this issue, given the significant responsibility they hold for ensuring the safety of pupils in schools. Therefore, the aim of the current research is to explore the experiences of designated safeguarding leads working with children and young people associated with knife crime.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter will present the research design followed by a discussion of the underlying epistemological and ontological positioning. A consideration of possible methodological approaches will then be given, followed by an in-depth description of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and its theoretical underpinnings. The recruitment of participants and how the data was collected and analysed will then be discussed. The chapter will end with a consideration of how quality and validity have been addressed along with ethical issues associated with the research.

3.2 Research Question

This chapter will detail the methodological approach for this research in an attempt to answer the research question:

What are the experiences of Designated Safeguarding Leads of working with children and young people associated with knife crime?

3.3 Research Design

The aim of the research was to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of DSLs in their work with children and young people (CYP) associated with knife crime. It aimed to do this by exploring the thoughts, feelings and perceptions of the participants in order to attempt to understand the sense they made of their experiences. It was felt that the most appropriate methodological approach to gain

this information was to seek detailed personal accounts, therefore collecting qualitative data. This piece of research does not have set hypotheses driven by existing literature and theory to test. Rather there is one area to explore, the DSLs' experiences. The analysis uses an inductive approach, beginning with the data and engaging with it in order for ideas, concepts and themes to emerge.

3.4 Research Paradigm

> *"To be able to evaluate research in a meaningful way we need to know what its objectives were and what kind of knowledge it aimed to produce"* (Willig, 2008, p.12)

Ontology (the nature of reality) and epistemology (the nature of knowledge) are the foundations of research knowledge and guide researchers in their thinking, questioning, strategy of enquiry and view of the world around them (Creswell, 2009). It is important to hold this in mind when reading research or conducting it oneself.

3.4.1 Ontology

Ontology refers to the philosophical enquiry into the nature of reality and beliefs about truth (Robson, 2011). It questions the nature of reality and being and is the stance of the researcher in relation to the world and to the participants (Fox, Green & Martin, 2007). There are different ontological perspectives varying from realists, who maintain that there is only one set reality, to relativists whom believe multiple realities exist (Willig, 2008).

From an ontological perspective, a realist takes the view that there is one true reality, which is "independent of human belief, perception, culture and language that we use to describe it" (Hart, 1998, p. 85). At the opposite end of the continuum, relativist ontology believes that there is no one objective truth; rather that each individual has a perspective of reality. So, there are multiple realities which are different for each person, as each person has ideas and individual meanings attached to what they encounter in their world (Robson, 2011). Relativist ontology is antithetical to the view that reality is fixed and there exist 'absolute truths' (Robson, 2011).

This research aims to explore the experiences of DSLs in their work with CYP associated with knife crime. A realist stance which posits that reality exists independent of beliefs or thoughts is unsuitable for the exploration of individual experiences. Rather, this research facilitates a relativist stance as it believes that individuals each construct their own reality (in this case DSLs' interpretation of their experiences working with CYP associated with knife crime), and it is this which is of interest to explore.

3.4.2 Epistemology

Epistemology questions the nature of knowledge and meaning - *how* do we know that we know something and how knowledge is created (Willig, 2008). Epistemology is influenced by one's ontological position and can also be viewed on a continuum with the positivist position at one end and social constructivist thinking at the other (Robson, 2011). Positivism corresponds to the realist ontological position and belief that scientific knowledge can be acquired from direct experience or observation of the real, objective world (Fox et al., 2007). This is the traditional scientific view that every individual looking at the same thing will see the same reality (Robson, 2011).

To test this view, hypotheses are formulated which are then tested whilst controlling for any alternative explanations. A deductive approach is often taken, and research is used to then support or reject the existence of the true reality (Fox et al., 2007). The data collected is considered to be generalisable to a population based on a power analysis and should be replicable. A positivist's goal is to identify predictable relationships between objects and events (Matthews, 2003). From this position, the researcher aims to be objective and neutral, as they believe that research can and should be free from values or bias. In line with this view, quantitative research is emphasised with randomised control trials viewed as the 'gold-standard' (Frederickson, 2002).

In contrast, the epistemological position of social constructivism proposes that knowledge does not exist in its own right; meaning and reality are socially constructed through interactions between people, language and social, historical and cultural contexts (Robson, 2011; Burr, 2003). This is more aligned to the relativist ontological position and has developed from the ideas of Vygotsky (1978) and Bruner (1986). Social constructivism is similar to social constructionism in both believing reality to be a subjective experience. However, it is more focused on their individual experiences and meaning-making rather than meaning made through social interchange (Willig, 2008). Linguistics is important in both, with social constructionists paying great attention to the linguistics in a conversational way. It helps to understand how and why the individual has chosen to use particular words and narratives to communicate their experiences and subsequently the impact on the researcher's understanding (Burr, 2003).

In contrast to positivists who believe in one set reality, social constructivists hold true that reality is subjective, it is what an individual experiences as their reality, and this should be the focus of research (Fox et al., 2007). Researchers are viewed as interactively linked to the participant and are there to help participants construct their version of reality, whilst remaining aware of the influence of their position and past experiences on the research (Robson, 2011). From this worldview, it follows that knowledge is obtained through qualitative methods such as observation and open interviews, which provide rich data and themes for further investigation. More of an inductive approach is taken, with new findings being explored as the research continues and with each individual constructing their version of reality (Robson, 2011). Phenomenon can only be understood within the context in which they are studied, therefore if you do enough of them there is a possibility to generalise but the findings are not sought to be generalised (Matthews, 2003).

The focus of this research is to explore the thoughts, feelings and interpretations of safeguarding leads. It does not aim to produce "truths" about the DSLs' experience working with CYP associated with knife crime. Instead, by adopting a social constructivist epistemology, it aims to understand how the DSLs make meaning of their experiences working with children and young people associated with knife crime from their own perspective (Willig, 2008).

3.4.3 Author's World View

The ontological perspective adopted by the author in this study is relativist, believing that there are many versions of reality. The researcher in this study adopts a social

constructivist (Robson, 2011) approach, as they believe that meaning and reality are socially constructed through interactions between people, language and social and cultural context. Following from this epistemological and ontological worldview, knowledge is gained through qualitative methods, which provide data with rich detail. In this study, the researcher is interested in exploring and understanding each individual person's constructions and views of their work with CYP and knife crime. The researcher acknowledges that her own experience and understanding of the issue of knife crime will influence her interpretation and will therefore position herself in the study accordingly. Further information on researcher reflexivity is provided in Section 3.14.

3.5 The use of Psychodynamic Theory

The author's own training experiences and practice privileges the use of psychodynamic theory. The psychodynamic approach highlights the importance of unconscious psychological processes and the significance of early experiences and development on functioning in the present (Kennedy, Keaney, Shaldon & Canagaratnam, 2018). A concept referred to throughout this research is containment which Bion (1963) described as the experience of being understood and having one's feelings heard and listened to. The internalisation of this experience of containment in a relationship helps children to feel safe and understood and develop the emotional skills they need to grow and develop and nurtures a capacity for independent thought.

The concept of transference describes how feelings that have been experienced in the past can be transferred into relationships in the present (Salzberger-Wittenberg, 1970). An awareness of intersubjectivity and these feelings in oneself and others in

relationships allows this emotional information to be used as data. In this study, this information provides a further level of understanding when making sense of the participants and their experiences, and the groups and systems they are part of. Psychodynamic theory will be used throughout the research as one of the psychological models drawn on when interpreting the data and discussing the findings.

3.6 Consideration of other methodologies

Several different methodologies were considered when planning this piece of research. Four will be discussed briefly below and the reasons will be given for deciding on the methodological approach of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis.

3.6.1 Grounded theory

Grounded theory is an inductive approach which is interested in generating a theoretical-level account of a given phenomenon (Charmaz, 2014). Grounded theory is based on symbolic interactionism, which describes the symbolic meanings individuals create and rely on during social interactions, and incorporates positivistic and interpretive elements (Charmaz, 2008). As with IPA, grounded theory is concerned with an individual's experience of the topic under study; however grounded theory then sets out to provide an explanation of the phenomena at a conceptual, broader level taking into account social processes (Willig, 2013). As this study intends to explore how individuals make sense of their lived experience rather than explain something at a wider level, grounded theory was decided to not be an appropriate method to use.

3.6.2 Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis examines the way people link events in their lives and make meaning from them through creating narratives about them (Silver, 2013). It is similar to Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in that it is concerned with the individual's understanding and experience of a phenomenon. However, Narrative Analysis is focused on the linguistic tools used during this process rather than the understanding gained from the individual's experiences (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

3.6.3 Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is interested in how knowledge is created through language rather than finding meaning through examination of an individual's experience (Willig, 2013). It creates knowledge of how a phenomenon is constructed through language. Discourse analysis is not as appropriate as IPA in this study, which creates knowledge about the subjective experience of an individual relating to a phenomenon, such as working with CYP associated with knife crime.

3.6.4 Why IPA?

There are several reasons why IPA was chosen as an appropriate methodology for this piece of research. The exploratory nature of IPA means that it aims to explore and gain insight of an individual's lived experience. IPA taps into a participant's experiences from their own perspective, which is in line with the research aim and question. It also complements the epistemological and ontological position held by the researcher and the study. IPA enables an in-depth and nuanced exploration of an

individual's experience of a particular phenomenon, in this case their work with CYP associated with knife crime.

IPA also acknowledges that both the researcher and the participant work together to co-construct meaning through the research process (Fox et al., 2007). IPA is a theory emergent process, meaning that it allows more scope for new research to surface. The method of data analysis in IPA starts with the participant and is systematic in its approach. It is also interpretative, unlike other methods, with the researcher attempting to create an understanding based on their interpretation of the participant's experiences.

3.7 The Theoretical Underpinnings of IPA

3.7.1 IPA

Interpretive phenomenological analysis is concerned with what happens when the everyday flow of lived experience takes on particular meaning for people. Thereby experiences that are of importance in someone's life are explored (Smith et al., 2009). IPA aims to engage in exploring experiences in participants' own terms and is interested in how people make sense of their experiences. This research hopes to understand the way safeguarding leads view and make-sense of their experience of working with young people associated with knife crime, from a subjective standpoint. It is a research process which recognises that the researcher engages in a double hermeneutic endeavour, attempting to make sense of the participant attempting to make sense of their experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2008). IPA acknowledges that access to experience depends on what the individual shares with the researcher about their experience; and it is the researcher's task to interpret this account from the

individual in order to understand their experience. IPA has been informed by three philosophical foundations of knowledge: phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Smith et al., 2009). These will now be discussed in more depth below.

3.7.2 Phenomenology

'The study of experience'

Phenomenology describes the study of experience. There are a range of different areas of interest amongst phenomenologists, but they are all concerned with considering what being human is like for individuals. Phenomenology takes ideas from philosophical, psychological and educational theories (Creswell, 2013). A useful facet of phenomenology for psychology is that it offers many suggestions for how to examine and understand lived experience. Phenomenological inquiry proposed that "experience should be examined in the way that it occurs, on its own terms" (Smith et al., 2009, p.12). In particular, it allows the study of individuals who each have the same shared experience, in this research working as a DSL with CYP associated with knife crime.

Influential thinkers in phenomenology include Husserl, Heidegger, Satre and Merleau-Ponty. Husserl believed that we need to step outside our everyday experience and reflect on this experience. He highlighted the need "to go back to the things themselves" (Smith et al., 2009, p.12). Husserl (1927) described intentionality, "the relationship between the process occurring in consciousness, and the object of attention for that process" (Smith et al., 2009, p.13). Intentionality focuses phenomenology with understanding and the means by which an individual understands the world in which they live (Landridge, 2007).

Husserl (1927) described that to achieve a phenomenological attitude, focusing on our perception of objects in the world, we need to 'bracket off', or put to one side the way we view the world, in order to really examine our perception of the world. Husserl's work emphasises the value of examining everyday experience and its perception (Smith et al., 2009).

A student of Husserl's, Heidegger (1927) was also a prominent phenomenologist whose interests lay more in the ontological questions around existence itself. He emphasised the importance of understanding people in their context (Heidegger, 1927). This study seeks to understand the experiences of safeguarding leads in their school context working with young people associated with knife crime.
All these phenomenological writers helped us to learn that understanding involves a lived process, unpicking views and meanings that depend on an individual's engagement with their world. Experiences are built through interpretation.

3.7.3 Hermeneutics

'The theory of interpretation'

Hermeneutics, the theory of interpretation, has been described as the questions a researcher asks about how one can interpret meaning and the corresponding methods that can be used to do so (Smith et al., 2009). IPA seeks to understand how an individual makes sense of their experiences, whilst at the same time accepting that it will never be possible to directly understand a person's inner world. Hermeneutics moves from describing a phenomenon to attempting to interpret it whilst also emphasising contextual meanings. Hermeneutic understanding takes the form of a

dialogue according to Gadamer (1960). IPA is a double hermeneutic endeavour as the researcher attempts to make sense of the participant making sense of their experience (Smith et al., 2009).

Key hermeneutics theorists include Schleiermacher, Heidegger and Gadamer. Heidegger (1927) believed that hermeneutics acknowledge that a person's own interpretation of their experience is based on their past experiences. The significance of acquiring knowledge through understanding individual's experience is highlighted. Linked to this, a researcher's understanding is impacted by their own thoughts and past experience and, as much as possible, IPA suggests that the researcher should be aware of this and 'bracket it off' (Heidegger, 1927; Gadamer, 1960). It is of note that Schleiermacher felt that the researcher, through their interpretation, is in the position to provide a view on the narrative that the participant is unable to.

3.7.4 Idiography

'Concerned with the particular'

IPA is idiographic as it is interested in what the experience for a person is like and offers a detailed examination of the individual case rather than being concerned with the group or population level (as in other nomothetic methods) (Smith et al., 2009). IPA seeks to make sense of how certain experiences have been understood from the view of individuals in a particular context (Smith et al., 2009). Theorists in IPA believe there is much to be gained from examining individual experiences in detail. This commitment to detailed data analysis is evident in the depth required at the analysis stage of IPA, at several levels.

3.8 Limitations of IPA

There are three main critiques of IPA concerning the conceptual and practical limitations around the role of language, the suitability of accounts and the explanation versus description debate, which will be discussed in more detail below (Willig, 2013; Smith et al., 2009).

3.8.1 The role of language

The most frequent criticism levelled at IPA is its heavy reliance on language and the accompanying credibility of language. In IPA, it is through their use of language that an individual articulates their experience to the researcher. However, this assumes that the individual has this language available to them and what they are communicating will be understood in the way it was intended (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Willig (2013) states that language does not describe but adds meanings to an individual's experience as an experience can be described in a multitude of ways.

To account for these issues and stay with the participant and their lived experience, the interviewer in IPA uses questions to encourage and support the interviewee to expand on their answers. This limitation is not solely a potential issue in IPA as several other methodologies, including thematic analysis, grounded theory and narrative interviews rely heavily on the use of language. This was adjusted for in this research, as DSLs hold a professional role requiring them to communicate in English and using language suggesting a high level of proficiency.

3.8.2 Suitability of accounts

Phenomenology relies on participant's ability to describe their experiences and to articulate them in a way, which enables the researcher to understand them, including the subtleties of nuance in both their physical and emotional experience. The participants may struggle to express their ideas in a coherent manner or may decide not to disclose certain views or feelings due to a worry of being judged (Smith & Osborne, 2008). To mitigate this risk, the researcher will make the participants feel at ease throughout the interview, spend time developing a rapport to start and will explain her interest in understanding their experiences. The use of open questions helps participants to draw on their experiences.

Willig (2013) states how IPA is not suitable for studying experiences where the participant may be unable to describe them in the advanced way required by the method. In this research it was felt that due to their professional expertise and requisite high levels of education, the participants would possess the ability to articulate their experiences sufficiently. Additionally, the IPA researcher's aim is to move the interview to discussing experiences in-depth and the associated thoughts and feelings and they help guide the interviewee to share these experiences.

3.8.3 Explanations v Description

A limitation of IPA is that whilst it is able to produce rich, detailed descriptions of a participant's experience of events, it does not support the understanding of why this happens and why differences may be apparent between individuals' experiences. In essence, that phenomenology seeks to describe and document participants'

experiences but does not seek to provide an explanation, can be viewed as a critique of the approach.

However, Smith et al., (2009) share their belief that the detailed analysis of experience that IPA produces, increases the understanding of a topic of interest. There is the risk that data analysis can be a description of events, therefore data analysis and interpretation needs to be thorough and approached systematically.

In order to account for this criticism and support the process of theoretical transferability, the researcher has provided contextual information about each DSL and their context, to enable others to consider how the research may be applicable in a similar context (Willig, 2013). The researcher also used supervision and colleague support to aid the analysis and ensure it was transparent and robust. The coding was checked out at certain points as the analysis progressed. Frequent small group supervisions were held with colleagues using the same methodology to discuss any concerns and issues.

3.9 Participants

3.9.1 Homogeneity

Purposive sampling was chosen as it enabled the researcher to recruit participants who have experience of the phenomenon under study, in this case, working with CYP associated with knife crime. A non-probability sampling method was used, with participants selected to be invited to participate in the research if they met the participant inclusion criteria (Willig, 2013). A factor contributing to the homogeneity of participants in this research is that they are all worked as designated safeguarding

leads or deputy designated safeguarding leads in secondary schools in the same Inner London Local Authority.

It is vital in IPA research that the participant sample is as homogenous as possible in order to ensure detailed examination of the phenomenon under study in a meaningful way). This should not be viewed as attempting to seek 'sameness' but as allowing for an exploration of how experiences of the same phenomenon vary between individuals (Smith et al., 2009). It allows the researcher to analyse convergent and divergent themes between the participants and thus the psychological variability within the group (Willig, 2013). This also aids the transferability of the findings of the research as described above (Smith et al., 2009).

3.9.2 Sample size

Smith et al. (2009) state the beneficial nature of using a small number of participants in IPA studies, recommending between four and six participants to allow for a substantial account of experience which is idiographic and to enable comparison to be made amongst all participants (Smith et al., 2009). The sample size for this piece of research was five participants. IPA focuses on making sense of an individual's experience within a set of shared characteristics.

3.9.3 Participant Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria

TABLE 3. PARTICIPANT INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Inclusion Criteria	**Exclusion Criteria**
Must be a DSL or Deputy DSL	Not a DSL or deputy DSL
Work in any Secondary school setting in the LA	Doesn't work in a Secondary school in the LA
Been a DSL for at least one academic year	Been a DSL or Deputy DSL for less than one academic year.
Must have experience working with CYP associated with knife crime	No experience working with CYP associated with knife crime

Rationale for Inclusion criteria

- Must be a DSL or Deputy DSL lead
    - To enable a comparison of experience, staff in the role of designated safeguarding lead or deputy safeguarding lead were included
- Must work in secondary school setting in the LA
    - According to research, there have been a significant increase in knife crimes involving children and young people aged 10-17 years old and the age young people start to commit serious offences is typically around the age of 14-20 (Waddell & Jones, 2018)
- Safeguarding lead for at least one academic year in September 2018
    - This was to ensure that the DSLs had a significant enough experience in their role and to enable a fair comparison of experience between the DSLs.
- Must have experience working with CYP associated with knife crime

- This ensures the relevance of the research topic to the participant

- Ensuring all participants were from the same area

3.9.4 Recruitment

Upon obtaining ethical approval, the researcher initially attended a Safeguarding Forum on knife crime held at the Local Authority which all DSLs in the borough in were invited to. The event comprised of a series of talks and discussions about the issue of knife crime and organisations such as the Youth Offending Team and the Police presented. At this event, the researcher displayed a poster inviting the DSLS to take part in the research and spoke to several DSLs to introduce them to the study, stating her desire to gain their views on their experiences of working with CYP associated with knife crime.

Following this, the email addresses of the DSLs were obtained through contacts in the LA and from the schools' websites. The DSLS in all secondary schools in the LA were contacted by email to invite them to take part in the research. Over 30 schools were contacted within the borough. The participants were informed that the places to participate in the research would be offered on a first come, first served basis. Following the initial emails, follow up phone calls were made to confirm whether the participants would be willing to take part. Six participants agreed, however one participant decided she did not want to participate in the research at a later point. Five participants remained and were sent a copy of the information sheet and consent from, before the interview took place (see Appendix H & I). A discussion of the potential effect of the recruitment approach adopted is provided in section 5.7.

Five DSLs were recruited and information about the DSLs is provided in the table below to contextualise the findings. Names have been changed to preserve anonymity and some genders may have been changed to protect their anonymity and in a way that ensures it doesn't interfere with the analysis. Mainstream settings had approximately 800-1000 pupils on roll and the specialist provisions had between 20-50 pupils. As with the trend in education, the settings were a mix of academies and state-run schools.

TABLE 4. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Participant	Pseudonym	Gender	Category of School	Sex	Other roles
DSL 1	Lucy	Female	Independent SEMH	Mixed	Human Resources Manager
DSL2	Annie	Female	Mainstream Catholic	Mixed	Assistant HT
DSL3	Sue	Female	Mainstream Catholic	Mixed	Head of Inclusion & Pupil support
DSL4	Fiona	Female	SEMH	Boys	Senior Leadership Team
DSL5	Peter	Male	Mainstream	Mixed	Deputy Head Teacher

3.10 Data Collection

3.10.1 Semi-structured interviews

This study aimed to obtain detailed narratives, thoughts and perceptions of the participant's experiences, therefore semi-structured interviews were carried out to enable them to communicate their experiences openly and clearly. Individual interviews enabled the researcher to adjust the line of enquiry, investigate underlying motives and provide rich, detailed findings (Robson, 2011). This approach has also been found to be the most suitable for collecting data in IPA (Reid, Flowers & Larkin, 2005).

Smith et al. (2009) described interviews as a conversation with purpose with Kvale (2007) noting that "an interview is where knowledge is constructed in the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee" (p.4). A benefit of using semi-structured interviews is that they are flexible, and discussions can still be led by the participant whilst ensuring that all topics are covered that are required by the researcher. The researcher's experience as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) supported her in considering how to enable the individual to feel comfortable and talk freely about their experiences and perceptions. Establishing rapport has been highlighted as important in interviews (Smith et al., 2009). It was hoped that the interview would offer a containing space for the participants to feel able to talk, think and reflect on their experiences in role.

Semi-structured interviews have been critiqued however, due to this inherent interviewer bias (Kelly & Norwich, 2004) still being present and the skill required in interviewing by the interviewer. To accommodate for these issues, the researcher held

in mind reflexivity to limit any bias and consider the impact of their own thinking infiltrating the interview process.

3.10.2 Interview Schedule

The interview schedule was developed in several stages and aimed to lead to "comfortable interactions with the participants which will, in turn, enable them to provide a detailed account of the experience under investigation" (Smith et al., 2009, p.59). It began with general questions, leading to more specific ones whilst ending on a positive note. Opportunity was provided to allow participants to further add anything they wanted to at the end of the interview.

3.10.3 Conducting the interviews

Interviews took place in the participant's school at a time and date that suited them best. Interviews began with the researcher checking that the participant had received their copy of the Information Sheet and had made Senior Leadership in their school aware that they were taking part. Another copy of the Information Sheet was provided for the participant to read and a space was provided for any questions to be asked.

The interview schedule is provided in Appendix J. An introductory script explained the researcher's role and the purpose of the research and clarified the terms. Before the interview started, the researcher checked that the participant was still happy to take part. The questions were posed when the researcher felt it appropriate during the interview, aiming not to disrupt the flow of the conversation. In order to gain and clarify the DSL's understanding of their experiences, prompts were utilised. During

the interview, the emotional state of the participants was monitored by the interviewer. After the interview had finished, the participants were offered the opportunity to feedback and there was time to debrief.

3.10.4 Transcription

Interviews were conducted in the participant's school, in a room of their choice. They were recorded on a password-protected audio device. Once the data was transferred to a password protected computer and transcribed, it was destroyed.

3.11 Data Analysis

Analysis was conducted according to the framework by Smith et al.'s (2009) which is a structured framework incorporating many strategies and tools used by IPA researchers. It was designed to be adaptable to help support the process of analysis, with the authors emphasising that there is not a definitive way to go about analysis (Smith et al., 2009). Appendices K and L provide a worked example of analysis for Sue to illustrate how the IPA analysis was carried out in this study.

The stages are discussed below:

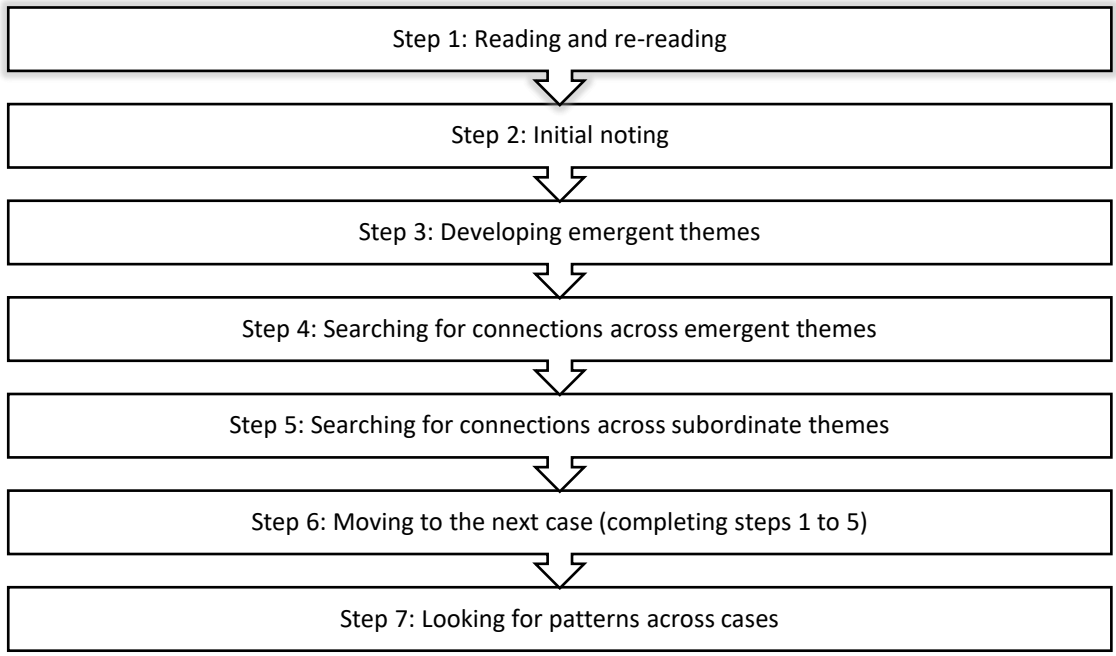


FIGURE 1. STAGES OF IPA FROM SMITH ET AL. (2009)

Step 1: Reading and re-reading

This involved the researcher immersing themselves in the data. This was achieved through actively engaging with the recording, transcribing it and listening to the audio-recording repeatedly. This stage sought to make the participant the centre of the analysis with the researcher entering their world. The author began to note down interpretations and thoughts during this process were put into the research diary in order to 'bracket them off'.

Step 2: Initial noting

The next step involved the researcher examining the language used by the participant and the semantic content of the data at an in-depth, exploratory level. It sought to understand how the participant has made sense of their experience working with CYP associated with knife crime. As described by Smith et al., (2009), the author aimed to keep an open mind, engaging in a 'free textual analysis'. Descriptive (relating to

content), linguistic (relating to language use) and conceptual (more interpretative) annotations were made to the text whilst it was read through and listened to.

Step 3: Developing emergent themes

Further re-readings and considering the exploratory comments led to the identification of emergent themes in the data which were noted down. Emergent themes encapsulate "a concise and pithy statement of what was important in various comments" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 92). This stage attempted to reduce the amount of detail but still hold on to the complexity in what had been captured in all the different comments.

Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes

Once the emergent themes had been identified, these were then brought together along with their related quotes extracted from the transcript into a separate document. Connections were explored across the emergent themes creating subordinate themes. There were several strategies used to do this listed in Table 2.4 below.

TABLE 5. TECHNIQUES USED TO ORGANISE THE EMERGENT THEMES (SMITH ET AL., 2009)

Abstraction	Identifying patterns by grouping themes together
Subsumption	Pick a theme and group similar themes together
Polarization	Oppositional relationships between emergent themes by focus on differences instead of similarities.
Contextualisation	Attending to the temporal, cultural and narrative themes as they occur through the interview
Numeration	Frequency with which a theme is supported
Function	Examined for their specific function within the transcript to enable deeper interpretation of the data.

Step 5: Searching for connections across subordinate themes.

These subordinate themes were examined and connections noted, then organised into overarching superordinate themes for the participant. The researcher found this process preferable to complete by hand to enable her to manually reorder the different combinations of how the different themes fitted together.

Step 6: Moving to the next case

This involved repeating the process thus far with each individual case for the remaining four participants. The researcher sought to ensure a high level of rigour and detail across all participants.

Step 7: Overarching themes

Once all the participant interviews had been analysed and subordinate and superordinate themes for each participant created, they were examined together and viewed across the data. This stage involved exploring the different superordinate themes from all the participants and considering what fitted together and what did not. Following this, five overarching themes were created capturing the main themes across the five participants' data. Each overarching theme comprised of superordinate themes which were created to describe the commonalities in the themes. This process took time, a range of different overarching themes were set upon which required several different iterations to provide what the researcher perceived as the best description of the participants' experiences.

3.12 Ethics

Prior to undertaking this piece of research, Tavistock and Portman Research Ethics Committee (TREC) granted ethical approval for the study (please see Appendix G). The British Psychological Society's (BPS, 2018) Code of Ethics and Conduct and Code of Human Research Ethics (BPS, 2014) were strictly adhered to throughout the research process in order to ensure the research remained ethically sound. It is crucial that any potential ethical issues are given consideration when conducting research. The four areas set out in the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2014) are used to structure the following discussion.

3.12.1 Respect for the autonomy, privacy and dignity of individuals and communities

Prior to interviews, informed consent was obtained and the researcher strove to be clear about the aims of the study with the participants. All participants were told of their right to withdraw from the research at any point until the analysis had taken place. As detailed in BPS guidelines, the researcher was mindful and aware of potential power imbalances during the interview process and tried to minimise these. The participants' values, cultural beliefs and rights were respected during the research process. The researcher strove to follow the suggestion of openness, impartiality and confidentiality in the research. All data was stored in line with the LA and trust policies and General Data Protection Regulation. The consent forms and interviews were named under their pseudonyms, so participants were not identifiable.

3.12.2 Scientific integrity

In order for the study to ensure quality and contribute to the knowledge base and address gaps in the literature, an initial search and appraisal of existing literature was undertaken before developing the research protocol. Regular supervision enabled high standards to be ensured throughout the research process.

3.12.3 Social responsibility

This principle corresponds to the idea that knowledge which is created must be used for beneficial purposes (BPS, 2014). This states that researchers must remain aware of both their professional and personal responsibilities. The implications of the findings of this research are provided in Section 5.4.

3.12.4 Maximising benefit and minimising harm

The researcher was mindful of any potential distress in the DSLs caused by discussing their experiences working with CYP associated with knife crime. A thorough debrief took place after the interview and the researcher had a list of relevant organisations and services to signpost them to. This included their senior managers in schools, social workers, adult mental health services and charities such as NCPCC and Gang Exit London. Please see Appendix J for further details.

3.13 Validity Issues

Ensuring quality in qualitative research has been a long and contentious debate. Statistical generalisability, objectivity and reliability which are used to evaluate quantitative methods are unsuitable for use with qualitative methodology. Yardley (2015) proposed a set of principles for evaluating the standard of qualitative studies

and ensuring the rigour and trustworthiness of the findings. These will each be discussed in turn below.

3.13.1 Sensitivity to context

According to Yardley (2015), sensitivity to context can be gained by being cognizant of theories and research literature and theory and carrying out research which addresses gaps in the literature. This research sought to explore the gap in existing research found by exploring the lived experiences of the DSLs. Interviews took place in the participant's school in a location of their choosing to ensure comfort and privacy.

The researcher was also aware of sensitivity to context in being respectful of all views and understandings of the participants and remaining curious about the sociocultural contexts of the individuals interviewed (Smith et al., 2009). By using quotes of the participants' experiences in the findings section, this enabled the participant's voices to be heard.

3.13.2 Commitment and rigour

Commitment and rigour can be maintained by engaging with the data and research and developing one's own skills in data collection and analysis (Yardley, 2015). Data analysis and collection was supported through detailed discussions in supervision with the researcher's supervisor. Sharing an example transcript with colleagues to ensure rigour was also beneficial to check out interpretations, highlight any biases and explore and clarify themes ensuring they 'made sense' based on the data.

The exploration and examination of the positioning relating to the researcher's ontology and epistemology and the theoretical underpinnings of IPA supported commitment and rigour in the research. The reasons why IPA as an approach was selected, whilst also an acknowledgment of an awareness of its limitations was provided. The manner in which participants were recruited also ensured a good fit with the homogeneity requirements and aims of a valid IPA study as detailed by Smith et al. (2009).

3.13.3 Transparency and coherence

Yardley (2015) posited that transparency involves *"how well the reader can see exactly what was done, and why*" (p.268). Transparency was ensured through a clear and detailed account of the methodology ensuring the process is replicable. The importance of providing the reader with an audit trail from the beginning until the final write up ensures they one can see how conclusions were reached (Yardley, 2015). A complete worked example of the analysis process is provided to support transparency and allow the analysis to be replicated in Appendix K & L. A through account of how this took place is given in Section 3.10. The interviews were all recorded and transcribed word for word with an extract from a transcript provided (see Appendix K). The superordinate themes for each participant are provided, see Appendices M – P. All findings have been reported and none held back. As discussed, in order to ensure transparency, the analysis was checked with the author's supervisor in supervision and with colleagues.

Transparency also refers to the consideration of the author's reflexivity in a piece of research, which is the discussion of particular ways that it is possible that the study

was affected by the researcher (Yardley, 2015). This is something that will be discussed in further detail in section 3.12 and section 5.7, however it was considered throughout the research process and a research diary was used to record these thoughts.

Coherence describes "the extent to which it makes sense as a consistent whole" (Yardley, 2015, p.267). Constancy in the research was ensured between the design and theoretical positioning and this sought to be made clear in this thesis. IPA requires the researcher to shift between the part and the whole, remaining focused on individual accounts whilst considering the broader themes emerging.

3.13.4 Impact and importance

According to Yardley (2015) impact and importance are critical components when critiquing qualitative research. The introduction and literature review have demonstrated the importance of this piece of research and the issues surrounding knife crime. The discussion chapter links the findings of the research and how it will further knowledge in the field. By exploring DSLs experiences of working with CYP associated with knife crime, this study offers an understanding of the experiences of DSLs in role. The role of the EP was discussed and implications for practice and their work supporting and improving outcomes for children and young people provided.

3.14 Researcher reflexivity

Fox et al., (2007) state the importance of recognising the researcher in role in order to demonstrate reflexivity and acknowledge that the researcher is involved in the manner in which the research takes place (Creswell, 2013; Fox et al, 2007).

The researchers own experiences growing up in Inner London, previous roles and work as a TEP working with CYP associated with knife crime sparked my interest in this topic. IPA states that the researcher should attempt to bracket off their previous experiences in order to engage with the participant's experiences and having an awareness of this and one's own presumptions, biases and interpretations can enable this process to take place more easily. A research diary was kept to records thoughts, feelings and reflections throughout the research process to enable reflexivity. Reflections on the process are provided in Section 5.7.

4 FINDINGS

4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter will present a detailed account of the themes generated during the Interpretative Phenomenological analysis of the five participant interviews. The analysis sought to answer the research question:

What are the experiences of Designated Safeguarding Leads' working with children and young people associated with knife crime?

First, contextual information will be provided to enable the reader to engage further with the hermeneutic dialogue and facilitate the reader's meaning-making from the data, how they were interpreted, and the findings presented (Smith et al., 2009). Following this, the findings will be discussed under each overarching theme that emerged from the analysis.

Extracts and verbatim quotes from the interviews will be provided for transparency and to show the phenomenological aspect, where the interpretations have come from. The analytic comments provided will demonstrate the interpretative aspects of the IPA and strive to reflect the thoughts and feelings of the participants as accurately as possible. A rich data extract for DSL3 Sue is provided alongside worked example of how overarching themes, superordinate themes and corresponding quotes were reached can be found in Appendix K. The superordinate, subordinate and emergent themes for each participant are provided in Appendices M-P.

4.2 Contextual Information

DSL1 Lucy

Lucy was the first participant to agree to take part in the research. She worked as a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead at a small independent mixed-sex SEMH school in the borough and was also on the Senior Leadership Team at the school. Lucy had several experiences of working with children and young people associated with knife crime, including those involved in gangs and county lines. Pupils she worked with had been found to be carrying knives and threatening members of the public. Lucy had a lot she wanted to talk about in the interview and was forthcoming in sharing her experiences about the work. Lucy was keen to share her frustration about the Education, Health and Care Plan process and it led the author to wonder whether Lucy's awareness of her position in the local authority affected some of what she chose to speak about. Lucy's interview was the first one and the author noticed that as a novice researcher, she often allowed the conversation to go off at a tangent at times.

DSL 2 Annie

Annie worked at a mainstream Catholic mixed sex school in the borough. She had a number of years' experience in role and as the Head of Learning Support and Assistant Head Teacher, was part of the Senior Leadership team. Annie seemed nervous in the interview and appeared to find it hard to share the personal impact of her experiences working with these young people. She said several times that relative to other schools, she had very few experiences working with these young people but as we spoke, several instances involving pupils directly or their wider family, friends or community appeared to have taken place. Annie described the impact on siblings

and on the school community when a knife crime incident had taken place and on those living in the immediate surrounding area. Annie had a meeting to attend after the interview and at times it felt quite rushed. The author noticed herself trying to make Annie feel more comfortable, as she felt the questions she was asking made her uneasy. Towards the end of the interview, Annie appeared more relaxed and after the voice recorder was turned off, she opened up more about her experiences.

DSL 3 Sue

Sue was the third person to agree to take part in the research after a follow up telephone call. She worked in a mainstream Catholic mixed-sex school in the borough. Her role as a DSL was also combined with being Head of Inclusion. Sue spoke about the number of years' experience she had in role within the School, and how she felt this had contributed to her skillset and ability to follow her instinct in her practice. The relationships she had developed with the CYP in school were important to Sue and she shared that she felt she had a good rapport with the young people. Pupils Sue worked with had been affected by knife crime. This was at times directly, with CYP carrying knives, and also through their family members and wider community. She spoke several times of the high level of fear of knife crime and violence that her pupils held leading them to carry knives. Sue appeared comfortable sharing her experiences with me and she often used humour when conversations turned to more difficult topics. Rapport was built quickly and Sue appeared largely happy to discuss her emotional experiences in depth.

DSL 4 Fiona

Fiona initially agreed to take part in the research during a follow-up telephone call but the author struggled to get in contact with her for several weeks after this and wondered if she had changed her mind about taking part. However, she managed to speak to her again and Fiona agreed to be interviewed and a date was set. Fiona worked at the boys SEMH provision in the borough. She started the interview by explaining that she felt that there was not a lot she had to share about her experiences working with CYP associated with knife crime, as the School had only had a few experiences. However, once the interview progressed she opened up, sharing her experiences and views about knife crime in general, its impact on pupils and whom she felt was responsible. In Fiona's setting, knives had been brought into school and hidden and on one occasion a member of staff had been threatened with a knife.

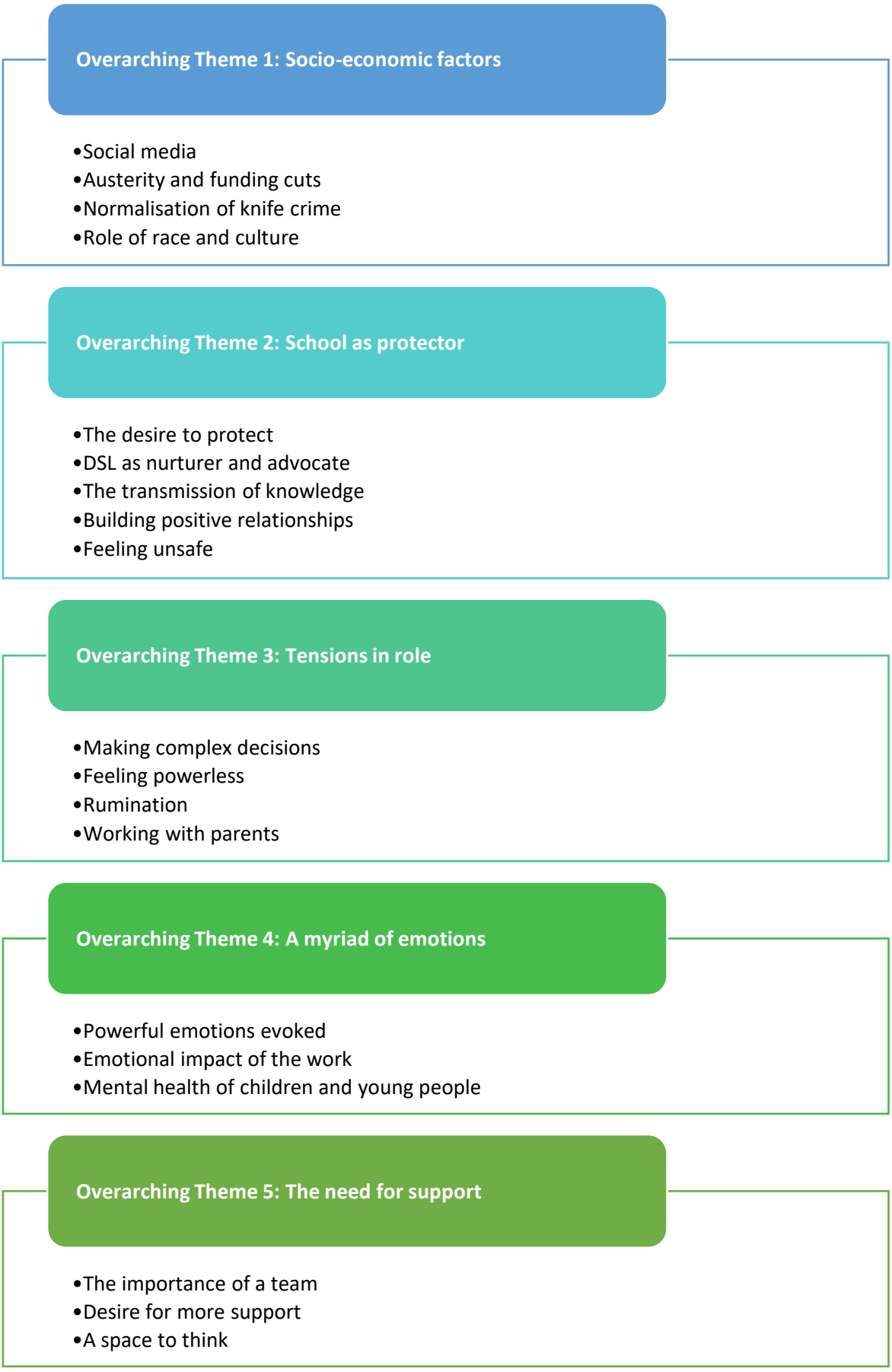
DSL 5 Peter

Peter was a DSL at a mixed mainstream school and had worked there for many years. He also had a role in the leadership team as Deputy Head Teacher. Peter had previously spoken to an influential government organisation about his experiences working with pupils associated with knife crime and the author felt this had given him the opportunity to reflect on his thoughts and experiences prior to the interview. He presented as challenged and conflicted by this work, on the one hand wanting to support the young people directly involved whilst balancing this with the needs of the other pupils, parents and the school community. In Peter's school, there had been a number of stabbings involving pupils of the school, both as perpetrators and victims, alongside issues with knife carrying. Peter spoke of the impact of the issue in the wider community on the school.

4.3 Overarching themes

The following overarching themes were identified by looking for connections across the superordinate themes for each of the five DSLs and identifying recurrent themes. As suggested by Smith et al. (2009) any theme that was evident in more than half of the participants, in this case three or more DSLs, would be an overarching theme in this research. This was so that homogeneity could be claimed across participants whilst also allowing robust conclusions and implications for practice. Superordinate themes were identified by reviewing common themes across the participants overarching themes and creating theme names that described these. Five overarching themes emerged which are presented in the figure below.

Figure 2. Visual of Overarching Themes



The table below demonstrates where the themes fit within the data for each participant.

TABLE 6 DEMONSTRATION OF WHERE THE THEMES FIT WITHIN THE DATA FOR EACH PARTICIPANT.

Participant	1 Lucy	2 Annie	3 Sue	4 Fiona	5 Peter
Overarching theme 1: Socio-economic factors					
Social media	x		x	x	x
Austerity and funding cuts	x		x	x	x
Identification of others by race			x	x	x
Normalisation of knife crime		x	x	x	x
Overarching theme 2: School as protector					
The desire to protect	x	x	x	x	x
DSL as nurturer and advocate	x		x		
The transmission of knowledge	x	x	x	x	x
Building positive relationships	x		x	x	x
Feeling unsafe		x	x		x
Overarching theme 3: Tensions in role					
Making complex decisions	x	x	x	x	x
Feeling powerless	x		x		x
Rumination	x	x	x		x
Working with parents	x		x	x	x
Overarching theme 4: A myriad of emotions					
Powerful emotions evoked	x	x	x	x	x
Emotional impact	x		x		x
Mental health of CYP	x	x	x		
Overarching theme 5: The need for support					
The importance of a team	x	x	x	x	x
Desire for more support	x		x	x	
A space to think	x		x		

These five overarching themes and related superordinate themes will now be discussed in turn.

4.3.1 Overarching theme 1: Socio-economic factors

This first overarching theme is conceptualised by the socio-economic factors affecting the DSLs' experiences working with CYP associated with knife crime. It is acknowledged that when asked to describe their experiences, the participants spoke at length about these factors which are part of the context in which they work. Whilst this does not directly answer the research question which is interested in exploring their experiences, the author felt that as this is what the participants chose to share, they must be pertinent to them and have a significant impact on their experience. It was also felt important to stay true to the participants' experience which is a key tenet of IPA.

The theme comprised of subthemes relating to:

- Social media
- Austerity and funding cuts
- Normalisation of knife crime
- Role of race and culture

This theme was discussed by all five participants, with them feeling that there are strong drivers of knife crime which are impacting young people and the work they do with them.

4.3.1.1 Social Media

For the DSLs interviewed, the increasing use of social media platforms by their students provoked a strong negative response. There was a feeling from the DSLs that social media was a force outside of their control and was directly impacting on their

work with these young people. They described how social media is so unknown and there is little they can do to prevent young people being exposed to whatever is on it.

"..social media is the bane of all evil cos it just upsets people.. " (Peter, 428-429)

"…social media that is exposing these children to so much more than I ever knew in my life" (Fiona, 556-558).

"Things get posted on social media, within you know a heartbeat, and it affects our young people" (Lucy, 114-116).

Sue's repeated use of the term 'bombarded' has connotations of war, or a battle. It implies that these young people, or the adults around them, find it difficult to shield themselves from all that they are exposed to.

"social media things, oh my god what a nightmare that is!.... they are bombarded aren't they and you don't know what they are being bombarded with" (Sue, 445; 483-485)

4.3.1.2 Austerity and funding cuts

Four of the participants shared their view that the financial climate had a bearing on their work with CYP associated with knife crime. They described the impact public sector cuts had on wider support services such as youth offending, CAMHS, community groups and youth centres.

"I think since 2012, a lot of charities have shut down, closed down which has impacted on youth groups, ermm church groups and what have you and YOS, YOS has been pulled back, cut to the bare bones" (Lucy, 103-106)

"And if the government didn't keep taking all the funding away…I just think if they could go to a nice youth centre, and be off the street, and they are supervised…" (Sue, 257-261)

"I'm quite a realist to understand that, this is you know, we're in an age of austerity that is really biting" (Peter, 727-729)

"You know there is all the cuts that are going on which is impacting on all of that, you know the community services for young people there, the CAMHS service is so horrendous at the moment" (Fiona, 523-537)

4.3.1.3 Normalisation of knife crime

The participants expressed their views on knife crime with Peter describing how "It's just endemic I think in the area" (Peter, 195). The use of the word 'endemic' likens knife crime to a disease.

Three DSLs shared their view that knife crime was "...just part and parcel" (Sue, 74-75) of everyday life for these young people and has been accepted and become normalised for them.

"It's as if it becomes normalised a little bit for them. Which is a bit of a worry because you know, it is part and parcel of the community they live in" (Fiona, 134-137)

"it's… you kind of go...it's just so commonplace and so normalised now that this is a real threat for kids, is that they know that well we just, that's what it is (Peter, 761-764).

Annie had concerns about knife crime but viewed it as less of a problem in the context of issues such as Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE).

"It is actually a smaller part of the work than say…child sexual exploitation is a much bigger part of the preventive work, but I would see that as a similar, it is in that field, but for us, child sexual exploitation and recently child criminal exploitation has become more of an issue than the knife crime" (Annie, 275-281)

4.3.1.4 Role of race and culture

The role of race and culture was also discussed by the DSLs relating to their experiences working with these young people. Sue described speaking to her pupils about racial differences in those involved based on geography and Peter noted that those involved in knife crime were predominantly from the black community.

"…who is doing the knife crime? Is it black on black and etc…. obviously in Glasgow it's white on white, just depending on the sort of ethnic background" (Sue, 77-80)

"…amongst unfortunately it looks like the black community" (Peter, 195-196)

Sue also highlighted the role of culture and race when speaking about a pupil who was involved in a knife crime incident. Her perception of the background of the child families as interesting is also of note;

"He was from a mixed background, his father was African and his mother was Filipino so it was quite an interesting combination and of course their reaction was quite interesting"(Sue, 242-245)

Both Peter and Fiona also expressed their belief about the impact a lack of male role models has on teenagers growing up.

"It's the mothers that are suffering the most, I don't see the fathers in any of this" (Fiona, 287-288).

"…you know no male role model in the family, or a very distant – dads who are off the scene…" (Peter, 495-496)

Peter shared his view that being part of this group creates a culture of acceptance of the situation they are in, leading them to believe the way to protect themselves is with a knife.

"If you are in that group, that social group and unfortunately ethnic group as well, I think you're sitting there going this is what it is like for us and this is what you have to do." (Peter, 768-771)

4.3.2 Overarching theme 2: School as protector

The participants all spoke about their view of themselves and the school as a protector. All participants predominantly responded in the interviews using the pronoun 'we' rather than 'I' when asked about their experiences, suggesting an affinity with how they view their role in regard to the wider school. Superordinate themes comprising of the overarching theme of school as protector are:

- The desire to protect
- DSL as nurturer and advocate
- The transmission of knowledge
- Building positive relationships
- Feeling unsafe

4.3.2.1 The Desire to Protect

In their accounts, all participants shared a desire to protect, emphasising their role in protecting pupils and keeping them safe. Lucy described how she felt schools should be a safe environment where pupils are able to feel safe and secure. Her rewording below suggests that she doesn't always feel this is the case.

"Schools are… should be… a safe environment" (Lucy, 14-15)

Annie shared her belief, which was echoed by the other DSLs in their accounts, that it is not safe outside of school, unlike in school where the pupils are protected. She discussed the risks faced to young people describing it as a 'fact' that knife crime is an issue. In the extract below it is unclear who these 'people' are, however, it is clear that they present a threat to Annie and her pupils.

"People know where they are and where they are going to be after school" (Annie, 38-39)

Whilst holding this strong desire to protect, questions around the responsibility for ensuring the safety of the children arose in all participants' accounts.

"But at the end of the day, it's down to the parents…you know to understand that" (Lucy, 140-142).

Similarly, Sue reported that her pupils don't feel safe outside the school. She wanted them to be aware of her desire to keep them safe and seemed to view it as a positive that they knew this.

"When they are in school, they do feel safe, when they are out on the street, I feel like it's very very different….They know that we want to keep them safe, they know that we care about them" (Sue, 68-70; 183-184)

Sue articulated the responsibility she feels, describing an almost Big Brother state where she feels the need to keep a constant eye on the pupils at all times to ensure their safety.

"They are in our gaze at all time, they are under our gaze if you like and we're keeping an eye on them all the time" (Sue, 520-522)

Linked to the desire to protect, several DSLs felt that the students perceived teaching staff as linked with or equivalent to the police. In Peter's school, the pupils even referred to him and other members of staff as 'the feds'.

"The kids almost see us like the Police. They call us the feds sometimes …they think we're like the Police. But all we want to do is find out what happened and make them you know understand they have to be responsible for their actions…" (Peter, 363-370).

"They think we're just after arresting them and getting them in trouble and all that kind of stuff. And unfortunately, a lot of the time, they'll be right in as much if they've broken the law, they've broken school policies, we will deal with them about it" (Peter, 459-463)

Peter appeared to embody the description of policing in his account, describing how he takes evidence, patrols the streets and adopts police like terminology to describe his actions, including to "randomly search if we have a suspicion" (361-362). On one occasion recounted by Peter, he chose to chase the offender of a robbery and attempt to catch them himself before the police arrived.

"This woman came in and said 'Oh [child] has just been robbed at knifepoint' I ran down, it was snowing and I was slipping all over the place in my shoes. I ran down and umm we saw this guy on the bridge, I was calling 999 as I did it and then all of a sudden 3 unmarked cars turned up, we said he's gone that way and they caught him and arrested him and got the…. But this was like 8 o'clock in the morning" (Peter, 697-704)

Other participants also saw 'policing' as part of the DSL or teaching staffs' role, with patrolling the area after school being a common activity amongst interviewees. Annie reported that her staff "always do a little patrol after school of the area" (Annie, 236-237).

4.3.2.2 DSL as nurturer and advocate

Several DSLs adopted a parental role in their work with CYP associated with knife crime. Lucy spoke about how her maternal instincts often take hold when working with these young people and she finds it hard to supress them.

"I would bring them up here for a cup of tea and a biscuit. Sit them down ermm ... How's your day been? Ermm ... What was your morning like? What did you get up to last night?" (Lucy, 947-50)

For Lucy, this nurturing role extended to parents as well. Describing a time when she helped a parent access mental health services, she recognised the importance of taking a holistic approach saying "we felt that by supporting mum, we felt we was supporting the young girl" (Lucy, 1008-1009).

Sue likened the school, and in this instance the inclusion team, to the secure base for children where they felt safe as they did not have this elsewhere. She described how some pupils required a higher degree of nurture and support, as she had a sense that some of the parents were not able to provide this.

"Some of the children, this is like the secure base, this is a safe place for them" (Sue, 193-194)

4.3.2.3 Building positive relationships

For Lucy, Sue, Fiona and Peter building positive relationships and a good rapport with the children and young people was crucial.

"I mean I know the kids really well and they are relaxed with me….I was able to have a really candid exchange with the students" (Sue, 25-26; 24-25)

"We've got quite a good, yeah, quite a good rapport with our young people" (Lucy, 230-231)

"He had a great relationship with me" (Peter, 504-505)

"I've enjoyed supporting these children because they give back. They take a lot from you, but they do give back something" (Fiona, 399-402)

Sue, Fiona and Lucy felt that pupils were able to trust them to come and speak about their experiences or concerns around knife crime.

"trust is a big thing especially with our young people, knowing that there are adults that they can trust and that by trusting the right adults, it can help keep them safe" (Sue, 501-504)

"Our young people they do whisper, and sometimes if they want us to know they will whisper louder, so that we can hear" (Lucy, 21-23)

"When they come into here, they know they can trust the adults who are working with them and they can build relationships with the adults and they'll get people who'll listen to them and talk to them" (Fiona, 364-369)

Peter described some strong attachments he had formed with particular children and described feeling bereft when they were excluded from school. Peter emphasised that "I think that the main thing is trust" (345-346). Although some pupils were able to trust staff, he described suspicions and differences between staff and certain pupils that meant that they struggled to trust the adults. Peter perceived this as a major threat and hindrance to positive relationships being built. He described how the view of

staff as a type of police made it difficult for the students to trust them, for fear of punishment.

"And that's the difficulty. It's the trust issue. And so the kids generally don't want to come and say to us, you know often, there's something they're gonna get in trouble for or this has happened….It is the trust issue I think that is the main challenge for us and that's why the kids often won't come and say to us ... you know there's going be a massive fight or you know…." (Peter, 371-374; 403-406).

4.3.2.4 The transmission of knowledge

All participants spoke about the educational programmes they had put in place aiming to share knowledge and increase understanding of the risks related to knife crime. Lucy, Sue, Peter and Fiona felt that it was the school's responsibility to educate pupils and having someone who had experienced first-hand the impact of knife crime come in to speak to the pupils was more powerful and meaningful than coming from them or other members of staff.

"We have a lot of prevention programmes in place" (Annie, 91-92)

"We are taking steps to make sure that students are aware of what is going on… it's educating them and making them aware of the consequences and the risk that they might put themselves at" (Fiona, 188; 197-200).

"By getting other people in who have experienced it and can bring a different level to it, an element to it" (Lucy, 181-183).

"You know we do a lot of assemblies on, I lead the assemblies on, this is the law around knife crime" (Peter, 104-106)

"The best thing you can do for young people…is that you wise them up, you tell them what is happening out there" (Sue, 107-110)

Lucy also spoke of her desire to have as much knowledge as possible herself;

"I'm on every single thing that can bring more information to the school, to the staff and to the student's wellbeing and staff's well-being so yeah, yeah, I get to know what's going on in the local area" (Lucy, 278-282).

4.3.2.5 Feeling unsafe

Contributing to the desire to protect pupils was an awareness amongst the DSLs of how unsafe children and young people feel. It is clear from the interviews that the interviewees unanimously felt that fear was a major factor in young people's decision to carry a weapon, usually in the form of the knife, and that this was for self-protection.

"Children have brought in a knife, umm because they have felt threatened in some way". She later describes how a pupil "…said the only place I feel safe is here in school, Mrs" (Sue, 7-8; 69)

"the sort of fear aspect is quite a big thing for some of the kids" (Annie, 49-50)

"They're doing it because they're worried about their journey home or because you know they're worried about who they are going to see later on, when they've got to go to a different part of London or go across the borough" (Peter, 653-657).

Participants also highlighted the impact of knife crime on feelings of safety in the wider community. Sue emphasised how knife crime is something children and young people "are very very aware of" (Sue, 39-40). Annie explained how for pupils she works with who have had knife crime incidents take place on the estate where they live, "it's made them feel that in their own home, they are not safe" (Annie, 359-360). Annie also describes the wider impact on the whole community;

"there is so many other kids that are kind of affected, whether that's they're affected because their liberty is slightly you know affected by it in terms of what they can do and how safe they feel. Umm, so I do think it has a massive knock on effect on the whole community I would say". (Annie, 340; 343-348)

4.3.3 Overarching theme 3: Tensions in role

All five participants discussed the tensions they experienced related to their work with CYP associated with knife crime. Most of these difficulties involved working on a wider level with the systems around the child, including the local authority, parents

and school. However, there were also tensions involved in direct working with these CYP. The related superordinate themes comprising of this overarching theme were:

- Making complex decisions
- Feeling powerless
- Rumination
- Working with parents

4.3.3.1 Making complex decisions

A pertinent theme evident in several participants' experiences was the struggle inherent when the school made the challenging decision whether or not to exclude a CYP who had been involved in a knife incident or carried a knife. The DSLs would often grapple with the situation, knowing the impact exclusion could have on the young person's future as a result. Several DSLs expressed that they felt that an ultimatum was presented to them when individuals were involved in a knife crime and that they were left with no real choice;

"…have got the challenge of someone who does actually come to school carrying a knife then there really is only one outcome" (Annie, 104-106)

"and ultimately you go, it can't be anything but a permanent exclusion" (Peter, 239-241)

"...was just not very good, but it had to be done" (Sue, 102)

"but of course we have a no tolerance policy for bringing weapons into school, so he was permanently excluded anyway for it" (Fiona, 72-74)

The enormity of this decision preoccupied the DSLs as they held a heightened awareness of what the future may hold for the children and young people once these decisions had been made. However, whilst they felt unhappy with having to do this,

they were also very conscious of why action had to be taken and the safety of all pupils and the school community was emphasised by the participants.

"And you know it's really difficult because you make that very hard decision to say that basically their chance of success now has been dramatically reduced because we're not having them back. Then you have to think about the 1200 other kids, staff, parents, the whole community, about what's more important - the greater safety or the needs of one or two children. It's hard. It's a big decision for the headmaster isn't it?" (Peter, 216-223)

Lucy described having to exclude a pupil involved in a knife crime but appeared to ease her discomfort with the situation by justifying that they settled him into a new school that was better able to meet his needs. This was something that several of the participant's described and appeared to help lessen the painful experience of making a decision that they felt forced into making.

"Umm, he obviously, we won't tolerate that, so he got excluded but we did see him into another school, a more appropriate school" (Lucy, 24-27).

Annie described knife crime as a messy situation with a multitude of interacting factors. It appears she struggled to unpick everything that is going on for these young people.

"Obviously knife crime is all tied up; it's all tangled up together" (Annie, 283-284)

For Sue, another complex decision relates to how to respond once an incident involving a CYP has taken place. She spoke of her dilemma of wanting to be helpful but fearing escalating or 'sensationalising' the situation.

"your trying to get the balance between providing something that is factual and pragmatic and helpful, you don't want to sensationalise things and you don't want to attract attention to it too much so it's just getting the balance right" (Sue, 142-146).

Similarly, Annie described how she feels the need to manage emotional outbursts from pupils in school the following so that violence is not promoted;

"dampened that down so that you know in, you don't want them to be glamorising it in that way" (Annie, 394-395)

4.3.3.2 Feeling powerless

The experience of working with children and young people associated with knife crime appeared to elicit feelings of powerlessness for the DSLs and potentially present as a threat to their competence. Several reported that they felt that they lacked the skills to educate CYP about knife crime.

"We can put a lesson plan together and get all this information from the web and everything else but unless you've actually physically lived through it and gone through it and its part of your daily life, then it's very difficult to bring that element into the classroom" (Lucy, 196-202)

"So we're trying to get people in to help us really, who are not us basically because they have the expertise often and that is their soul. It is... it is their subject, their chosen subject and they are the experts in it" (Peter, 974-978)

Sue's experience of feeling powerless related to her struggle to get a young person to open up to her about a knife crime incident that he did not feel able to talk about. She appeared to feel powerless that she was unable to get him to open up and help relieve the emotional impact on him. She described the discomfort at having to watch this young person withholding information when she seems to want him to release it in some way.

"He would be on the verge of, we could just tell he was on the verge of a disclosure, but he couldn't quite bring himself to make it and we encouraged him ….it was horrible to watch because we knew, we just thought, if you just say it," (Sue, 231-236)

The experience of feeling powerless emerged several times from the discussion with DSLs and linked to feelings of frustration, which will be discussed in more depth in Section 4.3.4.1.

4.3.3.3 Rumination

Linked to feelings of being powerless and unskilled, several DSLs described how they often questioned what they were doing or reflected back on what had happened, querying their actions. For Lucy, this extract suggests she spent time reflecting and considering what else could have happened;

"but I think looking back on that, I felt that there was so much we could have done" (Lucy, 679-681).

Annie described the need to check out her actions, suggesting her internal voice is questioning some of the decisions she had made.

"clarify it in your own head as well that what you're doing is the right thing" (Annie, 196-197.

Similarly, Sue described questioning her capacity in role. She seemed to wonder if she was able to provide the containing function she is aware that the children need.

"Am I doing enough to contain because we are not a mental health specialist like yourself?" (Sue, 299-300)

Peter described experiencing rumination linked to his involvement in identifying his pupils associated in a stabbing on CCTV. This seemed to preoccupy him and as he talked, he appeared to still feel torn at whether he had done the right thing, attempting to rationalise his actions out loud.

"Yeah so it was difficult because without my input to the CCTV footage, it would have been very hard I think for police to arrest and all that kind of stuff… but we have to identify for our own purposes…. And it's really difficult because you know

one of the lads is a looked after child and he's certainly one of those who was stabbing" (Peter, 177-180; 186-189)

4.3.3.4 Working with parents

A range of strong feelings and tensions about working with parents were elicited from the DSLs' accounts. All the participants expressed empathy for parents and the situations they were in as described by Peter and Fiona;

"It must be really hard as a parent who's got, you know, a kid who's been arrested. It must be really difficult. Because you're, you know, thinking about what's going to happen to my child and all that kind of stuff and it's like the parents don't want the school to know about it" (Peter, 383-38)

"…some of them are just overwhelmed. They're tired and they're just overwhelmed. They're struggling…" (Fiona, 469-471)

The participants also spoke of guiding and supporting parents, which they viewed as a key part of their role when working with these children and young people. This included helping them to access support services for both themselves and their children.

"We felt that by supporting mum, we felt we was supporting the young girl" (Lucy, 1008-1009)

However, working with parents also brought a number of challenges and tensions for the DSLs, most notably the demands that parents put on them when situations became challenging. They described the parents' desperation and helplessness about the situation with their children, seeking help and support from the participations.

"..when you've got a parent saying to me, he's beyond my control, I can't get him to do anything, I can't get him to come in, I can't get him to do that, what shall I do Mrs X?" (Sue, 281-283)

"parents are sometimes just as needy as the children" (Fiona, 503-504).

"parents just can be so exasperated by this child's behaviour, especially if they are experiencing that at home… they just feel as if there is no way out, what am I going to do?" (Lucy, 469-472)

For Peter, working with parents of children victimised by knife crime brought challenges of its own. In a situation where both the victim and perpetrator were from his school, he appeared conflicted. On the one hand understanding the wider issues of the perpetrator but also understanding the victim's parents' perspective and feeling pressurised by parents to help uphold the reputation of the school.

"The mum of the guy who was robbed, she had two sons, was probably gonna pull him out of school. And you go, how is that fair that she feels so worried - you know and we said look don't do that ok, you know the boys not going to be here for a while, we're gonna make a decision about whether its permanent or not. But in the end, we thought well cos she's then gonna say to other people do you know that kid X who robbed my boy - it could be your boy robbed at knife point next time and it's a really difficult decision for the school to take. You have to be quite pragmatic about it actually." (Peter, 274-284)

Lucy also described feeling torn. She wanted to help and support the parents but was also aware that sharing things with them may have a potentially detrimental impact on the young person's relationship with their parents and wider family.

"We try to put a positive stance on it but sometimes it's really difficult, but we also know that if we keep going with negative stuff that is going to impact the family dynamics" (Lucy, 465-468)

4.3.4 Overarching theme 4: A myriad of emotions

This overarching theme was evident across all five participant accounts. It is comprised of the superordinate themes:

- Powerful emotions evoked
- Emotional impact of the work
- Mental health of CYP

It appeared that the DSLs experienced a complex range of powerful emotions working with children and young people associated with knife crime, including anger,

shock, frustration and sadness. The reported impact of these emotions on the DSLS will also be discussed.

4.3.4.1 Powerful Emotions Evoked

Frustration

Frustration was a commonly held experience for the DSLs. A key feature of Lucy's account of working with these young people was the frustration that she experienced. This was related to working with the systems and services around the child and how she felt that young people had been failed. There was a feeling of frustration that certain events had to take place before support could be accessed.

"I think my frustration with it all is that, [sigh] that had to happen, he had to do county lines, for anybody to really take notice and put stuff in place" (Lucy, 69-71)

Sue shared this frustration;

"We can identify who are at risk, but we can't always access the services, or they are going to have to offend before they get to YOS. So, it's back to front" (Sue, 339-342).

Lucy likened her experiences to a battle to be heard and listened to, in order to access the right services for the young people and repeatedly, throughout her interview, expressed feelings of frustration around this. It appeared that Lucy holds the assumption that with the right support these children and young people would benefit from the involvement of other services. From Lucy's perspective, a delay in response from other services is of detriment to the CYP. In the quote below, she described trying hard to reach other local services and support and constantly being rejected;

"Frustration ... frustration in that you have to knock on so many doors for people to sit up and listen…it just seemed as if every single door we tried to open ermm ... with the local authority ermm, it just got slammed in our face" (Lucy, 632-633; 704-706)

For both Sue and Peter, part of the frustration they experienced was related to the difficulties in changing the minds of the young people they worked with. Their perceived inability to influence the thinking and behaviour of the young people was very frustrating for them and difficult to accept. Sue described a disconnect between her and the CYP in their belief of the need to carry knives to keep themselves safe. Despite attempting to convince her pupils that carrying knives is not a good idea, she explained how, "I couldn't budge them from that particular point of view" (Sue, 29). The use of the word budge indicates a feeling of stuckness and frustration for Sue.

Peter added that despite his work in attempting to educate his pupils, by speaking in assemblies and directly to them about the risks and potential repercussions of carrying a knife, many still continue to carry them.

"…the kids are just going 'well you know, we need to tool ourselves up' and it doesn't matter what advice you give them" (Peter, 102-104).

Shock

Four DSLs described the shock they experienced when they found out pupils were involved in knife crime in some way. In some instances, they had suspicions and at other times it was individuals that were completely unexpected. Peter noted how even when he held suspicions about a child, there was still a shock when he heard that they had been involved in a knife crime incident. He also spoke of the differences in some pupil's presentation in school and out of school;

"He never represented any behaviour to be in possession of a knife… You know, you just go where has that come from? He's never said boo to a goose in school" (Peter, 93-94; 96-98)

Fiona described how incidents involving knives and their pupils felt shocking. Her use of the powerful phrase ‘alien’ suggests that she felt very strongly that this is an unfamiliar situation for her and her colleagues to be in.

“it was quite a shock and to know that had happened and err, you know, it was something that was alien to us really” (Fiona, 118-121).

Sue’s experience of shock was related to her pupils expressing how unsafe they felt outside of school and that due to this, they needed to carry knives for protection. This was in contrast to her own experiences in the school community. Sue’s description of ‘the big bad world’ provokes connotations of a child’s story.

“I was quite shocked actually, at how unsafe they felt out in the big bad world” (Sue, 162-163)

Sadness and loss

Several DSLs expressed feelings of sadness linked to working with these CYP, both at the situations the CYP were now in and also at the loss they themselves felt when pupils were excluded and no longer attended the school. Peter described his sadness about how if the circumstances and factors around the CYP were different, they may not have ended up on this path. At the end of the extract, Peter struggled to articulate what might be different for these young people in a different situation and the idea of this seemed too difficult to say aloud.

“three of the four we've lost, you just go [head in hands] it's such a shame, you know it's such a shame umm because they are just... you just see in different circumstances, they'd be so... you know…” (Peter, 820-824).

Annie described her shock and sadness when she finds out her pupils are involved in these kinds of experiences. She considered that the situation they were in is not how she would want their lives to be and that she is mourning what she feels their teenage years should be like.

"It's always a shock and it's always a sadness I think… because I think... umm you know it's just so umm…. you can't help but feel but as an individual that this is not umm the experiences, it's an atypical experience of teenage life and it's not what you'd want for those, for these young people." (Annie, 81-86).

Lucy likened her experience of having a pupil move school to physical pain for the staff. The emotional impact of this experience seemed profound as Lucy talked about her awareness of the difficult circumstances the child found herself in and her sadness and regret that the school were unable 'to keep her'.

"and as much as it pained us, because we felt we were the only stable ermm ..., we couldn't, we couldn't keep her" (Lucy, 675-577)

Anger

Another pertinent aspect of the DSLs' experience working with CYP associated with knife crime was the experience of anger and injustice about what was happening to the young people whom they worked with and their families. Lucy described the injustice she felt in that children are not being noticed or supported in a way she believed they should. The repetitions she makes in her account seem to be a way of processing her feelings.

"There is no need for it. No, no child should be slipping through the net. Not in this day and age, not in this day and age. No child" (Lucy, 1087-1089).

Sue shared this sentiment describing feelings of anger at how young people are treated;

"You know our young people are the most precious thing…. you know it really makes me cross" (Sue, 455; 459)

Concern and empathy

Several DSLs expressed significant concerns about the vulnerability of their pupils associated with knife crime. Annie reported concerns over the worry that pupils are holding about knife crime, which in her view should not exist.

"There is a level of fear or I suppose an anxiety for some children that shouldn't be there". (Annie, 211-213)

She also spoke of her empathy for siblings of those involved "it was heart breaking for him because he wanted to stay, he was really successful but actually the impact on a sibling can be really significant" (Annie, 307-309)

Sue described how vulnerable she feels pupils are to negative influences outside of school likening them to 'ripe fruit' that could be picked by anyone looking to take advantage of them. This powerful metaphor produces several connotations, who will be doing the picking is called into question and whether Sue feels able to prevent unhelpful 'picking' of her pupils.

"They are ripe for the picking and they are easy to pick" (Sue, 489-490)

For Peter, empathy and concern are evoked when considering the impact of the wider social factors on these young people;

".... if circumstances were different for them socially, they would have really great opportunity in life. And that is the main thing that sort of upsets me really about this, I mean [sigh] I nearly cried in the governors meeting the other night…" (Peter, 816-821)

Fiona felt concerned around the how 'normalised' knife crime and violence is for young people as discussed in Section 4.3.1.3.

"It's as if it becomes normalised a little bit for them which is a bit of a worry" (Fiona, 134-136)

4.3.4.2 Emotional impact

The considerable personal impact of these complex emotional experiences was described by three of the DSLs;

"Sometimes we find it exhausting. Sometimes I go home, and I crawl to the car, because you're holding a lot of risk and it's not through anyone's fault" (Sue, 319-321)

"It's a lot of work. It's a lot of work." (Fiona, 267)

"I think that affected me ermm quite ermm considerably actually because I was one of the safeguarding leads, been working with this child ummm since last…. not this June, June before" (Lucy, 29-33)

"You kind of think this is hard, and it makes it really difficult" (Peter, 231-232)

To manage these powerful experiences and continue to function, Sue and Lucy described adopting a way of coping involving 'leaving it at the door' and detaching themselves from what is happening. However, this conflicts with their earlier accounts which suggest this may not be as easy to do;

"I don't go home with a huge baggage on my ... yeh. I leave it at the school door, I leave it at the school door" (Lucy, 1090-1092)

"you know and ermm, and I'm an old bag, and an old boot so I'm used to switching off, I can switch off" (Sue, 373-375)

4.3.4.3 Mental health of young people

Three of the participants spoke to the impact on the mental health of CYP associated with knife crime. Sue described how a pupil she believed had been involved in a knife crime event's mental health was considerably affected;

"it had a massive impact on him and you know on his mental health, on his emotional wellbeing. It was like he was carrying this massive burden" (Sue, 217-220)

Whilst Lucy and Annie described the impact on all pupils as a result of fear or due to peer pressure.

"Mental health is such a big thing because peer pressure is so great" (Lucy, 113-114)

we'll have some children who might need some counselling support, mental health support, umm support from other services because of anxiety….. support to help them feel safe (Annie, 46-49)

"so many children, are presenting with anxiety about what is going on outside of school that they might be experiencing and not able to talk about it because you know they do not want to expose their community, you know and open up and say this is happening in my area and they will hold on to it and end up having some kind of stressful mental health breakdown over it and not having an outlet for it" (Fiona, 537-546)

4.3.5 Overarching theme 5: The need for support

The first overarching theme is conceptualised by the need for support and includes the superordinate themes:

- 'the importance of a team',
- 'a desire for more support'
- 'a space to think.

This theme incorporates all five participants' accounts of their experiences feeling that when working with children and young people associated with knife crime, support is required in some form as the role can be too much for a person to handle alone.

4.3.5.1 The importance of a team

All participants reported to value being part of a team and having a space to think about their role differently and reflect on cases and complex decisions. Lucy described the function of the team in providing support to staff members so that they can share and discuss any challenges they have with particular children with the team.

"…its really important our staff feel supported and that they don't go home ermm with ... they're gonna go home with con... ermm concerns, issues, whatever and the like, but we don't want them to go home and think that it's all on their shoulders (Lucy, 567-577)

For Annie, the team provided a containing function as she described that it is 'too much' to work on alone;

"We have like a little safeguarding team. So, we umm, I think that helps not being on your own. So, I would, I would never deal with it or umm the deputy head who is also really involved, we would never, deal with any of these things without working together on it, because I don't think you could do this, as a, as a lone practitioner. Because it's sort of, you know it would be just too much" (Annie, 167-174)

Sue valued the team around her for sharing cases and discussing any concerns she may have;

"This amazing team around me and what we do is we meet once a week and we triage our case, we review them, we discuss things, we share...it's very helpful particularly when it's dealing with the difficult cases so that you've got other people to bounce off your concerns" (Sue, 362-368).

Fiona emphasised the importance of the team coming together in order to share the responsibility to deal with any incidents. For Fiona, support also seemed to come from not having to make decisions on her own.

"… you know there is a safeguarding team so it's not just me on my own. There are other members of…that safeguarding team and decisions are made, again, within that and we discuss issues and make decisions based on that" (Fiona, line 267-273).

Peter described the team and how they are all trained in safeguarding and responsible for certain areas of the school, reporting to him.

"So I'm the lead and my PA, [name] she's designated deputy - she's our safeguarding officer…So we've got 6, they're deputies to me. So, we've got a big team and we generally work through ..." (Peter, 562-563; 567-569)

4.3.5.2 Desire for more support

Whilst acknowledging the benefits of the Police Community Support Officers (Safer Schools Officer) role carried out in schools, three participants highlighted a desire for more support when working with these children and young people. It appeared that

the nature of the work made the participants feel that wider support was needed, with several sharing a feeling of abandonment by other services. Sue described how she felt that she and the school were carrying a lot of risk and that they required more professional input from experienced practitioners in mental health, both to support the young people but also to indirectly help staff like her.

"I think more specialists, more experts, more people on the ground that can actually work directly with these young people, people that understand" (Sue, 330-332).

This extract suggests that Sue feels that in her role she cannot work with these people or she is not someone 'who understands'; questioning her capacity in role. This links to the theme of rumination described in section 4.10.3.3.

Lucy highlighted how she felt there could be a lack of support from other professionals and services. She felt that there needed to be a joined-up approach from professionals working together to support these young people. She voiced her concerns that she was working alone, battling against other services, fighting for her voice to be heard and appeared to lack the backing she desired from others. Lucy was keen for a more joined up approach to supporting both young people and the adults working with them in the network due to the challenging nature of the cases.

"…professionals coming together - and sharing information and supporting each other, because it is quite tough, it is quite tough" (Lucy, 1077-1079)

Furthermore, despite having a team in school, Fiona felt that other services outside of school were not supporting young people sufficiently.

"There is nobody to say right let's see what we can do, how can we support you" (Fiona 546-548).

Shared as if talking to a child, Fiona's view leads one to wonder whether this also mirrors her own experiences of support. She seemed to feel that there is 'nobody' at all who is there to support her or the children and young people she is working with.

4.3.5.3 A space to think

Two of the DSLs spoke about their desire for supervision describing how they felt in comparison to other professionals doing similar work; a sentiment expressed that they are over-looked. Sue described the risk that schools held and believed there should be a role for someone who can provide a containing space for DSLs. She compared her role to that of social workers and psychologists who also receive regular supervision and appeared to be feeling a sense of injustice that other professionals working with similar levels of risk, receive more support.

"What we don't have is supervision, that social workers get, that psychologists get, and I think at times we could really do with that" (Sue, 368-369).

For Sue, this supervision would take the form of a space to think or someone to talk to. The repeated use of 'just' suggests that this is something that Sue is trying to play down.

"..probably just someone to talk to, I don't know maybe once a fortnight, just for half an hour just to talk through some of the cases" (Sue, 383-385)

Others described other more informal supervision arrangements and how they benefited from these. Lucy explained that following a challenging and emotionally draining case working with a boy who had been involved in knife crime and county lines, an informal supervision took place with colleagues. She appeared to benefit from the space to think and reflect with others and process some of the emotional experiences in a location separate to the school.

"..we actually went out for a drink, errm we went out for a drink, ermm sat and just, you know, just chilled. And just spoke about what we would have liked to happen, what we did and just to, to debrief you know and, you know, it was good, it was nice to come together ermm ... not in school" (Lucy, 614-20)

Whilst appearing to appreciate and value having a team of professionals in school to support them in discussions of cases and day-to-day experiences, the DSLs expressed a desire to access support with their work from other professionals, including those in mental health services, and the opportunity for a space to think and reflect on their cases and the subsequent impact on them.

4.4 Summary of findings

This chapter set out to explore:

What are the experiences of Designated Safeguarding Leads' working with children and young people associated with knife crime?

Five overarching themes emerged from the analysis and a detailed description of the findings under the themes below was provided:

- Socio-economic factors
- The desire to protect
- Tensions in role
- A myriad of emotions
- The need for support

The findings will now be discussed in context and links made to existing literature and relevant research and psychological theory.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter will provide a detailed exploration of the key findings produced from the analysis of the participant interviews. The discussion seeks to place the results in context by engaging in a dialogue with existing research. Links will be made to the literature and relevant psychological theories, mainly psychodynamic theory, will be used to offer explanations for the research. Proposed implications for EP practice and limitations of the study will be discussed and suggestions for future research provided. The chapter will conclude with final reflections on the research process.

5.2 Exploration of themes

First, the five overarching themes which emerged from the analysis will each be discussed in turn.

5.2.1 Socio-economic factors

The impact of Austerity

The participants spoke at length about these issues and it was an emotive topic provoking strong reactions. It seemed the economic climate strongly impacted on the DSLs experiences of working with CYP associated with knife crime. The use of a language that sounds attacking, with Lucy describing how services have been ‘cut to the bare bones’ and Peter noting how the situation is ‘really biting’, highlights the aggressive nature of how austerity is perceived. Participants spoke of the profound impact of budget cuts resulting in youth centres and organisations being closed down,

thresholds for services being raised and the increased pressure services such as social care and CAMHs were under. The considerable effect of this on CYP and their families, the school and the wider community was noted. Sue expressed a desire for a place where young people could go and be supervised and not be 'on the streets'.

The impact of financial pressures was a common theme in previous research where staff members highlighted that budget restrictions resulted in them not being able to buy in the services they desired (Waddell & Jones, 2018). School leaders in research by Ofsted (2019) stated that the largest barrier to being able to safeguard effectively was budget. Research has also shown the link between living in areas with high levels of deprivation and an increased likelihood of becoming injured due to youth violence (Jones, Sivarajasingam & Shepherd, 2011; McAra & McVie, 2016). In her work with gang involved families, Thornberry (2003) found that parents in families and communities experiencing social adversity do not always have the means to supervise their children and, due to external pressures, can be less available. In research by Waddell & Jones (2018), staff believed parents were under substantial pressure, meaning they struggled to keep track of their children.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory which posits that the interactions and relationships between people and their environment shape child development, can help us to understand the impact of socio-economic factors such as austerity. The model stresses the importance of understanding children and young people's behaviour as part of their context. Bronfenbrenner proposed that there are five interacting systems and environments around a child including their micro-systems (family, peers, school and community), meso-systems (relationships within

the micro-system), exo-systems (wider social systems) and the macro-system (cultural context) which each influence one another and the CYP's development. Socioeconomic status and poverty are represented in the macro-system, influencing CYP and their interactions across home and school systems (their micro-system) and their relationships within these systems (meso-systems) as noted by the participants.

Social Media

A shared narrative arising from the findings was the strong negative reaction evoked by social media with it being described as 'the bane of all evil'. There was a sense that social media is very overwhelming and also very much unknown.

"but they are bombarded aren't they and you don't know what they are being bombarded with" (Sue).

This suggests Sue is trying to protect the CYP from something that she doesn't understand herself. Fiona similarly shared her view that social media is "exposing these children to so much more than I ever knew in my life". The feeling that social media was something they felt unable to protect their pupils from, seemed to raise anxiety in the DSLs. The perceived impact of social media was described as profound and instantaneous further adding to their discomfort.

Social media plays a key role in the lives of young people with this generation being described as 'digital natives' who spend several hours online daily (Lenhart et al., 2015). The impact of social media on CYP is a contentious issue and research to date is mixed. Some studies have highlighted the benefits of social media in reinforcing

and broadening real-life relationships (Reich, Subrahmanyam & Espinoza, 2012) and supporting skills such as critical thinking and the ability to understand others' perspectives (Tynes, 2007), whilst other studies link social media use to an increased risk of social isolation, cyberbullying and depression (O'Keefe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011). Irwin-Rogers & Pinkney (2017) highlight the many ways social media can be a catalyst and trigger for serious episodes of violence between children and young people, including the filming of violent incidents or threats and music videos which can provoke, intimidate and aggravate others. They also note the social pressures that can be engendered on social media.

Research in schools has found that social media can have a key role in increasing fear of crime amongst children and cause them to become distressed and scared by what they see and hear online (Waddell & Jones, 2018; Broadhurst et al., 2009; Irwin-Rogers & Harding, 2018). One staff member shared how being seen to denigrate a rival gang in a video online resulted in him being the victim of a stabbing, (Irwin-Rogers, 2016; Irwin-Rogers & Harding, 2018) so it is clear that the participants fears of social media can be well founded.

Normalisation of knife crime

The participants spoke about the normalisation of knife crime among CYP describing it as commonplace for them and 'part and parcel' of their lives. This apparent acceptance of knife crime by CYP troubled the participants. They all shared their personal view of the situation as tragic and awful with Peter describing knife crime as 'endemic' in the area, likening it to a disease. However despite this, participants also acknowledged that amongst the issues they had to deal with in their role, Child

Criminal Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation were increasingly, and for some, a bigger issue than knife crime.

Role of race, culture and context

The role of race, culture and context was spoken about by two of the participants. There was a view that it was the 'black community' who was mainly affected. Waddell and Jones (2018) noted that although they didn't specifically ask about race, only one participant commented on issues of race and knife crime despite its prominence in wider discourse around knife crime and youth violence. Broadhurst et al., (2009) identify in their research that some gang-related activities are 'racial' and link this to the need to challenge discrimination and ensure equity and cohesion in schools. Family context also played a role in the findings with Sue considering a CYP's family background in terms of their response to a knife crime related incident. An absence of 'father' figures was raised by two participants as impacting on CYP involved in knife crime, which was a view shared by staff in existing literature (Waddell & Jones, 2018; Broadhurst et al., 2009).

The link between race and knife crime is frequently debated in political discourse and media reports (The Guardian, 2019). Psychoanalytic theory posits that defence mechanisms are put in place to defend against anxiety. The assumption that it is only the 'black community' may be a defensive response that closes down the thinking of the organisation and means that the underlying reasons for the issue, are not thought about. Frosh (2013) describes how;

"*Racialized others are especially selected as these hated external objects because they are made available to fulfil this role by the history and structure of racist and colonial societies, and also because, as a fantast category, racial "otherness" can be used to mean virtually anything" (p.149-150)*

By projecting uncomfortable feelings and feelings of difference into the 'other', in this case the 'black community', it frees the organisation from considering and thinking further about difference. The other group become the recipient of projections, so they no longer affect the organisation within, rather putting all the difficulty outside the organisation (Frosh, 2013).

In this situation, the overrepresentation may well be the reality of what is seen by some of the participants and it cannot be truly known either way. However, this way of thinking may help to offer a way of understanding the participants' need to section off this issue into another group.

5.2.2 School as protector

Linked to the socio-economic factors at play, this theme describes the participants' strong desire to protect their pupils. It was of interest that throughout the interviews, all five participants answered questions about their experiences using the pronoun 'we' rather than 'I'. This view of themselves as the school community could relate to the collective responsibility they feel for ensuring the safety of the pupils and staff. They responses suggests they see themselves as representing the school community rather than their own individual experience.

The Desire to Protect

As with previous research, the participants identified the school as a 'safe haven' (Broadhurst et al., 2019; Ofsted, 2019; Irwin-Rogers & Harding, 2018; Waddell & Jones, 2018). There was a sense that school was a safe place for pupils or at least tried to be but the 'big bad world' outside was dangerous. Although the participants felt that pupils were safe in school and pupils shared that they felt safe, the DSLs spoke about the fears they held for CYP once they left the school gates. For Sue, this related to her feeling as if they are under her watchful eye at all times and she has to supervise them always. This is a pertinent statement, describing an overwhelming amount of responsibility and a strong desire to protect her pupils which was echoed by Sue throughout her interview.

A theme relating to policing emerged from two participant's narratives, with Peter adopting the language of the police, including 'searching', patrolling', 'suspicion' and 'knife possession'. It is of interest to consider why the participants felt the need to adopt this role. The task of the DSL is of the key person responsible for ensuring the protection and safety of the school community. This could be seen as similar in a way to the police's role in society protecting the public, the DSL role in school is policing to ensure safety of the school community. Policing the boundaries of the school may be one way that the DSLs feel they have some control over what is happening to CYP.

Peter noted the tension in trying to protect pupils but not being perceived as negatively by pupils as the police are. The need Peter feels to take matters into his own hands is of interest, it may be that that is one way he feels he can help and have

some control over the situation. The parallel between schools and police was drawn by a pupil in previous research who was against searching pupils upon entry to school and stated, *"we're at school, not in prison"* (Ofsted, 2019, p.12).

DSL as nurturer and advocate

The DSLs adopted a nurturing and advocacy role towards pupils, families and the school community. This involved supporting CYP's physical care with tea and biscuits and holding them in mind (Winnicott, 1971), checking in with them frequently. Lucy described supporting parents on visits to CAMHS or helping them to access the right support for their own mental health needs. As identified in previous literature, there appeared to be something about these pupils that the participants felt needed extra support (Waddell & Jones, 2018).

Psychodynamic theories of attachment (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980) and containment (Bion, 1963) are helpful to consider when thinking about this theme. Stemming from his earlier work on maternal deprivation, Bowlby believed that the initial bond between a child and their caregivers provides the basis for securing an attachment which is seen as a prototype for future relationships. He compared the significance of positive attachments to a child's emotional development, to protein and nutrients to a child's physical growth. This attachment affects how the child relates to others and how they view and understand themselves. A child with a secure attachment is able to explore and learn and return to their caregiver for safety and comfort, thus providing them with a 'secure base'. A child with an insecure attachment can find it hard to trust others, have a lower self-worth and hold a view of adults as unreliable (Bomber, 2007). As children grow older, attachments become more focused "towards

peers and other persons and institutions outside of the family" (Bowlby, 1980, p. 209).

Attachment theory views the staff-pupil relationship as an extension of the parent-child relationship (Riley, 2011). This theory is useful to understand the DSLs and the pupils they work with. Through providing a nurturing attachment relationship where the DSLs are sensitive and responsive to their needs and wellbeing, the participants or the school act as the secure base for the pupils. When successful, this key access to consistent adults who are reliable enables the CYP to feel safe. Sue references this herself, describing the inclusion team (another part of her role) as the secure base for certain pupils. This is not without its challenges as when pupils no longer need her, Sue describes feeling bereft.

The experience of being understood and having one's feelings heard and listened to is referred to by Bion (1963) as containment and Winnicott (1971) as the 'holding environment'. Bion highlighted the importance of the duality of the parent-child relationship and the primary caregiver's ability to respond to a young infant's distress and unpleasant feelings. Containment describes how through attending and responding to the communications from the young child, the primary caregiver can hold on to their emotions, make sense of them and return them to the child in a manageable form (Symington & Symington, 1996). A state of mind called 'reverie' describes the capacity of the primary caregiver to be attuned to the infant's emotional experiences and communication and to manage them and respond in a sensitive way (Bion, 1962; Waddell, 2002). The internalisation of this experience of containment helps the child to feel safe and understood, develops the emotional skills they need to

grow and develop and nurtures a capacity for independent thought. Bion (1963) deemed this as a key skill in order for thinking to take place. Linked to this, Winnicott (1971) describes the 'holding environment' when a child is provided with a 'good enough' experience to achieve healthy development.

The participants in this research appeared to hold their pupils in mind and show them that they are thinking of them, being emotionally and physically available to ensure the CYP's needs are met. They described asking pupils how they were and providing them with a space to share their experiences, thus offering the pupils' containment through supportive and trusting relationships where they can feel heard. Throughout her interview, Lucy spoke of her desire for pupils to share how they are feeling, by doing this Lucy can help them make sense of their emotions and understand them and respond in a way that reduces their distress. Solomon and Thomas (2013) highlighted the key role teachers have in containing, thinking about and attempting to understand the needs, fears and preoccupations of pupils and their families in order to create a containing environment that enables pupils to feel safe and ready to learn.

Building positive relationships

Positive relationships with pupils were fundamental for this group of DSLs. They felt that getting to know pupils and building a good rapport was key, so that the CYP would feel able to trust them and share their concerns. Fiona spoke about pupils' experience of having people 'who'll listen to them and talk to them' that she believed they may not experience outside of school. This relationship was not one-way, with participants sharing how much they enjoyed and benefitted from working with these children and young people.

Peter shared a difficulty in school staff relationships with pupils, highlighting the major barrier a lack of trust can be and the impact it has on his ability to perform his role in keeping pupils safe. Through the experience of containment and reverie (Bion, 1962), infants are able to develop feelings of trust and safety in their caregiver. Children without a 'good enough' early life-experience may struggle to develop this skill and those young people the DSL work with may be part of the group who lack trust and safety in others, as identified by Peter.

Fitting with attachment theory and the thinking around containment, relationships between staff and pupils have been repeatedly identified to be key in the literature (Broadhurst et al., 2009; Hattie, 2008). The importance of school staff providing containing spaces for children's emotional needs, particularly those who have insecure attachment styles or who have experienced trauma has been demonstrated (Greenwood, 2002; Maliphant & Horner, 2016). The importance of teacher-pupil relationships is a central theme in the previous research on knife crime and gangs (Broadhurst et al., 2009; Irwin-Rogers & Harding, 2019). Irwin-Rogers & Harding (2018) highlighted how "*supportive and trusting relationships are paramount*" (p.476). Positive relationships with pupils and their families also help staff have a better understanding of their needs and context, making it easier to identify when there are difficulties. This was a view shared by the participants in the study, alongside the importance of gaining the trust of pupils.

Transmission of knowledge

Part of the school's role as protector involved the transmission of knowledge to and from both pupils and staff. All the participants spoke in detail about how they educate pupils to the risks involved in knife crime and described arranging talks for pupils from external organisations and people who had experienced knife crime in some way, as they felt they were more meaningful. The participants appeared to believe that sharing knowledge about knife crime would reduce the risks of CYP becoming involved. This is unsurprising and an assumption educators might naturally make as it serves to validate their profession.

The participants spoke about their desire to gain as much knowledge as possible about their pupils and the issue of knife crime, seeking information from wider services, the police and the media. Gaining and sharing knowledge about the current situation in the wider community was felt important to ensure the safety of pupils and staff. In contrast to previous literature, no participants in this study expressed a need or desire for further training around knife crime (Ofsted, 2019; Waddell & Jones, 2018; Broadhurst et al., 2009; Irwin-Rogers, 2016). They all highlighted that it was an area where they lacked personal experience and they felt less equipped to educate CYP about knife crime, however it seemed that this was not something they felt could be learnt.

Feeling unsafe

The belief that pupils did not feel safe was shared by all participants, with most stating that the primary reason behind CYP carrying knives was for protection. This is well documented in the literature around knife crime (Broadhurst et al., 2009;

Eades et al., 2007; MOPAC, 2017). This is despite research indicating that a third of knife crime victims are harmed by their own knife (McVie, 2010). Annie also described the impact on the wider community with pupils of hers, who were not directly involved but lived on an estate where someone had been injured, coming into school feeling very frightened. This has been found in existing literature (Waddell & Jones, 2018). Fear of crime affected many children not only those who were directly involved but also the wider community, fitting with an eco-systemic perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

5.2.3 Tensions in role

The role of a DSL is a considerable undertaking with lead responsibility for ensuring the safety for a large number of pupils and staff in a school. This overarching theme related to the inherent tensions the participants encountered in their role relating to decision-making, feeling powerless, rumination and in working with parents.

A pertinent commonality across participants was a school policy of 'zero-tolerance' relating to knife crime, meaning that if a pupil carried a knife or was involved in a knife related incident they would be automatically permanently excluded from the school or a 'managed move' to another school would take place. Whilst staff appeared to fully comprehend the rationale behind this policy, a tension appeared between understanding why this policy had to be in place to keep the other pupils and school community safe and their concern at the implication of this decision for the vulnerable pupil involved.

Making complex decisions

The participants felt that they had no choice in the decision to exclude which was described as ‘really difficult’, ‘challenging’ and a ‘very hard decision’. There was a sense of their dissatisfaction when a child is excluded or removed from their school and this seemed to have a considerable weight on the DSLs. They felt that this action would have a negative impact on the pupil’s life and reduce their chances of success. Yet they experienced a conflict, as they were aware that this had to be balanced with the needs and safety of the wider school community. This appeared to be something the participants were grappling with and they found ways to ease their discomfort by justifying why they had to make the decision or the better place that pupils were now in.

This tension is documented in the wider literature with staff sharing their concerns around ‘nice pupils’ carrying knives out of fear, ending up excluded or in prison due to their fear of gangs (Broadhurst et al., 2009). Ofsted (2019) highlight different practices and tensions around exclusion. They emphasise the need for school to consider all the factors that may be at play, including understanding the child’s context before an exclusion is imposed. They note that schools must follow statutory guidance and “consider the best interests of pupils at risk of exclusion alongside the need to maintain safety in school” (p.19), yet they do not fully acknowledge the tension inherent in this which was identified by the participants in the study.

Systems theory and psychodynamic theory are useful to help make sense of this tension. Systems theory posits that in order for a system, such as a school, to function, it seeks to maintain homeostasis that is a state of equilibrium (Dowling &

Osborne, 1994). By locating difficulties in challenging children, the system can be preserved, and equilibrium maintained.

In psychodynamic theory, Obholzer (2003) describes how defences can be at play as a result of an intrinsic need for an organisation to defend itself from the anxiety arising from its work. Institutions such as schools "develop defences against difficult emotions which are too threatening or difficult to acknowledge" (Halton, 2013). This may be through splitting or scapegoating (Youell, 2006). This is one way of viewing the zero-tolerance policies imposed by schools as a way to maintain order and homeostasis and defend the school from thinking about the painful reality of the work. By projecting all these unpleasant feelings in to the CYP associated with knife crime who is then excluded, the school is freed from having to think or consider what the underlying causes of this may be. They no longer have to tolerate the difficult feelings and remain 'safe'.

However, the DSLs are aware that these pupils, who have often experienced multiple rejections during their childhoods, go on to experience further rejection and deepen the negative narratives around them, leaving them increasingly vulnerable.
The participants are aware of the complexity of this issue making remaining within this boundary very difficult and leaving them with a tension. There is also a discomfort in their awareness that these young people are part of their school system and it is their job to protect them. Annie describes this dissonance, knowing there are times pupils, were "scared, not actually the perpetrator, or made a mistake" but were still implicated in the issue. She describes the 'messy and complex situation' of knife crime.

Feeling powerless

The experience of working with pupils associated with knife crime also evoked a feeling of powerlessness amongst the participants. This linked to their experiences working with other professionals and services, feeling left out of decisions and poorly informed or left with all the responsibility themselves. It also related to the wider socio-economic factors impacting on CYP such as social media, austerity that were outside their control. This feeling of being powerless, may further add to the school systems desire to impose strict boundaries, such as zero tolerance approaches, to create a sense of power and manage these painful feelings.

Feeling powerless was also present in relation to their description of feeling deskilled in regard to knife crime and in their inability to change pupils' minds about the need to carry a knife. Sue described a feeling of stuckness as she spoke of being unable to get a pupil, who had experienced what she believed to be a traumatic event involving a knife, to share his experience with her. She could see the emotional distress that the experience was causing but could not find a way to encourage him to open up, something she found difficult. This highlights that perhaps Sue does have training needs around processing trauma, although the participants did not feel that they needed training. This feeling of being 'at a loss' of how best to support pupils was identified in previous literature with primary school staff (Waddell & Jones, 2018).

Rumination

Relating to tensions in their role, participants spoke in a way that showed rumination over decisions in their work and how they support pupils. They questioned whether they were doing the right thing in the difficult circumstances and whether they had

done ‘enough’. The DSL role involves the individual holding the ultimate responsibility or key pieces of information and carrying all of the risk for the school (DfE, 2018a). Participants spoke of experiencing a powerful range of emotions with nowhere to think about them, and shared feelings of not being held in mind or thought about. A lack of supervision or safe space to think about and reflect on practice can lead one to question one’s own competence and experience feelings of failure (Hulusi & Maggs, 2015). This will be discussed in depth in section 5.2.5.

Working with parents

Working with parents was another source of tension for the participants. Whilst empathetic to the challenges parents faced, and being committed to working together and supporting parents, they also felt that parents could be very demanding. There was a sense that parents would seek the support of the DSLs when they felt helpless and desperate, describing their children as ‘beyond my control’ and asking the participants ‘what am I going to do?” This desperation left the DSLs feeling powerless themselves.

The psychoanalytic concept of projection resonates with this finding. Bion (1963) believed that when one experiences discomfort, they seek to place these unpleasant feelings elsewhere to relieve their emotional pain (Waddell, 2002). These feelings are split off, expelled and ‘projected’ from the child into the parent or other person who may subsequently experience these feelings as if they were their own (Burgo, 2012). This is called projective identification. In this research, the parent’s anxiety and feelings of helplessness about their children could be seen to be projected into the

system and the DSLs are left holding these painful feelings as noted by the participants.

Another tension was with participants describing how they wanted to share what was happening in school with parents, whilst remaining very conscious of the potential negative impact this could have on relationships and functioning within the family. Prior research has identified the challenges in working with parents. School staff reported feeling proud of the strong relationships they had built with parents (Broadhurst et al., 2009; Ofsted, 2019), whilst also still struggling to engage with some other parents, often those who most needed support (Waddell & Jones, 2018).

5.2.4 A myriad of emotions

Powerful emotions evoked

This overarching theme represents the emotional experience of working with CYP associated with knife crime. In the present study, participants describe a wide range of emotions that were evoked in their work, from frustration to shock, sadness and anger. Participants spoke of frustration that they were not being listened to and supported. Lucy's narrative spoke powerfully to her experience of fighting a battle to be heard, 'banging on doors' yet feeling like no one is listening. A prominent theme was participants anticipating and seeing CYP at risk yet feeling unable to do anything, as services would only become involved at higher levels of need. This links to the theme of feeling powerless discussed previously.

Frustration was also experienced in trying to educate young people about the risks of knife carrying and feeling unable to move them from the entrenched view that

carrying a knife was necessary. An experience of shock also permeated across the participants. At times, there was surprise at the pupils involved with Peter questioning *'where has that come from?'* Consistent with previous literature on gangs and youth violence, it appeared that students' presentation in school could vastly differ to their lives outside of the classroom (Irwin-Rogers & Harding, 2018).

Sadness was a common emotional experience expressed by the participants, often in relation to the situation young people were in after an event involving a knife had taken place. Peter found it hard to articulate what might have been if the circumstances were different for the pupil, sharing *"that they'd be so… you know…".* Lucy spoke of the pain she experienced that they were unable to 'keep' a vulnerable pupil and appeared acutely aware of the potential impact this would have on the young girl. Peter also described his sadness at having 'lost' pupils who were excluded due to a knife crime incident. This language of loss expressed by the participants around 'keeping' and 'losing' pupils is pertinent. It suggests that the participants may feel they failed to keep the pupils safe and fulfil their role in protecting CYP. The awareness that these are their pupils and part of the school system, yet they could not protect them appears to be painful for the participants. Annie described the loss for all pupils in terms of their experience of being a typical teenager. She felt regret that the pupils and the school community had to be facing and dealing with these issues.

Feelings of anger were also shared by the participants, at the current levels of support for CYP. There was a feeling that these CYP are not being noticed or supported in the way that they should be. It was not clear who or which service they felt should be supporting these young people. The repetitive expression in the following account by

Lucy appears to be a way of helping her to process these painful and unresolved feelings.

"there is no need for it. No, no child should be slipping through the net. Not in this day and age, not in this day and age. No child" (Lucy)

Government legislation around safeguarding, Working Together to Safeguard Children, highlights how it is "everyone's responsibility" (HM Government, 2018b, p.10). Huffington, James, & Armstrong (2004) note how with models of distributed leadership, such as with the collective responsibility for safeguarding, there can be challenges including confusion over roles and boundaries. There was a sense participants seemed to want to locate the responsibility elsewhere. This may also have been a way to share out the overwhelming amount of responsibility they felt they were holding.

Empathy and concern for the pupils was also apparent across the narratives. For some this related to their vulnerability, with Sue likening her pupils to fruit, describing how they are *"ripe for the picking and they are easy to pick".* This metaphor leads one to wonder how much control Sue feels she has to prevent them being 'picked' and who will be doing the 'picking'. Research has found that knife crime increasingly involves younger CYP with school staff also noting that younger adolescents are becoming involved (Broadhurst et al., 2009; Waddell & Jones, 2018). The role of gangs in providing CYP with an identity and feelings of belonging is well documented (Centre for Social Justice, 2009; Khan, Brice, Saunders & Plumtree, 2013; Children's Commissioner, 2019). Geddes (2006) notes how in secondary schools, CYP can "turn

to the peer group as a substitute secure base for acceptance and affirmation" (p.36), leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and coercion from gangs. The awareness of this may for Sue further add to her perception of the vulnerability of the CYP.

There was a sense from several participants that if the situation were different that the lives of these young people would also be different, something which they found very distressing. The participants spoke about adolescence and the associated behaviour (such as risk taking and impulsivity) further raising their concerns for their safety. Broadhurst et al., (2009) described how school staff noted that young pupils do not always possess a good understanding of the consequences of their actions. The reason school staff felt these CYP were particularly enticed towards gang involvement was because they were 'desperate for identity and a sense of belonging'.

The tasks of adolescence are well documented and include the formation of identity and the separation from parents (Erikson, 1968; Bibby, 2010). Coren (1997) describes the tension between this period and schooling;

"the demand to be educated during adolescence confronts us with what appears to be a paradox: at a time in our life when we most want to forget, act impulsively, or avoid reflection, we most need to remember, comply and perform. We accept that adolescence is a period of rebelliousness, confusion and upheaval; yet at the same time expect our adolescents to engage in what we call "formal education" which makes demands on them that … are difficult to meet" (p.5)

However despite this tension, adolescents need rules and structure to help them feel safe and contained during this developmental stage. Bibby (2010) describes how secondary schools and their staff are well versed in managing adolescents and the DSLs appear to understand this although it raises their anxiety.

Emotional Impact

The emotional impact on the DSLs of the powerful experiences described was discussed by participants. Three of the participants were open about the considerable impact these experiences have on them and the overwhelming nature of their role working with CYP. Sue spoke of the 'exhaustion' of holding a lot of risk, describing the school as being on 'the frontline'. She described the challenge of having difficult conversations with pupils about worrying issues, and then being required to go straight into a classroom to teach a history lesson. Sue's use of language throughout her interview suggests a feeling of being at war in some way, she talks about the 'bombardment' of social media, the school on the frontline and her attempts to shield and protect her pupils from all these threats. This use of metaphor highlights the profound impact of this experience on Sue.

It appeared that as a way of coping with the overwhelming task and level of risk the participants were holding, they adopted defence mechanisms to enable them to function. Defence mechanisms are the unconscious systems we use to protect ourselves from anxiety or painful feelings (Eloquin, 2016). The DSLs spoke about leaving all their emotional 'baggage at the door' of the school and how easily they can 'switch off', although their accounts suggest this is not always the case. This

process of bracketing off their emotions appears to serve a helpful function to enable the participants to cope and function in their multiple roles.

The strong emotions that are evoked in school staff when working with these children and young people have been identified in previous literature. Waddell & Jones (2018) found that primary school staff were very worried about the risks facing their students and a feeling of not being able to change situations despite their best efforts. Staff have also shared particular concern over vulnerable pupils who cannot see the potential warning signs or when a situation is unsafe (Broadhurst et al., 2009).

The powerful emotions experienced by the DSLs can be understood in terms of projection. Psychodynamic theory states that the individual who receives projections can experience the feelings as if they are their own. The participants may be partly experiencing the pupil and families' painful feelings being projected into them and then coming to experience these feelings as if they are their own. Research has found that CYP often project intolerable and painful feelings into school staff (Emanuel, 1999; Jackson, 2002; McLouglin, 2010).

"One of the reasons that working with children experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties is so disturbing is that such intense and painful feelings are somehow pushed [or projected] into the staff (as well as other children). Sometimes it might feel as if it is difficult to know where the feelings are coming from, and the intensity of them might lead one to question one's own competence and professional worth" (Greenhalgh, 2002, p.53)

Mental health of CYP

The impact on the mental health and wellbeing of pupils associated with knife crime and the surrounding school community was discussed by the participants. This related to those who were directly involved and were part of a knife crime incident but also had no direct relation to an event but lived in the wider area and had fears regarding their safety. As discussed, ecosystemic theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) highlights the impact of events on the wider community and on individuals and their interactions across systems such as home and school.

The link between poor mental health and violence is well documented (Grimshaw & Ford, 2018; Sethi et al., 2010) with adverse childhood experiences and experiences of childhood trauma related to an increased likelihood of violent behaviour (De Zulueta, 2006). Coid et al., (2013) found that gang members experienced elevated levels of poor mental health, had experienced trauma and had accessed mental health services. Sethi et al., (2010) describes how;

"poor mental health can be associated with violent behaviour in both directions, both contributing to and resulting from violent behaviour" (, p.30).

5.2.5 The need for support

Importance of a team

The final overarching theme relates to the need for support. All five participants spoke to the importance of the wider team of staff members, consistent with previous literature which identified 'the emotional support' team members can provide (Waddell & Jones, 2018). There was a sense that the decisions that the DSLs are required to make are 'too much' for one person to manage, and that the participants

appreciated the opportunity to hear alternative perspectives. The teams with whom they worked, provided a containing function for the work and allowed any issues to be shared. Lucy spoke about the need for her staff to feel supported, so that they are not 'carrying things with them'. Like Lucy when speaking about the team, the participants appeared supportive to their colleagues and had a strong desire to protect them and ensure they are not burdened. This led the author to wonder who is there to support the DSLs, this could be a role for EPs to play.

Desire for more support

Whilst acknowledging the beneficial role of the team, three participants spoke of a desire for more support from other professionals and services to work directly with young people. Reflecting previous literature (Broadhurst et al., 2009), the DSLs appreciated the role that the police's Safer Schools Officers (SSOs) officers played. However, there was a prominent narrative around a lack of support from other professionals and services. An experience of abandonment (Bowlby, 1969) permeated the participants' accounts with Lucy sharing that the school is left to deal with the risk and manage the difficulty alone. Sue expressed a desire for more 'people that understand' suggesting she would like more people like her who do understand. Fiona states how there is:

"nobody to say…what can we do, how can we support you?"

Whilst in this quote Fiona is speaking as if directed to a child, one wonders if this mirrors Fiona's experiences of being supported in role and her own desire to be asked that question.

Through their narratives, the participants shared a desire to be held in mind (Winnicott, 1971) and thought about. These findings fit with existing research highlighting that staff members desire more support in working with pupils and feel abandoned due to high thresholds in other services such as CAMHS and social care (Waddell & Jones, 2018; Ofsted, 2019; Broadhurst et al., 2009). Ofsted (2019) found that school leaders felt they were often 'acting in isolation' in their efforts to safeguard CYP associated with knife crime. Existing research has repeatedly highlighted the vital nature of a multi-agency approach centred on positive information-sharing in successful violence prevention research and government guidance (Foster, 2013; O'Connor & Waddell, 2015; Sethi et al., 2010).

As discussed, the participants provided a containing space for their pupils, attending to their physical and emotional needs. In Bion's (1985) Container-Contained model, he highlights the need for those who act as the container, to themselves feel contained enough to support pupils. In this instance, school staff need to feel contained themselves in order to provide a containing space for others. Hulusi & Maggs (2015) described this relationship stating;

"where teachers do not feel adequately contained in their work, they will not be able to provide containment to their students, who therefore will not be able to engage effectively in learning" (p.35).

A space to think

The desire for a space to think about their work was another pertinent theme that was identified from the analysis. Some DSLs expressed a desire for supervision;

"What we don't have is supervision, that social workers get, that psychologists get, and I think at times we could really do with that" (Sue)

Sue drew parallels between her role and the role of a psychologist and a social worker, suggesting she saw a similarity in the work they do. There was a sense of 'why not me?' if everyone else gets supervision and a desire to be listened to and thought about. Despite its prominence in other professions, and the demanding nature of the work, historically, supervision is not a common feature in education (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Geddes, 2006). For Sue, supervision ideally would comprise of *"just someone to talk to….just for half an hour….just to talk through some of the cases".* Sue's repetitive use of the word 'just' suggests she is trying to play down this request to be held in mind and have her feelings thought about. DSLs in the research who had experienced a kind of supervision, spoke about how much they valued and appreciated the experience of being listened to and heard and given the space to reflect on a troubling experience.

Supervision is set out in statutory guidance. Working Together to Safeguard Children states that "practitioners should be given sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their child welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively" (HM Government, 2018b, p.56). This document applies to all professionals involved in safeguarding, including those in schools. Legislation specifically for safeguarding in schools is less clear, highlighting the need for DSLs to provide support and guidance for school staff, but with no specific recommendations for supervision of DSLs themselves.

Jackson (2008) and Hulusi and Maggs (2015) have highlighted the key role of reflective spaces, such as supervision and work discussion groups, in supporting staff to develop their competence. He describes how spaces which provide a containing function to school staff can enable them to feel heard and better able to understand and manage their experiences working with CYP, thus ensuring they carry out their role more effectively.

Containing spaces support teachers to maintain the ability to think when working in challenging environments and move forward in how to best support CYP (Youell, 2006). In these spaces, Eloquin (2016) describes how projective identification can be used to help staff understand their pupils. Furthermore, Jackson (2008) also highlights how supervision of individuals in attachment roles like the DSLs described, is key. In the present study, the participants all highly valued the role of the team in enabling thoughts to be shared and joint thinking as the role is 'too much' for one person to manage. This containing function the team provides could be extended in supervision and the DSLs provided with more space to reflect on their experiences.

5.3 Limitations of the research

This research explored the views of five DSLs in secondary schools in an Inner London Borough. Although rich data was gained from the DSLs' experiences in role, this cannot be assumed to be generalisable to the experiences of all secondary school designated safeguarding leads. The value of exploring experiences in detail has been emphasised by Smith et al., (2009), in order to gain a more detailed, meaningful understanding of a phenomenon. Due to the desire to explore the DSLs' experiences, a qualitative design with IPA was appropriate.

The methodological approach taken to accessing participants means that the DSLs all chose to take part and were approached directly. This may have implications about the group that put themselves forward, who may all share a greater willingness to talk about their experiences than others leading to a potential skewing effect. They may be a group who are more confident in their practice, believe there is an issue with knife crime or who have a desire to be heard. It could be that the DSLs who would not have put themselves forward, might have shared a different narrative.

As themes from the analysis emerged around race and culture, on reflection, gathering additional information about the participants may have allowed further knowledge to be gleaned, such as ethnicity, length in role and time in school. This may have been interesting to explore in order to place their experiences in context. Participants spoke about their level of experience and visual clues were available for some differences, however invisible differences were not known.

The researcher's style of interviewing developed as the interviews were conducted. It led the researcher to consider where questions may have been posed in earlier interviews in a way that had potential to lead participants. However, all the participants were experienced and competent professionals who appeared able to assert their perspective on the topic. The author also wondered about the balance of broad versus specific questions around different areas. The participants did at times meander to different topics and raise other areas such as Child Sexual Exploitation. It may be that had more specific questions been posed, it would have made a difference to what the participants chose to share.

Another potential limitation is that although the author asked the participants about their experiences of working with CYP associated with knife crime, a definition of knife crime was not provided. This means that there may have been differences in what participants chose to speak about relating to this. Participant will have had their own understanding of the term and what they believe constitutes knife crime and this will have an impact on what they chose to share. It may have been interesting to use a repertory grid technique (Kelly, 1963) or Free Association Narrative Interview (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008) to explore their constructs and associations to knife crime.

Finally, whilst interpreting the findings through a psychodynamic lens is something that the author feels is helpful, others may view it differently and therefore the researchers own positioning is acknowledged to have an influence on the study and how the findings were interpreted.

5.4 Implications for practice

Due to the small sample size and qualitative methodology chosen, the implications for practice in this research concern transferability (application to a similar context) rather than generalisability (application beyond the research context) (Robson, 2011). The implications will be discussed in relation to the three different levels at which EPs work.

5.4.1 Individual Level

A holistic view of the CYP

Through their training, EPs have a knowledge and awareness of different contexts and how they impact on individuals (Health and Care Professions Council [HCPC], 2012; DECP, 2002). The findings of the study have identified that in this LA vulnerable CYP carry knives for protection and beyond the gang dynamic. In terms of understanding CYP's fear of crime which was raised in the research, EPs can share their psychological understanding and knowledge. The lens and learning that EPs could bring to their work with DSLs and school staff around understanding a CYP's context and situation and problem solving with staff is beneficial. The EP role champions young people's voices and considers the context and range of strengths and needs a young person has, contributing to a holistic understanding.

This research has highlighted the difficulties inherent in exclusion and zero-tolerance policies in schools. EPs have a key role in their work with schools to support vulnerable children at risk of exclusion. With the emphasis placed on early intervention as highlighted in the Timpson (2019) Review on Exclusions, EPs are well placed to provide early support to children identified as at risk in their schools.

5.4.2 Group Level

Supporting Designated Safeguarding Leads

The present study explored the experiences of DSLs in secondary schools working with CYP associated with knife crime from a unique psychological perspective. Previous work is built upon and highlights the key need to support DSLs in their role (Ellis, 2017). Ellis (2017) explored the experiences of DSLs in secondary schools working with CYP at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation. In line with this research, a

need was identified from the findings for supervision and protected time for DSLs. This has implications for how EPs can best support DSLs and indirectly support individual children and young people, their families and the wider system. As evidenced in professional competencies, EPs have skills in relationships, psychological understanding and are sensitive to the needs of staff, pupils, families and schools (HCPC, 2012; DECP, 2002).

Building on previous research, the findings have highlighted the importance of supportive and trusting teacher-pupil relationships and providing a containing role for pupils (Riley, 2011; Solomon & Thomas, 2013). As discussed, these relationships can come with powerful projections from vulnerable CYP. EPs are well placed to offer DSLs support to understand and manage these projections. This study has highlighted the emotional experience for the DSLs in their work supporting and managing CYP associated with knife crime. They are holding a range of strong emotions and feelings and there does not appear anywhere they feel supported to express this or experience containment themselves.

Supervision

At an individual level, DSLs would appear to benefit from supervision and a space to think about their work and process the myriad of emotions experienced. This could take the form of individual or group spaces. Jackson (2008) highlighted how regular supervision, and an opportunity to reflect on their work, helps teachers to understand CYP better and improves their ability and capacity to engage in their work supporting vulnerable children. Having a safe space for reflection would give the DSLs the opportunity to think about their work and provide them with the containment and

space to feel heard that they desire. Supervision could help increase their understanding of the CYP associated with knife crime and support them to be more able to safeguard children effectively.

In terms of their role as part of the wider school system, the DSLs will benefit from support to help them deal with the challenging environment they face, the level of responsibility they hold and the dichotomy of choices about safety present in their role. The impact of the economic climate could also be considered, supporting them to reflect on what they can do within the socio-economic constraints. With the skills and training they receive, EPs are in a good position to supervise DSLs or to support a staff member to facilitate a safe space for DSLs (Fallon, Woods & Rooney, 2010). Depending on capacity, these spaces could be regular supervision, consultation or work discussion groups (as described by Jackson, 2002; Hulusi & Maggs, 2015). Supervision models used by EPs include the Tavistock Relational Model (Kennedy, Keaney, Shaldon & Canagaratnam, 2018) and Hawkins & Shohet's (2007) Process Model amongst many others.

Training

The findings of the study have identified several areas where the DSLs may benefit from further training and EPs are well placed to deliver this. This could be provided for DSLs across the LA following a needs analysis highlighting gaps in knowledge. Key areas that could be covered include training on the role of risk and risk management and how the DSLs can manage feelings around carrying the risk. Linked to this, training could support staff to develop their awareness and knowledge of the needs of pupils and help them to manage making difficult decisions.

Furthermore, EPs could share their psychological knowledge of psychodynamic concepts such as containment and projection with DSLs to support them to understand their experiences in their work with these CYP and what their behaviour may be communicating. It would be hoped that this increased knowledge and understanding of the CYP, will help the DSLs to foster trusting and supportive relationships with pupils which were viewed by the participants as key.

5.4.3 Systems Level

Working with teams and systems

At a wider local authority level, this study can help inform practice in how to best support DSLs and enable effective team working. The finding that DSLs do not feel supported and can feel left out of decisions and poorly informed is pertinent. EPs' understanding of systems and how groups function can help school staff to understand situations and where there may be anxiety or defences at play and support the school to effect change. Eloquin (2016) highlighted that EPs possess the skills and understanding of psychodynamic theory to recognise anxiety and defences at play and support these to be better understood. He also noted how EPs consultation skills can be used to support head teachers and senior leadership in these instances.

Policies around exclusion were frequently raised by participants in this study and in previous research as a tension. EPs can use their expert knowledge and skills to support head teachers in thinking about these policies and the best course of action. This may involve a more graduated response with clear boundaries in place, whereby the system and community can be reassured, and anxiety can be reduced. This could

also involve advising head teachers, helping them to consider the next steps and how best to contain the members in their communities after a critical incident has taken place. EPs can use organisational change models such as quality circles and soft-systems methodology (Checkland & Scholes, 1990) to support schools with these issues.

The training that is provided by school staff about knife crime was felt by participants to not be relatable. Considering the findings, there may be ways that the training can be delivered to make it more effective. This could involve moving from traditional school assemblies and towards using modern social media platforms. Participants spoke of a fear of not wanting to glamorise knife crime and therefore, it may not always be spoken about. EPs could also use their psychological knowledge surrounding motivation to change to help make the training more effective in deterring pupils from carrying knives.

The recent government consultation (Home Office, 2019) proposes a legal duty for schools in reporting those pupils deemed at risk. Fiona stated that:

"..they can talk all they like about schools are responsible for educating the children on this, that and the other but if the support system isn't there for that to happen how is that ever going to improve and change.."

EPs are well positioned to provide a supportive role to systems around staff and pupils involved in knife crime. This research has identified the high level of pressure

and responsibility staff experience and questions the appropriateness of placing them under further pressure.

EPs can also influence strategy due to their position and expertise. The findings of the research will be fed back to the Knife Crime Lead in the local authority and these can be supported to influence how best to support schools, staff members and DSLs, parents and young people. EPs are also well placed to be part of strategic multi-agency safeguarding panels and boards, sharing their psychological knowledge to influence practice. When Critical Incidents take place, EPs support and advise schools on the best way to manage the situation and support the school community.

Community Psychology Approaches

Furthermore, this research highlights a potential role for EPs working systemically with the community. Community Psychology is interested in understanding individuals within their context and works with people within their wider environment (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). It sets psychological needs in a social context and there is a focus on preventative programmes. MacKay (2006) states how EPs are well positioned to work successfully in community contexts. They have a key role working with both parents and school and could be a facilitator in improving relationships and bringing them together. This could involve strengthening community relationships, working not only in schools, exploring CYP's contexts and providing early intervention support to those in need, such as those at risk of exclusion.

The recent introduction of a ‘public health approach’ to knife crime aims to reduce of risks factors and increase protective factors for individuals at risk of becoming involved (Bellis, Hughes, Perkins & Bennett, 2012). These approaches involve early intervention and working with all the systems around CYP (as described by Bronfenbrenner, 1979) to support them, where EPs could play a key role.

5.5 Future research

It is apparent from the literature review conducted that there is a distinct absence of voices of Designated Safeguarding Leads in existing research. The DSLs spoke of the challenges they face working with issues such as Child Criminal Exploitation, which would be an interesting avenue to explore.

There is need for a greater number of studies exploring the issue of young people associated with knife crime. Considering the findings of this research, it would be important to gain the views of young people themselves, particularly in relation to their experiences of school. Pertinent themes such as the relationship with staff members, issues around exclusions and view of the role of the school would be interesting to explore. Further exploration of other members of the school system and their experiences of working with children and young people associated with knife could also be a direction for future research. This could include staff with a range of different responsibilities such as head teachers, teaching assistants and those who have a therapeutic role with young people. Exploring how they manage CYP on the edge of disclosure and the perceived tensions in their role would be of interest. A case study approach could be one way of providing in-depth insight into issues permeating

across teams and services and exploring how best to support a CYP associated with knife crime.

The role of young women who appear to be under-represented in the research on knife crime may also be of interest to explore. In the present study, participants rarely spoke about female pupils associated with knife crime. MOPAC (2017) noted the involvement of girls in knife crime and the negative impact it can have on them in the context of domestic abuse and violence in relationships. Broadhurst et al. (2009) identified that girl gang members are exploited but appear to have gone unnoticed. Furthermore, the potential stereotyping that can occur as was highlighted in this study may also be an interesting avenue to explore in future research

5.6 Dissemination

The research findings will be fed back to the contact in the LA who is leading the knife crime strategy, allowing the DSLs voices to be heard. It will contribute to the team's continuing professional development in the EPS where the research took place and presented to EPs to inform their practice and work with CYP, families and schools. The research will also be presented to staff and fellow TEPs on the training course in July 2019. Furthermore, this research will be considered as to publication to illuminate the previously unheard voices of the DSLs.

5.7 Reflections

Reflections on the experience of undertaking this research study will now be discussed.

5.7.1 Introduction

This whole process has been a challenging but rewarding experience. My own experiences growing up in Inner London and being part of a wider school community where violent incidents took place and my work in a forensic psychiatry research department prior to becoming a TEP sparked my interest in this area. In my role as a TEP in this LA speaking to young people, families and staff members about their experiences, I became more aware of the potential impact of knife crime and levels of fear around it. I was curious about the impact on school staff who were responsible for safeguarding this issue. I remained mindful of my experience as a middle-class, white female and the lens that I am viewing this issue through.

Throughout the research process (2018-2019) there has been an increasing amount of knife crime which generated increasing media and political attention. I was aware of the potentially loaded nature of the term ‘knife crime’ but also keen to find an accurate way to describe the phenomenon under discussion that would resonate with the participants. I noted in events in the LA, action plans and government guidance, the term knife crime is used.

5.7.2 Literature Review

I was surprised at first when no research was identified exploring designated safeguarding leads, considering the prominence and importance of their role in schools. Throughout my literature searches, the majority of research into knife crime

came from a medical or criminal perspective and research into safeguarding mainly from a social work perspective. Little research was found that explored educational experiences relating to knife crime, those that did were mostly from the perspective of CYP themselves, so it seemed clear that research was needed to ensure DSLs voices were heard.

5.7.3 Methodology

Participants were recruited after being approached directly by the researcher rather than contacting school leaders, although part of the process involving the participants had the permission of senior leaders in their school and that they were aware. This may have resulted in a potential skewing in the participants that put themselves forwards to be part of the research, these may have been those who were more or less interested in the topic. I also noted that there was a reluctance from some schools to admit their association with knife crime. I wondered if this was related to a possible impact on their reputation. Annie repeatedly spoke about the limited experience her school had her with knife crime compared to other schools in the borough. This was a view shared by Fiona.

I really enjoyed the interview process. I was conscious about the potential sensitive nature of the topic and wanted to ensure that I gained the voice of the participants. I was mindful of my role in the local authority and the participants view of that. I also felt that in some interviews, the participant would slightly veer off-topic unrelated to my research and initially I felt unsure how much I should bring them back to the research focus. Afterwards, I wondered after about my role in the Local Authority and whether this had influenced what the participants chose to share. I was mindful of

any potential power imbalances and the impact it may have on the participants' narratives they shared and sought to minimise these.

5.7.4 Analysis

The experience of analysis allowed me to really immerse myself in the participant transcripts and try to understand how DSLs make sense of their experiences. I attempted to approach the analysis with an open mind and bracket off any prior assumptions at the start by writing them down. During the initial stages, I was overwhelmed with the amount of detail I had gained from breaking down the data and I struggled to see how I could reduce the volume and capture the essence of the piece into a smaller number of themes. I went back through my coding several times and at points, additional codes were added. However, it is worth noting that these additions resulted in no changes being made to the emergent themes increasing my trust in the process.

A tension emerged as I was analysing my data about how well the participants' responses answered the research question which was interested in their experiences. I noted that the participants often describe the context in which they were working. Although this didn't answer the question, I felt it was important to stay true to their experiences and felt it was important to capture the information they chose to share when asked about their experiences. Whilst this is reflected in the themes, I do not feel this is a weakness as it follows the idiographic commitment of IPA.

Throughout this process, I sought supervision to validate my analysis and checkout my interpretation. Discussions with peers helped me to make sense of my data and identify overarching themes that I felt captured the data.

5.7.5 Findings

I enjoyed the process of organising the findings and clarifying themes yet at times it felt that some of the nuance had been lost from the detailed analysis I had done. I tried hard to ensure that these ideas were incorporated across the piece and that I stayed true to the commitment to the individual as one of the core tenets of IPA. Three of the participants felt more able to talk about their experiences freely, whereas the other two appeared more comfortable talking about them from the perspective of the wider school. I wanted to ensure that all their views and voices were heard throughout my findings.

5.7.6 Summary

This experience has been a really valuable learning opportunity to hear and seek to understand the safeguarding leads experiences of their role working with CYP associated with knife crime, in particular the multitude of challenges they face and the powerful emotional experience. In my practice, I feel I have a greater understanding and appreciation of the experiences of school staff in their work with this vulnerable group of CYP.

6 CONCLUSION

This research sought to explore the lived experience of Designated Safeguarding Leads working with children and young people associated with knife crime. Knife crime is an increasing and worrying concern across the UK, with a rise in the number of children and young people affected. There are few published studies exploring the role of the DSL in schools, particularly in regard to their work with CYP associated with knife crime.

This research adds to the limited existing literature exploring the experiences of school staff working with children and young people associated with knife crime. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was chosen as a methodological approach because of its commitment to understanding the individual's lived experience. Five participants were interviewed using semi-structured interviews and five themes emerged from the analysis.

Themes identified across the participants' experiences of the socio-economic factors involved in knife crime, the role of the school as protector, tensions in their role, the myriad of powerful emotions they experienced and the subsequent need for support in their role.

Socio-economic factors including the impact of social media, austerity, race and culture and the normalisation of knife crime impacted heavily on the DSLs' experiences working with CYP associated with knife crime and also on the CYP, their families and the school. Participants felt that several of these factors were unknown and outside of their control.

The school's role as protector was crucial for the participants, with a nurturing, advocating role adopted by the DSLs providing a 'secure base' for the CYP. The transmission of knowledge to and from pupils and staff was also viewed as

central to their work. Relationships with pupils and parents was a key priority for the DSLs and the importance of trust in these relationships highlighted. DSLs reported that the young people they worked with did not feel safe outside of school, leading them to carry a knife for protection, a view that the DSLs felt they could not change.

There were several tensions in the role experienced by the DSLs in their work. These related to complex decisions surrounding exclusions and how to manage knife crime incidents, feelings of being powerless, ruminative thinking and the challenges inherent in working with parents. A range of powerful emotions including frustration, shock, sadness, anger and concern were evoked when carrying out the role. The DSLs spoke to the impact of these experiences both personally and on their pupils. A strong desire for support was conveyed by the DSLs. They valued having a team to support them with decision making but sought further support from services and some spoke of a desire for a space to think and understand their experiences, such as a supervisory space.

This research has explored the experienced of Designated Safeguarding Leads in their work with children and young people associated with knife crime. It has gained an understanding of the multi-faceted emotional experience of DSLs working with these vulnerable children. The research has highlighted the need to support Designated Safeguarding Leads in their work and provide them with a space where they can be held in mind and thought about. Implications for the practice of EPs include how best to support safeguarding leads through supervision, training, working with systems and in communities using their psychological knowledge and skills and holistic perspective of a CYP's needs in context. This research has identified that EPs are well positioned to support DSLs in school to fulfil their role in supporting and protecting CYP associated with knife crime.

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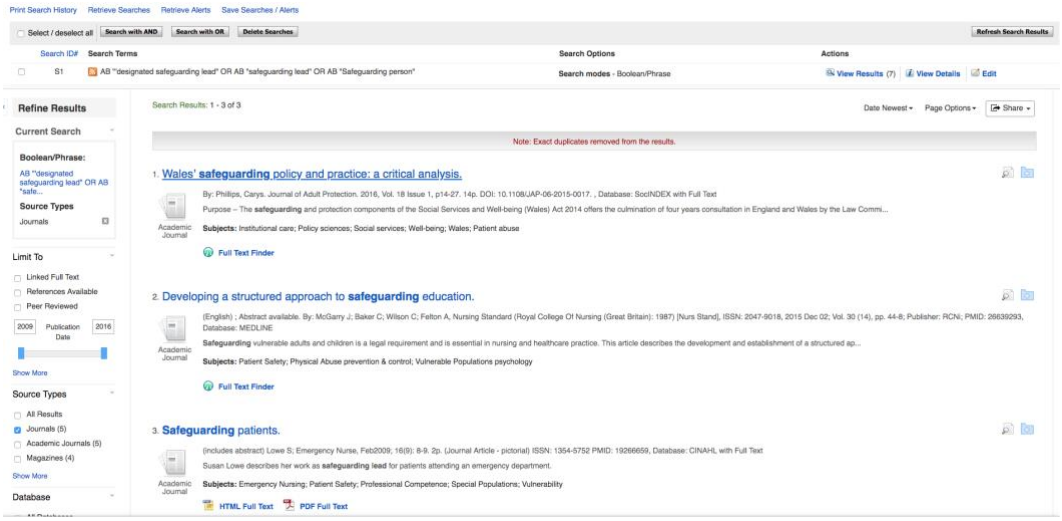
Appendices

Appendix A: Initial Scoping search

Initial scoping search for term “designated safeguarding lead”’ or “safeguarding lead” or “safeguarding person”



Appendix B: Search terms

Searching EBSCO Discovery: SocINDEX with Full Text, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, PsycBOOKS, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, PEP Archive, Education Source, ERIC, MEDLINE, CINAHL Plus with Full Text, Health Business Elite, eBook Collection (EBSCOhost), Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts, CINAHL with Full Text

School staff	**Knife Crime**	**UK**
Safeguarding “designated safeguarding lead" "school staff" "Designated safeguarding leads" “safeguarding lead” Teacher* "Senior leadership" school education	"knife crime" "youth violence" gang	"United Kingdom" Britain UK England Wales Scotland Northern Ireland

Appendix C: Excluded studies and reasons why

N=56

Study Title	Reason for exclusion
Alleyne, E., & Wood, J. L. (2010). Gang involvement: psychological and behavioral characteristics of gang members, peripheral youth, and nongang Youth. *Aggressive Behavior, 36*(6), 423-436.	Did not gain the views of school staff
Alleyne, E., & Wood, J. L. (2014). Gang involvement: Social and environmental factors. *Crime & Delinquency, 60*(4), 547-568.	Did not gain the views of school staff
Aston, E. V. (2015). Are risk factors for drug use and offending similar during the teenage years? *The International Journal On Drug Policy, 26*(4), 396-403.	Staff views on knife crime not the main focus of the study
Atienzo, E. E., Baxter, S. K., & Kaltenthaler, E. (2017). Interventions to prevent youth violence in Latin America: a systematic review. *International Journal Of Public Health, 62*(1), 15-29.	Not based in the UK
Bonell, C., Hinds, K., Dickson, K., Thomas, J., Fletcher, A., Murphy, S., Campbell, R. (2016). What is positive youth development and how might it reduce substance use and violence? A systematic review and synthesis of theoretical literature. *BMC Public Health, 16*, 135-135.	Did not gain the views of school staff
Briggs, D. (2010). 'True stories from bare times on road': Developing empowerment, identity and social capital among urban minority ethnic young people in London, UK. *Ethnic & Racial Studies, 33*(5), 851-871.	Did not gain the views of school staff
Brown, J. M. (2010). Designing research using facet theory. In J. M. Brown & E. A. Campbell (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of forensic psychology*. (pp. 795-802). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.	Staff views on knife crime not the main focus of the study
Craig, L. A. (2006). Review of Multisystemic therapy and neighbourhood partnerships: Reducing adolescent violence and substance abuse. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 12*(1), 74-75.	Staff views on knife crime not the main focus of the study
Davies, A., & Strange, J.-M. (2010). Where Angels Fear to Tread: Academics, Public Engagement and Popular History. *Journal of Victorian Culture, 15*(2), 268-279.	Knife crime not the topic of research
De Vos, E., Spivak, H., Hatmaker-Flanigan, E., & Sege, R. D. (2006). A Delphi approach to reach consensus on primary care guidelines regarding youth violence prevention. *Pediatrics, 118*(4)	Research not based in the UK
Densley, J. A., Adler, J. R., Zhu, L., & Lambine, M. (2017). Growing against gangs and violence: Findings from a process and outcome evaluation. *Psychology of Violence, 7*(2), 242-252.	Did not gain the views of school staff
Diamond, J. (2012). Creating a 'third position' to explore oedipal dynamics in the task and organization of a therapeutic school. In A. Briggs (Ed.), *Waiting to be found: Papers on children in care.* (pp. 191-209). London: Karnac Books.	Staff views on knife crime not the main focus of the study
DuPont-Reyes, M. J., Fry, D., Rickert, V. I., Bell, D. L., Palmetto, N., & Davidson, L. L. (2014). Relationship Violence, Fear, and Exposure to Youth Violence Among Adolescents in New York City. *Journal Of Interpersonal Violence, 29*(12), 2325-2350.	Not based in the UK
Elgar, F. J., McKinnon, B., Walsh, S. D., Freeman, J., D Donnelly, P., de Matos, M. G., . . . Currie, C. (2015). Structural Determinants of Youth Bullying and Fighting in 79 Countries. *The Journal Of Adolescent Health: Official Publication Of The Society For Adolescent Medicine, 57*(6), 643-650.	Knife crime not the topic of research
England, R., & Jackson, R. (2013). A nurse clinician's approach to knife crime prevention. *British Journal of Nursing, 22*(13), 774-778.	Research does not gain the views of school staff

Fletcher, A., & Bonell, C. (2013). Social network influences on smoking, drinking and drug use in secondary school: centrifugal and centripetal forces. *Sociology Of Health & Illness, 35*(5), 699-715.	Knife crime not the topic of paper
Fulu, E., Jewkes, R., Roselli, T., & Garcia-Moreno, C. (2013). Prevalence of and factors associated with male perpetration of intimate partner violence: findings from the UN Multi-country Cross-sectional Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific. *The Lancet. Global Health, 1*(4), e187-e207.	Not based in the UK
Gooderson, P. (2013). 'Noisy and Dangerous Boys': The Slogging Gang Phenomenon in Late Nineteenth-Century Birmingham. *Midland History, 38*(1), 58-79.	Did not gain the views of school staff/
Gómez-Restrepo, C., Padilla M, A., Rodríguez, V., Guzmán, J., Mejía, G., Avella-García, C. B., & Edery, E. G. (2010). Influencia de la violencia en el medio escolar y en sus docentes: Estudio en una localidad de Bogotá, Colombia = Influence of violence on teachers and the school: A study in a locality of Bogotá, Colombia. *Revista Colombiana de Psiquiatría, 39*(1).	Not based in the UK
Hayward, K., & Ilan, J. (2011). Deviant subcultures. In C. D. Bryant (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of deviant behavior.* (pp. 233-239). New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.	Staff views on knife crime not the main focus of the study
Howe, C. (2010). *Peer groups and children's development*: Wiley-Blackwell.	Knife crime not the topic of research
James, D. R., Sargant, N. N., Bostock, N., & Khadr, S. (2017). New challenges in adolescent safeguarding. *Postgraduate Medical Journal, 93*(1096), 96-102.	Did not gain the views of school staff
Jarillo, B., Magaloni, B., Franco, E., & Robles, G. (2016). How the Mexican drug war affects kids and schools? Evidence on effects and mechanisms. *International Journal of Educational Development, 51*, 135-146	Not based in the UK
Johnstone, L. (2017). Youth psychopathy: A developmental perspective. In S. Bailey, P. Chitsabesan, & P. Tarbuck (Eds.), *Forensic child and adolescent mental health: Meeting the needs of young offenders.* (pp. 217-237). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.	Knife crime not the topic of research
Jolliffe, D., & Farrington, D. P. (2009). A systematic review of the relationship between childhood impulsiveness and later violence. In M. McMurran & R. Howard (Eds.), *Personality, personality disorder and violence: An evidence based approach.* (pp. 41-61): Wiley-Blackwell.	Did not gain the views of school staff
Keenan, M. (2004). Autism in Northern Ireland: The tragedy and the shame. *The Psychologist, 17*(2), 72-75.	Staff views on knife crime not the main focus of the study
Knox, L. M., & Spivak, H. (2005). What Health Professionals Should Know: Core Competencies for Effective Practice in Youth Violence Prevention. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 29*(5,Suppl2), 191-199.	Not based in the UK
le May, A. (2013). Editorial. *Journal of Research in Nursing, 18*(4), 189-190.	Did not gain the views of school staff
Lepkowska, D. (2017). Protecting students who become involved in gangs. *British Journal of School Nursing, 12*(7), 322-323.	Did not gain the views of school staff
Levi, M. (2007). Review of Fraud; Organised crime; and Confessions of a dying thief: Understanding criminal careers and illegal enterprise. *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice, 46*(4), 445-449.	Research not on knife crime
Lyall, M. (2012). Review of Forensic mental health assessments in death penalty cases. *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology, 23*(5-6), 746-747.	Not based in the UK
Lösel, F., & Farrington, D. P. (2012). Direct protective and buffering protective factors in the development of youth	Research not based in the UK.

violence. *American Journal Of Preventive Medicine, 43*(2 Suppl 1), S8-S23.	
Macleod, F. (2008). Review of Nurturing future generations, promoting resilience in children and adolescents through social, emotional and cognitive skills. *Developmental Neurorehabilitation, 11*(3), 242-243.	Knife crime not the focus of paper
Madsen, T. E., Riese, A., Choo, E. K., & Ranney, M. L. (2014). Effects of a web-based educational module on pediatric emergency medicine physicians' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding youth violence. *The Western Journal Of Emergency Medicine, 15*(5), 615-622.	Did not gain the views of school staff
McAra, L., & McVie, S. (2016). Understanding youth violence: The mediating effects of gender, poverty and vulnerability. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 45*, 71-77.	Staff views on knife crime not that main focus of the study
Miller, S., Moore, M.-S., & Sternberg, J. (2007). Clinical commentary. *Journal of Child Psychotherapy, 33*(2), 239-255.	Staff views on knife crime not the main focus of the study
Morgan, R. (2009). Review of Reluctant gangsters: The changing face of youth crime. *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice, 48*(5), 542-543.	Did not gain the views of school staff
Nagin, D. S., Barker, T., Lacourse, E., & Tremblay, R. E. (2008). The interrelationship of temporally distinct risk markers and the transition from childhood physical aggression to adolescent violent delinquency. In P. Cohen (Ed.), *Applied data analytic techniques for turning points research.* (pp. 17-36). New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.	Did not gain the views of school staff
Neville, F. G., Goodall, C. A., Gavine, A. J., Williams, D. J., & Donnelly, P. D. (2015). Public health, youth violence, and perpetrator well-being. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, 21*(3), 322-333.	Did not gain the views of school staff
News. (2019). *British Journal of School Nursing, 14*(3), 110-114.	Did not gain the views of school staff
Parker, M., & Wills, G. (2009). Improving the knowledge exchange landscape in the Cape Flats, a developing community in South Africa. *South African Journal of Information Management, 11*(3), 1-11.	Not based in the UK
Parkes, J. (2014). Countering violence: The role of the school. In C. M. Parkes (Ed.), *Responses to terrorism: Can psychosocial approaches break the cycle of violence?* (pp. 135-143). New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.	Staff views on knife crime not the main focus of the study
Parkes, J., & Conolly, A. (2013). Dangerous encounters? Boys' peer dynamics and neighbourhood risk. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 34*(1), 94-106.	Staff views on knife crime not the main focus of the study
Pickering, J., Kintrea, K., & Bannister, J. (2012). Invisible Walls and Visible Youth: Territoriality among Young People in British Cities. *Urban Studies (Sage Publications, Ltd.), 49*(5), 945-960.	Did not gain the views of school staff
Raby, C., & Jones, F. (2016). Identifying risks for male street gang affiliation: A systematic review and narrative synthesis. *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology, 27*(5), 601-644.	Did not gain the views of school staff
Reid, R. J., Garcia-Reid, P., Klein, E., & McDougall, A. (2008). Violence-related behaviors among Dominican adolescents: examining the influence of alcohol and marijuana use. *Journal of Ethnicity in Substance Abuse, 7*(4), 404-427.	Not based in UK
Research outlines effective steps to stop gang culture infiltrating schools. (2016). *British Journal of School Nursing, 11*(5), 216-216.	Did not gain the views of school staff
Salaam, A. O. (2011). Yandaba on the streets of Kano: Social conditions and criminality. *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies, 6*(1), 68-77.	Not based in the UK

Sege, R. D. (2004). The Multisite Violence Prevention Project: A Commentary from Academic Research. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 26*(Suppl1), 78-79.	Not based in the UK
Shuval, K., Massey, Z., Caughy, M. O., Cavanaugh, B., Pillsbury, C. A., & Groce, N. (2012). 'I live by shooting hill'—A qualitative exploration of conflict and violence among urban youth in New Haven, Connecticut. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved, 23*(1), 132-143.	Not based in the UK
Smith, P. K. (2006). School violence dissected: An Israeli view. *Human Development, 49*(4), 248-252.	Not based in the UK
Swain, S. (2018). Grime music and dark leisure: exploring grime, morality and synoptic control. *Annals of Leisure Research, 21*(4), 480-492.	Did not gain the views of school staff
Thomas, L. K. (2012). Review of Transcending the legacies of slavery: A psychoanalytic view. *British Journal of Psychotherapy, 28*(3), 390-392	Did not gain the views of school staff
Twemlow, S. W., Fonagy, P., & Sacco, F. C. (2004). The Role of the Bystander in the Social Architecture of Bullying and Violence in Schools and Communities. In J. Devine, J. Gilligan, K. A. Miczek, R. Shaikh, & D. Pfaff (Eds.), *Youth violence: Scientific approaches to prevention.* (Vol. 1036, pp. 215-232). New York, NY: New York Academy of Sciences.	Not based in the UK
Vasquez, E. A., Osman, S., & Wood, J. L. (2012). Rumination and the Displacement of Aggression in United Kingdom Gang-Affiliated Youth. *Aggressive Behavior, 38*(1), 89-97.	Did not gain the views of school staff
Wood, J. L., Alleyne, E., & Beresford, H. (2016). Deterring gangs: Criminal justice approaches and psychological perspectives. In B. H. Bornstein & M. K. Miller (Eds.), *Advances in psychology and law.* (Vol. 2, pp. 305-336). Cham: Springer International Publishing.	Staff views on knife crime not the main focus of the study

Appendix D: Included studies

Five studies identified for inclusion in the research:

- Challenging the orthodoxy on pupil gang involvement: When two social fields collide (Irwin-Rogers & Harding, 2018)
- Safeguarding children and young people in education from knife crime, Lessons from London (Ofsted, 2019).
- Safer schools keeping gang culture outside the school gates (Irwin-Rogers, 2016).
- Intervening Early to Prevent Gang and Youth Violence: The role of primary Schools (Waddell & Jones, 2018).
- Gangs and Schools: A report for the NASUWT (Broadhurst, Duffin & Taylor, 2009).

Appendix E: Study Characteristics of Included Studies

Reference	Aim/s	Design	Participants	Type of school	Analysis
Irwin-Rogers, K., & Harding, S. (2018). Challenging the orthodoxy on pupil gang involvement: When two social fields collide. *British Educational Research Journal*, 44(3), 463-479. **Irwin-Rogers, K. (2016). *Safer Schools: Keeping gang culture outside the school gates.* London: Catch 22**	To explore the experiences and views of pupils and members of staff in relation to how gang involvement affects pupils attitudes and behaviours	Case study design	-14 male and 11 female staff - Role not described - Staff also spoke about previous work in mainstream and PRUs	Five alternative provisions across three major cities in UK varied in size 25-50 pupils Mixed schools with more boys than girls	Layder (1998) adaptive theory [Irwin-Rogers & Harding, 2018]
Broadhurst, K., Duffin, M., & Taylor, E. (2009). Gangs and Schools: A report for the NASUWT. London: NASUWT.	Review and summarize previous work on gangs, street culture and their potential impact on schools;	Case-study speaking to pupils and school staff. Semi-structured interviews with	Each case study differed. 8,10,9,9 Range of staff (Not DSLs)	4 schools all in urban areas.	Content analysis – organised into themes

		staff, focus groups with CYP			
Ofsted (2019). Safeguarding children and young people in education from knife crime, Lessons from London. London: Ofsted	Seeks to identify ways in which policy makers and school leaders in London can support practice in schools more effectively.	Survey Interviews with school staff and focus groups with parents and pupils	107 survey responses From these responses 29 schools chosen. School leaders (head teachers, principles and designated safeguarding leads).	Survey all secondary settings in London including PRUs 29 schools interviews: 6 PRUs, 6 FE colleges, 17 secondary school 4 focus groups with 12 CYP per group, Focus group with 4 parents of knife crime CYP	Thematic analysis
Waddell, S., & Jones, M. (2018). Intervening Early to Prevent Gang and Youth Violence: The role of primary Schools. London: Early Intervention Foundation.	To explore what currently happens at primary school level to identify and manage risk around gang and youth violence.	Qualitative 28 in-depth interviews (face to face or via telephone) Pre-arranged topic guides.	School staff across 6 school and stakeholders across two boroughs.	Primary school staff including head teacher, deputy head teachers, class teacher, teaching assistant, safeguarding lead, learning mentors and SENCos	Framework method of analysis Analysis can be done thematic or individually.

Appendix F: Critique of papers based on Walsh & Downe (2006)

TABLE 6 IRWIN-ROGERS & HARDING (2018) [I-R &H) & IRWIN-ROGERS (2016)[I-R]

Stages	Essential criteria	Critique
Scope & purpose	Clear statement of rationale for research questions/aims/purposes	Clear statement of aims of the research and the desire to use a lens to highlight theories.
	Study contextualised thoroughly by existing literature	Study placed in context and the links between research and existing knowledge demonstrated. No discussion of a systematic approach to lit review.
Design	Method/design apparent and consistent with research intent	Robust rationale provided of using qualitative design. No discussion of epistemological or ontological positioning Explained why qual. is most appropriate. Setting is appropriate.
	Data collection strategy apparent and appropriate	Data collection strategy seems appropriate to gain individual voice with pupils and staff however how the authors went about this is unclear and who the interviewers were is not stated. No description of structure of interviews or topics/questions covered. Hard to judge without seeing this whether they were capturing the complexity/diversity of experience and illuminate context. Does not state how data was collected
Sampling strategy	Sample and sampling method appropriate	Convenience and snowball sampling used but not discussed in depth or how sample were recruited. No justification for strategy Brief description of sampling method
Analysis	Analytic approach appropriate	Approach made explicit but not discussed in depth (I-R & H), not stated at all in I-R Data managed using software programme. No description of how data was interpreted. Little detail in approach to analysis.
Interpretation	Context described and taken account in interpretation	No description of data collection or how it was recorded or collected, who transcribed it etc.
	Clear audit trail given	No discussion of research process.
	Data used to support interpretation	Some verbatim quotes provided to illustrate points which were helpful. Good discussion of how interpretation led to conclusions.
Reflexivity	Researcher reflexivity demonstrated	No discussion of relationship between researcher and participants. Not made clear who researcher was. Discusses potential issues with the lens adopted demonstrating some insight.
Ethical dimensions	Demonstration to sensitivity to ethical concerns	No discussion of ethics at all or approval granted from ethical committee.

		No explicit discussion but appear to have granted integrity, honesty, transparency with participants. No discussion of consent or anonymity or how to ensure wellbeing of gang-members/staff.
Relevance and transferability	Relevance and transferability evident	Acknowledge lack of generalizability due to small sample- limitation discussed. Linked to existing theory and similar studies and literature. Discussion of how emergent theory fits with other data. Results well supported by evidence – often triangulated across pupil & staff Interpretation is plausible and makes sense. New insights Discusses potential link to policy Provides a new way of thinking about the topic. No discussions on future directions. Aims were achieved.

TABLE 7 BROADHURST ET AL. 2009

Stages	Essential criteria	Critique
Scope & purpose	Clear statement of rationale for research questions/aims/purposes	Yes aims clearly set out. Clear who commissioned the research and who undertook it. Rationale given including discussion of key terms.
	Study contextualised thoroughly by existing literature	Describes review literature and the importance of reviewing but does not describe a systematic approach conducted. Contextualises the findings well
Design	Method/design apparent and consistent with research intent	Good rationale for using qualitative design and for using case study method. No description of epistemology or ontology. Setting is appropriate.
	Data collection strategy apparent and appropriate	Yes, semi-structure interviews with staff and focus group with peers. Good outline out of how these were conducted and what happened before and after. Yes, able to capture complexity of experience Not open ended, more targeted questions
Sampling strategy	Sample and sampling method appropriate	Explained how found participants and difficulties encountered in accessing schools due to reluctance to be labelled as having a difficulty with knife crime. Detailed description of how went about process (emails, interviews, contacts). Very transparent about disparity between intended sample and possible explanations why
Analysis	Analytic approach appropriate	Not explicitly stated but described using content analysis to organise data into themes. Shared back with school head teacher to check accuracy and ensure sufficient anonymity. [Research participants had involvement in analysis]. Appropriate for method chosen .No discussion for coding systems. Explanation for inconsistent case studies.
Interpretation	Context described and taken account in interpretation	Yes findings presented within each case study and contextualised by area. Clear that researcher spent time interrogating data. Summary across pupil and teacher for each case given
	Clear audit trail given	More could be described about research processes
	Data used to support interpretation	Good use of quotes and verbatim extracts given in context. Discussion of how conclusions were reached
Reflexivity	Researcher reflexivity demonstrated	Discussion of relationship between research topic and participants.) Evidence of insight given the context and how sensitive the topic may be. Evidence of how problems were dealt with e.g. with recruitment and meeting prior to joining up.

Ethical dimensions	Demonstration to sensitivity to ethical concerns	No discussion of ethical committee approval granted but throughout displays a clear commitment to integrity, honesty, transparency and mutual respect when working with participants. Researchers appear clear not to over interpret truths from participants' words. Lots of discussion about consent, confidentiality and anonymity were maintained.
Relevance and transferability	Relevance and transferability evident	More fact based than interwoven with theories but good links to existing literature. Good discussion of directions for future works and implications of findings. Commented that aims were achieved. No discussion of how fed back to participants.

TABLE 8 OFSTED (2019)

Stages	Essential criteria	Critique
Scope & purpose	Clear statement of, rationale for, research questions/aims/purposes	Yes clarity of focus demonstrated awareness of limitations. Explicit purpose given – to identify ways to make practice more efficient. Good justification for relevance and importance.
	Study contextualised thoroughly by existing literature	No description of a systematic approach to the literature review but evidence of exploring relevant literature
Design	Method/design apparent and consistent with research intent	Rationale for using qualitative design – understanding schools' perspective. No definition of ontological or epistemological perspective.
	Data collection strategy apparent and appropriate	Data collection was appropriate – in-depth interviews. Not clear who conducted the interviews and their role. Discussed ethical limitations and desire to use self-selection of schools. Triangulation of data sources from previous literature and across the research was demonstrated.
Sampling strategy	Sample and sampling method appropriate	Yes detailed description in how sampling was undertaken. Justification given for sampling strategy Acknowledgement that schools don't want to be seen as having a problem
Analysis	Analytic approach appropriate	Thematic analysis using software- no more detailed description of how findings were reached. Context was considered in relation to the findings and each consideration. Contrasting views of different points of view.
Interpretation	Context described and taken account in interpretation	Description of the context included in the discussion of data collection. Appears that data was well considered.
	Clear audit trail given	Not too clear audit trail provided.
	Data used to support interpretation	Use of extracts to support sharing findings.
Reflexivity	Researcher reflexivity demonstrated	Lack of reflexivity
Ethical dimensions	Demonstration to sensitivity to ethical concerns	Ethical and safeguarding procedures sad to not yet be published but did appear sensitive to needs of CYP and schools. Focus groups with CYP screened by head teacher.
Relevance and transferability	Relevance and transferability evident	Very relevant and appropriate to work in schools and made some helpful policy suggestions.

		Valuable but lacks transparency in some areas. Contributes to existing knowledge and understanding about school experiences.

TABLE 9 WADDELL & JONES (2018)

Stages	Essential criteria	Critique
Scope & purpose	Clear statement of rationale for research questions/aims/purposes	The clarity of focus is well demonstrated and reasons provided why appropriate (previous EIF research into early intervention). Clear outline of aim to explore role primary schools are playing. Link between research and existing knowledge generated.
	Study contextualised thoroughly by existing literature	No description of systematic approach to literature review but research is placed in context.
Design	Method/design apparent and consistent with research intent	Robust rationale given for using qualitative design. No discussion of epistemological or ontological grounding No specific qualitative method provided. Discuss using framework method of analysis to ensure findings are robust and grounded in data. Setting is appropriate
	Data collection strategy apparent and appropriate	Data collection methods were appropriate and describe using individual in-depth interviews however despite stating there was a researcher and a note-taker present, it does not state who they were. Impact? Triangulation of data sources – staff views and stakeholders. Topic guides differed per participant group but did not say how. Not seen topic guide.
Sampling strategy	Sample and sampling method appropriate	Selection criteria detailed and good description of how sampling was undertaken. Disparity between planned and actual sample explained and justified and adjustments to sample described
Analysis	Analytic approach appropriate	Approach made clear (framework method of analysis, done both thematically and individually). Appropriate for qualitative method chosen however, could have been described in more depth. Not stated how data was managed. Data in context by keeping to each participant. Describe data approach is systematic and comprehensive including all data.

Interpretation	Context described and taken account in interpretation	No description of the social/physical and interpersonal contexts of data collection. Staff were chosen by head teacher and asked to be willing to speak, how willing would they have actually felt? Robust data appears apparent but unclear by who.
	Clear audit trail given	Clear discussion of research process, can follow decision trail but feel more detail is needed in order to replicate the study – questions asked, more detailed description of analysis method.
	Data used to support interpretation	Extensive use of quotes from participants to capture and reflect findings very helpful. Clear exposition of how interpretation led to conclusions and any differing points of view.
Reflexivity	Researcher reflexivity demonstrated	No discussion of researcher reflexivity and the impact on participants of their role. No discussion of self-awareness No documentation of effects of the research on the researcher. Evidence of how issues were dealt with (e.g. sampling).
Ethical dimensions	Demonstration to sensitivity to ethical concerns	No description of approval from ethical committee however, clear awareness of ethical issues around confidentiality, respect, honesty and transparency. Evidence of fair dealing with participants. Documentation of how autonomy and consent were managed.
Relevance and transferability	Relevance and transferability evident	The research provides sufficient evidence for typicality Analysis links to existing theories and research. Good link to policy implications of research and future planning. Acknowledgement of limitations including sampling approach, reflectiveness etc. Value and empowerment for participants in ensuring their voice is heard in a previously unheard issue. Extensive consideration of further work both conducted by EIF and for policy implications.

Appendix G: Ethical Approval Letter

The Tavistock and Portman NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

Quality Assurance & Enhancement
Directorate of Education & Training
Tavistock Centre
120 Belsize Lane
London
NW3 5BA

Tel: 020 8938 2699

https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/

Millie Owen

By Email

9th July 2018

Dear Ms Owen,

Re: Trust Research Ethics Application

Title: Designated safeguarding leads' experiences of working with children and young people associated with knife crime in Secondary Schools in an Inner London Borough.

Thank you for submitting your updated Research Ethics documentation. I am pleased to inform you that subject to formal ratification by the Trust Research Ethics Committee your application has been approved. This means you can proceed with your research.

If you have any further questions or require any clarification do not hesitate to contact me.

I am copying this communication to your supervisor.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Best regards,

Paru Jeram
Secretary to the Trust Research Degrees Subcommittee
T: 020 938 2699
E: pjeram@tavi-Port.nhs.uk

cc. Course Lead/Research Lead/Supervisor, Course Administrator

Appendix H: Participant Information Sheet

The Tavistock and Portman NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

Participant Information Sheet

Exploring Designated Safeguarding Leads experience of working with children and young people associated with knife crime in Inner London Secondary Schools?

You are being invited to participate in a research project exploring Designated Safeguarding Leads' experiences of working with children and young people associated with knife crime. This research will be carried out by Millie Owen, a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP), and supervised by Dr Richard Lewis, Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust.
This research has been approved by the Tavistock Research and Ethics Committee (TREC).

In this research, DSLs will be invited to participate in an interview where the researcher, Millie Owen, asks about their experiences of working with children and young people associated with knife crime. This may include your thoughts, perceptions, and feelings about working with these young people.

The interviews will be audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed and anonymised. As the intended sample size will be small, complete anonymity will not be possible as participant identity will be identifiable by the researcher. However, all information that could be used to identify participants, such as their name and the name of their school, will be changed to maintain confidentiality to anyone not involved in the research. All data generated will be stored according to the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust's Data Protection Policy. Due to the small sample size, if more participants volunteer than is required, interviews will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

If you agree to take part in this research, please make the Senior Leadership Team in your school aware and provide them with a copy of this information sheet.

Time commitment
The interview will last approximately 50 minutes.

Participants' rights

- You may decide to withdraw from the research at any time without explanation.
- You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to that point be withdrawn/destroyed up until the point of transcription and analysis of the interview data where names, and other identifying information will have been changed.
- You have the right to omit or refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of you.
- You have the right to have your questions about the procedures answered.
- Confidentiality will not be maintained if there is a disclosure of imminent harm to yourself and/or others.
- If you have any questions as a result of reading this information sheet, please contact the researcher or ask before the interview takes place.

Benefits and risks
There are no known benefits or risks for you in this study. It is however hoped that by having the opportunity to reflect on your work with this group of young people that there may be insights you attain. Additionally, the outcome of this research is hoped to provide an increased understanding of the challenges that this group present to schools, the experiences of Designated Safeguarding Leads in role and how best we can support staff working with these young people.

Confidentiality
If you choose to volunteer to take part in the research your name and contact details, such as your contact telephone number and email address, will be requested so that the researcher can get in contact with you.

Interviews will be audio-recorded so that they can be transcribed. Audio-recordings will be stored on a password protected computer, in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy, until transcription, at which point they will then be destroyed.

Upon completion of the doctoral research a printed copy of the thesis will be shared with the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust as well as a summary provided for the Local Authority.

In the thesis all participant information that could be used to identify participants, such as their name and the name of their school, will be changed to maintain confidentiality.

Any questions
Please contact the researcher or Dr Richard Lewis, the research supervisor at RLewis@tavi-port.nhs.uk

If you have any concerns about the conduct of the researcher or any other aspect of this research project, please contact Simon Carrington, Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance at academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk.

Thank you,

Millie Owen
Trainee Educational Psychologist
mowen@tavi-port.nhs.uk

Appendix I: Consent form

The Tavistock and Portman NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

Consent Form

How do Designated Safeguarding Leads in Secondary Schools in an Inner London Borough view their experiences of working with children and young people associated with knife crime?

- Involvement in this project is voluntary and participants are free to withdraw at any time, or to withdraw any unprocessed data which has been supplied.
- Participants will participate in an interview that will be audio-recorded and last approximately 50 minutes.
- Anonymised quotes from the interview may be used in the thesis.
- Due to the small sample size anonymity cannot be guaranteed, as the researcher will know the identity of the participants. Names of participants and schools will be changed so that participants are not identifiable to those who read the thesis.
- Confidentiality will not be maintained if there is a disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others.
- The findings of this research will be published in a doctoral thesis, a copy will be held at the Tavistock and Portman Clinic and the LA.

By signing below, you agree that;

- You have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet,
- Questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily
- You are aware of the potential risks
- You are taking part in this research study voluntarily
- You will share the information about taking part in the research with the Senior Leadership Team at your school, including the information sheet

Participant's name	Participant's signature
_____	_____
Researcher's name	Researcher's signature
_____	_____
Date	
_____/_____/_____	

Appendix J: Interview Schedule

Interview schedule

Introduction

- Introduce myself
- I'm going to ask some questions about your experiences, including your thoughts, perceptions and feelings.
- Can I check that you received a copy of the information sheet? Signed consent form? Here's a copy for Senior Leadership.
- Are you still happy to continue with the interview? If you free to withdraw at any point, you will not be disadvantaged in anyway.
- The interview will be recorded on this device and recordings will be securely stored and destroyed once the data has been analyzed. All identifiable data will be changed to maintain confidentiality.
- Just to say that I am just interested in you and your experiences and understandings. There are no right or wrong answers.
- The interview is like a one-sided conversation, some of my questions might seem a bit obvious but this is because I am trying to get to grips with how you understand things
- Take your time in thinking and talking
- Also to clarify that when I say associated with knife crime, I mean young people with friends/siblings/boyfriends or girlfriends/people they know. And can be victim or perpetrators
- Do you have any questions before we start?

Interview Qs

1. Can you tell me about your experiences working with children and young people associated with knife crime?

Prompts: *tell me more? What happens? How did that make you feel? How do you cope? Can you tell me more about that?*

Can you just explain what you mean by that? As can mean different things to different people…

2. What challenges do you experience when working with children and young people associated with knife crime?

Prompts: *does anything make it better/worse? How do you feel about these challenges*? *What are your main concerns?*

3. What support do you feel you have in your role for working with this group of children and young people?

Prompts: *how do you feel about this work? Part of your job? What are you thinking about X?*

4. What do you see are the implications on the school community?

Prompts: *How does that feel? Why? How?*

5. Are there any benefits or opportunities that you have experienced involved in working with children and young people associated with knife crime?

Further Prompts:
What do you mean by x?
Tell me more ….
Can I check with you [clarifications]….
What was it like working with that particular CYP?
How did you feel?
Why? How?

Debrief:

- Have we discussed anything that you would like to talk about further?
- Have we discussed anything you would like taken out?
- I understand this is a very troubling issue, has this interview raised anything for you or is there anything up or anything you would like to talk about or tell me about?
    - If say yes, do you feel you need anyone else to talk to at this time?
- Any questions for me?

Services to signpost to:

- Senior manager in school
- Group of people (social workers, EWO, police officers)
- Contact details for adult mental health services
- Contact details for support through charities such as the NCPCC, Gang Exit London, Ben Kinsella Trust, No Knives Better Lives and government websites containing advice for schools such as www.knifefree.co.uk and Victim Support.
- Advise them to visit their GP if they remain distressed
- Refer them to their school link EP or other colleagues

Appendix K: Rich data extract for Sue

Key for comments:. **Blue: descriptive, *green: linguistic*, purple: conceptual**

Emergent Themes	Transcript	Exploratory Comments
	Ok so can you tell me about your experiences working with young people associated with knife crime?	'We' all way through = view affinity with the school?
Boundary of school Disappointment at exclusion School as safe place Banning items in case viewed as a weapon CYP carry knives because feel threatened Heightened awareness of KC issue Profound impact on CYP Carry knives and use them	Right so, several experiences we've had in that we've umm we're very fortunate here in School X we don't have a lot of gang related issues. They don't bring it past the door [interesting], having said all of that umm we have had a couple of occasions where children have brought in a knife, umm because they have felt threatened in some way and I'm afraid that has led to a permanent exclusion. We've banned things like the afro combs with the metal erm teeth because they can be used as a possible weapon. Umm I suppose my most direct experience has been the effect it's had on some of our young people who have witnessed the use of a knife. So, I've had a lad a few years ago who witnessed one of his friends being stabbed to death and literally just yesterday one of our 6th former fathers was stabbed to death in X park. So, we are very aware of the knife crime issue and we are very aware of the fact that a lot of young people carry knives and use them, so we did a special	*Umm, hesitation.* Several = multiple. *We = us* *Fortunate, lucky?* Don't have a lot, don't bring it past the door What does the door/school protect? Brought in a knife. *Children* *A couple* Knife response to feeling threatened Unhappy that CYP was excluded. *Permanent*, Banning combs – viewed as a possible weapon *Experiences that are poignant.* *Direct, My/I (switch from we)* *Children –> young people* *Young people witness*. Witnessed the use of a knife. A lad = colloquial language I → we. *Death – repetition of word.* Effect on young people. Heightened awareness of the issue. *Very = repeated use.* *CYP aware of issue* Stabbed to death. A LOT of CYPY carry knives & use them. Family murder. Reaction. Something considered Special workshop

Educating CYP Relationships with pupils Know pupils well Knife carrying for self-protection CYP not feeling safe Stuckness – can't shift view Concerns about safety Outside known area=not safe CYP heightened awareness of KC Worry about our young men	workshop for year 10, at the end, in the summer term. And what we did is a doc… we used the EastEnders episode on the effects of knife crime, which you know was quite hard hitting and you know we read some articles and did some discussions around that. And I was able to have a really candid exchange with the students, I mean I know the kids really well and they are relaxed with me and they said they just don't feel safe, and that often they do carry a knife not into school, but if they are around and about because they feel it is for self-defense. And I couldn't budge them from that particular point of view that is how they felt and it very much depended on where they were and when they were somewhere. You know if they were in an area, if they were on their estate, where they knew who everyone is, who are the drug takers, who are the drug pushers, who does this - the hierarchy as it were umm, they felt reasonably safe and protected but if they went out of their area in any way then they, a number of them said they felt the need to carry a knife. So, umm I don't think it was bravado, I'm not saying that all our children are out there carrying knives, but it is something they are very very aware of and ermm I think I particularly worry about our young men because unfortunately it appears to be them that are the main victims, ermm and they get into an altercation and it can get very very	*Role in educating CYP* *Hard hitting – did she find it too much?* Discussions - talking to CYP. *Really candid exchange. Use of 'really'* *Emphasis of use of really and very.* *Relaxed with me. Safety and protection.* *Relationships -> importance* *CYP saying they don't feel safe. Knife carry for protection.* Relationship with pupils allows. Connection Couldn't budge – stuckness? Pushing for location is importance change Stuckness – couldn't move to where pp wants to be *Hesitation* Role of drugs - hierarchy Children carrying knives for self-defence depending on postcode. Familiar Safety/protection. Uncertainty Switch from we to I. Self-defence *I don't think*, bravado Hesitant CYP are very very aware of. E*mphasis – 'very very'* I particularly worry about Concern over safety of pupils. Sad situation *Hesitation* *Worry about*

Carrying knives for self-defence Parental KC talk	unpleasant indeed. ummm, we've also had I've forgotten his name, the little boy, the 16-year-old that was stabbed, errr god I can see him….I can't remember his name, his parent's go around doing talks. They came in to talk about knife crime.	*Young men main victims.* *Again 'very very' unpleasant.* *Forgotten the name = too painful?* Parental talks – educating CYP
	Was it Ben Kinsella?	
	Not Kinsella, ermm oh gosh I can see him, but I can't remember his name. it's just gone, I'm sorry it's because your recording me	
	Oh, don't worry	
Role of religion Forgiveness CYP needing to keep themselves safe Pupils in gangs	Anyway, they've come in and talked about it and they've forgiven his murders, and we are a Catholic school, so we have the Catholic side of things. But they have come and talked about the, you know, you know the dangers of it and I think they are aware of the dangers to a certain extent, but I think they feel they've got to keep themselves safe. So, erm I think possibly they don't bring them into school because, we do have children who are involved in gangs, of course we do, they are the ones that are very, they tend to be very quiet about it. They're not the wanabees, they are very, you	Parents coming in Role of religion, forgiveness *Danger* Aware of the danger CYP have to 'Keep themselves safe'. CYP just trying to keep themselves safe. *Quiet not wannabees -gangs → don't be heard* *Of course we do-* regularity of gangs *Her experience, profound* *Those in gangs are very quiet*

People in gangs quiet School is only place they feel safe Streets=not safe Location Deprivation Need to be savvy Normalisation of knife crime Role of media Role of race For some KC is worth the risk.	know they don't publicise the fact. OH RIGHT. It's just something they learn to do, YEAHH. Ermm, and I think because I did have one gang member here who said to me the only place I feel safe is here in school, Mrs X. So, I feel that when they are in school, they do feel safe but when they are out on the street, I feel like it's very very different. I mean we are in the middle of inner London, YEAH, ermm 50% of our children are pupil premium, they live on these big housing estates. And there is a degree of they have to have this savvy about them. Whose who? what's going on, where's it happening, where am I safe to be? That's just part and parcel of their lives and I think it's on the news every day, we have, I have had other discussions with umm young people about who is doing the knife crime, is it black on black and etc. etc. and we've had that discussion as well, we've also had the discussion obviously in Glasgow it's white on white, just depending on the sort of ethnic background. Ummm We've talked about issues such as the fact that some people have nothing to lose YEAH and so they will take the risk of doing something that dreadful. And the other thing that's coming from	*Switch from we to I – responsibility of the school it's the only place safe.* *Very very. emphasis* *School vs street – release them in to a dangerous world.* *Location* *Poverty linked to being savvy* *Pupil premium = impact of SES* *Location. Deprivation poverty.* *CYP have to be 'savvy'* *'part and parcel' of their lives – as expected.* Normalisation of KC Role of media *Increased hesitation, difficult topic?* Discussion who is doing it Ethnic background has an impact *Feeling like have 'nothing to lose'* *Dreadful – DSLs view*

Impact on community Community mentality Balance – helpful not worsen Managing the impact on the community Careful consideration Zero-tolerance approach	what's happened yesterday, when the father was errr murdered, he was stabbed 30 times in the back, of course, that then has a big impact on the local community. So, we are having to deal with this very carefully, because Area B is a very particular kind of environment and so immediately the community, everyone gathered at X park last night, whose done this? what's happened- we're going to get him. There is that sort of mentality, so we are having to be really careful how this is handled because what we don't want is hysteria and we don't want vigilante style you know repercussions kicking off all over the place and you know this has had an impact and we've had to think carefully about how we manage that. And you know in terms of them bringing anything in, it's zero tolerance in this school, completely and utterly….	*Father – impact of family members involved* *Err- hard to talk about murder* *Stabbed. 30 times* Role in terms of community. Not want to make situation worse. *We have -> I have.* Community spirit – fear/tension Schools role in community Nothing to lose *Dreadful* *Revenge from community?* School role in community. Deal with this carefully. Don't want to make the situation worse. Fear/tension in community *Careful x 2.* *Consider the impact.* *Zero tolerance – 'completely and utterly'.*

Appendix L: Sue's Superordinate, Subordinate and Emergent Themes

Superordinate theme 1: Desire to protect			
Subordinate theme	**Emergent themes**	**Line no.**	**Sample of quotes**
School as protector	Boundary of school	5	They don't bring it past the door
	School = safety	68	when they are in school, they do feel safe
	Role in protecting CYP	291-292	we are keeping that young person safe
	Good antennae – on pupils	517	I do think we have a pretty good antennae
	Supervision	517-9	we keep a very close eye because we are a small school, the children are supervised at all times -
	Constant supervision	520-2	They are in our gaze at all time, they are under our gaze if you like and we're keeping an eye on them all the time.
	Struggle to protect	489-492	that is another added dimension to the risks that young people are facing and you have to help them navigate their way through that
	Streets = not safe	69-70	when they are out on the street, I feel like it's very very different
	Ensuring safety of CYP	103-4	We have to make sure that our children are safe,
	DSL awareness of the danger	431-432	it's a very real danger, a very real risk unfortunately
DSL as nurturer and advocate	Pupils feel safe	182-3	they genuinely feel safe.
	CYP know where to go to	189-192	they know exactly who to go to if they are feeling upset, if they are worried about something, they know there are adults throughout the school that they can go to if they have a problem
	Containing CYP	307-8	you know we do a job of trying to contain and hold. I think we are quite good at that
	Feeling like CYP feel safe	511-3	they feel safe to tell and will come and tell you about their friends or will encourage each other to come and talk to us
	Nurturing role	273-4	we just want to make sure that you are safe, and you are happy.
	DSL role in supporting KC pupils	227-9	because every time he came to us one day looking very down and very upset and he'd self-harmed bless him
	Desire for CYP to feel supported	271-2	you want them to realise that they are being supported

	Guide CYP through	491-492	you have to help them navigate their way through that
	School = secure base for some pupils	193-194	some of the children, this is like the secure base, this is a safe place for them
	Surrogate parent – staff keep CYP safe, pupils know that.	183-4	They know that we want to keep them safe, they know that we care about them.
DSL-Pupil relationships	DSL-pupil relationships	24-25	was able to have a really candid exchange with the students
	Positive relationship with pupils	25-26	I mean I know the kids really well and they are relaxed with me
	Open communication with CYP/honesty	168-70	they felt able to really, and they able to really open up, they really well, they were ever so honest, and I thought that was good
	Small school = positive relationships	181-2	a small school we have good positive relationships with our pupils,
	Pupils can speak to staff	202-4	if they have an issue, or they will come and tell you themselves
	Trust and its importance	295-296	they felt they were worried we were going to betray their trust,
	Emotions obvious	412-6	their little faces are low and there you know, and boys get angry and kick a wall and girls will cry, you know it's they are so obvious teenagers you know they really wear their hearts on their sleeves
	Positive rsp/trust	500-1 510	developing further our positive relationships with our young people our children do trust us
	Trust = safety	502-504	knowing that there are adults that they can trust and that by trusting the right adults, it can help keep them safe.
Superordinate theme 2: Socio-economic factors			
Social media	Social media = nightmare	445	social media things, oh my god what a nightmare that is!
	Social media – no control.	473-4	they are all sorts of weird crap out there and trying to keep abreast of that
	Struggle to contain all they see.	469-71	trying to contain that and trying to stay ahead of that is a massive, massive nightmare
	Bombardment by CYP	483-4	but they are bombarded aren't they and you don't know what they are being bombarded with
	Permanency of social media	486-7	a digital footprint that lasts forever
	Gang videos link to KC	488	And then there are all of these awful gang videos,
Financial pressures	Government cuts & their impact	247	And if the government didn't keep taking all the funding away

	Impact of budget cuts	321-2	I sound like a party-political broadcast, but it's you know, they are cutting back
	Challenge with constant changes to services	325-7	you know things keep getting, services keep getting changed, the level of provision changes and it's very difficult, we
	Lack of external services support	306-7	people are waiting ridiculous for CAMHS, they are just not enough psychologists...
	Need high level in area	327	we are in a very needy borough
	Funding impact	336-337	but you know its funding, can we afford to do it?
	Parental income and KC	252-5	mum and dad were together so it wasn't the classic story of mum's on her own, we've got, we've hardly got any money I wanna a new pair of trainers, I'll go and do whatever
Wider factors	Role of media	75-76	think it's on the news every day,
	Impact of local area/context	70-72	are in the middle of inner London, YEAH, ermm 50% of our children are pupil premium, they live on these big housing estates.
	Territories/postcodes	122-3	you've got your postcodes and your territories
	Local knowledge is important	88	Area B is a very particular kind of environment
	Risks w/ CSE	443-4	We also have risks in terms of you know, CSE as well
	KC is 'part of the bigger picture'	105-106	just part of the bigger picture,
	Community mentality	89-92	so immediately the community…. There is that sort of mentality,
Race, culture & Religion	Impact of family culture and background	241-4	he was from a mixed background, his father was African and his mother was Filipino so it was quite an interesting combination and of course their reaction was quite interesting
	Role of race and culture	77-80	who is doing the knife crime, is it black on black and etc…. obviously in Glasgow it's white on white, just depending on the sort of ethnic background
	Role of religion	175-6 199-200	we are, we are a Catholic school I think it is a strong Christian ethos, this idea of forgiving, compassion
Superordinate theme 2: Transmission of knowledge			

Power of knowledge	Hope to elicit KC pupils experiences	231-3	he would be on the verge of, we could just tell he was on the verge of a disclosure but he couldn't quite bring himself to make it and we encouraged him
	Positive for CYP to express	417-8	they haven't learnt how to hide it all away, probably far better for them not to
	Awareness that they don't have all the info	513-5	so I'm not saying we know everything, we don't there is loads of stuff that is going on with our children that we don't know about
	Speaking to DSL will improve situation/be helpful to CYP	508	it is going to improve things in the long run
	CYP feeling able to speak to adults	506-8	I think they realise that yes, they can come and tell us things, it's not going to end up in something terrible, but it is going to improve things in the long run
	CYP share info with staff	350	sometimes they tell us themselves or their friends tell us,
	Good knowledge of KC involved	351-2	so we have a pretty good idea of who is involved.
Role of school to educate	Educating CYP about KC	19 139-40	so we did a special workshop for year 10, we are going to do something on knife crime at some stage.
	Parental KC give talks	47	They came in to talk about knife crime.
	Role of educating CYP of the risks	107-10	the best thing you can do for young people…..is that you wise them up, you tell them what is happening out there
	DSL advice giving to CYP	116-8	I have these conversations with them that you know if someone comes up to you and asks for your phone, just give it to them
	Emotional wellbeing and resilience work	188-189	a huge amount of work around emotional wellbeing and resilience
Superordinate theme 3: Emotions evoked			
Frustration	Feelings of frustration at struggle to change their minds	118-21	[puts on accent] I'm not doing that, I'm not having that, I'm going to fight back and all of that and that's when you get the difficulties and the problems.
	CYP so important. Frustration	455-9	You know our young people are the most precious thing, I don't understand why they are not number 1 priority, [laughing] and I know I'm preaching to the converted if you're going to be an ed psych, [laughing] but that is how I feel you know it really makes me cross

	Frustration	452-4	it has got worse and we need to be looking at why it has it got worse and what can we possibly do about it because something needs to be done.
	DSL feeling of stuckness	29	I couldn't budge them from that particular point of view
Sadness	Empathy for KC pupils	227-9	because every time he came to us one day looking very down and very upset and he'd self-harmed bless him
	Regret about excluding SEN pupils	102-103	was just not very good, but it had to be done
	Feelings of rejection	197-198	they get themselves together and off they go [laughs] and you don't get a second look [laughing].
Concern	Big concerns for MH	302-304 305	you know our role, particularly in a lot of mental health issues, and that is the biggest problem we are dealing with at the moment Oh my god it's enormous, it's enormous
	MH of pupils = a big concern	447-8	I think the self-harm, the mental health issues are a bit more of a concern than the knife crime
	Really concerned about KC carrying	155-6	I was really concerned, I was really concerned, but I said you are actually increasing the risk by carrying a knife
	High level of concern	166 167-8	it was quite concerning really but it was concerning really
	MH of pupils is a big source of anxiety/protection	440-2	I worry more about the things like the depression, the anxiety, we get so much self-harm
	Concern for pupils	269	you worry about them,
	DSL worry about boys	40-41	I particularly worry about our young men because unfortunately it appears to be them that are the main victims
	Shock at CYP perceived lack of safety	162-3	I was quite shocked actually, at how unsafe they felt out in the big bad world
	Vulnerability of CYP	489	they are ripe for the picking and they are easy to pick
Positive emotions	Optimistic for future	223	he's really clever boy, hopefully he's left it behind him.
	Feel fortunate	4	we're very fortunate here in School X
	DSL heightened awareness of KC	17	we are very aware of the knife crime issue

Emotional impact on DSL	Emotional & physical impact of the work	319-321	sometimes we find exhausting. Sometimes I go home, and I crawl to the car, because you're holding a lot of risk and it's not through anyone's fault
	Need to switch off	373-5	you know and ermm, and I'm an old bag, and an old boot so I'm used to switching off, I can switch off
	Increasing challenging nature of cases	396-8	because there are more and more cases all of the time, more and more complex, some are very distressing
Superordinate theme: Tensions in Role			
Tensions in role	Internal conflict in managing situation - balance	87-8 92-3	we are having to deal with this very carefully, because Area B is a very particular kind of environment we are having to be really careful how this is handled
	Role of SEN more vulnerable CYP	101-2	It wasn't the best situation because he was a statemented pupil as well,
	Hysteria vs vigilante	92-95	what we don't want is hysteria and we don't want vigilante style you know repercussions kicking off all over the place
	Balance in how you respond	142-6	your trying to get the balance between providing something that is factual and pragmatic and helpful, you don't want to sensationalize things and you don't want to attract attention to it too much so it's just getting the balance right
	Complexities inherent in balancing dual role (Teacher vs DSL)	370-3	had a parent that is very distressed or a child, you finish with that into the classroom to teach Elizabeth or whatever, [laughs] it's a bit challenging at times
Rumination	Fear of making situation worse/competency in role	268-269	you worry about ermm possibly making things worse
	Questioning capacity in role	299-300	am I doing enough to contain because we are not a mental health specialist like yourself
	Concerns of having detrimental impact	300-301	you worry that you will do more damage than good
	Worry about missing something	398-99 401-2	in order not to miss it/something we're accessing the risk, are we meeting the threshold, or have we missed something
Zero tolerance	Banning items in case used as a weapon	9-11	We've banned things like the afro combs with the metal erm teeth because they can be used as a possible weapon.
	Zero tolerance to knife carrying	97-8	in terms of them bringing anything in, it's zero tolerance in this school

		174-5	zero tolerance towards something like knife crime
	Bringing weapon in = exclusion	103	but it had to be done.
	Rules = discipline = boundaries	178-81	the reason we have those petty rules is because we then have very good discipline in school and so when the children are in school because we have very definite boundaries,
	Regret about excluding SEN pupils	102-103	was just not very good, but it had to be done
	Disappointment at permanent exclusion	8-9	I'm afraid that has led to a permanent exclusion.
Powerless	DSL no control/influence over knife carrying	157-8	they, but you know I remember when I said to them well it depends, Miss it depends where I am
	DSL feeling powerless	235-236	it was horrible to watch because we knew we just thought, if you just say it,
	Using humour as a technique / Wanting to get rid of thoughts/feelings	236-239	if you just say it [laugh] you'll get rid of it sort of thing. It's like having a big hard poo, I always say [laughing] just get it out and you'll be alright [laughing].
	Helplessness when pupils struggling	213-5	he couldn't, he couldn't ermm, he just couldn't quite bring himself to tell us, he couldn't tell us, he couldn't tell me
	Frustration at being limited by service availability	339-42	because we can identify who are at risk, but we can't always access the services, or they are going to have to offend before they get to YOS. So, it's back to front,
	DSL feeling of stuckness	29	I couldn't budge them from that particular point of view
Tensions in working with parents	Empathy with parents	135-6	some of our other parents are then overly protective and I can't blame them for that at all
	Positive role of parental support	241 244-7	his parents were very supportive they came round very quickly to being very supportive and understanding of their son and I'm sure that was half of the, half of the battle won
	Easier with supportive parents	274-6	easier when you've got parents like the one I was just talking about, his parents completed stepped in, stepped up - took responsibilities
	DSL helping parents access additional support	279-81	that's when you might, you do a referral to social services or early help to get them the additional support you know,

	Parental desperation	281-283	when you've got a parent saying to me, he's beyond my control, I can't get him to do anything, I can't get him to come in, I can't get him to do that, what shall I do Mrs X
	Link to parental involvement and challenges in role	277-9	. But there are others where the parents are not in a position to take on that responsibility and that makes it even more difficult
	Concern for competence of parents	125-7	what slightly concerns me is I don't quite know how some of their parents
	Lack of parental supervision	129-31 131-4	And a lot of our kids, not a lot but some of our kids, you know are virtually feral, you know they are sort of out and about. Very little supervision, might be because parents are working, might be because for whatever reason and it's those children that are at considerable risk
	Parental anxiety & The impact	135-6	some of our other parents are then overly protective and I can't blame them for that at all
Superordinate theme: Desire for support			
Benefit of a team	Benefit from support	375-7	you know, because I have got this great team and plenty of support from the staff but also from the top that it makes my job a hell of a lot easier
	positive rsps in the team	381-382	we're fortunate in that we get on so well and erm we're like a load of old mother clucking hens
	Perceived support from HT	389-90	. Anything that she'd think would help support her staff,
	Staff look out for one another (nurturing)	390-1	we are fortunate in our team, we are aware of each other, we look after each other
	Aspects of role – who takes these roles/caring?	392-3	We're those sort of people because we are doing that sort of role so that helps
	Key need for different perspectives/team thinking	399-401	there needs to be a group of you that can see it from slightly different perspectives. You
	Importance of a team	395-6	, you do need a team of people trained around you
	feeling supported In role	360-1	We have a very supportive, so I've got a very supportive line manager. The head teacher is very supportive,
	Benefits of team working/shared responsibility. Positive relationships amongst team	362-4	this amazing team around me and what we do is we meet once a week and we triage our case, we review them, we discuss things, we share
Desire for supervision	Opportunity to reflect on case	366-8	it's very helpful particularly when it's dealing with the difficult case so that you've got other people to bounce off your concerns

	Desire for supervision/unfairness in supervision	368-9	What we don't have is supervision, that social workers get, that psychologists get, and I think at times we could do really do with that
	Supervise each other informally	380	I mean we'd sort of do it for each other
	Desire for space to talk to/reflect on cases	383-5	probably just someone to talk to, I don't know maybe once a fortnight, just for half an hour just to talk through some of the cases
Desire for external support	Lack of external services support	306-7	people are waiting ridiculous for CAMHS, they are just not enough psychologists...
	Schools need support	316-7	I think we could do with perhaps a bit more support around that
	Lack of professional support	330-332	I think more specialists, more experts, more people on the ground that can actually work directly with these young people, people that understand
Superordinate theme: Impact on CYP			
Impact on knife crime CYP Mental health	Huge impact of witnessing/experiencing KC	433-435	if they then have direct experience with it and see something or hear of something, obviously it really affects them.
	Impact on CYP who witness KC	12-13	seen the effect it's had on some of our young people who have witnessed the use of a knife
	Impact of KC on CYP MH Pupil couldn't forgive himself for witnessing KC	208-9 211-2 217-20	he did or was involved in something that he couldn't forgive himself, he carried this enormous guilt And you know there was some self-harm, some suicidal ideation it had a massive impact on him and you know on his mental health, on his emotional wellbeing. It was like he was carrying this massive burden
	NH raises Anxiety/MH of CYP affected	428-31	I think it raises is anxiety levels, I think it is a concern for young people ermm I think it can have a direct impact on their emotional well-being and even their mental health,
Impact on all pupils	Heightened awareness of KC amongst CYP	39-40	it is something they are very very aware of
	Requirement for CYP to be 'savvy'	**72-73**	there is a degree of they have to have this savvy about them
	everyday existence for CYP	74-75	just part and parcel of their lives
	Fact of life for CYP today	106-7	it is part of the life that our young kids live
	Real risk CYP must live with	432-3	that they have to live with and assess on a daily basis

	Affects how CYP live their lives/daily existence	450-1	but the children made it clear that it's something that they have to be aware of, it does impinge on their life and their experience of life
CYP don't feel safe	Fear/tension/hyper vigilant of surroundings	73-74	whose who? what's going on, where's it happening, where am I safe to be?
	Concerns about safety depending on where they were	30-31	very much depended on where they were and when they were somewhere
	School is the only place KC CYP feel safe	67	the only place I feel safe is here in school, Mrs
	CYP not feeling safe	26	*They said they just don't feel safe*
Carry knives for protection	Knife carrying due to feeling threatened	7-8	children have brought in a knife, umm because they have felt threatened in some way
	CYP 'carry knives and use them'	17-19	we are very aware of the fact that a lot of young people carry knives and use them,
	Knife carrying for self-defence	27-28	they do carry a knife not into school, but if they are around and about because they feel it is for self-defense
	Outside known area = need to carry knife	35-37	if they went out of their area in any way then they, a number of them said they felt the need to carry a knife.
	CYP feel need to carry knives to keep safe	57-8	think they are aware of the dangers to a certain extent, but I think they feel they've got to keep themselves safe.
	For some CYP, KC is worth the risk	81-82	some people have nothing to lose
	Carry a knife because everyone else is	61	because the attitude is I have to carry one because everyone else is

N.B Key to superordinate themes for each participant

Superordinate theme

Subordinate theme

Emergent themes (line numbers)

Appendix M: Annie's Superordinate, Subordinate and Emergent Themes

Wider impact on individuals

Impact on wider community
Wider impact on school community (11-13)
Impact on school(13-14)
Anxiety from staff communicate to parents (225-226)
Parental responsibility for safety increasing (220-221)
'massive knock on effect on whole school community' (357-348)

Impact on wider family
Impact on siblings (8)
Challenge for families (27)
Sibling of perpetrator/victim (25-26)
Families moving for their safety (29-31)
Impact on families, being rehouse (135-137)
Sig impact on innocent siblings (143)
'Great unfairness to the whole family' (155-156)
Negative impact on siblings (307)

Impact on CYP

Impact on CYP
Loss at what CYP's life should be (84-86)
Lack of freedom for CYP (223-224)
Impact how children live lives outside of school (231-232)
Affects socialising time for CYP (229-230)
CYP's sense of justice and wanting to change society positively (315-317)
Impact on all children/affects school community (340-342)
Large number of pupils affected who live nearby (351-354)

Impact on KC affected CYP
Heart-breaking for him (141-142)
CYP needing MH support (46049)
Benefit from a 'fresh start' in new school (122)
Consequences can shock CYP (126-127)
Affect KC incident, don't feel safe at home (359-360)
Fear of crime CYP needing emotional support to feel safe (361-362)
Practical ways of supporting CYP together with parents (366-367)

CYP not feeling safe
CYP's fear of KC (49-50)
CYP carrying knifes out of fear (123-124)
Evoking intense fear in children in wider community (208-209)
Fear in CYP that should not exist (212-213)
Effect CYP's feelings of safety (346)
CYP fearful/scared of crime (357)
Help CYP to reappraise risk (369-371)

School as Protector

School as protection/protector
Accepting KC YP from other school (19-21)
School = safety/security (35)
Outside school = not safe (38-39)
School providing protection from criminal activity (51-52)
School reinforcing concerns for safety (239-240)
Belief that CYP Are not safe 'on the street' / outside of school (241)
Outside school is full of risk (234-246)
Safety challenges present (31-32)

Protection from harm
Prevention work happening in school (91-92)
School having positive input into future (160-162)
School staff = police – patrolling the area/staff as protectors (236-237)
Knowledge of pupils (208-209)

Challenges in role

Supporting CYP vs not wanting them to glamourize KC
Balance out glamorisation (384)
Public displays of emotions - hysteria (390-391)
'Dampened it down' = concern about YP glamourizing (394-395)
CYP not affected may want to be part of the grief experience (405-406)
CYP attracted to the drama of KC (409)

Knife crime as a 'messy' situation
Exclusion for knife carrying (18)
Most involved can be the most hidden (57-58)
"bit further down the pecking order that you find out about." (60-62)

CYP carrying KC leaves one choice (1015-106)
Awareness that CYP carry knives for different reasons (111-113)
Links to CSE & CCE (276-278)
Messy situation (283-284)
Deal with CSE more than knife crime (289-292)
Link to county lines involvement (304-305)

Tensions in role
Challenges in identifying children at risk (53-56)
Importance of decision making (176)
Decisions harder to make when unclear (184-185)
Make decisions cautiously (194)
Avoid hysteria vs acknowledging real pain 400-402)

Impact on DSL

Positives of a team support
Team providing supportive function (167)
Never work alone (169-172)
Too much for one person (173-174)

Impact on DSL
Evoking feelings of shock and sadness (81-82)
Internal voice questioning decisions (196-197)
Evoking feelings of empathy (154)
Dual role/perspective (202)
Internal voice questioning decisions (196-197)

Wider involvement

Links to other schools & services
Receiving support from links to other schools (157-158)
Comparison to other areas (viewed as superior) (381-382)
Good links with external agencies (97-98)
Providing pupils with a second chance (117)
KC YP often have external agencies involved (134-135)
KC victims can have lots of involvement from other services (265-267)
Sharing knowledge with professionals (208-209)

Appendix O: Lucy's Superordinate, Subordinate and Emergent Themes

Wider societal factors

Knife crime situation
KC got worse
Wand pupils
Zero tolerance = exclusion
Impact of socio-political context
Support networks not there
Communities not coming together
Impact of budget cuts on services
Need youth groups
Impact on future generations
Perceived causes of KC
View as lucky with KC
Issue with county lines

Pressure on services
High level of need
Lack of money
Too many changes
Empathy for SS pressures affecting them
Funding constraints
Impact of budget cuts
Funding money impact
School exclusion
Disaffected teachers

School as protector

School as protector
Ensure CYP feel safe & secure
No interaction with outside world
Importance of security for pupils
Schools as a safe environment
Keeping CYP safe

School as educator on KC
Educate CYP about risks of KC
Shock CYP about KC
KC parental experiences shared
Power of personal experience
Desire for memorable learning
Teachers less equipped to educate on KC
KC educate for all
Educating CYP about risks

Desire for knowledge
Staff find out quickly
CYP want staff to know about KC
Holding knowledge about knife carrying
Pupil share gang status with staff
Desire for local knowledge
Pupils want staff to know
Info can get lost
DSL holding concerns
Desire for all knowledge about CYP

School as surrogate parent

Mothering
Staff check in with pupils
Child centred practice
Every child deserves a chance
Nurturing role
Duty of care to ex pupils
Giving CYP space
Share own experiences

Advocating
School as advocate for CYP
DSL as advocate for CYP
See the positives of CYP
DSL/school as advocate
CYP need someone 'there for them'
Encourage CYP to talk

Relationships
Good teacher-pupil relationships
Small school benefits
Challenge of Being on their level
Benefits of staff life experience
Staff intuitive with pupils
Tutor role – staff-pupil rsps

Powerful emotions evoked

Emotional impact of the role
KC pupil big impact on DSL
Relief when CYP returned from CL
Sharing knowledge of pupils
Small change, big difference
Emotional experience of staff

DSL emotionally involved
Vessel for projective identification
DSL role as tough
Anger when it fails
Anger at CYP 'slipping through the net'
Leave baggage in schools/offloading experience

Frustration
Frustration at the system
Frustration at systems
Frustration with communication
Feels of frustration
Shared frustration
Frustration with CAMHS
Frustration- feeling not enough done
Frustration – not more done
Frustration – CYP failed by services
Regret- more should have been done

Hopefulness
Aspirations and hope for CYP
Importance of goals

Tensions in role

Role conceptualisation
Educate staff of risks
KC CYP need a lot of support in place
Remind staff about sharing info
School staff work hard for CYP (duplicate)
Difficult cases
Protecting herself & staff
Going above and beyond role
Extra effort is rewarded

Conflict in role
Conflict over best interests
Failing CYP? Ruminating? Regret
Balance child vs school safety
Difficulties working with chaotic systems
Fear of allegations

DSL as navigator/organiser/instigator
DSL role in putting plan into place with other professionals
Put plan in place – her responsibility
School doing all the work
Successful support = several services involved
Missing glue holding services together

Fight for support
Constant rejection/battle to access support
Trying her best
Determined to fight
Accessing all support & Help available
School staff work hard for CYP
Abandonment to deal with here and now

Impact on the pupils

KC associated pupils
Understanding of why CYP turned to KC
KC pupils on an unstable path
Empathy with CYP's situation

Factors linked to KC
MH linked to peer pressure
Social media inescapable
Gangs easier to communication with CYP
Gaming desensitises CYP to violence
CYP struggle to make sense of violence
"Living in a virtual world"
School focus on getting CYP back
KC CYP need a lot of support in place
Acknowledge needs of CYP
Impact of peer pressure

Working with guiding and supporting parents

DSL as supporter of parents
DSL attempting to access support
Helping families access support
Schools duty to 'educate' parents
DSL providing advice & Support & signposting
Parents MH needs
Role to support parents
Parents despair
DSL supporting and guiding parents
Importance of open dialogue
Empathy with parents
Give parents space to talk
Working hard to support families
Supporting parents = supporting pupils

Challenges in working with parents
Balance (info sharing vs parental MH)
Internal conflict in role working with parents

Difficult conversations part of the role

Parental engagement and relationships
Importance of rsps with parents
Parents trust and engage with school
Difficult conversations with parents
Awareness of impact on parent-child relationships
Regular contact with parents
Parental engagement

Judging parents
Parents giving in to peer pressure
Disapproving of parents
Responsibility lies with parents [something about being helpless]
Judgement of parents x2

Empathy for families
Empathy with situation for families
Families not being supported
Families' exasperated

Support

Supportive function of a team/valuing the team
Importance of a team
DSL role too big for one person
Opportunity to reflect on cases
Pride in team
Good team = working together
Value staff wellbeing/containing role/ Team providing containing functioning
Joined up thinking/reflection
Joined up ways to support CYP
Reassurance did her best

Desire for reflection
Desire for debrief/reflection
Experience of containment/Space to reflect

Desire for Collaborative work across services
Need more collaborative work
Importance of open dialogue with professionals
Benefits of joint working
Working together to safeguard
Professionals work together
Professionals supporting each other
Multi-disciplinary working

External services – feeling unsupported
Police failings
Lack of police engagement
Lack of support from other professionals
Frustration with other services
Need services supporting each other
Lack of support at lower levels
Police work more collaboratively
CAMHs difficult to engage
Tensions between professionals
CS undoing the good
Variation in experiences with CS
More support for MH

Miscellaneous

Time: the race against time
Time- waiting for things to happen
Not receiving info
"chasing and chasing and chasing". Not being informed
Timing – just too late
Time – despair at having to wait/nothing being done
Need to slow down/take time
Time – very frequent
Changes happen quickly/situation fast moving?

Self in role
Personal experiences
Increased awareness of KC
Personal fulfilment in role
Blurred boundaries role vs personal life
Dual role (DSL/parent)

Appendix P: Fiona's Superordinate, Subordinate and Emergent Themes

Prevalence of Knife crime inside & outside school

View of KC not an issue in this school
KC not a big issue in this school
Any issues are rare
Time (gaps between incidents)
Rumours but nothing found
KC incidents are unusual event/rare
School not receiving info
No issues with knives
Surprise at lack of KC in school
KC unusual in this school

KC is big issue outside in the community
Current situation with KC worst ever
KC is accepted and not tackled
Awareness of media surrounding KC
KC more prevalent now
More public and obvious
Hearing stories about KC
Gang violence in communities
Pupils exposed to gangs outside of school

School as protector

Barriers around school
Keeping others out
School as a closed system
Crossing the barrier and entering the school
Gang culture not brought into school
School as a barrier – KC does not enter

Protection
Concern for staff and CYP's safety
Schools as a safe place
Parental role/ownership (our boys)
Parental ownership of the boys
School protects their pupils from negative outcomes
Fear of world outside of school

Staff knowledge & skill
Staff skilled in dealing with situations
School staff competent at dealing with KC incidents
School competent at dealing with situations

School As KC educator
Educating CYP about KC and radicalisation
School role to address KC
Wanting CYP to be aware
KC Parents sharing experiences
Seen to be showing sufficient concern and action re KC
DSL conceptualisation of role as ensuring pupils are aware of KC
Importance of education CYP
Help CYP to understand potential consequences
Increasing awareness of potential consequences of KC
View of schools role in educating pupils and increasing knowledge of risks and consequences
Young men as future role models

Conceptualisation of DSL role

DSL representing school
DSL speaking as the school 'we'
We = as school experiences
DSL sees herself with all staff

DSL role conceptualisation
Inevitability of exclusion for KC
Confusions over lack of KC in school
Surprise at CYP involved
Idea of safeguarding as something that needs to be dealt with
Experience in DSL role = knowledge?
DSL access vulnerable side of pupils
DSL can reach challenging pupils
DSL shifting mind-sets of CYP
DSL Role as "tough but fulfilling"
DSL role benefits
Benefit of seeing CYP evolve

MDT work
More voices = better assessment of needs
Benefits of following process and consulting others
Strong belief in joint decision making
Joint decisions allow all voices to be heard
Important to consider wider contextual factors of CYP
Joined up thinking and decision making

The Emotional Experience of the DSL Role

Support in role
Team discussions = support
Sharing responsibility of cases with SLT and whole school
Important function of joint decisions
Team function= not being alone

Feelings evoked in DSL role
Feelings of shock
Shock at experience
Situation as 'alien' to staff
Awareness of issue but still shocked
Feeling of DSL having large volume of work
Enjoyment in DSL role
Idea that CYP 'give back'
Pupils drain DSL – they take something
Parents Instead needy and over anxious on DSL
Powerless feelings/lack of control about life outside school for CYP
Surprise not more of an issue in school
Relief not a major issues in school

Who holds the responsibility?

Whose problem is it? Community vs. school
Community problem not school problem
Some CYP involved in prevention
View that government and powers that be do not care
Role of community shutting down
Role of community in stopping KC
Schools limited in what they can do
Responsibility placed on schools
Schools not supported to mange KC
Community have KC responsibility
LA's have responsibility to support communities
Adults need to take responsibility for protecting CYP
Lack of responsibility for our CYP

Impact of budget cuts
Impacts of cuts on services
Camhs = horrendous
Concern over high level of anxiety in children about KC
CYP no space to express feelings
View that CYP are Holding too much and eventfully explode
Pessimistic view – nobody to support CYP
Despair at camhs waiting time
Feeling that CYP MH needs more concern

Impact of social media on CYP
CYP exposed to a lot
Feeling let down by government
Government role in protecting CYP

Relationships

Relationships between staff and pupils
Relationships between staff and pupils
Time spent together = knowledge of pupils
Positive relationships with pupils
Benefits of making decisions based on knowledge of pupils
Can see benefits of working with CYP associated with KC
Staff-pupil relationships and trust
Staff listen to pupils/take time for pupils
Students appreciate staff, are grateful for support

Pupils in school
Pupils like being at school
Pupils enjoy social aspect of school
School offers CYP different opportunities

Pupils don't talk
No communication about the issue from pupils
No talk is good
CYP not talking about Gang involvement
CYP fear of repercussions of taking about KC
Snitching – fear of becoming. Target so silenced
Fear in CYP of becoming the victim
No communication about the issue from pupils
Rumours but nothing found

Impact on CYP

Impact on CYP
CYP appear unaffected by KC "water of a ducks back"
KC normalised to CYP
DSLS concern at acceptance of KC by CYP
'part and parcel' of community they live in
Pupils not shocked by KC
KC discussion captured pupils' interests
Pupils interests and curious in KC parent
Pupils sensitive to emotional experience of the KC parent
Pupils possessing sensitivity despite SEMH label

Pupils fearful of coming to school

Feelings about community and KC impact

Impact on community
Despairs at impact of KC on community
Impact on future generations
View that KC is acceptable and normalised
Impact on communities, CYP and friends
Barrier to community engagement

Feelings about KC in general
Anger at KC issue
Feeling that nothing is being done
Shock at primary pupils carrying knives for protection
Evoking irritation at situation out there on streets
Mugging makes no sense to DSL
Despair at current situation
No direct experience but own views on the issue
Anger at what cyp are exposed to (E.g. social media)
Feelings of worry and concern over the situation

Relationships with parents and pupils

Engaging with parents
Parents happy in the end when they are involved
Pupils engage with KC parents
Parents as supportive of school
Some parents try hard to support child

Empathy with parents
Parental fear is universal
Empathy for mothers suffering
Belief that fathers aren't involved
Impact on parents of child with SEN
Parent's stuckness with SEN
Empathy for tired/overwhelmed parents
Disparity in support parents receive
Parents not aware of their rights/what they are entitled to
Parents want to feel they can cope
Parents unsure how to access support
Parental struggle

Challenges in work with parents
Parents not available for CYP to talk
Building relationships with parents

Parents not engaging
Parents can see benefits of school
Link between parental education experiences and engagement in their children's education
Two extremes with parental engagement
Parents placing all problems with school
Frustration when parents don't engage
Parents divorce themselves from school
Parents as suspicious of services
Key role of parental experiences of education
Balance between Pushy and relaxed parents
Sharing of suspicion of education
Families keeping secrets from school
Parents try to silence CYP
Parents demanding time and attention
Parents as needy as the children
Parents feel owed
Parents needy vs over cautious
Working with parents can be difficult

Appendix P: Peter's Superordinate, Subordinate and Emergent Themes

Views on KC

Views about KC
Challenge with KC
KC big issue
Unhappiness with the frequency of KC incidents
Irritating that perpetrators are brazen
Shock at brazen nature of robbing's
Feeling like there is a lot of KC
Feeling that violent events are frequent
Reality less bad than feared
Shock at KC situation elsewhere
Feel relief, situation is worse elsewhere
KC everyday occurrence
Belief that KC CYP would do it all again
KC CYP need a reality check
Importance of role models
Power of emotional link
CYP regret

Impact on KC CYP
Huge impact on KC CYP
MH needs and KC
KC CYP as fragile
KC CYP not accessing counselling
Frequency of KC normalised and accepted
CYP KC as a real threat
Power of social group
Role of CYP confidence
Pressure/shame CYP desire to fit in
CYP fear of being viewed in a bad light
CYP cognitive dissonance

CYP carry knives for protection
CYP carry knives for protection
CYP knife carrying due to safety concerns
Profound impact/scale of the fight

Wider factors

Geography
Crime in area
Impact of affluence in area
Role of area

Pressure from local area on CYP
Location of incidences close to school
Proximity to school x2
Geographical proximity to school
Different SES – live in a different world
Extreme split in wealth
Role of areas/territories – crossing boundaries
Territories
Endemic to the area

External factors
Impact of budget cuts
Social media = evil negative connotations
SEMH issues
Negative of lack of police
Role of social media
Impact of austerity
Unhappiness at cuts to support services
Social media pressure is huge
Peer pressure
Power of social media

Role of culture/race
Role of culture around speaking about emotions
Impact of lack of male role model
Challenges of little support at home
Role of culture
Role of race
Assume view of the black community
Empathy for black community
Differently affect by social group
Reality for black community
Inequality
Only impacts a certain group
Different concerns for different SES
Staff-pupil difference

Age
Impact of age
Age as a factor
Impact of age
Youth – infantile aspect to KC
Age as a factor

SEN
Idea of vulnerability – needing extra protection
EHCP more protected
Role of SEN

Desire to protect

Protection role
Ownership/protection of boys
Desire to protect
Relationships
Protection over more vulnerable CYP
Consideration of language used
Idea of KC CYP as fragile
Ownership responsibility
Responsibility
School perceived to do a good job protecting students
Guarding the SG power – but seen to protect
Protector role
Hard to protect
Desire to protect 'kids'
School vs outside (Evil)
Keep CYP safe

Police
Heroic/attempt to physically catch perpetrators
Police terminology adopted
Random search: like a prison
Physically patrol the area
Collaboration with the police
Give & Take with police
Viewed as police by CYP
Investigating incidents (adopting police like persona)
Staff viewed as police
Investigating incidents (adopting police like persona)
Staff = policing the school
CYP view of staff getting them in trouble
Skill in solving issues
Police to patrol
Police- suspicious, searching students

Outside school - no control
Outside school = bad influences
Contrast in vs outside school
Struggle that can't control/protect CYP from outside school
Support with life outside

The Emotional Experience

Feelings evoked
Shock
Surprised by those involved
Shock at those capable of KC
Surprise that CYP would use weapons
Shock and confusion
Shock for CYP too
Shock at those involved (unexpected)
Shock at brazen KC
Shock at behaviour of robbers

Sadness
Deep sadness to exclude SEN students
Loss for school, DSL & CYP
Feelings of sadness
Lost hope
Affecting DSL
Incredulous at KC attacks taking place
Feeling impact of KC CYPs loss
Unhappiness at KC situation
Strong impact emotionally
Loss of relationships
Deep sadness
Empathy with KC CYP
Loss of boys

Worries
Concern about KC CYP's future
Confusion
Acceptance/pessimism
Knew CYP would come to a sticky end
Pessimism – lack of agency in supporting CYP
Idea of nature of pupils – link to KC
Give up on child, feeling unskilled?
Acceptance of what will happen – defeatist
Lack of agency 'the writing is on the wall'

Frustration & Anger
School put in effort, family not engaging
Frustration
CYP trapped in own learnt behaviour
CYP deliberately avoid telling the truth
View that CYP don't want to be responsible
CYP not thinking
Frustration at CYPs behaviour
Anger at pupils targeted

Positive feeling

Idea of hope
Power of experience

Relationships & trust with pupils

Relationships
Teacher-pupil relationships
Looked after personal check in
Adopting youth language
'Great kids'
Relationships
Values working with CYP
Energy of CYP
Positive relationships with CYP
Consideration of language used

Trust
Importance of trust
Importance of trust
Issue with lack of trust
Kids don't feel safe enough to talk
Students lack of trust in school staff
CYP not enough trust with staff
KC CYP not open to talking
Certain topics feel safer for CYP to discuss

Relationships with parents

Working with parents
Misunderstood by parents
Pressure from parents
Threats from parents
Empathy with parents
Fairness/equality
Compromising with parents (preserving rsps?)
Anticipation of parental perspective
Filter what to say to parents
Perceived antipathy from parents
Parents resentful of schools holding knowledge
Importance of family support
Filter what say to parents
Perceived antipathy with parents
Parents don't trust the school with knowledge
Parents defensive with school
Challenges trying to engage parents
Empathy with parents
Parental retaliation

Dealing with parental concerns

Tensions in role

Challenges in role
Gaining knowledge too late
Pupil's frequent victims
Trying their best but KC still happening
Forced to PEx
Extraordinary situations
Extraordinary situations
Suspicions held of CYP
Special circumstances for EHCP students (treated differently)
Working hard to not PEx
Different presentation in and out of school
CYP pulled towards knife carrying to keep safe/outside school more of a pull
CYPs rational thinking is over-rided
Feeling between a rock and a hard place
Conflicted/questioning whether should talk to the police
Lack of honesty from CYP
Significant of KC events
Awareness of difficulties/consequences
Ruminative thinking
Repercussions for CYP
Unfair view as trying to help the child
Struggles to identify appropriate support
Challenge

The hardest decision
Balancing CYPs future vs schools safety
Difficult decisions (burdon of decisions)
Enormity of decision
Pessimism about future for KC CYP
Difficulty/faced with a dilemma
Justifying actions
Feeling really difficult
Consideration of knock on consequences
"You think this is hard"
Difficult
Complicated decision
Thinking about 'the greater good'
Justifying behaviour
Fear of missing something
Caught between parents -> school
Dilemma – keep boys vs safety of school
Inclusive vs safety
Reasoning/ruminating
Tough decisions

Feeling powerless
Ultimately no control re exclusion
Trapped, no other options
Parallel pupil and school options
Conflicted by decisions forced to make
Staff lack means to find out
Lack of trust/belief in students
Stuckness –DSLs words have no impact

Feeling deskilled
Lack of knowledge about KC behaviour
Questioning knowledge held of pupils
KC outside of staff control.
Desire to do best by CYP, parent, school
Tried but didn't work
CYP view that staff cannot help with KC
School lack expertise in KC
External support needed to educate boys – someone
CYP don't want to listen to staff
School staff lack lived experience

Conceptualisation of role

View of role
Role as a lead
Perceived importance of safeguarding
Power – he holds control
Role to safeguard, teachers is to teach
Tensions in role for schools
Prevention work
Awareness of level of support required

Fear of the unknown
Fear of what may find/extent of KC issue

Role
Education CYP to risks
Desire to educate
Desire to support to move on
Desire for appropriate support (therapeutic) for CYP
Benefit of space for everyone
Desire to make CYP responsible
Safety takes precedence over academic

Pride
Pride in school
Impact of reputation
Idea of putting community of jeopardy (knife crime = jeopardy)
Want to be seen to be school trying their best & Doing what they can

Try to prove themselves and show success
Role of pride/rivalry in KC
Pride in system – desire to protect
Pride on being inclusive
Need to keep parents happy – popular school
Reputation is important
Public perception
Pride in school
Pride
Positive view of the school
Regret over CYP behaviour
Desire for things to have been different
Idea of pride takes precedence for CYP
Comparison to other schools

Knowledge
Desires for pupils to talk to staff
Uncertainty over whether CYP talk to staff
Importance of being informed
Not being included not/not kept informed
Parents not being kept informed
Other teams provide knowledge
Desire for students to feel able to share
Social media is a method that school is kept informed
All of knowledge – nothing is missed