"They seem to have grown taller"

An exploratory and explanatory grounded theory of the impact of using person centred annual reviews in primary schools, derived from the views of the SENCos who led them.

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For Alex and Ben, the persons at the centre.

Abstract

Exploratory and explanatory research was conducted into the impact of a model of person centred reviewing. In the existing literature, although children and young people who take part in person centred processes typically describe a positive experience, the overall evidence base for the effectiveness of the approach in education is not robust.

Using a qualitative methodology, interview data from five SEN Coordinators working in local authority primary schools, which were part of a project piloting the use of a model of person centred reviews, was analysed using critical realist grounded theory. The primary aim of the study was to explore the impact that adopting a person centred review process had in schools that were part of the pilot project. This includes the potential impact on children, teachers, parents and the whole school. The secondary aim was to explore how any changes have come about.

Two research questions were derived from these aims. The primary, exploratory research question was: "What changes have come about in primary schools that have been running person centred annual reviews as part of the local pilot project, according to SENCos who have been leading them?" The secondary, explanatory research question was: "How, according to SENCos who have been leading person centred reviews, have these changes come about?"

The theory developed from the data proposes that the local model person centred reviews can have a transformative impact on SEN provision in primary schools with a supportive ethos. More specifically, the grounded theory identifies causal factors which give rise to particular effects. It suggests that in bringing people together, making them feel they are on the same side and enabling reciprocal listening in a structure which supports honesty, positivity and

constructiveness, the model of person centred reviewing being studied has an impact on everyone who takes part.

The theory proposes that, while the model is not without risks, children who take part develop their skills and their self-determination. Similarly, it proposes that relationships improve for children, parents and school staff, alongside developing teamwork and a feeling of being part of a "caring community". It also proposes that SEN systems and practice can improve in a number of ways. The theory has implications for local practice around person centred reviews, as well as at the national level, given the priority given to the approach in recent government guidance.

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BPS	—	British Psychological Society
DECP	—	Division of Child & Educational Psychology
DfE	—	Department for Education
DfES	—	Department for Education and Skills
DoH	—	Department of Health
EHCP	—	Education, Health and Care Plan
EP	—	Educational Psychologist
EPS	—	Educational Psychology Service
HSA	—	Helen Sanderson Associates
IEP	—	Individual Education Plan
IfHR	—	Institute for Health Research
IPA	—	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis
LD	—	Learning Disability
PRU	—	Pupil Referral Unit
RQ	—	Research Question
SEBD	—	Social, Emotional, Behavioural Difficulties
SEN	—	Special Educational Needs
SENCo	—	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SEND	—	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SMT	—	Senior Management Team
TA	—	Teaching Assistant
TAC	—	Team Around the Child
UNCRC	—	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

1 Introduction

"The only possible basis for a sound morality is mutual tolerance and respect: tolerance of one another's customs and opinions; respect for one another's rights and feelings; awareness of one another's needs."

A J Ayer (1968)

1.1 Chapter overview

This chapter will set out the background to the current study, outlining the national and local context of the research as well as showing how the aims and rationale were framed as initial research questions. A brief history of person centred planning in UK education will be given as part of the national context, while the local context will describe how person centred planning has been applied in the area in which the research took place, along with defining the local model of person centred reviews.

1.2 Background

This research is an investigation of the impact in schools of adopting person centred approaches to Special Educational Needs (SEN) practice. Specifically, it focuses on a project in one urban English local authority where a small number of mainstream primary schools had pioneered person centred annual reviews for children with statements of SEN. Within this project, informal evaluation with parents, children and teachers had been positive; however, there remained a need for more in-depth, methodologically sound research.

The author has been an Educational Psychologist (EP) in the local authority since 2006, jointly leading on the project and taking a central role in the development and promotion of the local model of person centred annual reviews. This research therefore comes from a subjective position in relation to the area and topic being studied. The consequences of this position are discussed in later sections of this thesis.

1.3 National context

The current study took place at a time when a historical context of evolving practice in relation to person centred planning in education met a national context of reform of the legal structures around SEN support in schools.

In England since 1981, children and young people with the most severe SEN typically go through a structured multi-professional assessment process set out in statute. This process usually results in a document issued by the local authority, which, with legal force, sets out the child's or young person's difficulties and their educational needs alongside the type and level of support that should be provided in order for them to make progress in their learning. Under previous versions of the Code of Practice (DfES, 2001), this document was called a Statement of Special Educational Needs (statement).

Part of the statutory regulations regarding the maintenance of statements has been the requirement to review the child's progress, the effectiveness of the support provided and the targets set for their learning at least every twelve months. This meeting, known as an "annual review" is typically called by the child's school, attended by parents, teachers, support staff and

additional professionals such as EPs, social workers or speech and language therapists and chaired by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo).

While the newest version of the SEN and disability code of practice (DfE & DoH, 2014) introduced a new assessment process and began to replace statements with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) through a phased transition programme, the most relevant aspect for the current study was its promotion of person centred planning.

1.3.1 Person centred planning

Originally developed in the USA in the 1970s and 1980s, person centred planning began as an approach to working with adults with Learning Disabilities (LD). Connie Lyle O'Brien and John O'Brien, two of the early pioneers of the approach defined it as follows:

> *"We understand person-centred planning as a systematic way to generate an actionable understanding of a person with a developmental disability as a contributing community member."*
>
> *(O'Brien & O'Brien, 2000)*

Person centred planning was built on the idea of human rights for people with disabilities, incorporating the principles of independence, choice and inclusion (Towell & Sanderson, 2004).

O'Brien and O'Brien (2000) also highlight the "authority of the service user's voice", at the centre of an attempt to mobilise the family and social network. Helen Sanderson, whose work brought person centred planning to the UK, extends the O'Briens' definition, stating that:

> *"Person centred planning discovers and acts on what is important to a person. It is a process for continual listening and learning, focusing on what is important to someone now and in the future, and acting on this in alliance with their family and friends."*
>
> *(Thompson et al., 2008)*

Person centred planning was formally adopted by the UK government in the Valuing People strategy (DoH, 2001) for adult learning disability (LD) services, raising:

> *"the prospect of … building a society in which people with Learning Disabilities can participate as equal citizens."*
>
> *(Erwin & Sanderson, 2010)*

This strategy drew heavily on Sanderson's work through her "development agency", Helen Sanderson Associates (HSA), and her links to the originators of the approach in the USA (Sanderson, 2000). HSA has since applied person centred planning to work with older adults (Bowers et al., 2007) and organisations (Stirk & Sanderson, 2012), as well as beginning to explore person centred planning in schools (Erwin & Sanderson, 2010).

Person centred reviews are a tool within the broad approach of person centred planning, offering a structure for a group of individuals (some of whom may be professionals working with the family) to hold an accessible and respectful meeting that addresses the needs of a

person with learning difficulties. HSA developed a specific model of person centred reviews for work with adults with LD and young people with LD making the transition to adulthood (Sanderson, 2000; DoH, 2010a).

1.3.2 2001 Code of practice

In the English education system, principles related to person centred planning were first introduced in the SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001). The 2001 version of the code of practice placed an emphasis on "pupil participation" rather than specifically person centred planning; despite their differences, both of these approaches draw on the disability rights movement as well as similar emancipatory principles. At the same time, the Education Act (DfES, 2002) placed duties on local authorities to consult children on decisions made about them.

> *"Children and young people with special educational needs have a unique knowledge of their own needs and circumstances and their own views about what sort of help they would like to help them make the most of their education. They should, where possible, participate in all the decision-making processes that occur in education including the setting of learning targets and contributing to IEPs, discussions about choice of schools, contributing to the assessment of their needs and to the annual review and transition processes. They should feel confident that they will be listened to and that their views are valued."*
>
> *(DfES, 2001, p14)*

1.3.3 2014 Code of practice for SEN and Disability

In the period following the introduction of the 2001 SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001), a critical lens was shone on the system it outlined. Evidence began to show that a statement was no guarantee that a child with SEN would make progress, and that monitoring of provision was inconsistent and ineffective (Ofsted, 2010). Parent groups also reported that the assessment process was long, stressful and bureaucratic (Corrigan, 2014).

The aims of the 2014 Code of Practice for SEND (DfE & DoH, 2014) were to change the culture of SEN support, to change the experience of families and to enable better outcomes for children with SEN and disabilities. It went further than its 2001 forebear, placing person centred planning at the centre of its recommendations, promoting it as the default way of working.

> *"9.22 The assessment and planning process should:*
>
> - *focus on the child or young person as an individual*
> - *enable children and young people and their parents to express their views, wishes and feelings*
> - *enable children and young people and their parents to be part of the decision-making process*
> - *be easy for children, young people and their parents or carers to understand, and use clear ordinary language and images rather than professional jargon*
> - *highlight the child or young person's strengths and capabilities*
> - *enable the child or young person, and those that know them best to say what they have done, what they are interested in and what outcomes they are seeking in the future*

- *tailor support to the needs of the individual*
- *organise assessments to minimise demands on families*
- *bring together relevant professionals to discuss and agree together the overall approach, and*
- *deliver an outcomes-focused and co-ordinated plan for the child or young person and their parents*

9.23 ***This approach is often referred to as a person-centred approach****. By using this approach within a family context, professionals and local authorities can ensure that children, young people and parents are involved in all aspects of planning and decision-making."*

(DfE & DoH, 2014, p147-8, emphasis added)

This definition of person centred planning for education omits the element of seeking equal community participation and citizenship emphasised in those of Sanderson and the O'Briens (see section 1.3.1). It also does not mention the aim of seeking an "ordinary life" prioritised in government guidance for adult LD services (Davis, 2012).

While the significant cultural change of adopting person centred planning went hand in hand with the major structural change of transferring statements to Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP), some aspects of the SEN system did not change. The duty to hold an annual review, to examine the effectiveness of support and to update plans as necessary, still remained.

1.4 Local context

The current study took place in a local authority in the inner city area of a large English city. The local area is characterised by social contrasts, with areas of severe poverty, overcrowding, and unemployment side by side with areas of wealth and privilege. Redevelopment of the area, continuing since the 1980s, is a topic of debate as to the extent to which it has benefited the residents of the area equally.

The population of the local authority is multi-ethnic, predominantly white British and British Asian, with a greater proportion of under 25s than is typical in the UK. Life expectancy is below the national average and there is considerable local effort to mitigate the negative effects of poor diet, overcrowded accommodation, smoking, lack of exercise and difficulties accessing health services on the wellbeing of the population.

Educationally, the local authority has seen major changes over the last 10-15 years, moving from being an area of significant relative underachievement, to seeing results at primary and secondary level above the national averages.

1.4.1 Local project – pupil participation

Locally, a project exploring pupil participation in SEN practice in schools has been running for around a decade. Starting with investigating "child-friendly" SEN practice, including setting targets with children and using their goals and language in Individual Education Plans (IEPs), the project evolved to take on an open investigation of child-friendly approaches to annual review meetings (Birney & Sutcliffe, 2012).

This local project has drawn its influences from Humanistic Psychology (Maslow, 1968) and Positive Psychology (Hefferon & Boniwell, 2011), looking at children with identified SEN as whole people and considering their character, strength and values alongside their difficulties and needs. Gersch's work on listening to children (Gersch, 2001; Gersch et al., 2008) has also been a significant influence, in his synthesis of Personal Construct Psychology (Kelly, 1955; Ravenette, 1999) and philosophy for children (Lipscomb & Gersch, 2013).

The international context has also been an important element, with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC – UNICEF, 1989) and the Ladder of Participation, (Hart, 1992, drawing on earlier work by Arnstein) shaping the project from the start. The UNCRC states:

> *"Children have a right to express an opinion and to have that opinion taken into account in matters that affect them.*
>
> *Children have the right to freedom of expression, including the right to see, receive and share information and ideas in ways which make sense to them."*
>
> *(Articles 12 and 13, UNICEF, 1989)*

Finally, the "Trendsetters" project of the disability charity Scope (Scope, 2013) has been a major inspiration, with the aim of developing an aspirational but realistic mindset, adding "grit" to the basic warmth of the positive and humanist elements of the work.

1.4.2 Pilot project – person centred annual reviews

In 2009, the local project changed from a loose interest group of primary school SENCos, EPs and specialist teachers into a more structured pilot project exploring new ways of conducting annual reviews. In its first year, eight primary schools took part, growing to 15 in year two and 24 in years three and four.

Over the course of four years, the pilot project went through an iterative annual process of informal evaluation with pupils, parents and teachers (Birney & Sutcliffe, 2012; Lopez, 2014), leading to developments in guidance and practice. This process resulted in the evolution of a structured model of person centred annual reviews which drew significantly both on the HSA model of person centred reviewing and on local experience of involving children of all ages and difficulties in planning for their education.

1.4.3 Local model of person centred annual reviews

The model of person centred annual reviews developed through the pilot project is set out in a guidance book written by the project leads, one of whom is the author (Sutcliffe & Birney 2015). The guidance sets out how organisational culture should support the process of person centred planning:

> *"In a person centred culture, the whole person is considered, and we identify their strengths, abilities and good qualities and encourage them to share their interests, preferences, hopes and ambitions. At the same time we need to be honest and realistic about the difficulties and barriers they face."*
>
> *(Sutcliffe & Birney, 2015, p7)*

The annual review process in this model involves preparation for the child or young person alongside work with their class. The child or young person is also involved in setting up the meeting; they may write invitations and typically invite a friend or supporter to accompany them to the review meeting.

The annual review meeting itself is run according to an agenda (see Appendix 9), which involves the child making a contribution which in some way expresses their preferences, interests, views, opinions or ambitions. The form taken by this contribution depends on the child's level of development, their communication skills and the choices they themselves make. An adapted "ladder of participation" (Sutcliffe & Birney, 2015) provides a loose structure which helps adults and children prepare contributions for the meeting.

Then, drawing on the core principles of person centred planning, the meeting gives time to an appreciation of the child or young person's character and strengths - "What people like and admire...", including where appropriate comments from their peers collected before the meeting – before moving on to their values, interests and ambitions – "What is important to...".

After considering "What is going well" and "What is not going well", a clear and structured action plan is written. After the review, in addition to the statutory process of reporting to the local authority, the child receives an accessible summary of the meeting. Throughout the guidance (Sutcliffe & Birney 2015) it is emphasised that the model is flexible with the principles of meaningful involvement and real choice for the child more important than rigidly adhering to a structure. Professionals are encouraged to aim for an "ideal review", one where:

> *"The child or young person looks forward to it, and is confident it will be a positive experience, and a celebration of their achievements.*
>
> *AND*
>
> *Everyone leaves confident that the difficulties of the child or young person's situation have been addressed honestly and fairly and each person leaves the meeting clear about the plan and how it will help the child or young person."*
>
> *(Sutcliffe & Birney, 2015, p11)*

Although both use the core person centred questions listed above, the emphasis on the child's own contribution in the local model distinguishes it from the HSA model of person centred reviewing, along with there being no need for an independent facilitator and note taker.

1.5 Rationale

The chief rationale for the current study is to undertake methodologically sound research into the impact of person centred planning that has so far been lacking (see Chapter 2). There is a subsidiary rationale in conducting more formal research into the impact of the local pilot project. Given the scope and scale of the current study, the local model of a person centred annual review process will be the lens through which person centred planning more generally will be examined.

1.6 Purpose and aims

The purpose of the current study is to explore the impact that adopting the local model of the person centred annual review process has had on the schools that took part in the pilot project.

The primary aim is to outline the impact that adopting a person centred review process has had in schools that were part of the pilot project. This includes the potential impact on children, teachers, parents and the whole school. A secondary aim is to begin to explore how any changes have come about.

An additional aim is that the findings of the current study will enable further research into person centred practice – investigating children's and parents' views of the process, the impact on progress and learning, the issues for secondary and special schools, and the views of professionals who have adopted the approach through necessity rather than as pioneers.

The current study may also open up the possibility of conducting a trial (Haynes et al., 2013) of the effectiveness of the approach, if appropriate measures can be identified and issues of treatment integrity can be addressed. This will be discussed further in section 6.6.

1.7 Initial research questions

The questions for the current study concern the impact that adopting the local model of a person centred planning process has had in schools. Given the nature of the group involved in the pilot project, the research questions are restricted to exploring the impact in mainstream primary schools.

The primary, exploratory research question can be framed as:

- What has changed in schools that have been running person centred annual reviews as part of the local pilot project?

While the secondary, explanatory research question can be framed as:

- How have these changes come about?

These initial research questions denote an area of interest for the current study; they will be further elaborated, in the light of the selection of a methodology in section 3.4.5 on page 47.

1.8 Relevance and impact

The current study is both timely and relevant, due to the changes to SEN practice in schools brought in by the 2014 Code of Practice. As a result the findings should be of interest to Headteachers, SENCos, local authority officers and other professionals in health and social care. It is also relevant to Headteachers and SENCos nationally, especially those already using person centred approaches or considering their adoption.

The findings of this research should also interest politicians and civil servants in the Department for Education and Department of Health who are nationally promoting person centred approaches. The findings will have a direct and immediate impact on the development of person centred approaches locally, with the potential for a wider impact given the range of stakeholders in other geographical areas and at a national level.

1.9 Chapter summary

In this introductory chapter, the aims and rationale for the current study have been outlined, set within an international, national and local context. Person centred planning has been defined and the local model of person centred reviews has been described. The initial research questions have also been stated.

The development of person centred planning in the English education system has been heavily promoted, but so far little researched. The next chapter will explore the existing published literature, and identify the gap which the current study hopes to fill, further strengthening its rationale.

2 Literature review A

"Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence."

Carl Sagan (2011)

2.1 Chapter overview

This chapter describes the existing literature about person centred planning, both in adult LD work and in education. In doing so, it will review the quality and breadth of the literature, identifying the gap which supports the rationale for the current study.

Two phases of literature review were carried out. This chapter presents the first phase, conducted before data collection, following the abductive approach of Thornberg (2012, see section 3.4.4 on page 46 for more details). A further series of literature reviews, begun during the analysis and completed after the development of the complete grounded theory, is presented in Chapter 5, starting on page 155.

2.2 Search strategy

The initial literature review (stage A1 & A2) was carried out using a systematic strategy, in order to answer the following questions:

- What is the research background to person centred planning?
- What is the evidence base for the effectiveness of person centred planning with adults with LD?

- What is the evidence base for the effectiveness of person centred reviews in schools?

Stage A1, carried out between October and December 2013, involved a series of searches using the full text databases shown in Box 2.1, below.

- PsychINFO.
- PEP archive.
- Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection.
- PsychARTICLES.

Box 2.1 Full text databases used stage A1of the initial literature search

The breadth of the search terms at stage A1 was systematically expanded with each search, in order to ensure a meaningful selection of literature was captured. Stage A2 was conducted later, in order to ensure complete coverage of the literature.

At stage A2, the full archive of the British Library was searched in the most open way possible, using the broad search term “person centred planning”. Terms used at stages A1 & A2 of the initial literature search are shown in Table 2.1, on page 18, along with the numbers of relevant, non-duplicate items returned by each.

Stage of search	Search terms (Keywords)	Total results	Relevant results
A1	‘person centred’ AND ‘annual review’	0	0
	‘person centred review’	2	2
	‘person centred’ AND ‘special education*’	2	1
	‘person centred’ AND ‘school’	2	1
	‘person centred planning’	58	21
A2	‘person centred planning’	213	9

Table 2.1: Search terms and results stages A1 and A2 of the literature search

The results from all of these searches were subjected to a title search, followed by an abstract search, to select only relevant literature. The inclusion and exclusion criteria used to narrow down the results of the searches are shown in Box 2.2 on page 19.

The results of both stages of the initial literature search are reported together, with articles grouped by type and topic as described in section 2.3 below. Appendix 1 contains tables which lay out the results of the searches conducted for the initial literature review.

Inclusion criteria:

- Article is published in a peer reviewed journal.
- Article is in English.
- Article published since 1990.
- Topic of article is relevant.

Exclusion criteria:

- Duplicate items
- Articles relating to irrelevant topics:
    - Speech and language therapy
    - Occupational therapy
    - Mental health care, psychotherapy, counselling
    - Dementia, care of older adults, palliative care
    - "Quality of care" in health services
    - Diagnostics

Box 2.2: Inclusion and criteria applied during literature search stages A1 & A2

2.3 Literature evidence

The literature identified through searches at stage A1 falls into two main categories: articles, reports, books and chapters relating to person centred planning in adult LD services, which form the bulk of the literature, and a smaller literature relating to person centred planning in schools. In both of these areas, some articles focus on policy, conceptual definitions of person

centred planning and guidance for practice, while others describe research or summarise systematic reviews.

Throughout this chapter, quantitative studies were evaluated using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP, 2014) frameworks, including the tools for systematic reviews, randomised controlled trials, cohort studies, case control studies as appropriate. The tools were applied as systematic checklists, allowing for an assessment of the validity of the conclusions made by the researchers.

Lincoln and Guba's (1985) evaluative criteria were applied to qualitative studies. While there are many contrasting sets of criteria for evaluating qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba's was chosen because, as noted by Cresswell (2003), it derives from the same tradition and approach to research as Grounded Theory.

2.3.1 Person centred planning in Adult Learning Disabilities

"Ordinary living" is a paradigm in LD services which guides the implementation of functional, behavioural and developmental support (Burton & Sanderson, 1998). It formed the foundations on which person centred planning was built in England. Sanderson (2000) notes the challenge of the paradigm, due to the scarcity in reality of the communities of reciprocity and mutual interdependence described in the rhetoric of person centred planning.

At this time, Sanderson expressed a hope that person centred planning can change the perception of people with LD by the people who work with them, noting the need to address the balance of power which diminishes individual aspirations. Workers applying person centred

planning need "social supports for inventive action" (O'Brien & O'Brien, quoted in Sanderson, 2000), with services designed around the needs of children. These early documents state that a person centred approach will help services improve quality and save money (DfES, 2007), a claim which will be revisited in the light of the rest of the literature.

2.3.1.1 Literature relating to policy in adult LD services

Writing on the eve of the arrival of the Valuing People strategy (DoH, 2001), Kinsella (2000) highlights the barriers to implementing person centred planning, emphasising the intensity of the experience and noting that it requires skilled professionals, who can adopt an attitude of humility and long term commitment alongside a willingness to give up control.

Several writers in the field have critiqued person centred planning as public policy (Felce, 2004; Mansell & Beadle-Brown, 2004). They emphasise that it has a weak evidence base, with little beyond the anecdotal, and limited evidence on the claim to deliver person-oriented change. Both papers also go on to question the capacity of the system in the UK to establish person centred planning through a top-down, government mandated process, given the demands of self-determination and social inclusion and the tendency of organisational inertia and funding challenges to choke such high-minded principles, despite the enthusiasm of individual practitioners. O'Brien (2004), among the pioneers of person centred planning in the USA, echoes this position, describing a risk that it could be used to mask a lack of government funding.

These writers are taking a gloomier version of the position of Iles (2003), who stated that adopting person centred planning requires a radical change in organisations, with a need to

develop a learning culture alongside the promotion of flatter hierarchies, the celebration of innovation and cooperative working. O'Brien also adds that discussion of rights, independence, choice and inclusion is necessary to find a way through these possible tensions.

Jones and Lowe (2008) respond to these critiques by stating that even service users with the most severe disabilities can participate in regular daily activities. Towell and Sanderson (2004) go further, stating that it is hard to assess aspects of a major social policy change separately, instead giving a view that positive change comes from the "dynamic interplay" (p19) of context, policy and practice. In effect, Towell and Sanderson are agreeing with the pessimism of Mansell and Beadle-Brown and Felce – that the culture change required is a major challenge – while aiming for Iles' optimistic outcomes and noting that pragmatically there is no other way to go about it.

2.3.1.2 Research evidence

There is a small research literature looking at the impact of person centred planning with in LD services. Sanderson et al. (2004) summarised a number of case studies of person centred planning with children with LD and their families. Although the study did not report a sampling strategy or a structured method of data analysis, casting doubt on the dependability and confirmability of the findings, families did consistently report greater empowerment, a change in the family view of the child and stronger relationships within the family. This study, although it involved children with LD and not adults, is included here as it did not take place in school.

Ryan and Carey (2008) carried out a single case study of person centred planning with a young person with Down Syndrome. They claimed that active listening and accessible communication kept the young person involved, leading to a genuinely personalised health action plan. The descriptive elements of this study demonstrate good transferability, but the relationship between the researcher and the participant is not made clear and the methodology is not reported, weakening the confirmability and dependability of Ryan and Carey's conclusions.

Hoole and Morgan (2011) used thematic analysis to explore the views of seven adults with LD involved in person centred planning. Data was collected through a focus group and the sampling and recruitment strategy were clearly stated. The authors report that participants had ideas, they wanted to be listened to and they reported feelings of unfairness and inequality alongside feelings of inclusion and power. This research has transferability due to the detail in the findings. The credibility is less clear as the engagement of the researchers was brief and, although participants were given a summary of the findings, their views on the validity or meaningfulness of the analysis were not sought.

Espiner and Hartnett (2012) analysed the views and experience of a small cohort of 10 adults with learning disabilities going through a person centred planning process in New Zealand. Data from participants and the adults within their networks was analysed using content analysis. All participants but one stated that it had been a positive experience, and families and professionals reported a greater understanding of the participants' aspirations. The authors attempted to triangulate the findings through a questionnaire, however, the lack of validation leaves this data open to accusations of bias in the form of demand characteristics.

It is also worth noting that none of the previous three studies examined the implementation of the plans or whether participants achieved the outcomes set through the planning process. They cannot therefore draw robust conclusions as to the medium or longer term impact of the approach.

The one large-scale, multi-site, longitudinal study of the impact of person centred planning in adult LD services in England was carried out by the Institute for Health Research at Lancaster University (IfHR, 2005). This study was an evaluation of the Valuing People strategy initiated in 2001; it has been reported in peer reviewed literature in several papers (Robertson et al., 2006, 2007a; 2007b; Wigham et al., 2008). The overarching study focused on four localities, restricted to those which were identified as having a commitment to person centred planning, including urban, rural, affluent, deprived and diverse areas.

Using a multiple case study method, 93 participants were followed for two years to gain an insight into how person centred plans related to real-life outcomes. The studies identified a number of factors which supported successful person centred planning for adults with LD, such as the status and commitment of the facilitator and the personal involvement of the focus person.

The main findings were that people who received person centred plans gained in their community involvement, contact with friends, contact with family and choice. The researchers describe person centred planning as “efficacious” – it has the capacity for beneficial change– and “effective” – its use brings about a positive impact (IfHR, 2005). It is also interesting to note that person centred planning was found to be linked neither to any increase in ongoing costs (Robertson et al., 2006), nor to any reductions in cost.

Robertson (2007a) describe the barriers to people being involved in person centred planning, including shortages of trained facilitators, lack of time, appropriate services not being available and the reluctance of some support workers to be involved. Robertson et al. (2007b) note "powerful inequalities" – with people with mental health difficulties or challenging behaviour less likely to receive a plan and less likely to benefit if a plan was made. People with poor health were also less likely to get a person centred plan, but were more likely to benefit, while people with Autism also less often received plans.

This study was clearly focused and applied a highly representative and an unbiased sampling strategy. The researchers also used a thorough and complete approach to follow-up. The researchers used a range of validated outcomes measures and took account of confounding variables in their robust statistical analysis. The results reported have precision and the effects are reported clearly without overclaiming.

As stated by the researchers themselves, the decision to select areas with a commitment to person centred planning makes it hard to generalise the conclusions to other areas; similarly had the study continued for longer than two years, the conclusions could have been even stronger, reflecting established, more mature practice. However, when set against the strengths mentioned above, the study has a basis for drawing robust conclusions about impact.

2.3.1.3 Systematic reviews

Dowling et al. (2007) examined the literature on person centred planning in social care in England. They found that progress in implementing the approach had been partial or slow, due

to organisational inertia, power relations, funding structures, staff turnover and a lack of training, experience and supervision for staff. In this they align with the pessimism of Felce (2004) and Mansell and Beadle-Brown (2004). More optimistically, Dowling et al. concluded that successful implementation was linked to policy encouragement, investment, favourable case reports and practitioner enthusiasm, suggesting the need for a localised, bottom-up approach in parallel to the top-down pressure of government strategy. However, they also state that there is "little substantial critique of the model itself" in the literature they reviewed.

While Dowling et al. conducted a very broad literature search, which is positive in terms of its completeness, they state that their search was integrative and not systematic. Furthermore, they do not base their conclusion on a critical appraisal of the literature, taking findings for granted rather than assessing the quality and rigour of the studies. As a result, confidence in the conclusions of this review is limited.

Claes et al. (2010) conducted a thorough systematic review of the evidence of the impact of person centred planning for adults with LD. From 15 studies, they found positive but moderate gains in community presence, community participation and positive relationships. Claes et al. also highlighted the recurring concern that person centred planning is hard to establish in large "traditional" service systems.

While Claes et al. describe the methodological quality of the studies in their review as "good", they note that the external validity is "weak", due to loose definitions of person centred planning and a lack of horizontal alignment with outcome measures. They conclude that the overall quality of evidence is "weak in relation to criteria for evidence based research."

The conclusions of Claes et al.'s review can be taken as highly trustworthy, given the transparent way they report their literature search and the consistent and rigorous application of well-established evaluation criteria and cross-rater checking to every study in their review.

Harflett et al. (2015) review the literature of the impact of personalisation (including direct payments, rather than just person centred planning) on the most isolated service users (those without families, living out of area or with severe complex needs including challenging behaviour). This review covered similar territory to Claes et al. (2010) and also cited the IfHR (2005) studies described above. They found that studies tend to treat adults with LD as a homogenous group. While they describe some small case studies of positive impact, Harflett et al. also found that the most vulnerable are less often offered personalisation of the services they receive. Harflett et al.'s review was not conducted in a fully systematic way and as such their conclusions can be seen as less than fully trustworthy.

2.3.1.4 Summary and critique

Alongside a number of small scale and methodologically weaker studies, three literature reviews and one large multi-site evaluation (IfHR, 2005) have been carried out.

Service users, families and professionals consistently report person centred planning is a positive experience in informal evaluation. For example, Sanderson's own research (e.g., Sanderson et al., 2004), while typically reporting overwhelmingly positive comments from service users, families and professionals, is typically methodologically unstructured and, like the small scale and case study research (for example, Ryan & Carey, 2008) does not explore the impact of person centred planning on outcomes.

The more rigorously conducted evidence is positive but cautious on the impact of person centred planning for adults with LD, with benefits shown in the areas of community presence, community participation and positive relationships. However, there is a consistent warning that those with most severe difficulties and least existing social support are least likely to benefit. There is also no current evidence for the claim that person centred planning saves money.

Experienced practitioners also give a consistent message of the power of the interaction between top-down pressures, both positive and negative, and bottom-up supportive factors such as practitioner enthusiasm.

2.3.2 Person centred planning in schools

The searches described at the start of this chapter found only a small literature relating to person centred planning in schools.

2.3.2.1 Practice guidance and conceptual overviews

The majority of the literature relating to person centred planning in schools has so far been practice guidance and booklets outlining the approach and the range of available person centred tools (Yorkshire & Humberside SEN Partnership, 2006; DoH, 2010a; Smith and Sanderson, 2008).

This practice guidance (for example DoH, 2010b in relation to transition to adult services for children with LD) typically refers back to the literature around person centred planning for

adults with LD, notably the IfHR studies (IfHR, 2005). Much of the literature also takes time to outline what Gersch (1996) calls the "moral case" for person centred approaches. Davis (2012), who interviewed the families of children with multiple disabilities, concluded that there is a "universal striving" for an ordinary life – which required planning and effort to fulfil.

There has also been a parallel literature to the pessimism of Mansell and Beadle-Brown in adult LD services. For example, Ingram (2013), while supporting the idea of a "moral case" and a "pragmatic case" for listening to children (Gersch 1996), notes that interpreting children's views is a challenge for professionals, with the power dynamics making it hard for children to challenge adults if they disagree with how their words have been taken.

Similarly, Quicke (2003) critiques the concept of pupil participation set out in the 2001 code of practice, stating that mere involvement in setting IEP targets is limited, giving the emotionally loaded warning that:

> *"We may even be asking pupils to collude in their own negative labelling."*
>
> *(Quicke, 2003, p 51)*

Furthermore, Lindsay (2004) analyses how the principles of the 2001 Code of Practice relate to the UNCRC. He describes the lack of evidence to support the principle of pupil participation as a "major omission" and warns that, for participation to be real, adults need ways to communicate with children with needs across the full range.

While providing valuable context, the literature described in this section constitutes a theoretical base rather than an evidence base for the use of person centred planning in schools.

2.3.2.2 Research evidence

Test et al. (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of the involvement of children with disabilities in person centred planning. Combining 16 studies from the US, they concluded that children with widely varying disabilities can contribute to planning for their education, noting that in two studies person centred planning combined with direct instruction improved children's scores on measures of self determination.

A number of small-scale research projects have been carried out in English schools around various aspects of person centred planning. Six were identified by the literature search. Hayes et al. (2004), in a single case review, report on the use of visual and graphic methods to record review meetings. They describe the success of the approach in one primary school, noting that the need to be careful with language does not simply disappear with graphical methods, and emphasise the greater difficulty in working with children with profound and multiple LD. The credibility and dependability of these findings are, however, weak due to the unstructured analysis and apparent lack of audit and reflexivity.

Burke (2005) explored the views of young people with SEN involved in group activities to express their views. Participants reported gains in self-confidence and self-advocacy skills in school and their community. Young people showed commitment to activities which helped them establish a sense of identity and purpose – willing staff were a significantly supportive factor in enabling participants to feel they had developed. However, Burke does not define the

terms used and states a number of assumptions without evidence, for example that self esteem is dependent on the social situation. The dependability of the findings is weakened by the unstructured data analysis and the absence of any discussion of reflexivity means they lack confirmability.

Erwin and Sanderson (2010) present a case study of two special schools, who used a range of person centred planning tools, including person centred reviews, to inform the schools' strategic development plans. The study claims that the process resulted in individual changes for the pupils, local changes in the organisation of support in the schools and strategic change to influence school development. However, due to the lack of methodological structure and any comparison with a similar process which did not use person centred tools, there is no way of knowing whether these changes are in fact a result of the application of the approach or simply the result of individuals modifying an aspect of their behaviour in response to their awareness of being observed. This is an example of an established phenomenon known as the Hawthorne Effect (McBride, 2013). The weaknesses of these studies as evidence should be taken as a strong antidote to the enthusiasm with which they are presented.

Taylor-Brown (2012) explored the experience of three year nine boys with Statements of SEN for Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties at a person centred transition review. Taylor-Brown reports that the reviews in her study followed an approach adapted from two related person centred planning techniques called MAPS (Making Action Plans) and PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope). The reviews aimed to focus on the "person as a whole", celebrating and recognising resources, and treating each participants as an "expert in their own life".

From data collected through semi-structured interviews, and analysed with Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), Taylor-Brown concluded:

> *"The process of the person centred review "reduced power imbalances and incorporated an expectation of reciprocity that allowed the boys and their families to participate more fully."*
>
> *(Taylor-Brown, 2012,p64)*

Similarly, Taylor-Brown stated that the review framework enabled a new narrative to be heard, one which reflected the boys' lives in a more holistic way. Although her participants reported some anxiety in relation to the review, she concluded that the format enabled them to feel comfortable and to participate in more formal discussions, despite some difficulties articulating their ideas.

Taylor-Brown's use of supervision, external audit and a reflexive diary support the dependability and the confirmability of her findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, it is harder to have confidence in the credibility and transferability of the research due to the limited engagement resulting from the small scale nature of the project. The findings are also not triangulated with data from other sources. Taylor-Brown's conclusions, therefore, make a small but positive contribution towards an evidence base for the benefits of person centred reviews.

Corrigan (2014) carried out a study of person centred planning as part of a re-integration programme for six young people who had been excluded from secondary school. Young people and teachers interviewed agreed that person centred planning supported their involvement in

planning and despite small numbers, Corrigan reports some evidence of positive outcomes on attendance, emotional understanding and attainment as a result of the intervention.

This study supports the idea that person centred planning can act as an intervention, but due to the lack of comparison or control cannot be taken as evidence for the benefits, which, as in so many similar studies reported here, could have come from the effect of the additional attention involved rather than from the specific nature of the person centred process.

2.3.2.3 Summary and critique

As the preceding sections show, there has been very little formal research into person centred approaches in English schools. There is some positive evidence from case study and small scale research for how the process is experienced positively by children and young people with SEND and the adults who work with them in school.

However, the research carried out has typically had a limited scope, with no structured evaluation and serious, unaddressed issues of bias; with the exception of Taylor-Brown's study, no methodologically sound, peer reviewed research into the impact on outcomes for children with and without SEND in schools was found through the literature searches used to inform the current study.

In summary, while small scale research is beginning to be carried out into the impact of person centred planning in the UK, there is a long way to go before the evidence matches up to the claims made by the advocates of the approach, the author included.

2.4 Links to research rationale

The initial literature review supports the rationale for the current study. No research was found specifically concerning the use of person centred annual reviews in schools and robust studies of the impact person of person centred planning in schools more generally appear to be lacking. The literature has also not revealed a theory of how person centred planning and reviews might have an effect.

Answers to the research questions of the current study will hopefully therefore go some way to filling this gap in the literature, by exploring what changes person centred reviews bring about (primary RQ) and attempting to explain how these changes happen (secondary RQ).

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has described how the literature on person centred planning was systematically searched and shown that robust research into the approach in schools is currently lacking. While person centred reviews have been shown to be efficacious and effective in services with adults with LD (IfHR, 2005), evidence from schools has so far not met the same standard.

Chapter 5 will return to some of the themes presented in this initial literature review, linking them to the findings of the current study to the post-analysis literature review.

3 Methodology

"Truth, I have learned, differs for everybody. Just as no two people ever see a rainbow in exactly the same place – and yet both most certainly see it, while the person seemingly standing right underneath it does not see it at all – so truth is a question of where one stands, and the direction one is looking in at the time."

Iain M. Banks (2001)

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter outlines the purpose of the current study before outlining the orientation, strategy, design and methodology, as well as describing the process of sampling, data collection, data analysis and theory construction. It will also explore the approach taken to research ethics and the validity of the analysis.

3.2 Purpose and initial research questions

As discussed in the introductory chapters, the overall aim of the current study is to begin the process of investigating the use of person centred approaches in schools, as the first steps in building an in-depth, methodologically sound research base in this area.

Robson (2011) outlines the variety of purposes possible in a research study, listing, exploratory, descriptive, explanatory and emancipatory.

- Exploratory research involves seeking to understand more about something the research has noticed or observed, often generating hypotheses for future research.
- Descriptive studies attempt to build an accurate picture of a phenomenon, in order to determine the central factors and variables.
- Explanatory research aims to understand the relationships which define the topic of study, including an explanation based on cause and effect.
- Emancipatory studies are working to create opportunities for "social action", i.e. by foregrounding the voice of a marginalised group.

To these can be added **evaluative** research (Robson, 2011, p6), which looks to gather the evidence necessary to make validated judgements about a phenomenon.

A possible place to start in the current study is by exploring what impact adopting person centred reviews has in a school, as well as explaining how this impact comes about. The purpose of the current study is therefore both exploratory and explanatory. The exploratory purpose takes priority and is considered as the primary research question. The initial research questions associated with each purpose are:

- What has changed in schools that have been running person centred annual reviews as part of the local pilot project? (Primary RQ, Exploratory).
- How have these changes come about? (Secondary RQ, Explanatory).

It is hoped that the answers to these questions will enable the construction of a theory of person centred reviews in schools, which will in turn provide a rich source of ideas and hypotheses for further research in the area, including studies with an evaluative purpose (Are person centred

reviews an effective way to work with children and young people with SEN and disabilities?) and those with an emancipatory purpose (How do teachers respond to the views and opinions of children and young people and disabilities?)

3.3 Conceptual framework

In this section, the position taken in the current study in relation to ontology and epistemology is outlined.

3.3.1 Ontology and epistemology

Ontology, often defined as branch of the philosophy of metaphysics, is the philosophical study of the nature of reality, existence and being (Robson, 2011; Cresswell, 2003). It also deals with the ways in which we categorise ideas, objects and concepts and how they relate to each other (Hughes, 1997), for example, through similarities and differences or hierarchies and subdivisions.

An ontology is a particular account of existence; an explicit specification of a set of concepts and categories. In practice an individual's ontology is inseparable from their epistemology (Moore, 2005).

Epistemology is the philosophical study of knowledge; it deals with the fundamental questions of what makes knowledge valid and how valid knowledge can be obtained (Robson, 2011) Epistemology attempts to answer the question, "How do we know?" and concerns itself with the

accuracy of the senses, and the nature of reason and logic. There are also debates in epistemology around how the nature of knowledge relates to notions like truth, belief, and evidence.

A research epistemology is very much affected by the individual researcher's perceived relationship with the material they are studying. For example, does the researcher see themselves as discovering knowledge to which they are an external observer, or are they building a body of knowledge of which they themselves are a part?

When combined together in research, epistemology and ontology define a theory of knowledge within a view of reality, providing an underpinning to a paradigm and a methodology, as shown in Figure 3.1, below. Gray (2004) describes this as a "conceptual framework" for methodological decision making.

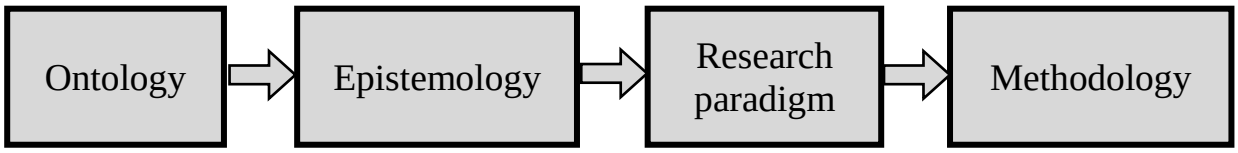

Figure 3.1 The relationship between the elements of a conceptual framework for research

3.3.2 Realism, relativism and critical realism

Research in the social sciences is shaped by whether the phenomenon under study requires a realist or relativist ontology. This requirement defines the researcher's relationship with the subject of their research and constrains their options later in the process of designing a methodology.

Realist ontologies hold that there is an external reality, which can be explained by observable facts. Such ontologies are supported by positivist epistemologies, which state that the facts of external reality can be determined a sufficiently objective observer. Those who adopt this orientation see knowledge as governed by universal principles, such as the laws of nature, and will often claim that facts are facts, independent of our values, and can be "captured" or "discovered" using methods of sufficient rigour (Robson, 2011; Cresswell, 2003).

While this orientation works well in the physical and life sciences (where objective measurement and replicable methodologies are goals that, while challenging, are possible to pursue and can be approximated) many subjects in the social sciences are not suited to this paradigm (Robson, 2011). Many of the phenomena explored by social researchers are dependent on enormously complex and varying concepts such a context and culture, which are extremely difficult, if not impossible, to operationalise in a way which would satisfy the realist's demand for rigour and objectivity (Cresswell, 2003).

The opposite orientation is to start from a position that knowledge is subjective; to seek to understand phenomena through interpreting the meanings individuals ascribe to them. This relativist ontology often works alongside a constructivist epistemology. Raskin (2002) defines constructivism as the view that "knowledge is a compilation of human-made constructions". Burr (2003) describes the constructivist epistemology as taking the perspective that the person has an active role in the creation of experience and meaning from their perception of the world.

Researchers with the strongest relativist positions claim that there is no such thing as an external reality – there is no ultimate truth – and that knowledge is culturally and historically

situated, dependent on individual interpretation or social construction (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). The advantages of this orientation are the contextualisation and meaningfulness of findings, and the respect given to participants as individuals.

In contrast to both, post-positivists recognise this fallibility of observation. While their ontology remains realist, claiming that "the truth is out there", post-positivists often adopt a critical realist epistemology, acknowledging that external reality can only be approximated, never confidently and objectively defined (Trochim, 2006). Critical realists in social science emphasise the complex and dynamic nature of the social world, arguing that the reliability that positivists seek can only come at the expense of an oversimplification of the variables and factors involved (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). There is also a recognition that the values of the observer influence what is observed (Robson, 2011).

Critical realists try to understand how contexts and mechanisms combine to create a social process, or "regularity" (Fox, Martin, & Green, 2007; Pawson & Tilly, 1997). The term 'theory' to a critical realist is a description of the mechanisms underlying actions which result in observable events and of the conditions within which these mechanisms work (Robson, 2011). Exploring the perceptions of the participants, which may of course differ, can identify the mechanisms which they say are helpful and the contexts within which these mechanisms occur.

3.3.3 Conceptual framework of the current study

The challenge of the current study was to find a way of exploring the person centred reviews, which is alive to the complexity of the review process and which can build a sufficiently valid

and meaningful theory. The conceptual framework selected for the current study is shown in Figure 3.2, on page 41.

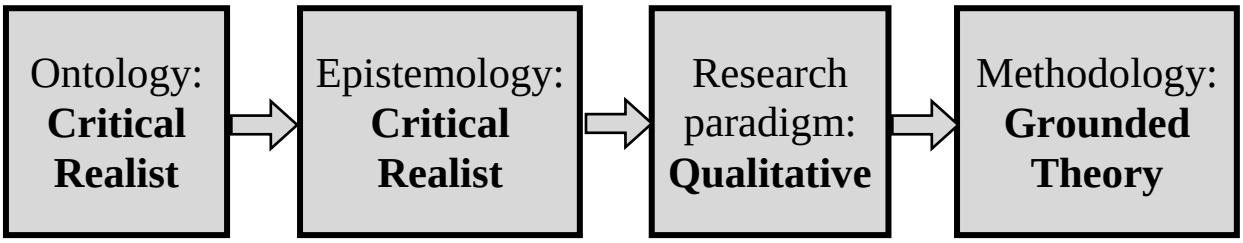

Figure 3.2 The conceptual framework of the current study

The current study has adopted a critical realist ontological position, to explore person centred reviews as a process or a mechanism that takes place in varying contexts and that triggers certain outcomes. Critical realism allows mechanisms or processes to be seen as socially constructed hypotheses (Robson, 2011; Cresswell, 2003) and it enables a researcher to approximate what is taking place, building a valid and meaningful theory through synthesising the individual perspectives of the participants (Trochim, 2002).

Positivist approaches were rejected as they are not well suited to understanding social processes – the complexity of person centred reviews prevents the objectivity and rigour necessary for the adoption of an orientation based on a positivist epistemology (Robson, 2011).

Furthermore, an investigation using the quantitative methods favoured in the positivist tradition would be hard to design well within the limits of the current study. For example given the huge variety in how provision for SEN and disabilities is managed in schools, it would be hard to guarantee the treatment integrity necessary for a randomised controlled trial. Similarly, the

small numbers of children with Statements of SEN and their enormous diversity would render the construction of an appropriate control group impossible (Haynes, et al., 2012).

Critical realism enables the researcher to be alive to changes that occur during the process of data collection and analysis. These benefits significantly outweigh the practical disadvantages, including time consuming data collection, complex and challenging data analysis, and the possibility that clear patterns may not emerge.

In addition, Pawson and Tilly (1999) state that research using this orientation can produce an understanding that can be used to create and develop policy and practice for professionals, a major benefit given the anticipated relevance and impact of the current study (see section 1.8).

3.4 Research strategy

A research strategy is a structured plan, designed to ensure that research is carried out systematically rather than haphazardly. Strategy refers to how the researcher carries out their research, how they go about finding out knowledge. It is a holistic approach, rather than merely the techniques and data analysis (Wainwright, 1997). This section will outline the methodology of the current study, and the plan for sampling, data collection and analysis.

3.4.1 Research paradigm

Working with a critical realist epistemology, the current study used a qualitative paradigm. Rossman and Rallis (1998) describe the characteristics of a qualitative study as:

- Taking place in a natural setting and aware of the position and influence of the researcher themselves,
- Sensitive to and building rapport with participants,
- Interactive and emergent rather than tightly pre-figured,
- Interpretive of data, resulting in broad views rather than micro-analyses.

Robson (2011) provides justification for this choice in the current study, stating that qualitative paradigms are very well suited to exploratory research, where the experience and individual perceptions of participants is important and where social processes and units are being studied.

3.4.2 Methodology

Grounded theory was selected as the methodology for the current study. In grounded theory, initially developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), the researcher is not attempting to test or prove a pre-existing theory, but to derive one that is strongly grounded in the data. Often the influence of the perspectives, values and contexts of both researcher and participants are openly acknowledged, allowing a rich, detailed picture to emerge.

> *"Grounded theory methods consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct theories grounded in the data themselves."*
>
> *(Charmaz, 2006, p2)*

The advantages of grounded theory are in its systematic, meticulous and rigorous procedure, and in the relevance, meaning and testimonial validity that come from deriving data from the

experiences of individuals. In the current study, these advantages significantly outweigh the disadvantages of this approach to analysis, such as the challenge of establishing reliability and generalisability from subjective data, and the difficulty in avoiding researcher-induced bias.

Other qualitative methods were considered, but were less suitable given the characteristics of the current study. Thematic analysis is often suggested to those starting out in qualitative research (Robson, 2011). However, it is not recommended for exploring a complex social process such as person centred reviews. Similarly, Discourse Analysis (Coyle, 2007) is also not appropriate at this stage. Although its probing of the constructive use of language would provide fascinating insights into how person centred reviews are defined and presented, it cannot answer the current research questions. Furthermore, neither of these methods is well suited to the explanatory purpose of the current study (Robson, 2011).

Two further social constructionist methods, Narrative Analysis, which focuses on the stories participants' construct and the meaning they ascribe to events in their life (Crossley, 2007) and Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which explores personal lived experiences (Smith & Etough, 2007), were both rejected due to the critical realist stance of the current study, exploring participants' views on an external process.

3.4.3 Types of grounded theory

Since its development in the 1960s, grounded theory has evolved along three main pathways, reflecting various points on the continuum from positivism to constructivism via post-positivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Corbin & Holt, 2005).

Glaser's own definition of the method is seen as the most positivist version of Grounded Theory, with its explicit attempt to discover a theory objectively, unaffected by the pre-existing knowledge of the researcher. This search for "truth" has been criticised as flawed, given the inevitable influences of the researcher's overt and implicit biases (Willig, 2008).

Charmaz (2014), in a more recent development of Grounded Theory, draws on a social constructionist framework, working from the perspective that theory is co-constructed by the researcher and the participants together. In contrast to Glaser's approach, Charmaz's is a search for shared interpretations, holding that there are many possible truths.

Strauss's development of Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) takes a critical realist standpoint, attempting to view an external reality through the imperfect lens of human perception and thought. This is a search for understanding, acknowledging that all attempts to observe reality objectively will fail, taking a middle ground between the extreme realist and relativist ontologies by assuming an "obdurate reality" (Thornberg, 2012) alongside multiple perspectives on these realities (Charmaz, 2009).

Corbin and Strauss's approach to grounded theory is the best suited to the epistemology and aims of the current study, in its exploration of person centred reviews as a real social process, using participants' views as a tool to approximate as closely as possible the mechanisms involved.

3.4.4 Grounded theory and literature review

As Charmaz states, "grounded theorists start with data" (2006, p3) and as such, researchers using grounded theory typically delay their literature review until after completing the process of data analysis and theory generation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Thornberg (2012) outlines the practical and philosophical challenges of waiting until the end of the research process to conduct the literature review, particularly for educational researchers.

Specifically Thornberg notes that the ideal of starting with a "blank slate" is impossible in practice, due to the need for the researcher to have some knowledge of the literature in order to identify a topic and to justify its importance to funders and ethics boards. He points out that a researcher claiming to have no preconceived ideas is showing a "naive empiricism", adding that:

> *"Empirical observation could never be totally free from theoretical influence because seeing is already a "theory-laden" undertaking."*
>
> *(Thornberg, 2012, p246)*

Thornberg recommends a constructive approach, which he names "informed grounded theory", using abduction alongside induction, which avoids the risk that ideas from the literature will be forced onto the data where they do not belong. He states that abduction involves selecting or constructing a hypothesis that better explains the data (Douven, 2011). Abduction means that insight comes about by modifying or elaborating existing knowledge or combining ideas in new ways.

> *"...the grounded theorist has to accept the impossibility of pure induction and at the same time recognize the analytical power of the constant interplay between induction (in which he or she is never tabula rasa) and abduction."*
>
> *(Thornberg, 2012, p249)*

In the current study, a similar approach has been taken. While an initial literature review was conducted prior to data collection (Chapter 2) in order to discover what was already known about the impact of person centred reviewing and to justify the value of the research, the main literature review was carried out in stages, starting during the analysis, following Kelle (2005) in seeing pre-existing theories and research findings as "heuristic tools".

3.4.5 Revised research questions

As stated in section 1.7, the initial research questions denoted an area of interest for the current study.

- What has changed in schools that have been running person centred annual reviews as part of the local pilot project?
- How have these changes come about?

These initial research questions have been revised as follows into more specific questions answerable through grounded theory:

- What changes have come about in primary schools that have been running person centred annual reviews as part of the local pilot project, according to SENCos who have been leading them? (Primary RQ, Exploratory).
- How, according to SENCos who have been leading person centred reviews, have these changes come about? (Secondary RQ, Explanatory).

The revised questions will enable the construction of a theory of person centred reviews, which is grounded in an analysis of the views of those who are leading their implementation in primary schools.

3.4.6 Sampling strategy

Although the pool of potential participants for the current study was quite small, this is not necessarily a disadvantage in qualitative research. Gray (2004), for example, states that a small sample can lead to a more penetrating, in depth analysis.

In order to have a detailed perspective on the impact of adopting person centred reviews, participants needed to have been involved in the local pilot project since 2010[1], having worked at their school before then. They also needed to have taken a leading role in setting up and running person centred reviews. In total, there were 10 participants who fitted these criteria, all of whom were SENCos or Inclusion Coordinators in primary schools in the same urban area.

[1] The pilot project started in 2009 as an exploration of child-friendly approaches to annual reviews, and was expanded in 2010 to include elements of person centred planning.

Participants were invited to take part because they had a meaningful insight into person centred reviews to offer the research. This technique is known as purposive sampling (Patton, 2002). Purposive sampling is a non-random method of sampling and it relies on the judgement of the researcher. The aim of purposive sampling is not to obtain a group of participants randomly selected from a population in order to make generalisations, instead it aims to target characteristics within a population that are relevant to the research questions (Babbie, 2001). Robson (2011) describes how purposive sampling is used in grounded theory research.

> *"We do not seek a representative sample for its own sake, there is certainly no notion of random sampling from a known population to achieve statistical generalisability."*
>
> *(Robson, 2011, p 193)*

Purposive samples can be highly prone to researcher bias, if the sample is based on criteria that are too loose or that do not stand up to close scrutiny (Patton, 2002). However, this subjective component of purposive sampling is not such a significant disadvantage when the researcher's judgements are based on clear criteria. In the current study, the criteria (see Box 3.1 on page 50) are clearly defined and consistently applied, justifying the choice of a purposive sample.

A process of theoretical sampling was also applied, in keeping with grounded theory. Theoretical sampling involves deciding who to interview next according to the development of the analysis – specifically the progress of theory generation. The rationale for each stage of theoretical sampling will be described in section 3.5.2 on page 62.

3.4.7 Process of sampling and recruitment

Using the exclusion criteria outlined in Box 3.1 below, the total population in the current study numbered 10. Of the 15 schools in the pilot project in 2010, two had left the project and a further three SENCos had moved to new jobs by the time sampling occurred, excluding them from the population. The researcher had knowledge of participant characteristics and eligibility from historical involvement in the pilot project.

Participants must be:

1. A SENCo or inclusion coordinator.
2. At a school which has been involved in the pilot project since at least 2010.
3. A regular past contributor to the pilot project
4. With a leading role in setting up and running person centred reviews.
5. Having worked at their school prior to 2010 (including in different roles).

Box 3.1 Criteria for purposive sample of participants

Sampling from a population of this size meant the final sample was necessarily small, which in qualitative research can be an advantage. As Crouch (2006) points out, small samples enable "the researcher's close association with the respondents, and enhance the validity of fine-grained, in-depth inquiry in naturalistic settings." (p1).

With such a small population it was possible to ensure that all were informed about the research; indeed all members of the population were first made aware of the development of this research through information sharing at meetings of the pilot project group more than a year before sampling began. This made it possible to determine that the purpose of the research

and the research questions were relevant and interesting to front line practitioners (Cresswell, 2003) and that at least some would consent to take part.

Recruitment was conducted through individually emailing the participant to check their previous expression of interest still stood, and that they were willing and able to take part. This was followed by sending a formal information pack covering the ethical basis of the research (see Section 3.7.5 below). If the participant consented at this stage, a time was arranged to conduct the interview. The final number of participants was not known in advance; following the core Grounded Theory technique of theoretical sampling (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, see section 3.5 on page 58), participants were approached one at a time, following analysis of the previous interview.

The choice of participant at each stage was determined by the concepts and categories emerging from the data analysis up to that point. The rationale for this process is detailed in section 3.5.2 on page 62, and further elaborated in Appendix 7: Research Diary. Sampling was concluded when the analysis of the data reached theoretical saturation, as detailed in section 3.5.3 on page 67.

3.4.8 Characteristics of sample

Details of the participants who took part in the current study are listed in Table 3.1, below.

Interview	Participant code	Gender	Role in school	Date school joined pilot project	Participant's status within pilot project
1	**E**	Female	Assistant headteacher, SENCo	2010	Early adopter
2	**M**	Female	Acting deputy headteacher, SENCo	2010	Early adopter, also involved in wider dissemination of the model
3	**O**	Female	Assistant headteacher, Inclusion coordinator	pre-2009	Pioneer, involved the early development of the model and in setting up the pilot project
4	**T**	Female	Assistant headteacher, SENCo	2010	Early adopter
5	**I**	Female	SENCo	2010	Not involved, started leading person centred reviews in 2014/15

Table 3.1 Characteristics of the participants

3.4.9 Data collection

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews. Formal, or fully structured, interviewing techniques are not seen as having sufficient flexibility and responsiveness, while unstructured

interviews are more suited to research exploring the experiences of participants or the meanings they ascribe to phenomena (Robson, 2011). Semi-structured interviewing techniques are often advocated when using grounded theory to analyse the data (Gray, 2004; Robson, 2011).

Semi-structured interviews use a set of pre-determined questions, but allow the interviewer the scope to rephrase questions, follow interesting leads and develop ideas in more depth (Robson, 2011). As such, semi-structured interviews offer a balance between structure and flexibility, allowing a more natural, conversational style suited to exploring participants' broad and complex views, opinions and perspectives.

Robson (2011) identifies four main elements of a semi-structured interview:

- Introductory comments, opening out the area under study.
- A list of topic headings linked to specific questions.
- A set of prompts or probes to elicit further ideas or to develop a theme.
- Closing comments to conclude the interview.

Given the complexity both of person centred reviews as a social process and primary schools as a social environment, semi-structured interviews are ideally suited to exploring the views of SENCos running person centred reviews.

3.4.10 Interview schedule

The initial interview schedule was constructed with the exploratory and explanatory research questions in mind. Topics were selected to cover as broad as possible a range of ways in which

person centred reviews may have had an impact, drawing on informal evaluation carried out throughout the pilot project (Viner, 2008, Lopez, 2014, Sutcliffe & Birney, 2015) as well as the researchers own introspection.

The introductory element was loosely scripted to cover important points related to research ethics, including anonymity, confidentiality and the right to withdraw. It also covered the procedure for recording the interview and how the recording would be securely held afterwards, checking the participant's informed consent. In this section, the interview also emphasised that there could be no right or wrong answers, as the research was concerned with the participants' own experiences.

The main questions were selected to be phrased in as open a way as possible, as open questions tend to be more flexible, encourage more in depth or surprising responses and support rapport between interviewer and interviewee (Gray, 2004; Robson, 2011).

Prompts and elaboration were selected to broaden the opportunities for the interviewee to draw on their experience and to stimulate interesting discussion. During the interview, the researcher was careful to be clear that participants could give negative answers, to avoid demand characteristics – participants responding to cues from the interviewer and giving answers to live up to the interviewer's expectations, rather than reporting their own views and experiences (Gomm, 2004).

Robson (2011) outlines how probes, in conjunction with verbal comments and questions, can include non-verbal techniques, including eye contact, gesture, pauses and minimal encouragement. In addition to these support probes, the researcher drew on his training as an

Educational Psychologist to apply the skills of active listening to each interview, including the use of clarification, reflection and encouragement (Egan, 2002).

3.4.10.1 Piloting of interview schedule

Interview schedules are often piloted to identify flaws and to allow necessary revisions to be made before beginning the study proper (Kvale, 2007; Cresswell, 2003). In the current study given the small size of the total population, the interview schedule was informally piloted through discussion with two colleagues: specialist teachers in person centred planning (at the time employed by the local authority) both of whom had previously run person centred reviews in schools.

While generally making positive comments, their recommendations were as follows:

- Add questions and prompts exploring the impact on the whole school, including school leadership.
- Explore impact on workload for staff and pupils.

These suggestions were used to develop and expand the interview schedule, shown in Table 3.2, below. A key to the table below is shown in Box 3.2 on page 57.

Topics/purpose	Questions	Prompts	Elaboration
Introduce and establish interview protocols	Opening out; purpose; timescales	Ethics (recording; confidentiality; withdrawal)	
Rapport	What is your experience of person centred working?		
Impact on the school as a whole	**Has anything changed in your school as a result of working in person centred way?**		**for the better** **for the worse**
Impact on people	Has there been any impact on people in school?	pupils parents teachers teaching assistants you as SENCo **the school leadership**	positive and negative impact how did that happen?
Impact on relationships	Have relationships changed in school?	between children and adults between children with SEN and disabilities and their peers between the adults involved	positive and negative impact how did that happen?
Impact on workload	**Has workload changed?**	**for you** **for teachers** **for TAs** **for children**	**give examples**
Impact on learning	Has there been any impact on children's learning?	progress motivation	positive and negative impact give examples how did that happen?
Impact on dealing with conflict	Has anything changed when dealing with conflict?		positive and negative impact give examples how did that happen?
Closing comments	Is there anything important I didn't ask about?		

Table 3.2 Initial interview schedule

Bold:	Questions and prompts added following piloting
Italic:	Questions and prompts selected to answer the primary research question
Underline:	Questions and prompts selected to answer the secondary research question

Box 3.2: Key to interview schedule

3.4.11 Transcription

The audio recordings were transcribed by the researcher shortly after each interview took place, as recommended by Charmaz (2006). Although a time consuming process, transcribing enabled the researcher to become intimately familiar with the data from each interview, enabling analytic note taking to take place before beginning the process of coding, an important aspect of analysis using grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The researcher recorded non-verbal elements to the audio informally, using punctuation to indicate significant pauses, emphasis and minimal hesitations. Each transcription was reviewed alongside the audio recording, to check its accuracy. The complete transcripts of each interview are available to view on request.

3.4.12 Use of MaxQDA 11

The data were analysed using MaxQDA 11, a software package that enables flexible coding and theory construction. The advantages of computerised analysis are the speed and simplicity of

coding, the ease of relating codes together as part of axial and selective coding and the visualisations the package can generate. MaxQDA also enabled saving historical versions of the analysis, supporting constant comparison (see section 3.5.1). The features of the main MaxQDA interface are shown in Figure 3.3, on page 59. The complete final MaxQDA project file is available to view on a data disc on request.

3.5 Data analysis

Grounded theory research studies are built from the following main elements (Strauss & Corbin, 1998):

- Theoretical sensitive coding – deriving strong concepts and categories from the data which explain the phenomenon under study.
- Theoretical sampling – selecting participants based on the current state of the theory generated from the data collected so far, without a concern for generalisability.
- Constant comparison – identifying similarities and differences between the emerging categories, setting up a two-way process of construction and deconstruction, linking ideas in a way that reflects the complexity and variability of the data.

Furthermore, these elements are enabled by conducting data analysis simultaneously with data collection.

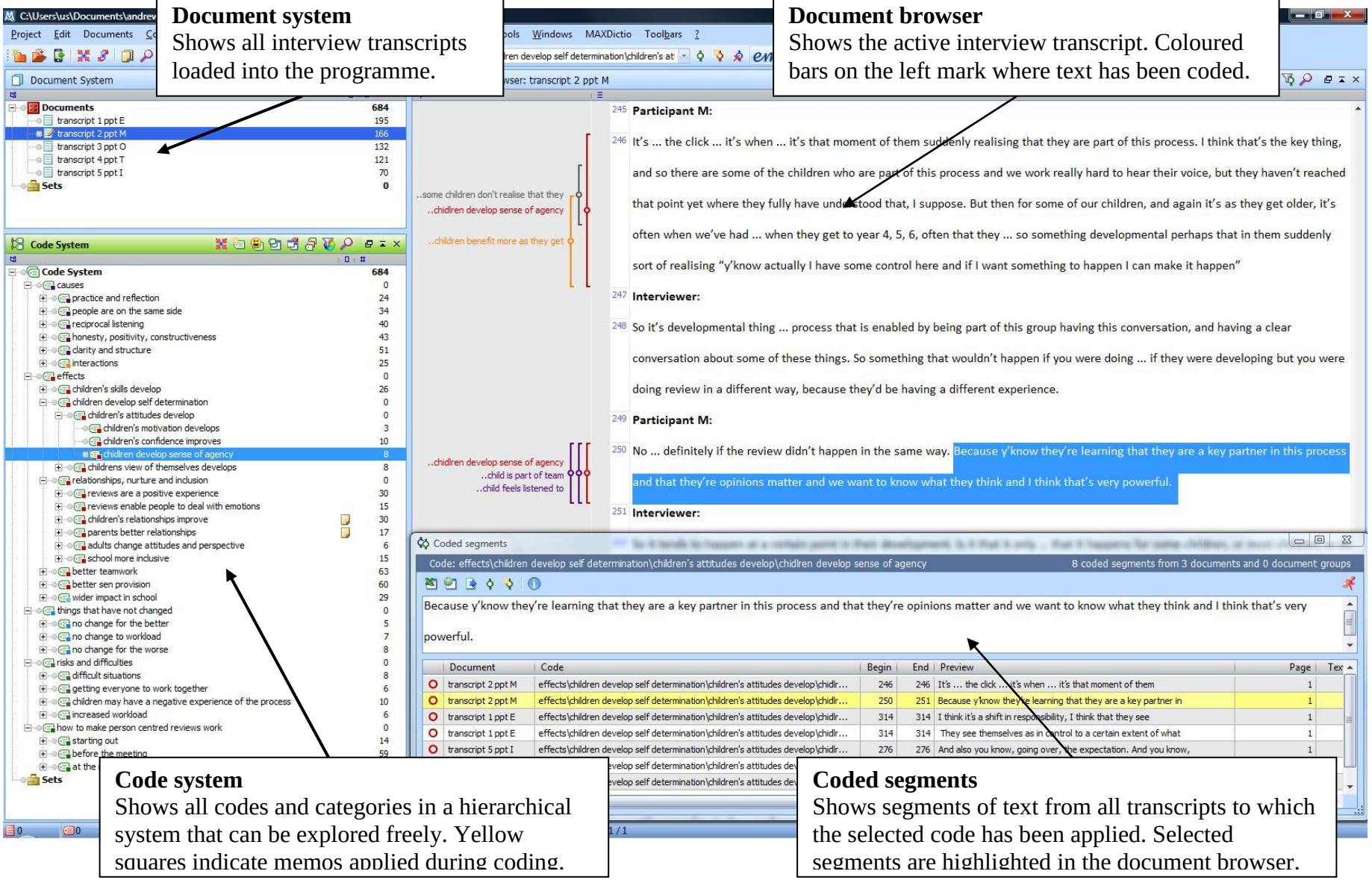

Figure 3.3 Screenshot showing the features of the MaxQDA 11 interface

3.5.1 Theoretical sensitive coding

In analysis using grounded theory, coding involves a detailed process of combing through the data, identifying properties, and noting relationships and categories. There are three levels of coding, which between them enable the generation of a robust theory grounded in the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Charmaz 2006):

- Open coding – breaking the data down in to themes and categories that broadly describe the phenomena under study.
- Axial coding – making connections between the themes identified through open coding and beginning to form higher-order categories.
- Selective coding – choosing a core category and systematically exploring how it relates it to other categories.

This process of narrowing and deepening the analysis at each stage enables a theory to be generated, which tells a coherent story or explains what is happening in the topic of the research. "Theory" is defined by Strauss and Corbin as:

> *"A set of well developed concepts related through statements of relationship, which together constitute an integrated framework that can be used to explain or predict phenomena."*
>
> *(Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p15)*

In practice these stages do not take place one after the other in a simple sequence (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, Charmaz, 2006). While the noting and categorising of properties begins almost

immediately the data are collected, typically the researcher works through a recursive process, moving back and forth between open coding and axial coding, developing and refining the categories and their relationships throughout data collection.

Similarly, selective coding involves checking these connections and relationships and, where necessary, revisiting and evolving the categories in the light of the developing theory. The process of theory generation is supported by the use of memos, notes highlighting significant ideas about the data and hypotheses about the relationships between categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This process is illustrated in Figure 3.4, below.

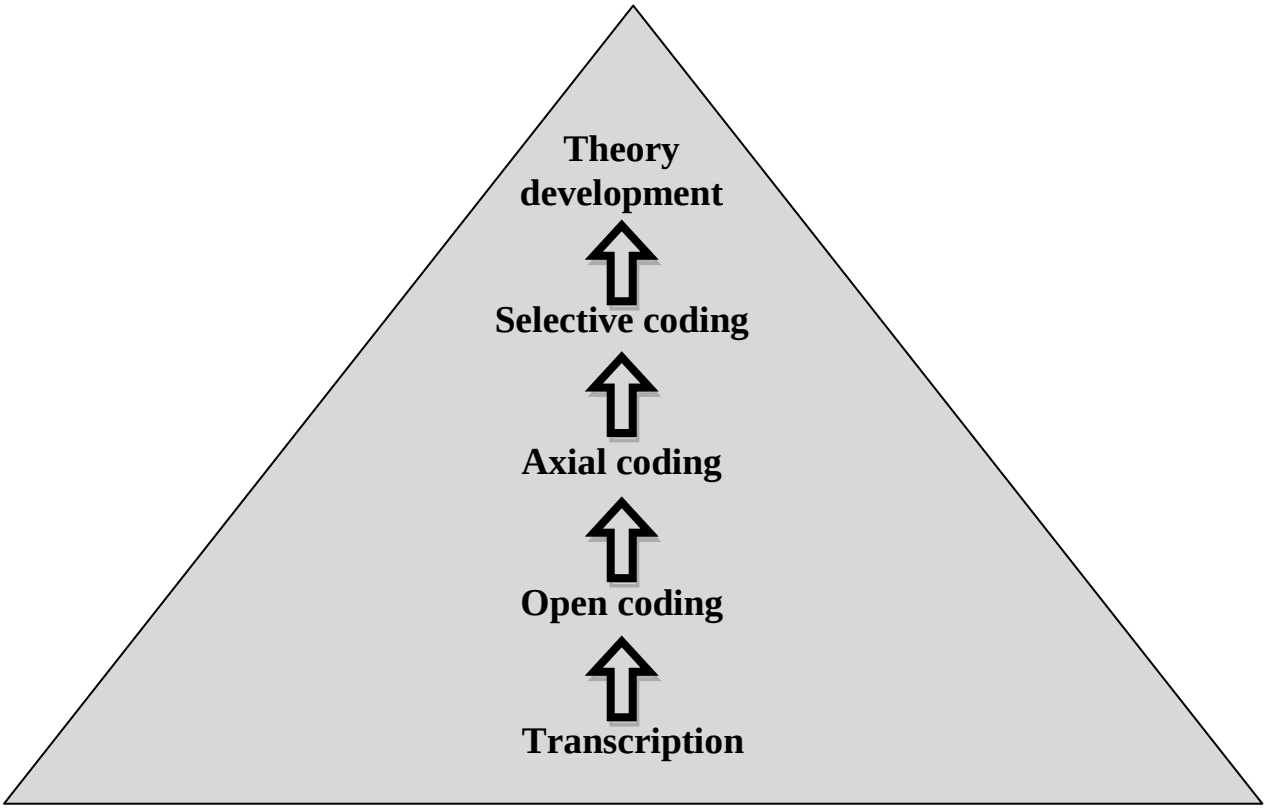

Figure 3.4 Simplified illustration of the process of data analysis using grounded theory

In the current study, following the approach of many writers in the field, including Strauss and Corbin (1998), Corbin and Holt (2005) and Charmaz (2006), each interview was coded before

proceeding to the next. After the second interview was analysed through open coding, the process of axial coding was begun, through identifying connections and conceptual relationships between the open codes from both interviews. Similarly, after each new interview was transcribed and coded using open coding, axial coding was applied to all the existing data, refining and developing the interrelationships of the categories identified in the data.

Selective coding began quite early in the research, with tentative core categories emerging after the second interview. The selective coding too was revisited after each stage of axial coding, as part of a recursive cycle. After the selective coding of interview 3, an emerging theory had begun to develop. At this point, an interim literature review was conducted (Thornberg, 2012; see section 3.4.4, for rationale) a process which was repeated after interview 4. The recursive process of constant comparison followed during the data analysis phase of the current study is shown in Figure 3.5 on page 66.

3.5.2 Theoretical sampling

Theoretical sampling is a process where each stage of data gathering is directed by the themes constructed from the previous stages. Glaser and Strauss define theoretical sampling as:

> *"...the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyses his data and then decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges."*
>
> *(Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 45)*

The researcher "follows the trail of concepts looking for sites, persons or events that enable further comparisons" (Corbin & Holt, 2005, p51). In the current study, participants from the small available pool (see section 3.5.1) were sampled according to the rationale outlined below. The rationale is also further elaborated in Appendix 7: Research Diary.

3.5.2.1 Selection of participant for Interview 1

For the first interview, the researcher elected to sample a participant who could provide a broad and balanced view, opening out the topic and providing a foundation from which (hopefully) conceptual leads would emerge, enabling the next step of theoretical sampling.

E, an early adopter of person centred reviews, who joined the pilot project in its second year, was sampled as the first participant. E had been an enthusiastic advocate for person centred reviews and a regular contributor to critical evaluation through the pilot project. This positioned her well to offer the breadth and balance required at the start of data collection.

3.5.2.2 Selection of participant for Interview 2

After coding interview 1, a range of themes relating to school ethos, SEN systems and the impact on the wider school had emerged. In order to explore these themes further, participant M was sampled. M, also an early adopter who joined the pilot project in its second year, was selected due to having recently taken on a new role as acting deputy headteacher. This new role, it was hoped, would give her an interesting perspective on the impact of person centred reviews on SEN systems and the wider school.

3.5.2.3 Selection of participant for Interview 3

Coding of interview 2 revealed that participants E and M broadly agreed about the relationship between school ethos and the impact of reviews, as well as agreeing about the changes to SEN systems and the influence on the wider school. Where they disagreed was on the possibility that children who take part in person centred reviews make more progress in their learning. As a result, the participant for interview 3 was sampled to offer a further perspective on this theme.

O had been a pioneer of pupil participation in the authority, one of the handful of SENCos who shaped the local model of person centred reviews from before the start of the pilot project. Given this level of experience, it was hoped that she would be able to address the issue of whether taking part in person centred review has any impact on children's academic progress.

3.5.2.4 Selection of participant for Interview 3

Coding of interview 3 introduced a set of themes around the emotional experience of person centred reviews, highlighting the role of nurture and containment. In order to explore this broad theme in more detail, the sampling of a participant for interview 4 was guided by knowledge of ethos amongst the pilot project schools.

T, like E and M an early adopter who joined the pilot project in its second year, had not been as involved in the ongoing evaluation of the project. T was sampled because her school presented its ethos in a very similar way to O's school. It was hoped that this would position her well to elaborate on the theme of emotional support at reviews, as well as possibly providing new perspectives on the concept of the impact of reviews on children's progress.

3.5.2.5 Selection of participant for Interview 5

During the coding of interview 4, very few new concepts emerged from the data. Following discussion at supervision, a decision was taken to sample a potential negative case. More detail about negative cases in Grounded Theory is set out in section 3.5.5 on page 68.

Participant I was sampled to test the developing theory. Although she worked in a school which had been involved throughout the pilot project, she was a new appointee as SENCo. Thus, while she had taken part in person centred reviews as a teacher, in contrast with the earlier participants, she had not herself been involved in the pilot project and the development of the local model of person centred reviews. This, it was felt, positioned I well to challenge the theoretical saturation which appeared to be present in the existing data. More detail about theoretical saturation in Grounded Theory can be found in Section 3.5.3 on page 67.

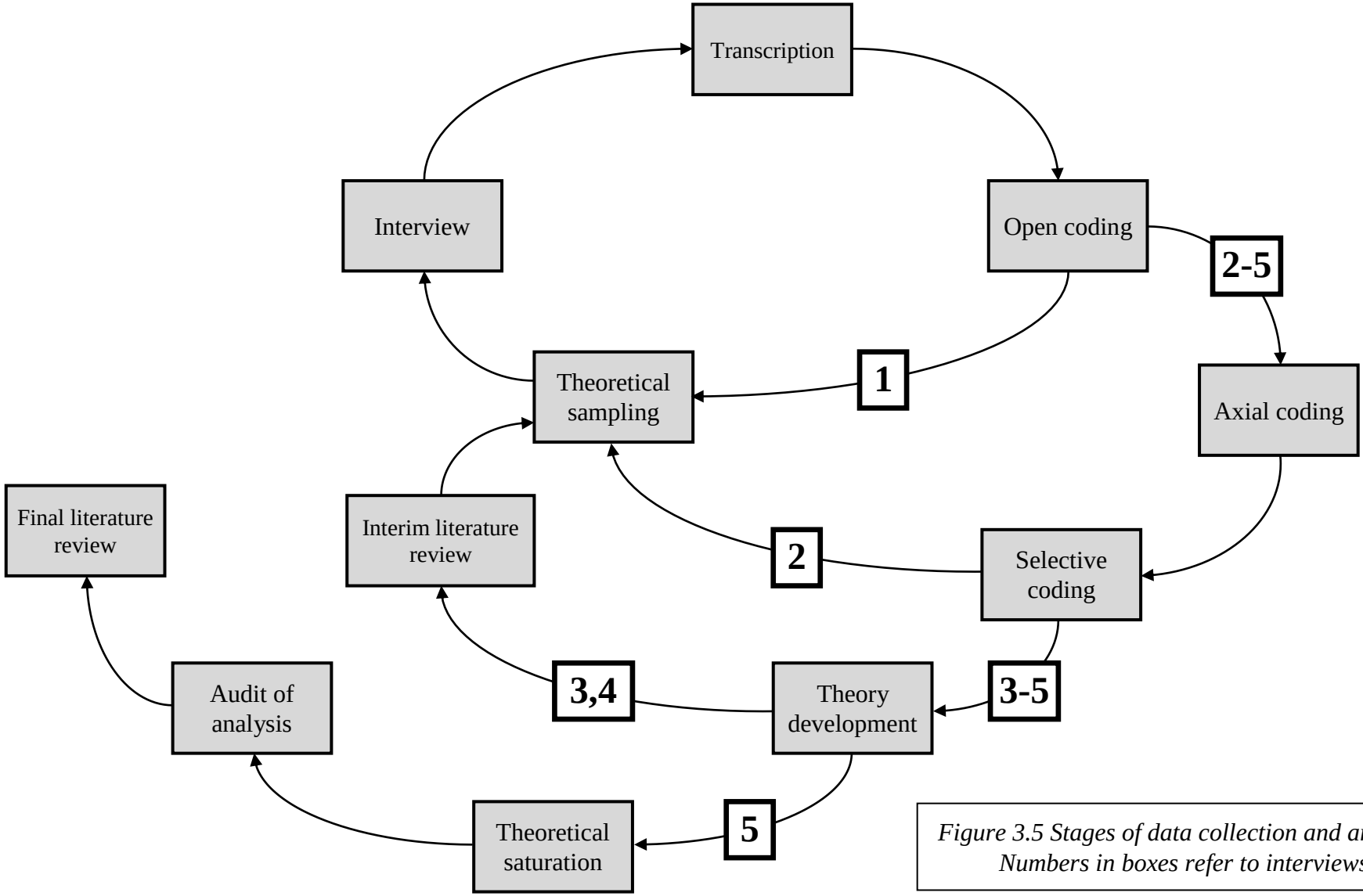

Figure 3.5 Stages of data collection and analysis
Numbers in boxes refer to interviews

3.5.3 Theoretical saturation

Theoretical saturation is a trademark concept in grounded theory research; it refers to the endpoint of theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), occurring when the developing theory of the topic under investigation has reached a sufficiently comprehensive point.

> *"One of the concerns often expressed by those new to grounded theory is when to stop collecting data. The answer is deceptively simple. One stops when one no longer needs to continue. The challenge is in how to recognize that the need no longer exists."*
>
> *(Holton, 2010)*

As Holton outlines above, theoretical saturation is achieved through a process of constant comparison. The grounded theory researcher, engaging in constant comparison of the categories emerging from the data through axial and selective coding, is continually checking how each category or concept is developing, "until no new properties or dimensions are emerging" (Holton, 2010).

In the current study concept saturation began to be evident after the coding of the fourth interview. At this point, selective coding did not produce a major change to the core categories; neither did axial coding significantly alter the interrelationships between lower order categories.

3.5.4 Development of interview schedule

In grounded theory studies, it is typical for the interview schedule to evolve as the research progresses, in response to the developing theory (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In

the current study however, the overall shape of the schedule did not change – no completely new questions were added and none were discarded completely.

This atypical approach was taken for two reasons. In part, the use of previous practice-based evidence (Viner, 2008; Lopez 2014; Sutcliffe & Birney, 2015) and an informal pilot with experienced specialist teachers in its construction gave the initial interview schedule a breadth that was not in practice challenged by the data. Furthermore, it was possible to use changes of emphasis and in the depth of probing to make the interview schedule respond to the developing theory.

3.5.5 Negative case

The participant for the fifth interview was sampled to test the emerging theory as a possible negative case. A negative case is purposely sought out data that challenge the researcher's expectations, assumptions or hypotheses (Charmaz, 2006) and as a way of refining the developing theory.

Analysis of negative cases may revise, broaden and confirm the patterns emerging from data analysis (Patton, 2001). Although the process is risky, directly challenging as it does the analytic framework in which the researcher may feel personally invested, negative cases are a vital method of strengthening findings and provide an additional technique for counteracting personal bias in data analysis.

By lifting one of the inclusion criteria (see Box 3.1 on page 50), Participant I was selected to provide a contrasting perspective, testing the theory and giving an indication of its theoretical

completeness. As detailed in section 3.5.2, Participant I was not "a regular past contributor to the pilot project" (Criterion 3) and she had not therefore contributed herself to the early development of the specific model.

However, Participant I had worked in a pilot project school since before person centred reviews had been introduced, and had been running them as SENCo for two years, using the model in its developed form. Thus her perspective, of having witnessed any possible changes in the school while not being so personally invested in the model, was a valuable one, and a potential source of challenge to the theory as it stood.

The analysis of Interview 5, however, showed that Participant I was not in fact a negative case. Instead, her broad agreement with the developed theory brought about theoretical saturation, as no additional properties or dimensions emerged (Holton, 2010).

3.5.6 Open coding

The process of open coding involved a close reading of the interview transcript uploaded to MaxQDA 11. The researcher highlighted text segments that related to the research question and labelled them with a code which represented their conceptual content. Text segments varied significantly in length, from single phrases to complete sentences to a participant's entire response to a question. This is necessary when coding natural language (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Codes were allowed to overlap across a text segment in order to reflect the messy way concepts are actually expressed in the data.

Often, these initial open codes borrowed the participant's own wording. Codes of this type are known as in-vivo codes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), which help to ground the coding in the data. For example, the quotation below was initially coded with the in-vivo code ***go through the process together***.

> *"Sometimes those TAs are, y'know, just as nervous as the child, but it means that they can, like I say,* ***go through the process together****."*
>
> *Participant E, Line 186.*

Text segments that were not relevant to the research question were not coded, following Strauss and Corbin (1998). An extract from Interview 2 is shown below, both as it appeared on the screen in the MaxQDA 11 project (Figure 3.6 on page 71) and illustrated as a table (Table 3.3 on page 72).

The complete final MaxQDA project file, showing all open codes is available to view on a data disc on request.

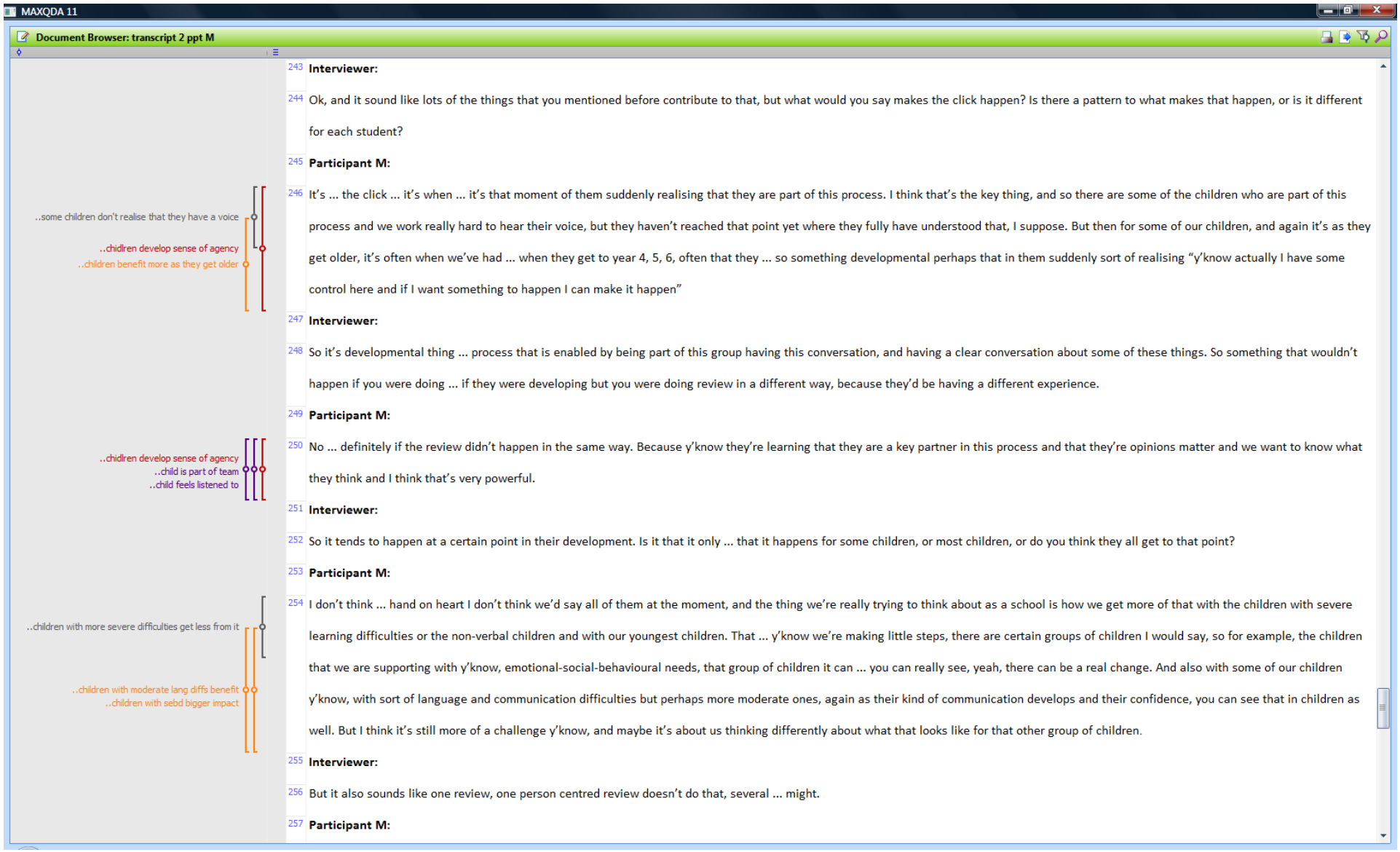

Figure 3.6 Screenshot from MaxQDA 11 project showing open coding

Interviewer	Participant	Open coding
Ok, and it sound like lots of the things that you mentioned before contribute to that, but what would you say makes the click happen? Is there a pattern to what makes that happen, or is it different for each student?	It's ... the click ... it's when ... it's that moment of them suddenly realising that they are part of this process. I think that's the key thing, and so there are some of the children who are part of this process and we work really hard to hear their voice, but they haven't reached that point yet where they fully have understood that, I suppose. But then for some of our children, and again it's as they get older, it's often when we've had ... when they get to year 4, 5, 6, often that they ... so something developmental perhaps that in them suddenly sort of realising "y'know actually I have some control here and if I want something to happen I can make it happen"	Some children don't realise they have a voice Children develop sense of agency Children benefit more as they get older
So it's a developmental thing ... process that is enabled by being part of this group having this conversation, and having a clear conversation about some of these things. So something that wouldn't happen if you were doing ... if they were developing but you were doing review in a different way, because they'd be having a different experience.	No ... definitely if the review didn't happen in the same way. Because y'know they're learning that they are a key partner in this process and that they're opinions matter and we want to know what they think and I think that's very powerful.	Children develop sense of agency Child is part of a team Child feels listened to
So it tends to happen at a certain point in their development. Is it that it only ... that it happens for some children, or most children, or do you think they all get to that point?	I don't think ... hand on heart I don't think we'd say all of them at the moment, and the thing we're really trying to think about as a school is how we get more of that with the children with severe learning difficulties or the non-verbal children and with our youngest children. That ... y'know we're making little steps, there are certain groups of children I would say, so for example, the children that we are supporting with y'know, emotional-social-behavioural needs, that group of children it can ... you can really see, yeah, there can be a real change. And also with some of our children y'know, with sort of language and communication difficulties but perhaps more moderate ones, again as their kind of communication develops and their confidence, you can see that in children as well. But I think it's still more of a challenge y'know, and maybe it's about us thinking differently about what that looks like for that other group of children.	Children with more severe difficulties get less from it Children with moderate lang diffs benefit Children with sebd bigger impact
But it also sounds like one review, one person centred review doesn't do that, several ... might.	No, it's a process I think ... yeah and I think it's then how that feeds into generally how people speak to the children, work with the children and I think that the principles of that meeting need to be...	Principled language Familiarity with process

Table 3.3 Interview transcript illustrating open coding

3.5.7 Axial coding

While engaged in open coding, the researcher was constantly alive to possible links between open codes and to the emergence of potential higher order categories. These observations were recorded as memos in the MaxQDA 11 project (see section 3.5.10). These links were then formalised during the process of axial coding. Axial coding derived greater abstraction from the raw data, moving towards a higher level of interpretation.

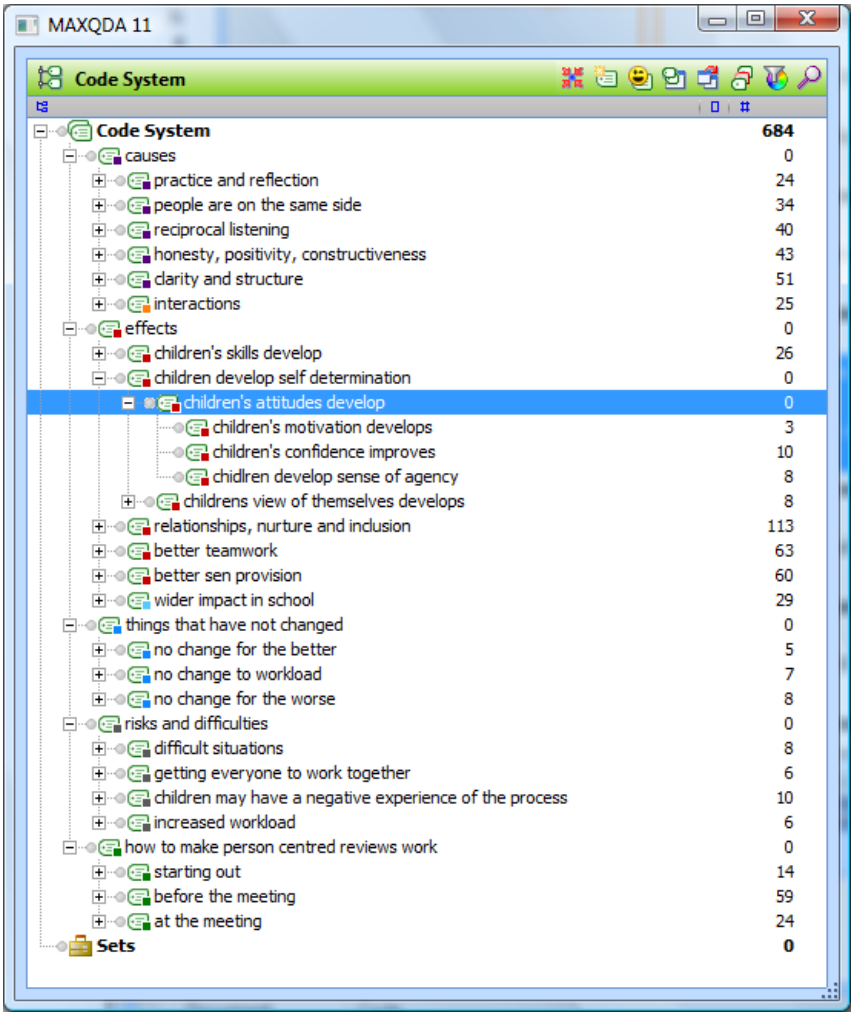

Figure 3.7 Screenshot of MaxQDA 11 project, illustrating axial coding

For example, the axial code, **children's development,** was constructed by linking open codes including ***children benefit more as they get older***, ***children with moderate lang diffs benefit*** and ***children with sebd bigger impact***.

Table 3.4 on page 75 shows axial coding links to open coding, in the same extract of Interview 2 used previously. Figure 3.7 above, shows how the axial code **children's attitudes develop** was constructed from the open codes ***children's motivation develops***, ***children's confidence improves*** and ***children develop sense of agency***.

Through the recursive process of constant comparison (described in section 3.5.1), the structure of the code system and the relationship between initial codes and axial codes evolved and developed as the analysis proceeded. Appendix 5 illustrates the development of the code system throughout the data analysis phase of the research.

3.5.8 Selective coding

The process of selective coding involved a further stage of integration. The categories represented in axial coding were again linked by hypothesising relationships between them, constructing an additional layer to the hierarchy of the code system. Again, at this stage, constant comparison was applied, reviewing the coding of each previous interview transcript in the light of the progress of the analysis and of theory development.

Table 3.5 on page 76 illustrates how a set of axial codes were linked together to construct selective codes, and how these contributed to a core category.

Participant	Open coding	Axial coding
It's ... the click ... it's when ... it's that moment of them suddenly realising that they are part of this process. I think that's the key thing, and so there are some of the children who are part of this process and we work really hard to hear their voice, but they haven't reached that point yet where they fully have understood that, I suppose. But then for some of our children, and again it's as they get older, it's often when we've had ... when they get to year 4, 5, 6, often that they ... so something developmental perhaps that in them suddenly sort of realising "y'know actually I have some control here and if I want something to happen I can make it happen"	Some children don't realise they have a voice Children develop sense of agency Children benefit more as they get older	*Some children respond less well to the process* *Children's attitudes develop* *Children's development*
No ... definitely if the review didn't happen in the same way. Because y'know they're learning that they are a key partner in this process and that they're opinions matter and we want to know what they think and I think that's very powerful.	Children develop sense of agency Child is part of a team Child feels listened to	*Children's attitudes develop* *Working as a team* *School listens*
I don't think ... hand on heart I don't think we'd say all of them at the moment, and the thing we're really trying to think about as a school is how we get more of that with the children with severe learning difficulties or the non-verbal children and with our youngest children. That ... y'know we're making little steps, there are certain groups of children I would say, so for example, the children that we are supporting with y'know, emotional-social-behavioural needs, that group of children it can ... you can really see, yeah, there can be a real change. And also with some of our children y'know, with sort of language and communication difficulties but perhaps more moderate ones, again as their kind of communication develops and their confidence, you can see that in children as well. But I think it's still more of a challenge y'know, and maybe it's about us thinking differently about what that looks like for that other group of children.	Children with more severe difficulties get less from it Children with moderate lang diffs benefit Children with sebd bigger impact	*Some children respond less well to the process* *Children's development* *Children's development*
No, it's a process I think ... yeah and I think it's then how that feeds into generally how people speak to the children, work with the children and I think that the principles of that meeting need to be...	Principled language Familiarity with process	*Language* *Experience across several reviews*

Table 3.4 Interview transcript illustrating axial coding derived from open coding

Axial coding	Selective coding	Core category
Children learn more	**Children's skills develop**	**EFFECTS**
Children's metacognition improves		
Children's independence develops		
Children's attitudes develop	**Children develop self-determination**	
Children's view of themselves develops		
Reviews are a positive experience	**Caring community develops**	
Reviews enable people to deal with emotions		
Children's relationships improve		
Parents better relationships		
Adults change attitudes and perspective		
School more inclusive		
Disagreements easier to manage	**Better teamwork**	
Parents know children better		
Teamwork develops		
Parents more involved in planning		
Adults have better knowledge of child		
All have more of a voice		

Table 3.5 Extract from code system showing selective coding constructed from open and axial codes within one core category

3.5.9 Theory development

The data analysis involved one further stage of abstraction and interpretation, as the selective codes were drawn together into the core categories which formed the heart of the developing theory. The researcher then drew the core categories into theoretical maps which represented an aspect of the overall theory, bringing together the concepts to form a coherent explanatory whole.

One core category **EFFECTS**, is partially illustrated in Table 3.5, on page 76. The theoretical maps will be shown and outlined in detail in Chapter 4.

3.5.10 Examples of memo writing

Memo writing is a central part of analysis using grounded theory. It enables the researcher to keep track of thoughts about the data, potential links between codes, hypotheses about categories and emerging theoretical ideas, maintaining reflexivity, contributing to constant comparison and ensuring no ideas are lost (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2006). While MaxQDA 11 enables memos to be recorded as part of the coding process, linked to specific points in the text, memos can also be recorded separately as part of a research diary. Examples of memo writing from various stages of the analysis are shown in Table 3.6, on page 78, while further examples of memo writing are shown in Appendix 7.

Date	Stage of analysis	Location	Memo
09/01/2015	Transcribing Interview 1	Int 1 Line 117	Participant less clear. Focus on completing forms rather than process of review
23/01/2015	Open coding Interview 1	Int 1 Line 358	Link to understanding of wider world?
17/02/2015	Transcribing Interview 2	Int 2 Line 242	Disagreement about effect on learning
17/02/2015	Transcribing Interview 2	Int 2 Line 255	Much more discussion of difficulties
28/02/2015	Axial coding between Interviews 2 & 3	Int 2 Line 006	Possibly remove “features of pilot project” – not relevant enough
20/03/2015	Transcribing Interview 3	Int 3 Line	The narrative of each participant is different in important ways
01/04/2015	Axial coding between Interviews 3 & 4	Int 3 Line 566	Link between nurture and teamwork
15/04/2015	Axial coding between Interviews 4 & 5	Int 4 Line 305	Existing ethos definitely significant as an interacting factor
15/05/2015	Selective coding between Interviews 4 & 5	Int 4 Line	Are interactions a core category?
29/05/2015	Theory generation		Change "relationships, nurture and inclusion" to "caring community"?

Table 3.6 Examples of memo writing recorded in MaxQDA 11

3.5.11 Reflexivity

In qualitative research, the researcher is often the most important instrument for collecting and analysing data. As a result, many writers on grounded theory highlight the central significance of reflexivity (Moore 2005; Charmaz, 2008). Reflexivity in research means:

> *"...recognizing prior knowledge and theoretical preconceptions and subjecting them to rigorous scrutiny."*
>
> *(Charmaz, 2008, p. 402)*

So, instead of beginning with the idea that we start as a blank slate, onto which the findings of the research are clearly and objectively written, as grounded theory researchers, we recognise that we are completely embedded within a historical, ideological and socio-cultural context, which will have a significant effect on the nature of the interpretations we make.

Corbin and Strauss (2008) go further, stating that the role of the researcher should, as well as being acknowledged, be celebrated and utilised. This builds on the idea that the analysis comes from both the researcher and the data, and provides further justification for the process of constant comparison involved in grounded theory analysis.

As Willig states, *"we cannot ask questions without making assumptions"* (2008, p38). Based on personal experience, informal evaluations of the local pilot project (Viner, 2008; Lopez 2014, Sutcliffe & Birney, 2015) and personal communication with many individuals who have attended person centred reviews, the assumptions of the researcher in undertaking this research are listed below:

- Person centred reviews represent a significant change in practice from other ways of conducting annual reviews.
- The experience of going through a person centred review is different for all the participants, including for the child or young person, the parent(s) and the school staff, when compared to other ways of running reviews.
- This different experience will, in some way, have an impact on everyone who takes part.
- If an individual takes part in enough person centred reviews, this impact may be more significant or last longer.
- If a school fully adopts person centred reviews over a period of several years, there will be changes across the school, noticeable to an individual who knew the school well through this time.
- The range of possible ways the impact of person centred reviews is seen or felt is very broad and may vary from school to school.
- The SENCo is in an excellent position to observe any changes that may have occurred and to give a view as to whether they could have been caused by the adoption of person centred reviews.

3.6 Credibility and trustworthiness

There are major debates about whether it is appropriate to use terms such as “validity” and “reliability” in qualitative research (Robson, 2011), with some writers arguing that, derived as they are from the positivist tradition, they have no place in research with a constructivist ontology. In contrast, Robson (2011) and Gray (2004), outline the concepts of “trustworthiness” and “credibility”.

The trustworthiness of a piece of research is the extent to which the findings are believable and how closely they reflect the data (Robson, 2011). Credibility comes from the efforts made by the researcher to build confidence in the data collection and interpretation (Gray, 2005).

Given the critical realist ontology and epistemology of the current study, it is worth giving some space here to a discussion of how validity and reliability relate to its findings. The subsequent sections will also detail the methods followed to explore the credibility and trustworthiness of the analysis.

3.6.1 Validity, reliability, generalisability and bias

The benefits of grounded theory are in the contextualisation and meaningfulness of the theories constructed from the data (Robson, 2011). The findings are likely to have testimonial validity (Stiles, 2003) in relation to the experience of schools in the local project.

However, the generalisability of the findings is limited due to the participants being drawn only from primary schools in one small area, with its own unique characteristics, cultural profile and history. Furthermore, schools in the local project are using a set of person centred tools developed and used only within one local authority, with significant differences from the approach promoted nationally.

Given this time- and context-dependent nature of the research, the findings are also unlikely to have strong reliability, in that different conclusions would be expected to be drawn if the research was conducted at a different time or in a different location. However, in a qualitative

study these are seen as relatively minor issues, outweighed by the testimonial validity noted above (Cresswell, 2003).

In addition, the small and restricted nature of the pool of potential participants biases the sample towards those who volunteered to pioneer the approach; it could be that the enthusiasm and positivity of this group leads to discourses of the weaknesses of the approach being submerged in the data. Given the exploratory purpose of the current study, it can be seen as the first step in a broader undertaking – generating hypotheses to be tested or explored in future studies – these weaknesses can be seen in context and mitigated through triangulation (Greene et al., 2004) in future research. This will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

Finally, there are significant issues with the researcher being the joint local authority lead on the person centred planning project. This creates the potential for bias (Cresswell, 2003; Robson, 2011) in the phrasing and choice of questions in the interview schedule, the introduction of demand characteristics in the interviews themselves as well as bias at every stage of the data analysis. There is also a significant risk that the researcher, who is known to all participants as one of the originators and promoters of the local approach, will unconsciously promote a dominant discourse of the approach as useful, successful and valid.

This should be set against the benefits of sampling from SENCos who had been involved in the pilot project, rather than say, headteachers from the same schools. Given the close involvement this group have with the review process, and their relationships with the children with SEND who took part in the reviews, they are realistically the only group positioned close enough to the topic to be able to answer both exploratory and explanatory research questions. Thus the challenge to the trustworthiness of the research from the researcher's pre-existing relationships

with the participants is balanced by the transferability which comes from the depth and quality of the descriptions they are positioned to provide (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Within the limits of the current study, limited time and resources meant there was scope for neither a more neutral interviewer to be employed, nor a different technique to be utilised. However, great care was taken in the construction of the interview schedule to promote the current study as neutral in regard to the impact of adopting person centred approaches, with questions selected and phrased to enable participants to voice concerns about the work that would otherwise be held back.

Similarly, the researcher took a reflective and self-critical approach (Cresswell, 2003) to the coding of the interview data, seeking peer support and criticism as well as using supervision to challenge his own existing preconceptions and minimise the biasing effects noted above.

3.6.2 Audit of analysis

To provide "consensus replication" and to support the trustworthiness of the analysis, two forms of audit were carried out. Firstly, the emerging code system was checked by an experienced researcher at two points during the analysis:

- After the first stage of axial coding, between Interviews 2 and 3, to check the trustworthiness of the early stages of the analysis and the first axial codes.
- After selective coding of Interview 4, to check theoretical saturation before proceeding to Interview 5.

At both points comments about the overall progress of the analysis were taken into account including:

- The decision to exclude the axial code *features of the pilot project* from the analysis, discarding the subcodes as not relevant to the research questions.
- The decision to sample Participant I as a possible negative case to test the theoretical completeness of the analysis.

Peer audit of the final code system, and of the developed theory, was carried out by an Educational Psychologist familiar with person centred reviews and with experience of using grounded theory in research. Comments about individual codes were taken into account and minor changes were made to open codes and to axial codes. The peer auditor concluded that the researcher's coding was reasonable and that the theory had coherence. This feedback justified the researcher's conclusion that theoretical saturation had been reached after the fifth interview, and provided credibility to the completed analysis.

3.6.3 Respondent validity

After completion of the analysis, a brief summary of the final theory was shared with the participants, to check the testimonial validity of the research findings. Participants' responses supported the credibility of the analysis and none made a comment that there was anything missing from the analysis. Respondent validity will be discussed in more detail in section 4.4 on page 150 and section 6.4 on page 194.

3.7 Research ethics

This research was designed and conducted in compliance with the British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Ethics and Conduct (2006). The four principles of the BPS code listed below underpinned all decisions made in planning and carrying out the current study.

- Respect – treating individuals with respect, including taking privacy, confidentiality, informed consent and self-determination into account.
- Competence – being aware of professional ethics in decision making and the researcher recognising the limits of their own competence.
- Responsibility – working within a duty of care, protecting research participants from harm and offering debriefing.
- Integrity – behaving at all times with honesty, avoiding exploitation and conflicts of interest, maintaining personal boundaries and dealing with misconduct.

As a prerequisite of starting the process of data collection, permission of the local authority was obtained. This was a straightforward process as the local project was championed by the Principal Educational Psychologist and earlier stages of the work were been supported and encouraged by senior officers in the authority. The study fitted well with the local authority's plan for transition to the new Code of Practice for SEND from September 2014.

In addition, approval was sought from the Tavistock Research Ethics Committee (TREC), which was granted at the second attempt in December 2014, following a request for further information. The letter of approval is shown in Appendix 2.

3.7.1 Consent

Informed consent was sought through a participant consent form (Robson, 2011), which contained detailed information about the process of the research and the use to which the data would be put. The consent form (see Appendix 3) also contained clear statements about how the data would be anonymised, securely held and eventually destroyed. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw at any time and have their data removed from the analysis and destroyed.

The consent and withdrawal form was sent by email once a participant had agreed in principle to be interviewed. A paper copy was brought to the interview (at the participant's workplace) to be reviewed and signed by both participant and interviewer before continuing.

The participants' rights and of the nature and purpose of the research were recapped at the start of each interview, ensuring the principles of respect and integrity were upheld. The signed consent form was copied before the interviewer left to ensure the participant retained a copy as a reminder of their right to withdraw at any point.

3.7.2 Risk of harm

In order to live up to the principles of competence and responsibility, a risk assessment was carried out, which concluded that overall risk to participants was low – there was no risk of physical harm, and, as the topic is not emotionally loaded and very unlikely to bring up trauma for participants, only a very small risk of psychological harm. The research was carried out in an open and honest way; there was no deception or withholding of information from participants.

There was a small risk that the process of being interviewed would be uncomfortable for the participants and there was a concomitant need for the researcher to ensure an accepting, containing atmosphere in interviews, along with reminders about the right to withdraw. Similarly, as participants were interviewed in a private office at their own place of work, they were likely to feel comfortable and able to open up about the topic.

3.7.3 Anonymity and privacy

The risk assessment revealed a risk of breaching participant anonymity through overuse of descriptive details, especially given local knowledge of the schools involved in the project as pioneers and early adopters. Information identifying the local authority, the participants and the schools in which they work was removed from the data at transcription; care was taken to avoid identification of the local authority and the schools in the study through overuse of descriptive details.

Similarly, all names, including of children and young people, parents, teachers, Teaching Assistants, SENCos, Educational Psychologists and other professionals were removed during the process of transcription. The completeness of anonymisation in the transcriptions was checked by a colleague as part of the audit of the analysis; the anonymisation within this write-up was checked during proofreading by an individual with experience of professional writing but no connection to the project or the local authority where the research took place.

3.7.4 Confidentiality and data storage

Interviews were digitally audio recorded, using two devices simultaneously – a tablet computer and a smartphone – to minimise the chance of a catastrophic loss of data. Both devices were protected with passcodes and stored securely by the researcher to guarantee the recordings remained confidential between interviewer and participant.

After the last interview was transcribed, the audio recordings on the smartphone were destroyed. Those on the tablet computer have been retained, still stored securely; they will be destroyed no more than six months from the end of the research project.

3.7.5 Research ethics in practice

In order to fulfil the principle of competence, it is essential to reflect on how these principles were upheld throughout the conduct of the study in practice. Participants were universally happy with how data would be handled, including anonymisation and secure storage. At the point of being approached to take part, two participants asked questions about whether they would be recorded using video and, being told that only audio recording would take place, were happy to continue.

Finally, it is worth noting that the small risk that the process of interviewing would be uncomfortable did not come to pass; at the end of each interview participants were given an opportunity to comment on the process and any ways in which the interview could be improved, and although three commented that it had challenged them to think deeply about their work, none described it as a stressful or difficult experience.

3.8 Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined the conceptual framework for the research, explored the justifications for the choices made in the research strategy and outlined, with examples, the process of data collection and analysis. It detailed the researcher's reflexivity and examined the credibility and trustworthiness of the analysis. This chapter also explained how the research held to the BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct. The following chapter will explore the findings of the current study in detail.

4 Findings

"There is nothing like looking, if you want to find something. You certainly usually find something, if you look, but it is not always quite the something you were after."

J. R. R. Tolkien (1937)

4.1 Chapter overview

This chapter will outline the grounded theory constructed form the interview data. Starting with a summary of the complete theory and an illustrated metaphor, it will continue to explore each core category, showing how each is grounded in the data using excerpts from interview transcripts. Later sections will outline contradictions in the data and respondent validity.

4.2 Complete grounded theory

In subsequent sections, the colour code used to indicate the core category to which each selective code belongs is shown in Table 4.1, on page 91.

Superscript numbers in the outline below (For example **children practice speaking for themselves**[5]) indicate links to propositions in the conditional matrix (see Figure 4.2 on page 98).

Colour		Core category
Red	→	**EFFECTS**
Pink	→	**WIDER SCHOOL DEVELOPS**[2]
Purple	→	**CAUSES**
Orange	→	**INTERACTIONS**[3]
Grey	→	**RISKS AND DIFFICULTIES**
Blue	→	**SOME THINGS MAY NOT CHANGE**
Green	→	**HOW TO MAKE PERSON CENTRED REVIEWS WORK**

Table 4.1: Colour codes used in coding and theory development

4.2.1 Outline of grounded theory

- In a school with a **supportive ethos**[1] and with **staff who are committed** to the process, person centred reviews using the local model have the capacity to **transform SEN provision**[2] in primary schools in a number of ways.

---

[2] WIDER SCHOOL DEVELOPS is a subcategory of EFFECTS

[3] INTERACTIONS is a subcategory of CAUSES

- This model of person centred reviews is flexible, and it **responds to the assumptions and values of the SENCo** managing the process. It can have a **positive impact on all who take part**[3], but brings with it a number of **risks which must be addressed**.

- **Children** who take part in person centred reviews using the local model often **develop** their **skills** and their **self-determination**[4].
    - **This does not happen for all children**[4a]; is most noticeable with **older children**[4b], and those with **specific language difficulties**[4b] or difficulties with **social, emotional and mental health**[4b].
        - This may come about because **children practice speaking for themselves**[5], because **adults listen to them**[6] and **because the process can be honest, positive and constructive**[7].
        - To make this happen, **everyone needs time to prepare for the review**[8].
    - **Some children find taking part in person centred reviews stressful**[9]; it is necessary to **adapt the process to enable their voice to be heard**[10].
    - For children with more severe difficulties, while their peers are often supportive, their **relationships can remain unequal**[11a].

- Taking part in person centred reviews using the local model **improves relationships**[11] for all who take part; it can help **develop a caring community**[12], and it can **build teamwork**[13] between school staff, parents and children with SEN.
    - While in some cases **good relationships already exist**, these reviews have **no negative impact on relationships**.

- Where this effect does occur, it is made possible by a **pre-existing ethos**[1] in the school which supports the process.
  - This may come about because the process **brings people together**[14], in a **clear structure**[15] which encourages **reciprocal listening**[6] and enables people to be **honest, positive and constructive**[7].
- Difficulties can arise when **not everyone is committed to being positive or constructive**[16]; the **role of leading the meeting is fundamental**[17] to its success, through **maintaining a balance between honesty and positivity** and **ensuring difficulties are discussed in a way which is meaningful to the child**.

- **Schools** which adopt the local model of person centred planning often **develop day-to-day SEN practice**[2]. There can also be a **wider impact across the school**[22].
  - Changes to workload for school staff are varied. While there may be **no change to overall workload**, there can be **extra work for the SENCo in starting out** with person centred reviews, and there can be **more work in preparing for a review**. **In some situations, the SENCo's workload is reduced**.
  - **Teaching assistants can gain status and responsibility**[18] from taking part in the process.
    - This happens because often they t**ake on an important role in preparing for the meeting**[19].
  - Teachers who take part in the process sometimes **improve their teaching of children with SEN**[20].
    - This effect often comes about when **teachers listen to children**[21] talk about their learning.

- Running reviews using the local model can support SENCos **develop good systems for SEN**[2a] and **improve the status of SEN within the school**[2b].
    - This happens because of the **clarity and structure**[15] of the process and how it encourages people to be **honest, positive and constructive**[7].
- Some schools which have adopted the local model of person centred reviews have **applied person centred techniques more widely**, or **involved children in school development work.**
    - **School ethos**[1] and person centred reviews **influence each other**[22] in a reciprocal way.
- In some schools, person centred reviews have **influenced the headteacher and SMT**, although **this does not happen everywhere**.

- Setting up person centred reviews requires that the SENCo **learn from existing practice**[23] and **ensure staff understand the approach**[24].

4.2.2 Illustration of the proposed theory

In Figure 4.1 on page 95, the core categories of the theory are illustrated using a simplifying but vivid metaphor. Complementing the verbal description above, this metaphor provides a clear, visual and conceptual way to understand the theory.

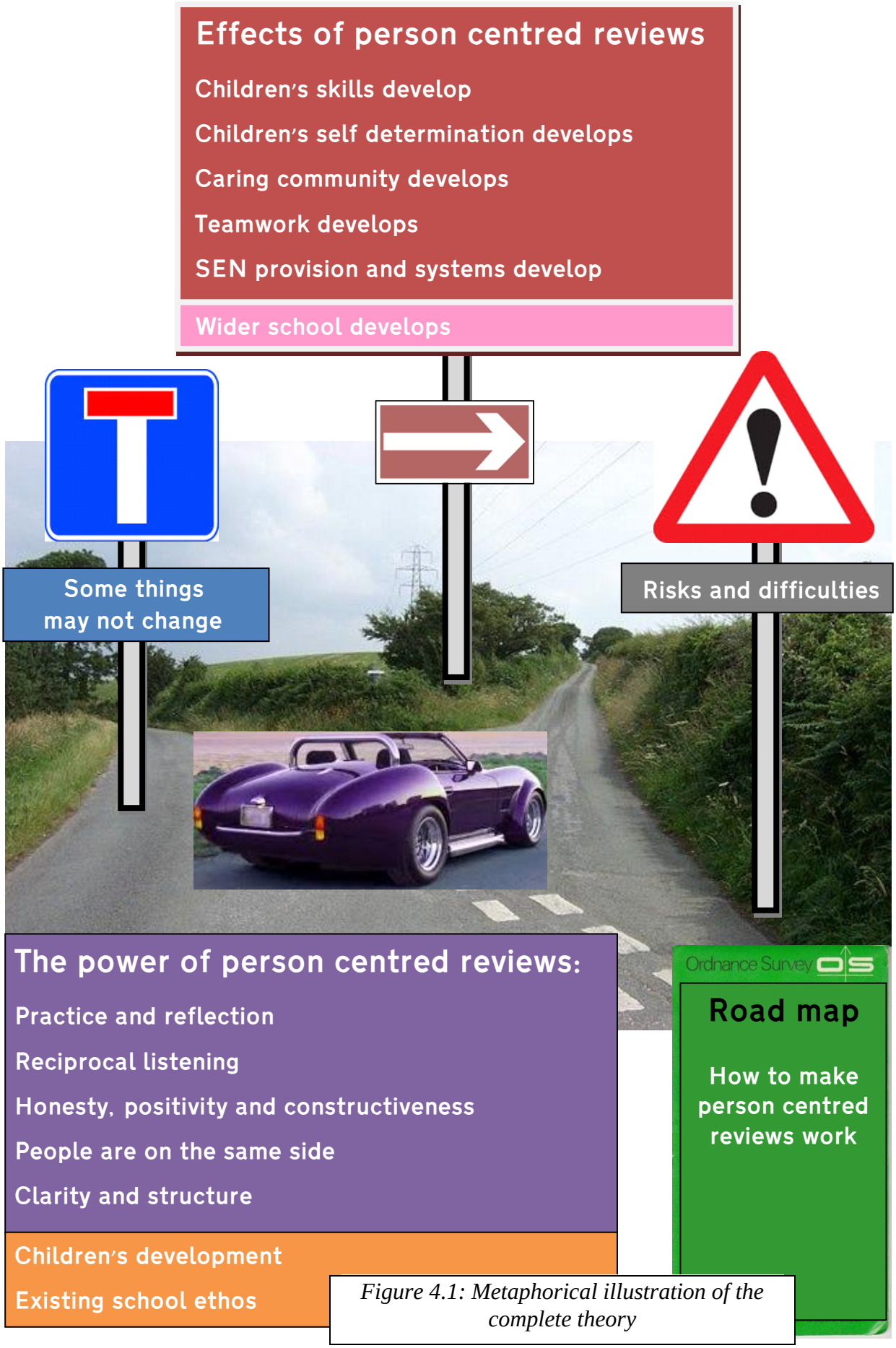

Figure 4.1: Metaphorical illustration of the complete theory

In this metaphor, person centred reviews are a vehicle (powered by **causes** and **interactions**) which can take a school on a journey towards the range of positive **effects** (including how the **wider school develops**) listed on the direction sign. However, there are warning signs to alert the driver, firstly to the fact that the journey has **risks and difficulties** which require skilled driving to handle, and secondly that **some things may not change**; person centred reviews are not a teleportation device, and there is no guarantee the journey will reach every location on the road sign. Finally, the school can use the road map provided by **how to make person centred reviews work.**

4.2.3 Conditional matrix

Cresswell (2003) defines a grounded theory as "an abstract analytical schema of a process". He goes on to explain that strictly a "conditional matrix" is an essential element of a complete grounded theory, although he notes that not all researchers make the effort to construct one. A conditional matrix is, according to Cresswell, a "grand theory" linking the macro and micro levels through a set of concentric circles, starting with the individual and building outward to the nation, summarising the process under study at the highest level of abstraction.

Figure 4.2 on page 98 shows a conditional matrix for the complete grounded theory of the current study, with the child placed at the level of the individual, the person centred review at the level of the group and so on out to the English Education system at the national level. Propositions within the theory (Cresswell, 2003) are shown with arrows and symbols, coloured according to the same code as the analysis, the metaphorical illustration and the outline of the grounded theory (see Table 4.1 on page 91). Each proposition or factor within the theory is also

numbered in the conditional matrix, linked to statements in the outline (see section 4.2.1 on page 91). A key is provided in Box 4.1, below.

1. **Supportive school ethos**
2. **Transform SEN provision**
    a. **Better SEN systems**
    b. **Higher status of SEN in school**
3. **Positive impact on all who take part**
4. **Children develop skills and self determination**
    a. **Some may not (as a direct result of taking part)**
    b. **Some may benefit more**
5. **Practice speaking for themselves**
6. **Reciprocal listening**
7. **Honesty, positivity and constructiveness**
8. **Time to prepare**
9. **Some children find the process stressful**
10. **Adapt the process to the child's needs**
11. **Improved relationships**
    a. **For some children they remain unequal**
12. **Caring community develops**
13. **Teamwork develops**
14. **People are brought together, on the same side**
15. **Clear structure**
16. **Some may not be committed to the process**
17. **Lead meeting with care**
18. **TAs gain status and responsibility**
19. **TA role in preparing for the meeting**
20. **Teachers improve SEN teaching**
21. **Teachers listen to children**
22. **Wider adoption of person centred culture**
23. **Learning from existing practice**
24. **Preparing staff**

Factors outside the analysis but influencing the project:

i. **Developments in person centred planning**
ii. **SEN reform and the 2014 Code of Practice**
iii. **Support from the local authority**

Box 4.1: Key to conditional matrix

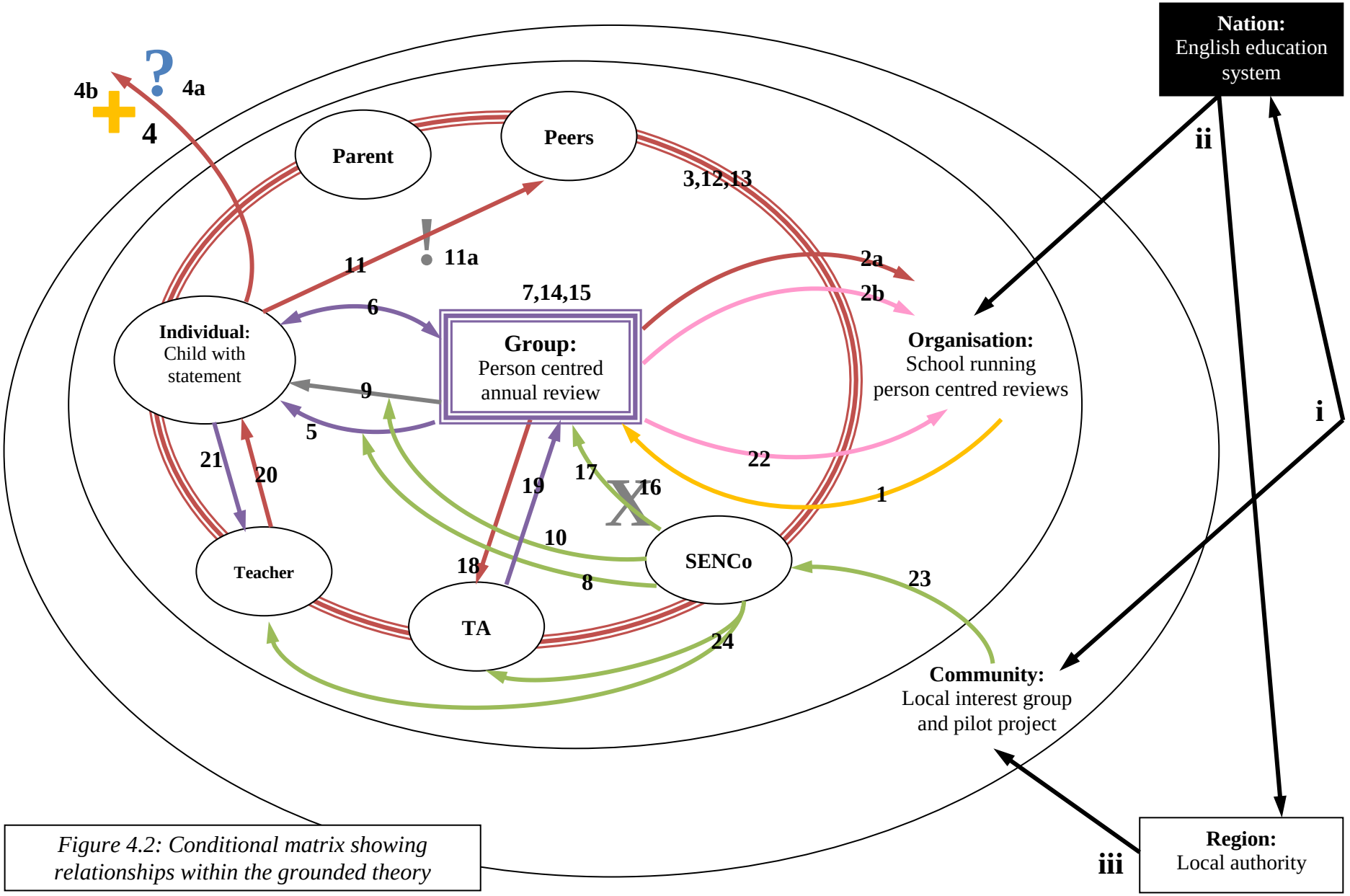

Figure 4.2: Conditional matrix showing relationships within the grounded theory

4.2.4 Links to research orientation

In critical realist research, researchers are seeking to explore how mechanisms operate within contexts to create a social regularity (Robson, 2011), identifying the conditions under which actions result in observable events. Within the theory developed in the current study, **how to make person centred reviews work**, can be seen as the context, the conditions under which the factors within **causes** and **interactions** result in the observable **effects** and observable **risks and difficulties** including how the **wider school develops**.

4.2.5 Links to research questions

As detailed in section 3.4.5, the research questions of the current study are:

1. What changes have come about in primary schools that been running person centred annual reviews as part of the local pilot project, according to SENCos who have been leading them? (Primary RQ, Exploratory).
2. How, according to SENCos who have been leading person centred reviews, have these changes come about? (Secondary RQ, Explanatory).

The core categories **effects** (including **wider school develops**), **risks and difficulties** and **some things may not change** together form an answer to the primary, exploratory research question. The core categories **causes** (including **interactions**) and **how to make person centred reviews work**, along with some aspects of **risks and difficulties** constitute an answer to the secondary, explanatory research question.

4.3 Core categories

The following sections will explore more deeply the grounded theory generated from the data, showing concept maps for each core category and illustrating all levels of coding with relevant quotes from the interviews. A subsequent subsection will discuss contradictions within the data and their relevance to the complete theory.

4.3.1 EFFECTS

The core category EFFECTS is constructed from participants' descriptions of what has changed in their school as a result of establishing a system of person centred annual reviews over a number of years. It summarises the destinations to which person centred reviews can take a school. In critical realist terms, EFFECTS represents the events, observable to SENCo participants, which come about through the mechanism of person centred reviews.

EFFECTS encapsulates a range of changes that participants described, including to children, parents, school staff, to the SENCo themselves as well as to the wider school. Selective codes are part of the core category EFFECTS only where participants were clear that a particular change specifically resulted from person centred reviews, and were not due to another factor. Figure 4.3 on page 101 shows a concept map for EFFECTS.

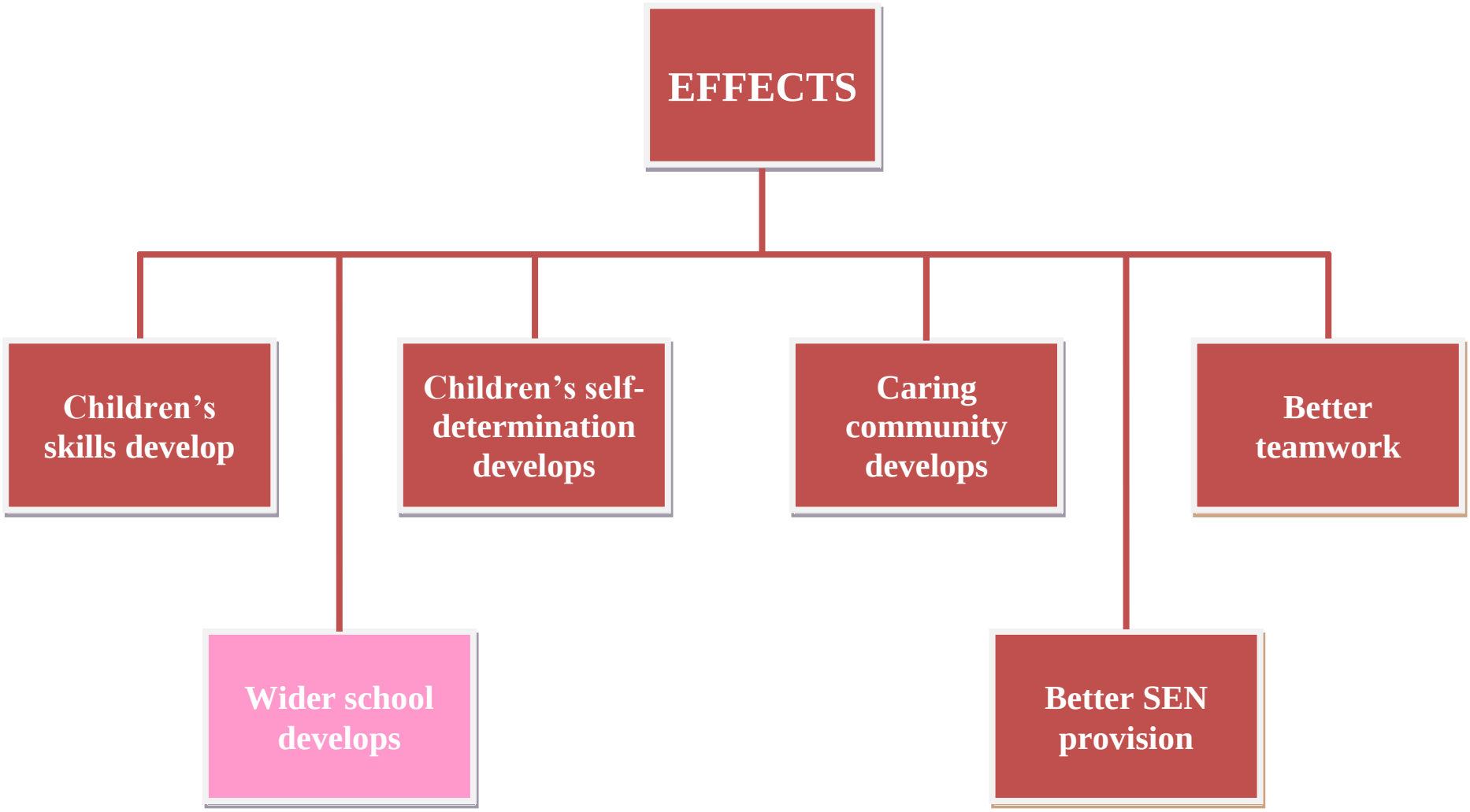

Figure 4.3: Concept map for the core category EFFECTS

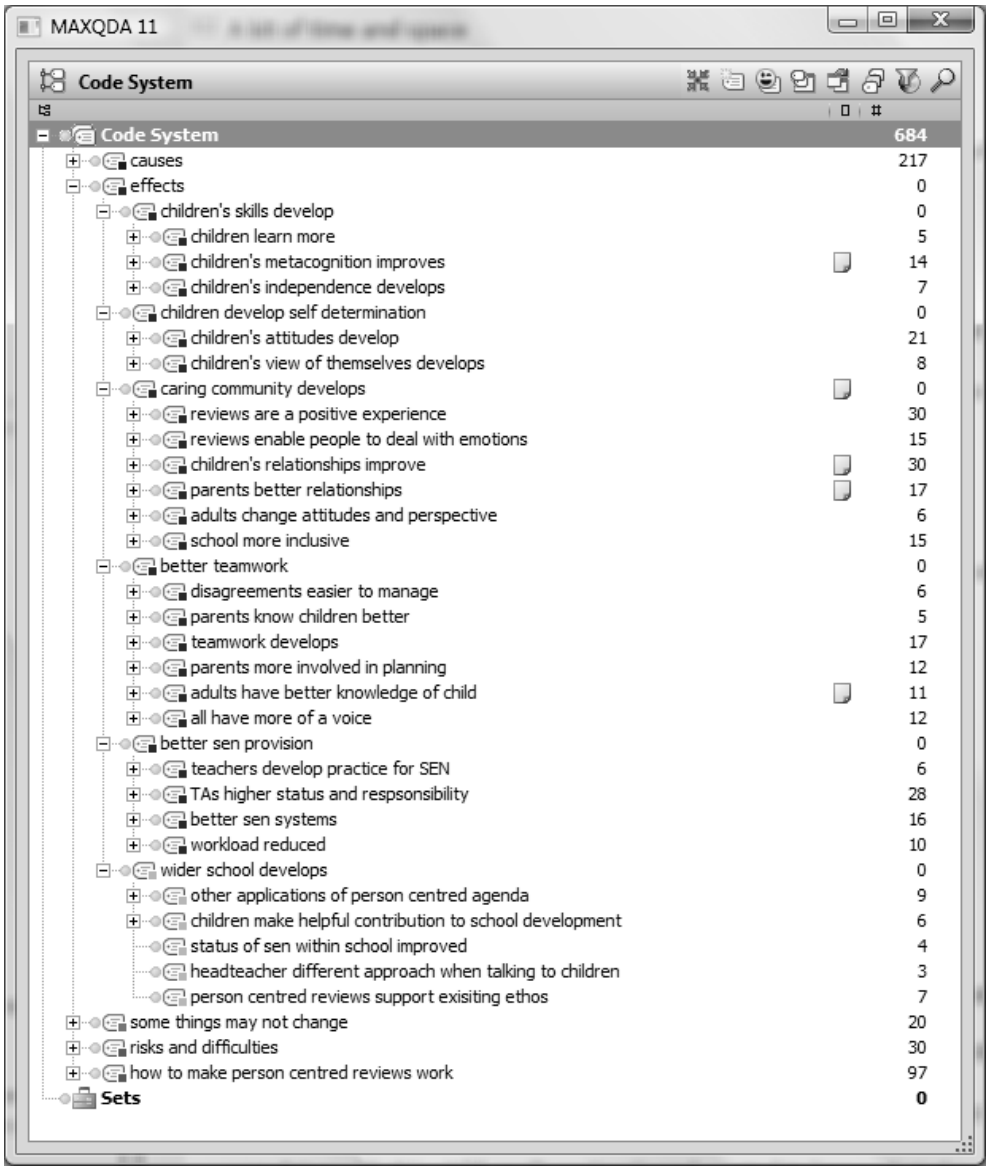

Figure 4.4: MaxQDA screenshot showing the code system for the core category EFFECTS

Wider school develops, a subcategory of EFFECTS, is coded with a different colour to the rest of the core category, because, earlier in the analysis, it was a tentative core category itself. It was eventually brought under EFFECTS to reflect the fact that the selective and axial codes of which it consists do in fact describe a specific kind of effect of person centred reviews. Figure 4.4, above shows how the code system for EFFECTS appeared in the MaxQDA project.

4.3.1.1 Children's skills develop

Participants described person centred reviews as having a significant impact on the children who take part – children with Statements of SEN who are the subject of the annual review process. This impact was partly seen as a direct development of the child's understanding – in their ability to see the bigger picture of their learning:

> *"You can see there is a turning point, and once it clicks, then they have that real awareness of, these things are going really well and these things aren't, and they have that real ownership over it, you can really see that in their progress in their learning."*
>
> *Participant M, Line 242*

And in the development of their metacognitive skills:

> *"I think they are much more aware of how they ... of how they learn, what they are like as learners."*
>
> *Participant E, Line 358*

> *"They are more aware of what they are supposed to be doing and why they are supposed to be doing it, and the long ... the longer outcomes as well, y'know for those year 6 we are talking about, 'Well when you get a job' or y'know, 'When you're out in the world.'"*
>
> *Participant E, Line 378*

Participants also saw children who have taken part in person centred reviews becoming more independent as learners:

"It has really helped us to develop generally our practice about them being more involved, more independent in their learning."

Participant M, Line 234

"Sometimes on that annual review form, where it says who's going to do it, it's the child who's going to do it and you know, we can only do so much for you, but you know you've got to do something as well."

Participant O, Line 538

Finally, in some cases, participants reported that children make more progress in their learning through taking part in person centred reviews:

"The children that have taken [what is and is not going well] on board ... it does really impact on their progress."

Participant M, 242

4.3.1.2 Children develop self-determination

A further effect of person centred reviews is in the development of children's self-determination. Participants described seeing changes to children's sense of autonomy:

"I think it's a shift in responsibility, I think that they see themselves as part of ... you know, they're not dependent."

Participant E, Line 314

"Because we've really listened to what they've said and really acted on that, yeah, you can really see that they are much more motivated to be part of that process."

Participant M, Line 238

And significantly a boost to children's confidence:

"There's an increase in the sense of confidence in themselves."

Participant I, Line

"The children who have gone through it seem much more confident around school."

Participant E, Line 42

Participants also saw changes to children's self-awareness, especially in terms of seeing their achievements in context:

"I think that brings about the self awareness of the child, in actually y'know, looking at the successes that they've had."

Participant E, Line 190

Developments to children's sense of relatedness were also evident to participants:

"With <pupil>, she's done really well, she seems to have kind of flourished, more this year I think, with her relationships with other children. I watch her in the playground,

she's quite happy playing with the other children, whereas before, I think there was a bit of an issue in that she was ... she was a bit isolated, didn't feel a part of it.

Participant I, Line 192

"I think there's something about the fact that when you have these meetings and you've got the child and the parent there, or parents, and the staff working with the child there is something in the relationship there, that really develops."

Participant M, Line 162

4.3.1.3 Caring community develops

More broadly, participants described how the sense of a caring community with the school develops through running person centred reviews. This was partly evident to participants through annual reviews having become a positive experience, in which children with statements, their peers, parents, teachers and the SENCo themselves all want to be involved.

"There's a real buzz around the fact that their review is happening, because generally speaking they enjoy it so much. and the preparation for it and so on."

Participant M, Line 202

"They see the children very much as part of their class and they really enjoy being part of these reviews. So the children who get brought along as a friend love it."

Participant M, Line 178

"All the staff are so excited about them."

Participant T, Line 205

"Well, I like them. Actually I enjoy them, I know that's not the key, the main reason for having them, but ..."

Participant O, Line 346

"Well, the parents have been overwhelmingly positive about this way of running reviews, I've not had any parents that have not enjoyed it ... often they will say at the end of the meeting, particularly if it was the first time they'd experienced something like this. Even when they've had several meetings, they will often comment on how useful they found it."

Participant M, Line 86

Participants also described how the quality and quantity of children's relationships develop, both at school and within the family:

"And the relationships with the children, in that family I think are better. Because they don't feel judged."

Participant T, Line 213

"So I think they've got more friends, they also feel more able to come to me throughout the year if things aren't quite working and we work out how to help them."

Participant T, Line 30

This effect was also reported by participants as applying to the parents of children with statements who have attended person centred reviews:

> *"They are very happy with us as a team and that makes them much more open."*
>
> *Participant O, Line 294*

> *"When you say 'What do you admire about the child' and 'What is important to the child?' is really powerful for those parents because they know that you know the child, because often you'll say exactly the same things as the parents."*
>
> *Participant E, Line 50*

The experience of taking part in person centred reviews was also seen by participants as one that enables people, particularly parents, to express and deal with strong emotions:

> *"You see ... very rare you know, kind of glowing smiles between the parent and their child, of the parent like watching the child, they're just delighted, they've never seen the child functioning in that way."*
>
> *Participant O, Line 302*

> *"It feels like we are more of a team with the parents and they feel safer to express their feelings with us. And the relationships with the children, in that family I think are better, because they don't feel judged."*
>
> *Participant T, Line 213*

"They are much more open about talking about special needs and about their children and it ... it's not seen ... it's generally not seen as a stigma."

Participant E, Line 250

Participants noted how the attitudes and perspective of the adults who take part often change:

"Whereas when you look at the strengths and what's going well, you actually, you start from a different perspective."

Participant E, Line 26

"It's that real positive outlook and I'm pretty sure it's that whole 'What's going well'"

Participant E, Line 246

According to the participants, their schools had become more inclusive in observable ways:

"I think children without statements begin to understand the children with statements more and that's and I think that's by the qualities the children have improved in and the areas they've improved in."

Participant T, Line 129

"If you talk to any of the children in classes, where there are individuals with statements, they would be able to tell you about that person's needs and the adaptations that have to be made for them and why and why it's a good thing to do that, and what their strengths are. And don't think they would always have been able to do that."

Participant O, Line 270

"We've definitely noticed over the last few years, in terms of the playground and the dinner hall and those parts of the day, that our children especially are much better at, y'know just kind of getting involved, and being part of that."

Participant M, Line 206

4.3.1.4 Better teamwork

Participants talked about how they saw person centred reviews building a sense of working together as a team. Firstly, this was seen through parents coming to know their children better:

"She could see his progress more clearly, it wasn't just talking about it, it was him showing her, which is what annual... child centred reviews do, you can see it, very visibly, the child just stands there."

Participant T, Line 333

Participants also saw how other adults in school, including themselves as SENCos, get to know the child better:

"I know the children much better. Um on many aspects, not just looking at their levels and thinking 'How can we get them up?'"

Participant T, Line 93

> *"Well, they (teachers) are thinking about the child rather than a problem that needs solving."*
>
> *Participant O, Line 422*

This all contributes to an overall sense for participants of developing teamwork, which includes the child and the parents:

> *"I think they felt that they enabled everybody working with the child and the child themselves to sort of come to a shared agreement on things that were going to go forward."*
>
> *Participant M, Line 102*

> *"I think we kind of share the responsibility with TAs better now."*
>
> *Participant T, Line 49*

As a part of this teamwork, participants saw parents becoming more involved in planning for their children's learning:

> *"(Parents) seek me out. They're much … they're much, much more at ease to come and talk to me or to email me or to phone me."*
>
> *Participant E, Line 66*

"I think they felt that that then enabled them to have more of those kind of conversations with staff without feeling worried about being thought of as being a pain because they're complaining."

Participant M, Line 166

Participants very clearly expressed how person centred reviews enable all who take part to have a voice, which is heard and heeded:

"And also I think the special needs child has much more of a voice, which I love in the annual review meetings, their voice is really heard."

Participant T, Line 161

"Parents feel that they've got a voice, and it's recorded during that meeting."

Participant E, Line 394

"I think it improves on the relationship because the TAs don't feel so ... you kind of ... they feel they're being heard.

Participant I, Line 228

"I can be more present for the meeting because I am not so manically note taking."

Participant T, Line 241

An important aspect of the developing teamwork was how disagreements and conflict were seen as easier to manage when using a person centred structure in reviews.

> *"Yeah, so the openness about when things are not going well, that you can come to the class teacher or the TA and say "What's going on here?" in a way that's sort of focused on trying to find a solution and nobody getting offended by it."*
>
> *Participant M, Line 170*

As evidence of this, participants told stories about particular parents they worked with, with whom previously difficult relationships had been softened and ameliorated by the experience of taking part in one or more person centred reviews:

> *"You know there was a time when meeting with (him) was a scary thing. Whereas now, he seemed to have, kind of ... you know he'll still be a bit, at times <laughs> ... but he seems more engaged, he seems more ... you know ... I feel that he trusts us more"*
>
> *Participant I, Line 128*

Participant O described what she thought would have happened in the relationship between the school and a particular family, had they not taken part in three person centred annual reviews:

> *"I think we'd still be at loggerheads probably."*
>
> *Participant O, Line 571*

4.3.1.5 Better SEN provision

As the SENCo or Inclusion Manager, participants reported changes to professional practice and provision for SEN in their school that had come about as a result of running person centred reviews. For example, class teachers were seen as developing their practice:

> *"The teacher, you know takes on the responsibility more I think, you know, of providing for and making sure the child's needs are ... up there."*
>
> *Participant I, Line 188*

TAs were also seen as gaining higher status and responsibility through the process:

> *"They're keener to be there and they feel more part of it ... because they feel they know the child, they've worked with the child a lot, a lot and, and they feel, they want to share those, they want to share those successes."*
>
> *Participant I, Line 148*

> *"We always valued them, but it's even more, it's more professional and deeper."*
>
> *Participant T, Line 201*

Participants also described how SEN systems had developed and improved, for example in terms of knowledge and of accountability:

> *"I think we are noticing progress, probably more regularly."*
>
> *Participant E, Line 334*

"I feel like I go into it better prepared."

Participant T, Line 233

"You come out of that meeting feeling really positive because you know you've got the things to do, who's going to be checking them. And so if one of these parents comes with a query or a complaint, I can look back at what we discussed and say 'This hasn't happened, hands up, we need to do this, or...' So because it's all written down."

Participant E, Line 402

This included being able to address the kind of longer term outcomes called for by the 2015 Code of Practice for SEN and Disability:

"You might be talking about 'We're going to get to a four word level question' but they're thinking about 'Can my ... will my child ever be able to drive a car, or rent a flat.' And it's getting a balance between the two."

Participant E, Line 382

Finally, participants also commented on how their workload had reduced as a result of adopting person centred reviews:

"In terms of SENCo time, it's a lot less than the old style of reviews."

Participant M, Line 214

"It's lightened it actually. I find it easier."

Participant O, Line 462

"I've delegated a lot. So I give the checklist to the TA, the TA goes through it with the child. I give the ... the um ... the questions to the parents, to the teacher, to the TA."

Participant E, Line 270

4.3.1.6 Wider impact in school

Looking beyond issues related to SEN, participants also described a range of ways in which the impact of adopting person centred reviews had rippled out into the wider school. Participants explained how they had applied the person centred agenda in different kinds of meetings:

"Because I've seen it work and I like how it looks and how it gets people together, I have started using it in other meetings, you know in TAC meetings, maybe, or in meetings with TAs."

Participant I, Line 100

They also described how their school had begun to enable children to make a contribution to school development:

"When I attend SMT meetings, I'm always the voice that's saying, "How are we going to involve the pupil in this?" So it's broadened out in to a sort of ... wider than just SEN really."

Participant M, Line 118

Participants had observed how the status of SEN within the school had changed:

> *"The teachers understand the special needs process much better and the statementing process."*
>
> *Participant T, Line 18*

They had also observed changes to the headteacher's approach having taking part in person centred reviews:

> *"<Headteacher> goes along with it and really, you know, joins the meeting properly and values it, I think, he really appreciates the time that we spend doing the positive feedback and I see when he's talking to individual children, that there's a similar kind of structure to the way he talks to them.*
>
> *Participant O, Line 406*

Finally, person centred reviews were seen as supporting the existing ethos of the school:

> *"What people often comment at this school is that they go into a class and they can't tell who the children are with statements, or they can't tell the one class that has a huge amount of behavioural and emotional needs and they don't know, which I think is because of the inclusive ethos, that the person centred reviews has helped support even more."*
>
> *Participant T, Line 177*

4.3.2 CAUSES

The core category CAUSES was constructed from attributions made by participants about the features of person centred reviews which give rise to their effects. CAUSES summarises the elements that give this review process its power; it describes the engine which drives it and enables it to reach its destination.

The causal factors described by participants included features of the review structure and agenda and the experience of preparation and practice as well as attitudes taken by the people taking part. In critical realist terms, CAUSES consists of the actions which bring about observable events with the mechanism of person centred reviews. A concept map for CAUSES is shown in Figure 4.5 on page 119.

Interactions, a subcategory of CAUSES, is coded with a different colour to the rest of the core category, because, in an earlier stage of the analysis, it was a tentative core category itself. It was later brought into CAUSES to emphasise participants' comments on how person centred reviews are embedded in the context of the school and the family. In critical realist terms, the category *interactions* represents where the actions of a person centred review meet the context in which they take place. Figure 4.6 on page 121 shows the code system for CAUSES as it appeared in MaxQDA.

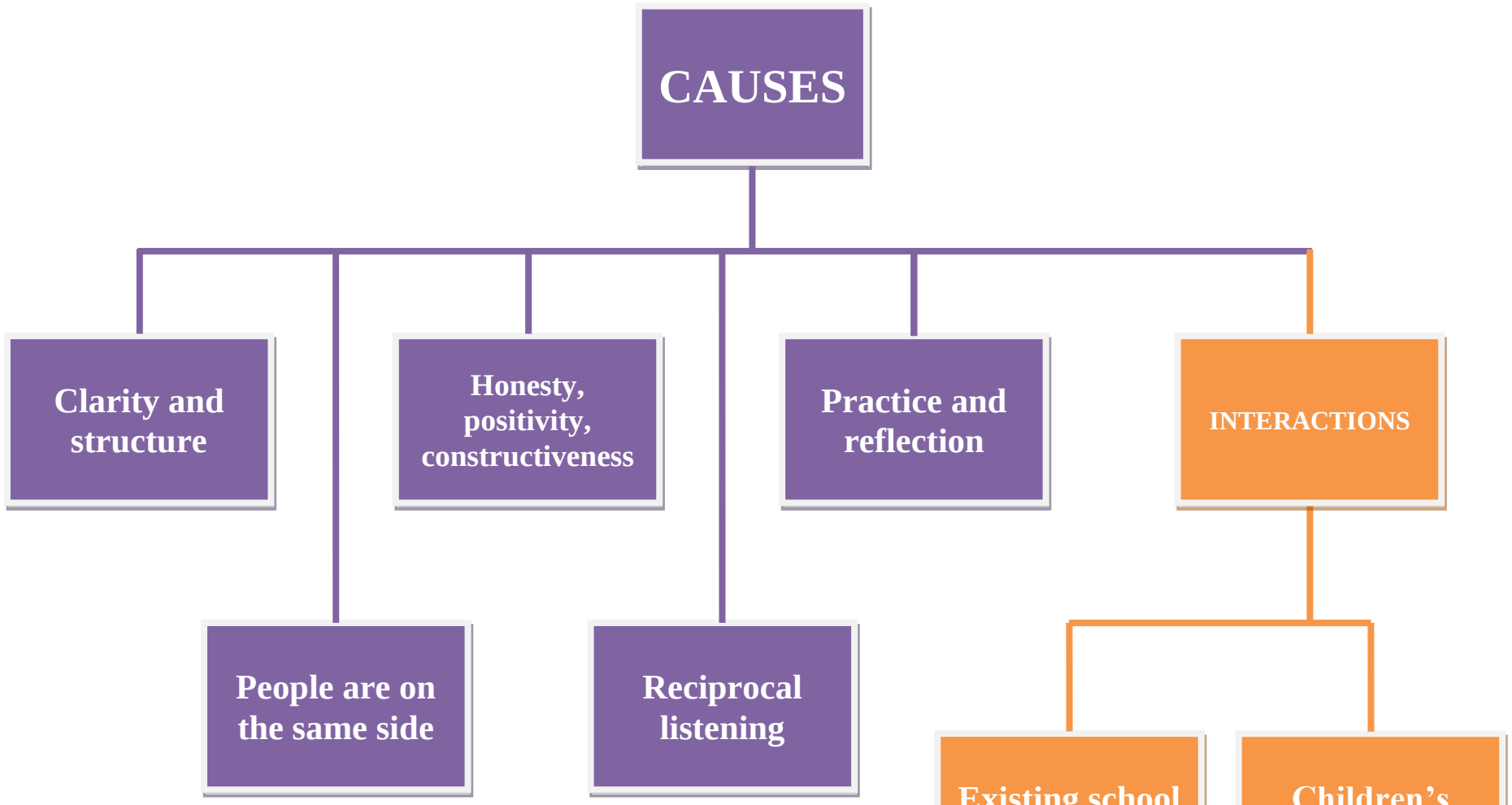

Figure 4.5: Concept map for the core category CAUSES

4.3.2.1 Clarity and structure

Participants explained that person centred reviews have a structure and a clarity, which are significant in enabling the positive effects to occur:

> *"Whereas I think the structure of these reviews and the kind of, having a very clear part of: these things are working well, these things aren't. And you've got a very clear, y'know, set of things that you need to address in the future plans for the child."*
>
> *Participant M, Line 102*

> *"Because the annual review is discussed so ... in such a structured way, that you come out of that meeting feeling really positive."*
>
> *Participant E, Line 402*

> *"So it feels like you're much clearer about 'these are the key things'. And then you can kind of record those key things."*
>
> *Participant M, Line 223*

Participants attributed a major part of this structure and clarity to the person centred agenda:

> *"So I think having those clear sections makes it really easy to be focused, and these are the things that are going well and referencing back to targets or outcomes that are set previously and these things are not, so therefore we're going to do this to address them, and it sort of feels like it flows much better."*
>
> *Participant M, Line 226*

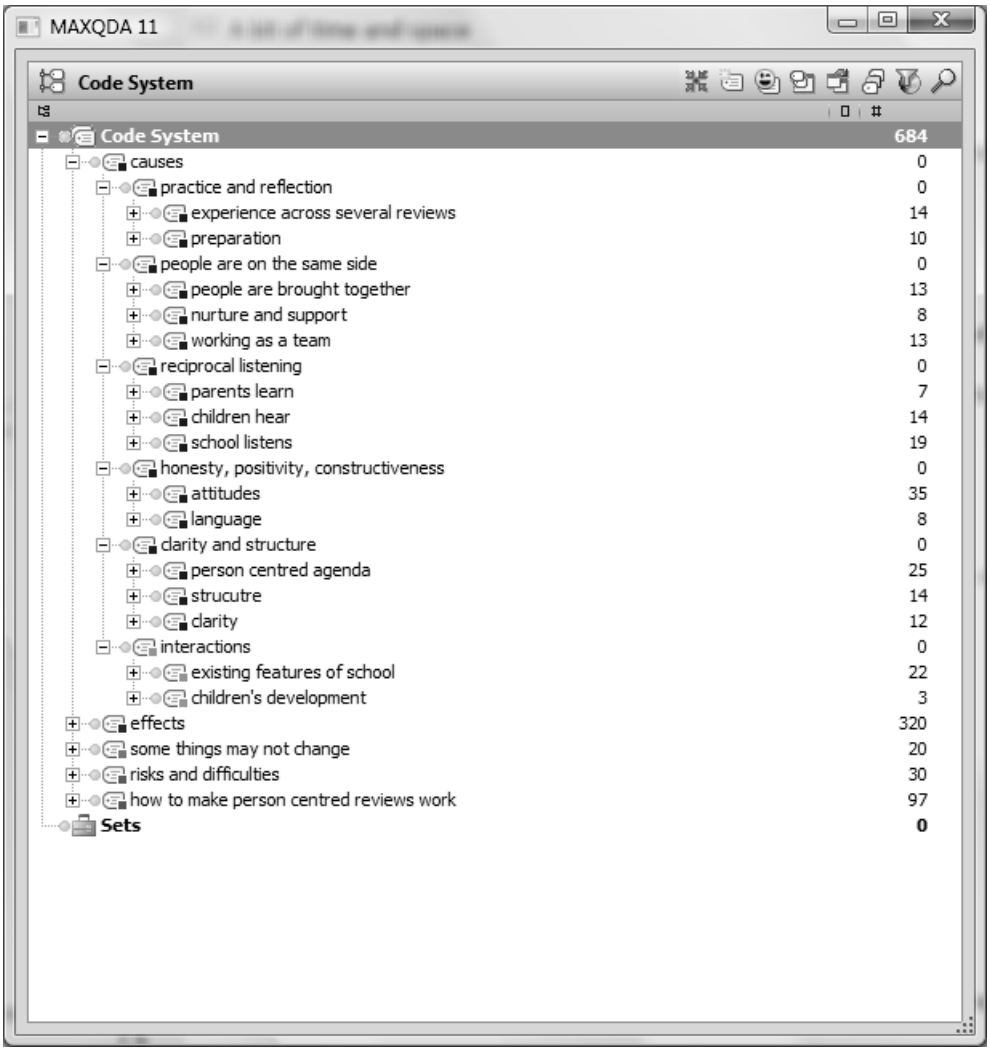

Figure 4.6: MaxQDA screenshot showing the code system for the core category CAUSES

"I like it, with starting with a positive, because then, you're not going straight in to what's not working."

Participant I, Line 108

"When you look at the strengths and what's going well, you actually, you start from a different perspective. You start to use aspects of what's going well and call on those."

Participant E, Line 26

4.3.2.2 Honesty, positivity, constructiveness

Participants also strongly highlighted how attitudes and language go hand in hand with the structure of person centred reviews, helping to bringing about changes they observed.

> *"Yeah a change of emphasis ... looking in a much more child centred way."*
>
> *Participant T, Line 85*

> *"I think the meetings are very much in a language, because they are centred on the pupil, they're then in a language that the parents can really access as well."*
>
> *Participant M, Line 94*

They also communicated a sense that these reviews encourage a positive and constructive attitude, which, alongside respectful and honest language, supports the changes they have perceived:

> *"It's a more common sense, nuts and bolts thing to do ... The main question is what do we want to happen and what are we going to do to make them happen?"*
>
> *Participant E, Line 439*

> *"Person centred reviews are really powerful ... on group ways of expressing the kind of, all the positive stuff that there is going on around the child."*
>
> *Participant O, Line 286*

"It's that fine line between obviously keeping that positivity, but also having a level of honesty about things when they are not working or they're not going well. And it may be that level of honesty previously wasn't quite there."

Participant M, Line 58

"So it's an opportunity for the teacher to, you know, draw out from all that stuff they've got on the child, all the positive stuff, to unpick it all ... to address the child politely."

Participant O, Line 314

4.3.2.3 Practice and reflection

Another idea strongly emerging from participants' perceptions was that the power of person centred reviews does not simply come from taking part once. Instead participants highlighted how the experience of preparing to take part and of rehearsing a contribution both contribute to the effects they observe.

"Because the teaching assistant is helping them to prepare for this meeting, there's a lot of groundwork done, there's a lot of review and evaluation 'let's look through your book, what's your best piece of work?' and they go through it together.

Participant E, Line 186

"I'll go through it with the child, and they'll practice it and then they'll tell me if they want to change it and then they either read it themselves or they read it with the friend."

Participant T, Line 165

Similarly, participants were clear that going through the person centred review process more than once supported the impact they had seen:

> *"It does have an impact, but not in a ... not in a piecemeal way, I mean, so we had an annual review a couple of weeks ago, for example ... and I haven't seen any immediate impact, but if we carry on doing that over the child's career in school, then I feel sure that it will."*
>
> *Participant O, Line 522*

> *"We always have support for them if they want it, but often the support falls away because they... And I guess that grows the more they do it, that confidence increases."*
>
> *Participant T, Line 333*

4.3.2.4 People are on the same side

Participants saw person centred reviews as a context where people are brought together and that this has a powerful impact on relationships and teamwork:

> *"There is something in the relationship there, that really develops. And I think the child sort of very much feels that. The fact that there is a celebration of all this fantastic work that has been going on and that's shared with their parents and the staff that are working with them."*
>
> *Participant M, Line 162*

"And there's almost more point being emotive in that situation, because you know, everybody's there and it's gonna have, it's really going to have an impact."

Participant O, Line 454

Participants also elaborated a view that person centred reviews are a practically and emotionally supportive context, for parents and children:

"Before it was more of um looking at the problems 'He can't do this, how are we going to work on that?' whereas now the problems don't seem like problems any more."

Participant T, Line 81

"Everybody is connected at that point, and that feels very supportive. It feels like the child is on a cushion of ... all of us caring about them."

Participant O, Line 142

In the participants' views, a sense of being a team is part of the experience of person centred reviews:

"It has really created this whole problem solving team approach"

Participant E, Line 246

"Because y'know (the children) are learning that they are a key partner in this process and that their opinions matter and we want to know what they think and I think that's very powerful."

Participant M, Line 250

"Yeah, I think it offers parents that kind of opportunity that they get listened to more and they can suggest and they can bring in as much as you know, everybody else to that meeting."

Participant I, Line 136

4.3.2.5 Reciprocal listening

At the heart of how participants see the power of person centred reviews is the idea of reciprocal listening. This came across in how participants described parents, children and adults in school being linked by listening to each other. For example participants described many ways in which person centred reviews help parents learn:

"I can think of one example where a parent insisted on always carrying their child up and down stairs, the child was late to school every day because they live on the third floor and 'We have to carry him up and down.' And we had film of him walking downstairs and it wasn't, we didn't do it to catch her out, we did it to show her that actually just give him a, let him have a go and he will be able to do it, and she was delighted. Because actually she didn't want to carry him up and down the stairs."

Participant O, Line 302

"(Parents) are seeing that the teacher is really interested, they're seeing the teacher, it's the same thing again, they're seeing the teacher say lovely things to their child, they're seeing that the teacher has thought about what they are saying."

Participant O, Line 430

Furthermore, participants also highlighted how, in their view, children hearing some of the messages of a person centred review is a profound experience:

> *"The child hears that the parents are listening to and agreeing to all the things that are going on in school."*
>
> *Participant E, Line 330*

> *"The other thing that's been very powerful is um ... the kind of ... for the children themselves is hearing much more explicitly the views of their peers and of adults, other adults that work with them around the school."*
>
> *Participant M, Line, 78*

> *"And I always go into the class now, and I ask the children for all their strengths and the changes and they basically come up with the annual review with all the positives because they notice the minutest and all the wonderful detail."*
>
> *Participant T, Line 65*

Similarly, the experience for both parents and children of being listened to by the school was strongly emphasised by participants as significant in bringing about the effect they have seen.

> *"There's certainly some children I can think where it has really worked well, because we've really listened to what they've said and really acted on that."*
>
> *Participant M, Line 238*

"(Parents) feel they're being listened to, they feel their children's issues are being addressed."

Participant I, Line 116

Finally participants outlined how the experience of listening to the child, to their parents and to other professionals is helpful for school staff:

"Just thinking about that child, and seeing the child in the context of his family and listening to what professionals might have to say."

Participant O, Line 318

4.3.2.6 Interactions

A number of the significant causal factors that participants described as bringing about the effects they see, were in fact external to the review structure and process itself. Firstly, participants talked in detail about how the existing ethos, culture and practice of their schools have supported person centred reviews.

"It has to be part of a wider culture in the school I think definitely."

Participant M, Line 262

"(Teachers) often use circle time, which is part of the school culture anyway, they don't have to teach the children anything, they just use that format."

Participant O, Line 482

"I mean our ethos is that, because we're looking long term, the idea is that that TA is there to support that child to be independent, that's it."

Participant E, Line 194

"I know in my experience, that if a parent is really angry or complaining about something, there's always a reason, so we're not a school that is, y'know, incredibly defensive."

Participant T, Line 394

Another significant interacting factor identified by participants was that of children's existing stage and rate of development in different domains. Participants expressed the view that the effects that person centred reviews have on children are most evident for children with certain needs and difficulties:

"The children that we are supporting with y'know, emotional-social-behavioural needs ... there can be a real change. And also with some of our children y'know, with sort of language and communication difficulties."

Participant M, Line 254

4.3.3 RISKS AND DIFFICULTIES

The core category RISKS AND DIFFICULTIES was constructed from the participants comments about the difficult situations which can arise in running person centred reviews and about the potential for them to have a negative impact. It represents the shadow side of person centred reviews, the challenges, barriers and unintended consequences participants had seen in their work.

In critical realist terms, RISKS AND DIFFICULTIES represents actions and observable events, as well as aspects of the surrounding context – it can be seen as bridging across the whole mechanism of person centred reviews. The code system for RISKS AND DIFFICULTIES as it appeared in MaxQDA is shown in on Figure 4.8 page 132.

While RISKS AND DIFFICULTIES is less well grounded in the data, reflected as it is in fewer interview text segments than EFFECTS and CAUSES, it forms an absolutely essential element of the final theory, standing as a warning for schools who are planning to establish person centred reviews and highlighting the situations where careful thought is needed to minimise the chance of undesirable outcomes. A concept map for RISKS AND DIFFICULTIES is shown in Figure 4.7 on page 131.

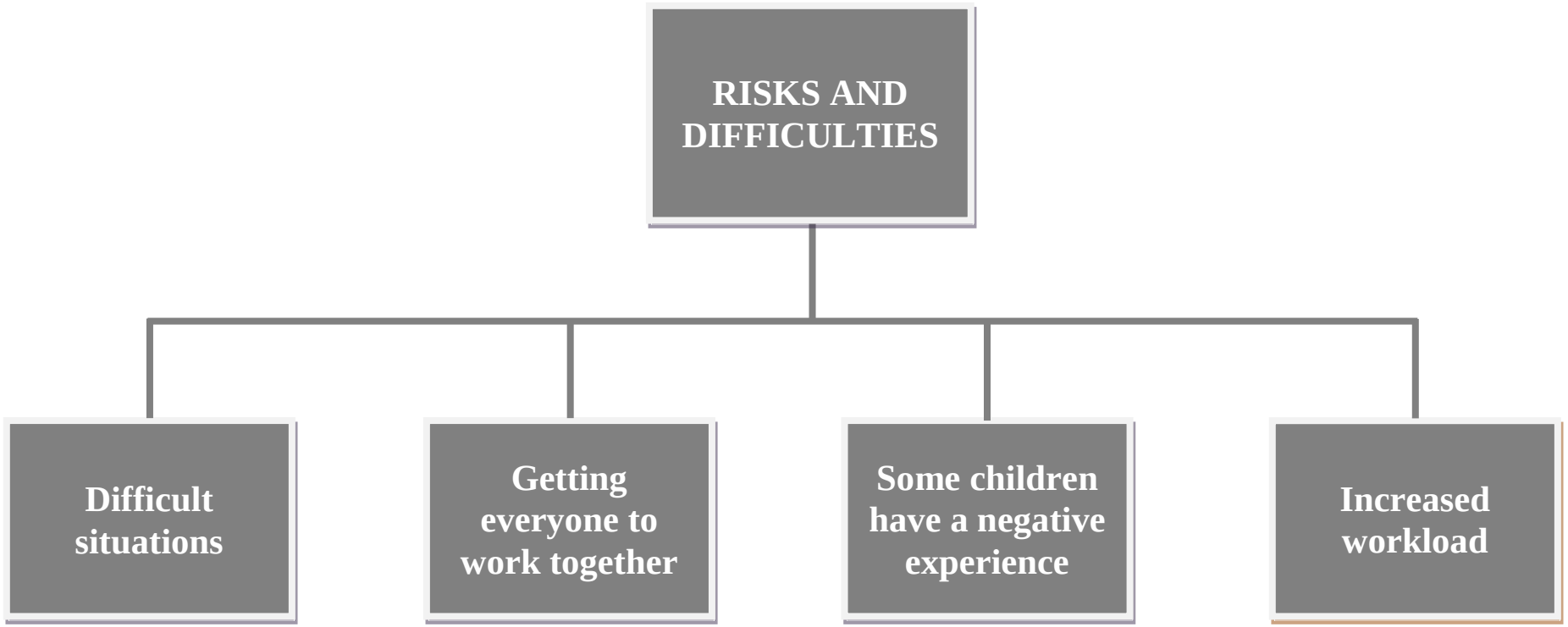

Figure 4.7: Concept map for the core category RISKS AND DIFFICULTIES

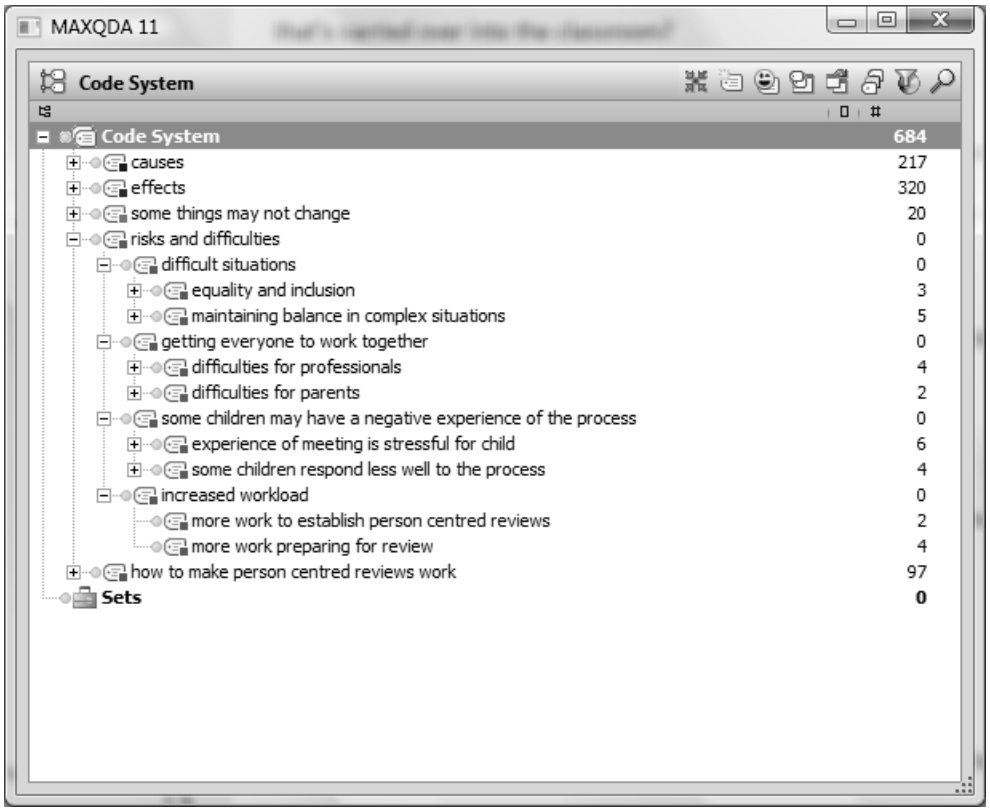

Figure 4.8: MaxQDA screenshot showing the code system for the core category RISKS AND DIFFICULTIES

4.3.3.1 Difficult situations

Participants identified a number of situations which, in their view, created difficulties in running person centred reviews effectively. For example, participants expressed a view that it is not always easy to maintain the balance of honesty, positivity and constructiveness they strive for in well run person centred reviews.

"Sometimes you've got other people in the room and you're not quite, and it's the anticipation of well 'How might somebody phrase this?' And particularly sometimes with parents that can be difficult."

Participant M, Line 62

Similarly, participants noted that, for all the positivity, person centred reviews do not always have an impact on children's sense of equality and inclusion for children with more severe difficulties.

"I still feel as a school that y'know, we've got some way to go in terms of moving that on from their peers being really ... y'know very supportive and caring ... but moving it on a step to it being um ... y'know so they're not treating the children as too special."

Participant M, Line 178

4.3.3.2 Getting everyone to work together

Participants also described the negative consequences that can come about when not everyone has fully adopted the attitudes that support a person centred review. For example, professionals from outside the school may not engage in reciprocal listening in a constructive way:

"I think I've only had one heated meeting, when an occupational therapist wanted a child toilet trained and we'd tried and the mum wasn't ready to try at home and it could have actually ... it was really horrible and I just stepped in and said this isn't the time to

talk about it, take it away from the review, because this occupational therapist went on and on and on and it really wasn't suitable and the mum was so angry."

Participant T, Line 305

In addition, parents may not agree that some or all of the aspects of the person centred review process are a good idea:

"Mum really didn't want him there."

Participant E, Line 418

4.3.3.3 Some children may have a negative experience of the process

Participants highlighted very significant risks inherent in children being involved themselves in person centred reviews. Firstly, participants identified situations where, in their view, individual children found the experience of the meeting itself stressful.

"I did one recently where I ... the child was very bright, but I didn't tell him ... about the meeting until the day before, because I knew that it would really worry him. And that he would, you know, build up anxiety about it. And he probably wouldn't come to school at all."

Participant O, Line 62

Similarly, participants expressed a view that some children respond less well to the process overall – that children at the lowest developmental levels benefit less than children who are older or who have less severe learning difficulties.

"The thing we're really trying to think about as a school is how we get more of that with the children with severe learning difficulties or the non-verbal children and with our youngest children."

Participant M, Line 254

4.3.3.4 Increased workload

Participants described their perspective that it can mean more work for them to establish person centred reviews in their school:

"The first year of doing them, the first classes or children that we did them with, I needed to support the class team a bit in that."

Participant M, Line 218

They also highlighted how the preparation for an individual person centred review can take extra work:

"I mean obviously the time and that will probably come in, in the teachers' workload, sometimes in my workload, but it's you know, it's probably being prepared and being organised, and making sure that it's planned for."

Participant I, Line 312

4.3.4 SOME THINGS MAY NOT CHANGE

The core category SOME THINGS MAY NOT CHANGE was constructed from segments of the interviews where participants indicated that person centred reviews did not have a significant impact. Although it is the least grounded of the core categories, drawing from the smallest number of interview text segments, it remains a significant part of the theory, reflecting disagreements between the participants and therefore areas where the data contradict themselves. A concept map for SOME THINGS MAY NOT CHANGE is shown in Figure 4.9 on page 137.

Originally a selective code within RISKS AND DIFFICULTIES, SOME THINGS MAY NOT CHANGE was made into a core category to highlight the difference between where participants identified a possibility of negative impact and where they described an absence of impact, including an absence of negative impact.

In critical realist terms, SOME THINGS MAY NOT CHANGE represents situations where events were not observed – it stands as a challenge to the researcher's assumptions and a reminder of the variability of participants' experiences and the contexts they work in. The code system for SOME THINGS MAY NOT CHANGE is shown in Figure 4.10 on page 138.

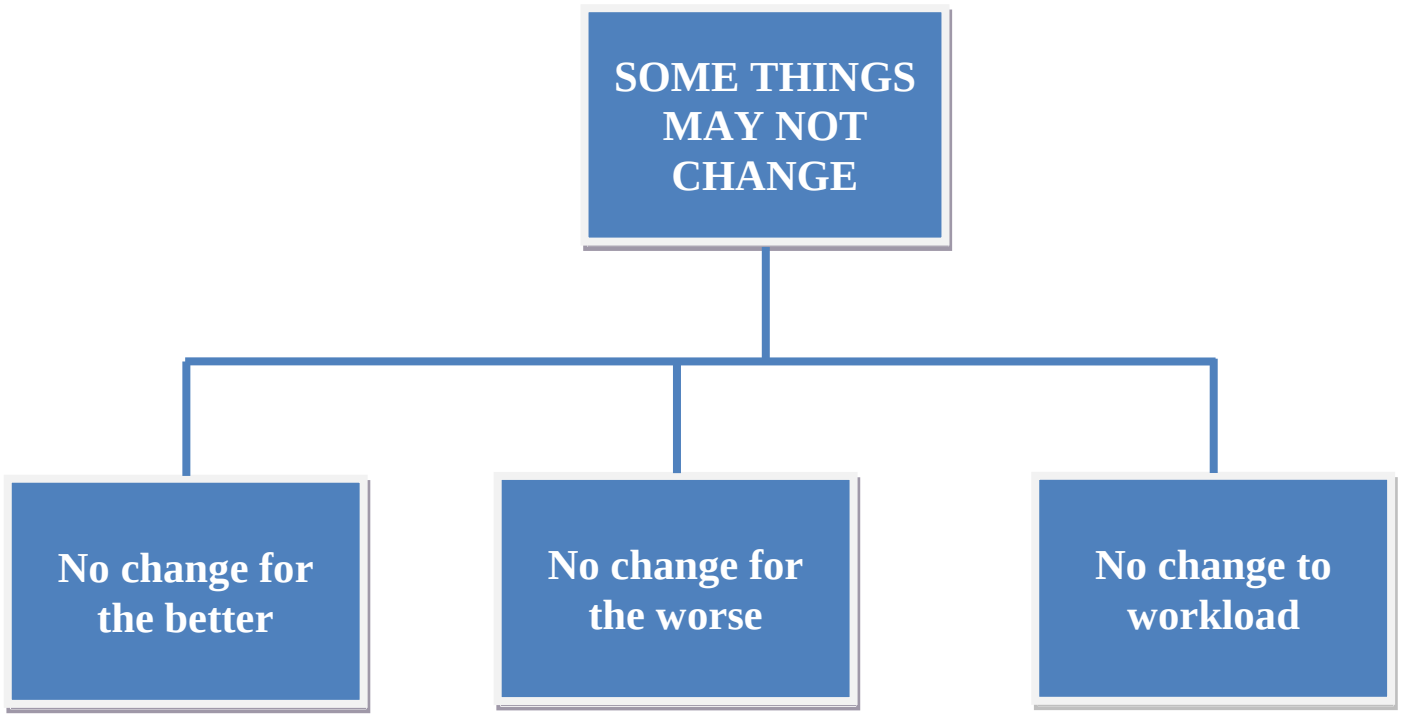

Figure 4.9: Concept map for the core category SOME THINGS MAY NOT CHANGE

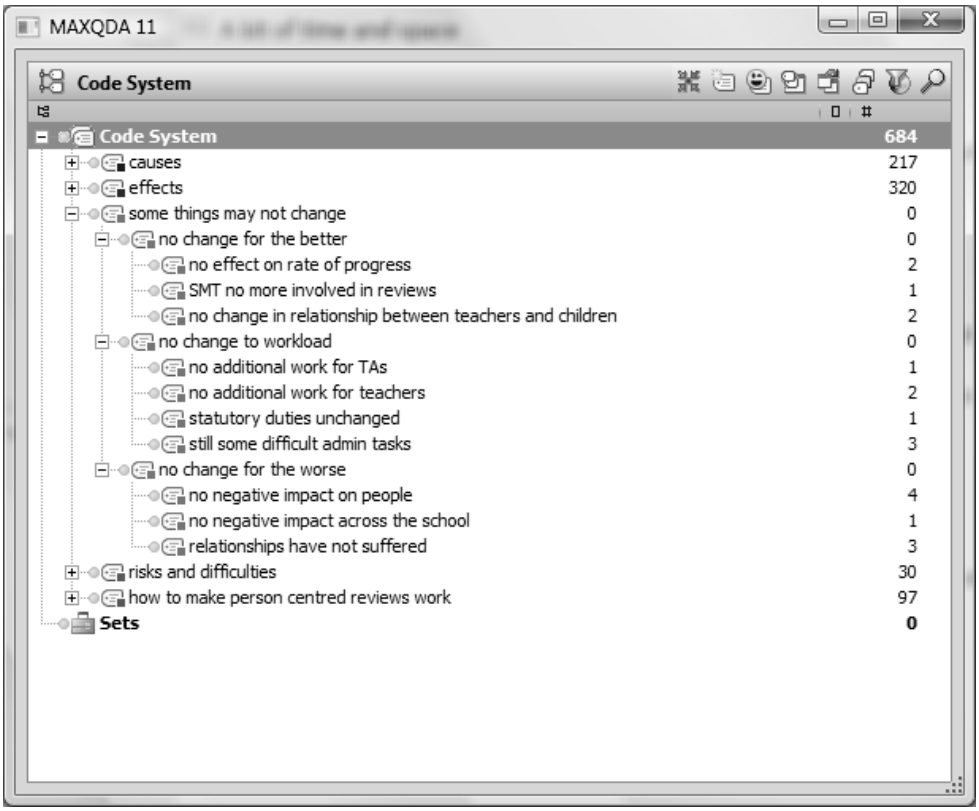

Figure 4.10: MaxQDA screenshot showing the code system for the core category SOME THINGS MAY NOT CHANGE

4.3.4.1 No change for the better

Participants expressed a range of views about positive changes that they had not observed, or that they did not see as a direct result of running a person centred review process. For example, participants shared a view that gains in learning for children with statements of SEN may not come about as a direct result of taking part in person centred reviews:

> *"Well, they are learning faster, but it's hard to compare with ... if they weren't (having person centred reviews)."*
>
> *Participant E, Line 346*

Participants also stated that they had not seen any change to relationships between teachers and children as a result of going through a person centred review together:

> ***Interviewer:*** *Have you noticed any difference in how teachers and how those children get on?*
>
> ***Participant E:*** *No, no, it's fine.*
>
> *Interview 1, Lines 223-226*

Participants also commented that they had not seen any change in how the senior leadership in their school were involved in SEN and annual reviews:

> *"Other members of SMT don't attend the annual reviews, yeah, usually."*
>
> *Participant E, Line 158*

4.3.4.2 No change for the worse

In contrast, participants also highlighted situations where they had not seen potentially negative consequences come about, both for individuals:

> *"I certainly haven't seen a negative impact in terms of people that we're working with, in our school."*
>
> *Participant M, Line 134*

For relationships:

> ***Interviewer****: You know, is it possible that it has a negative impact (on relationships)?*
>
> ***Participant O****: No. I'm sure it doesn't.*
>
> *Interview 3, Lines 263-267*

As well as across the whole school:

> *"Over the whole school? No! If it has they haven't told me, ha!"*
>
> *Participant E, Line 30*

4.3.4.3 No change to workload

Participants also commented that, in their view, adopting a person centred review process had not changed workload, both in terms of a lack of additional work for teachers and TAs:

> *"No not more workload (for TAs)."*
>
> *Participant T, Line 285*

> ***Interviewer****: ...do you think teachers have a different workload?*
>
> ***Participant T****: No. But I think they maybe ask themselves and myself more challenging questions through the year to develop the child.*
>
> *Interview 4, Lines 270-273*

Certain demanding tasks had also been unaffected by adopting a person centred review process. Specifically, the legal duties of being a SENCo:

> *"I need things to be done in order to monitor their progress and that's statutory."*
>
> *Participant E, Line 310*

Similarly, adopting a person centred review process had not changed the administrative effort required to complete review paperwork for the local authority:

> *"Writing it up is still difficult sometimes."*
>
> *Participant E, Line 114*

4.3.5 HOW TO MAKE PERSON CENTRED REVIEWS WORK

The final core category HOW TO MAKE PERSON CENTRED REVIEWS WORK is constructed from the many practical ideas participants shared, drawn from their experience of running these reviews. In critical realist terms, HOW TO MAKE PERSON CENTRED REVIEWS WORK addresses actions that can be taken as well as beginning to define the context required for the mechanism of person centred reviews to work well. A concept map for HOW TO MAKE PERSON CENTRED REVIEWS WORK is shown in Figure 4.11 on page 143

In many cases, selective codes contributing to HOW TO MAKE PERSON CENTRED REVIEWS WORK are linked to codes in RISKS AND DIFFICULTIES, where participants have shown how they have addressed the “shadow side” of person centred reviews. The code system for HOW TO MAKE PERSON CENTRED REVIEWS WORK as it appeared on screen in MaxQDA is shown in Figure 4.12 on page 144.

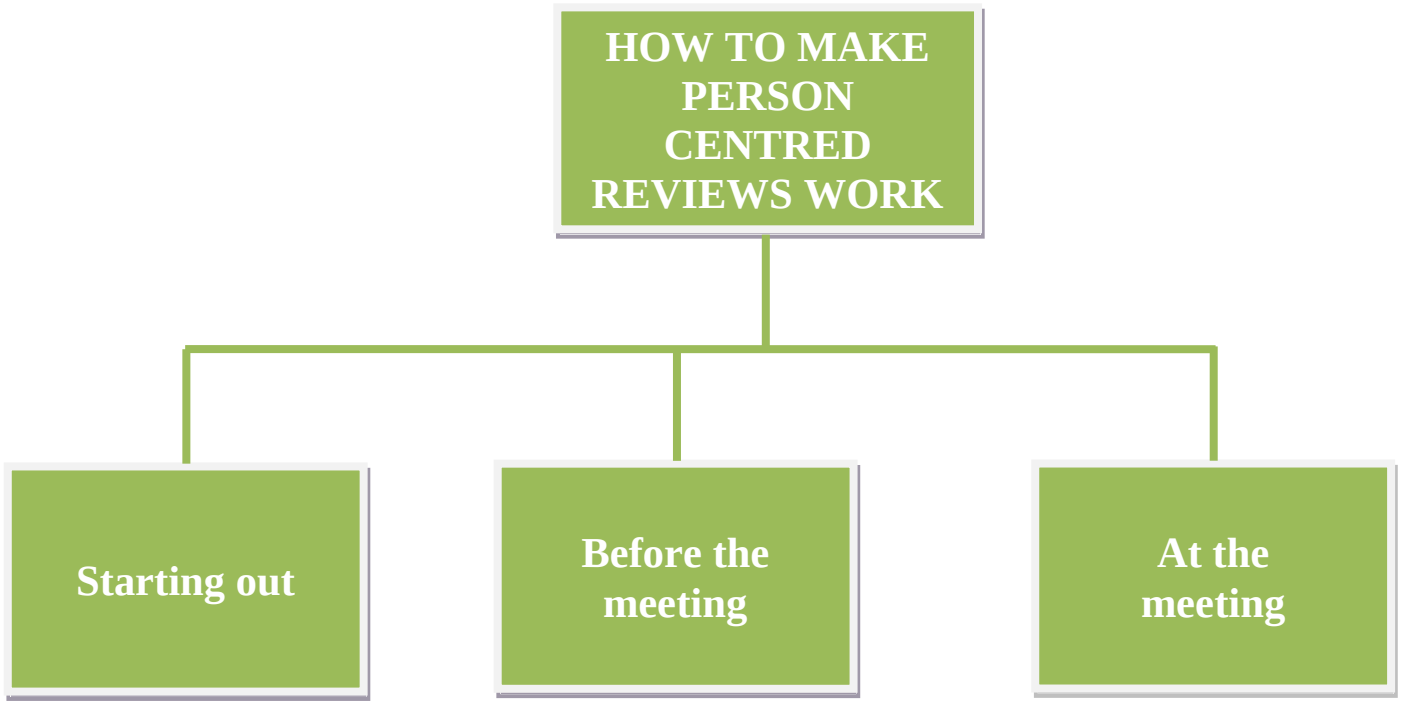

Figure 4.11: Concept map for the core category
HOW TO MAKE PERSON CENTRED REVIEWS WORK

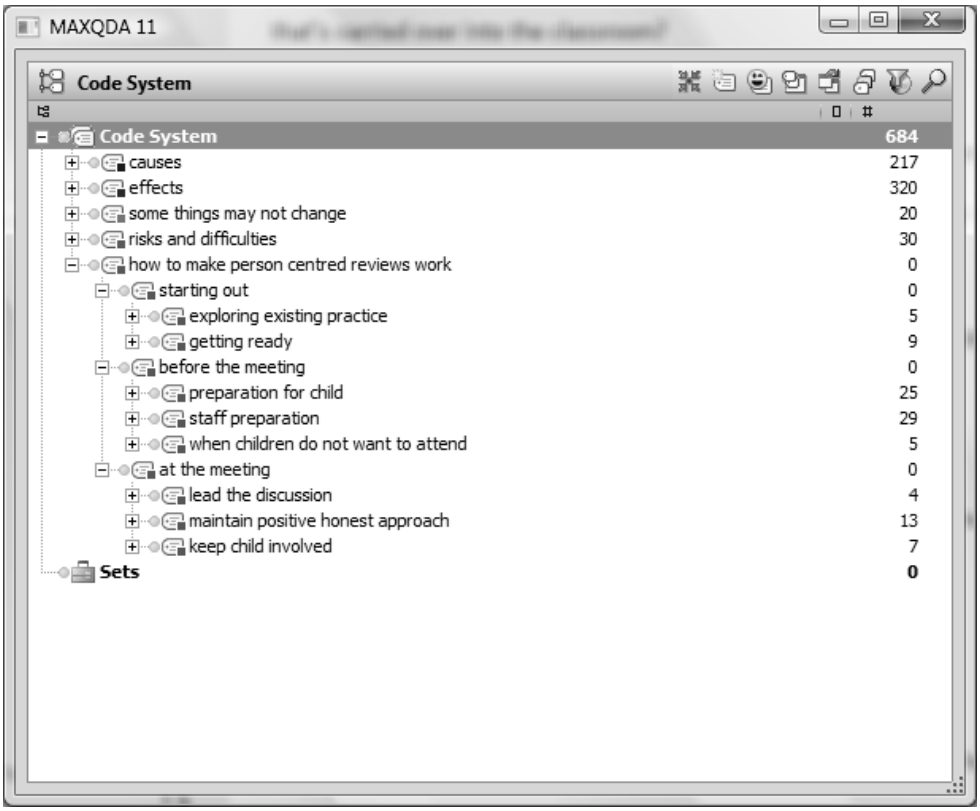

Figure 4.12: MaxQDA screenshot showing the code system for the core category HOW TO MAKE PERSON CENTRED REVIEWS WORK

4.3.5.1 Starting out

Participants had observed that a number of important tasks and activities need to take place before a school begins to run person centred reviews. Firstly, they highlighted the benefit of exploring existing practice:

> *"I started coming to the interest groups, and immediately I thought they were exactly the way we should be going."*
>
> *Participant T, Line 10*

Participants also emphasised the need to work with staff across the school, both the leadership team:

> *"(Senior Leadership) understand it, they are aware of it and I'm sure they are in favour of it. They're not against it."*
>
> *Participant I, Line 176*

And the staff group as a whole:

> *"I've had to run staff training sessions on how we run the reviews."*
>
> *Participant M, Line 218*

Participants also expressed a view that their own skill and confidence as a SENCo running meetings needs to be developed through observation and practice.

> *"I've seen it work, giving it a go and trialling it, this year and building my confidence in using it."*
>
> *Participant I, Line 336*

4.3.5.2 Before the meeting

Participants shared a range of views about the actions they take in preparation for an individual person centred review, in order to build a supportive context for the meeting to take place in. Participant O emphatically explains why in her view the preparation is so vital:

> *"You can't do one by the seat of your pants, because it matters too much to everyone that's there."*
>
> *Participant O, Line 478*

This preparation includes activities to help the child who is the subject of the review to get ready, by understanding the nature and purpose of a review meeting:

> *"I tell them we have the meetings to check how they are learning and to celebrate how well they've done."*
>
> *Participant T, Line 26*

> *"We talk together about who might come to that meeting. So we do a bit of preteaching ... sort of run through what I will actually say in the meeting, so that he's not shocked by it."*
>
> *Participant O, Line 67*

It also includes the child preparing to share something at their review:

> *"... preparing the child for making a presentation or preparing them to be attending this meeting ... talking about ... what to expect, you know, who will be there, what they might be expected to say, what they might want to say, what they might want to share."*
>
> *Participant I, Line 33*

Participants had also observed that adapting the review process to suit the character or the needs of the child themselves is an important aspect of the preparations before a review meeting:

"We gave him the choice and he said he really didn't want to be there and we asked him to create something, sort of, so he would be there in the meeting through his views."

Participant M, Line 22

"... at several of the meetings, especially for children where they are not, where they don't communicate easily, or they're at a very early stage, the class teachers make films, and bring films of the children and that ... those moments are stunning.

Participant O, Line 302

The preparation also involves ensuring school staff are prepared and know what their contribution will entail:

"The first thing I do is make sure that the class teacher knows about the fact that they have a responsibility to be involved and to involve the class with it."

Participant O, Line 50

"At the same time, the class team do um er a meeting with the whole class and get the children's feedback."

Participant M, Line 14

Participants also shared the beneficial impact of flexible and sensitive preparation for vulnerable children:

"I thought it was actually more successful for him, the year 5 one, because I felt that, even though he wasn't in the meeting ... his voice came through much more strongly this way for him, because actually he wrote some really insightful things and things that actually really changed our practice around how we supported him. And I don't think he would have voiced those things in a room full of adults."

Participant M, Line 43

4.3.5.3 At the meeting

The view of the participants was that running the meeting itself requires care, skill and effort on their part, as SENCo and as the chair or facilitator of the review. In detail this means leading the discussion:

"But obviously we have to be mindful of what they can take, it's all very well having them here, it's nice but at the same time, we've got to be making sure it's purposeful, it's meaningful and not tokenistic, oh yeah it's all about them, sit there for a whole hour and they're bored to tears and all they want to do is just go."

Participant I, Line 324

Working to maintain a positive and constructive approach:

"But I think it's about, I've also sort of become more skilled in the kind of language you use to phrase, or sort of rephrase what other people might say sometimes."

Participant M, Line 62

Intervening when the balance of the discussion is upset:

> *"I just stepped in and said this isn't the time to talk about it, take it away from the review, because this occupational therapist went on and on and on and it really wasn't suitable and the mum was so angry."*
>
> *Participant T, Line 305*

And ensuring that tricky topics are given the time they require without dominating the whole of the annual review.

> *"There was one meeting where um, there was a bit of a disagreement between the parent and the class teacher about something, and so in that particular case, I mean we did have a conversation about that, but we weren't going to resolve it in the time of the meeting, so we decided to arrange another meeting to talk further about that particular issue."*
>
> *Participant M, Line 274*

Participants also emphasised their view that is it important to be active in keeping the child themselves involved, working with their concentration and giving them real choices:

> *"Kind of like an ice breaker and again, it's ... it's ... they're there, they've said their bit and they're ... they're not ... and I like it, because you don't have to sit there and worry about "oh I've got to say something" and get it out there and done."*
>
> *Participant I, Line 45*

"Quite often at that point I will ask the child if they would now like to go back to class. They don't have to, but 'You can choose, we're now going to do quite a lot of talking, and you can be involved in that, or not. If you choose to go back to class, that's fine, and I promise that I will share back with you whatever we decide and you're going to have a copy of these things that people have said.'"

Participant O, Line 154

4.4 Respondent Validity

In order to establish respondent validity, the final version of the theory, including the metaphorical illustration, was shared with the participants by email, asking for comments and criticisms. All five participants responded by email. Their anonymised comments are presented in Appendix 8.

All of the participants commenting that the theory made sense to them and none disagreed with the overarching structure. Three expressed interest in the differences and contradictions within the theory, which are discussed in section 4.4.1 below. This strongly supports the respondent validity of the proposed theory and it is presented in the sections above unchanged from the version shared with the participants.

Two out of five participants also stated that the experience of taking part had made them reflect on their practice, making further changes to how they run person centred reviews following their interview. A further two out of five reported that seeing the completed theory also encouraged them to revisit the systems they use to prepare for and run person centred reviews.

4.4.1 Disagreements and contradictions

In response to the comments participants made about the final theory, during the respondent validity exercise (see section 3.6.3 and Appendix 8), this section serves to clarify aspects of the theory, by briefly outlining the main disagreements evident in the interview data.

4.4.1.1 Workload

Participants shared contrasting views on the impact of adopting person centred reviews on workload. Axial codes relating to reduced workload contributed to the core category EFFECTS, axial codes relating to unchanged workload contributed to the core category SOME THINGS MAY NOT CHANGE and axial codes relating to increase workload contributed to RISKS AND DIFFICULTIES. Despite this apparent contradiction, it is possible to bring the participants' ideas on workload together as follows:

- Setting up person centred reviews can take extra work, which participants saw as worthwhile given the benefits.
- Once person centred reviews are well established within a school, they do not necessarily increase workload, and can reduce it if managed carefully.
- There can be more work to prepare for a person centred review than a non-person centred review. However, this work can be shared out, contributing to a sense of shared responsibility and improved status for TAs.
- Increased workload before a review can be balanced by a reduction after the meeting, although person centred reviews do not change the statutory duties of the SENCo.

4.4.1.2 Do person centred reviews develop children's learning?

Participants' observations of whether the experience of taking part in a person centred review process increases the progress that children with SEN make in their learning differed. Here participants described their own attributions as to whether or not there is a causal link, rather than reporting specific measurements of progress. Chapter 3 discussed the difficulties in designing a qualitative methodology of sufficient rigour to evaluate this impact within the scope and scale of the current study.

Participants E and I both expressed the view that the reviews do not in and of themselves have an impact on children's progress. Participants O and M on the other hand confidently shared a view that gains in children's progress can be attributed to the experience of taking part in person centred reviews.

Participant T did not comment specifically about progress in curriculum learning. However, along with nearly every participant (all except I), she did express a view that children develop their communication skills through taking part in person centred reviews.

This contradiction is not easy to resolve, and it may take further exploration or research with a different methodology to provide an answer. However, the axial codes under "children's development" within the selective code *interactions* as well as "some children respond less well to the process" within RISKS AND DIFFICULTIES, may point in a helpful direction.

Participants' views here suggest that a person centred review process may have its greatest impact on children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and language and communication difficulties, who are at a higher level of development overall. The youngest

children and those with the most severe learning difficulties may not gain as much from taking part in person centred reviews. This possible difference could provide the basis for a research question in a future study.

4.4.1.3 Do person centred reviews develop the relationship between children with SEND and their teachers?

Although in general the participants consistently stated that they see children with statements of SEN developing better relationships with their class teachers through taking part in person centred reviews, Participant E offered an interesting contrasting perspective. Her view was that children develop better relationships with teachers across the school through taking part in person centred reviews, however, she had not seen improvements to the specific relationship with the child's class teacher.

It may be that this is a reflection of the individual context of Participant E's school – she was clear, for example, that certain effects she had seen were more to do with developments in inclusive practice at her school than a result of establishing and running person centred reviews (see section 4.4.1.2 above for example).

In any case despite this, the data overall suggest that improvements to the class teacher-child with SEN relationship do come about as a result of both taking part in a person centred review process together, a finding which fits with the evidence on improvements to other relationships within the selective code *caring community develops*.

4.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has summarised the findings of the current study, outlining the proposed theory and illustrating it with a vivid conceptual metaphor, using quotations to demonstrate how it is grounded in the data. Throughout, it has also shown how the findings relate to the research orientation, and to the primary and secondary research questions. Finally, this chapter explored how respondent validity was established and has highlighted where disagreements in the data have resulted in contradictions in the theory.

5 Literature review B

"I may not have gone where I intended to go, but I think I have ended up where I needed to be."

Douglas Adams (1988)

5.1 Chapter overview

This chapter outlines the results of the literature searches carried out for the current study during and after the analysis. Starting with an outline of the approach to literature review taken in the current study, this chapter will describe the searches carried out, the strategy applied and the method by which the results of the searches were refined.

Four main areas of literature were searched in response to various stages of the analysis. Firstly, this chapter will explore the literature around emotional containment in schools, followed by critical appraisal of the literature pertaining to self-determination theory, schools as caring communities and reciprocal listening.

5.2 Grounded theory and literature review

Thornberg (2012) in a discussion of his "informed grounded theory" approach (detailed in section 3.4.4), advocates conducting the literature review in stages during the analysis:

> *"The literature review should therefore be seen as an open, critical and pluralistic conversation between the researcher, the literature, the data and the "emerging" body of concepts and ideas."*
>
> *(Thornberg, 2012, p253)*

Thornberg admits there is a danger of "forcing extant concepts" from the literature while neglecting others, and to combat this, he recommends keeping an open mind through "theoretical pluralism", stating that exploring:

> *"...different and even competing theoretical perspectives provides the researcher with flexible choices among different extant concepts and ideas."*
>
> *(Thornberg, 2012, p253)*

Citing other grounded theorists including Martin and Kelle, Thornberg warns that grounded theorists must be on the lookout for the limitations and weaknesses of the pre-existing literature, remaining "non-committal" in order:

> *"...to boldly go where nobody in their discipline has gone before."*
>
> *(Martin, quoted in Thornberg, p.254).*

Thornberg outlines how his view contrasts with the positivist, objectivity-seeking position of Glaser, noting that a "substantive field" is always known prior to the beginning of a research project, even if initially it is "unfocussed and fuzzy", ready for the research further to elaborate, clarify and reformulate through their fieldwork and analysis.

Thornberg's pragmatic theoretical pluralism fits well with the critical realist orientation of the current study, taking different theoretical perspectives as a set of imperfect lenses, through which the reality described by the participants can be viewed.

5.3 Search strategy

The aim of the mid- and post-analysis literature searches was to test and refine the developing grounded theory by identifying existing explanatory theories related to the categories and propositions within it. The principal question here is, "Do exisiting theories in the literature align with the grounded theory of the current study?" with a subsidiary question, "If so, how good is the evidence base for the existing theory?"

As outlined in the section above, three main stages of later literature review were carried out in relation to the developing theory. These are shown in Table 5.1, below.

Stage of literature review	Time carried out	Topic
B1	After analysis of interview 3	Emotional containment in schools
B2	After analysis of interview 4	Self-determination theory
B3	After analysis of interview 5	Schools as caring communities Belonging and special education Listening to children

Table 5.1: Stages of mid- and post-analysis literature review

- PsychINFO.
- PEP archive.
- Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection.
- PsychARTICLES.

Box 5.1 Full text databases used in literature stages B1-3

Stages B1-3 of the mid- and post-analysis literature review were carried out in a similar way to the initial literature review, using the databases shown in Box 5.1, above.

Stage of search	Search terms (Keywords)	Total results	Relevant results
B1	'emotional containment' OR 'emotional holding' AND 'school'	9	5
B2	'self-determination' AND 'special education*'	45	3
B3	'caring community' AND 'special education*'	2	0
	'belonging' AND 'special education*'	97	11
	'reciprocal listening' AND 'special education*'	0	0
	'listening' AND 'special education*'	218	5

Table 5.2: Search terms and results of stages B1-3 of the literature search

The keywords used are shown in Table 5.2, above, along with the number of results for each search. The keywords were selected to mirror as closely as possible codes within the grounded

theory. The results from each search at stages B1-3 were scanned to select relevant literature. A title search, followed by an abstract search, narrowed down the results for each set of keywords. The inclusion and exclusion criteria are shown in Box 5.2.

Inclusion criteria:

- Article is published in a peer reviewed journal.
- Article is in English
- Article published since 1990
- Topic of article is relevant

Exclusion criteria:

- Articles relating to irrelevant topics:
    - Teacher training and professional development
    - Speech and language therapy
    - Literacy difficulties
    - Identity, culture and diversity
    - Assessment and measurement
    - Pedagogy
    - Careers education
    - Mental health and addiction

Box 5.2: Inclusion and criteria applied during literature search stages B1-3

As can be seen in Table 5.2, several of the searches revealed very small numbers of items. Similarly, some of the apparently more successful searches consisted mainly of articles on irrelevant topics. It was therefore necessary to apply a more open, less systematic strategy in

order to cover the background to an existing theory or to ensure a sufficient level of depth to the literature reviewed in relation to the grounded theory.

Three tactics were used to broaden and deepen the literature reviewed in relation to the grounded theory: firstly, in the process of reading full articles, relevant publications referenced by the authors were noted and sourced on an item by item basis. Secondly, the researcher supplemented the literature through reference to works in the field known in advance. For example, the limited literature revealed by the search into emotional containment was augmented through a reading of Geddes (2006), a well known book on attachment in education.

Finally, where the sheer size of the general literature on a topic (for example self-determination theory) prevented a complete critical reading within the time limits of the current study, colleagues with an expertise in the area were consulted and articles were sourced based on their recommendations

As in Chapter 2: Literature review A, in this chapter, quantitative studies were evaluated using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP, 2014) frameworks, including the tools for systematic reviews, randomised controlled trials, cohort studies, case control studies as appropriate. The tools were applied as systematic checklists, allowing for an assessment of the validity of the conclusions made by the researchers. Lincoln and Guba's (1985) evaluative criteria were applied to qualitative studies. While there are many contrasting sets of criteria for evaluating qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba's was chosen because, as noted by Cresswell (2003), it derives from the same tradition and approach to research as Grounded Theory.

5.4 Literature evidence

The following section covers the relevant literature discovered by each of the stages of the systematic search.

5.4.1 Emotional containment and holding

During the analysis of interview 3, open codes including *emotional holding, parents feel loved* and *organised nurture* were applied in-vivo to the data. These were initially brought together under the tentative axial code *nurture and support*. In reflecting on the analysis of this interview, the researcher was prompted to explore the literature on emotional containment and holding in schools. These searches were attempting to answer the questions:

- Are there existing theories of emotional containment in schools which align with the developing theory?
- If so, how robust is the evidence supporting these theories?

The articles and chapters identified through computerised and manual searches come predominantly from authors within the psychodynamic tradition. Geddes (2006), for example, outlines a way containment can be applied to school systems:

> *"The whole process involves transforming fear into thinkable thoughts. In this way the child acquires the capacity to think about fears so that frustrations can be tolerated, mediated by talking and thinking. Without this process, challenge can create anxiety, which can feel overwhelming and can contaminate learning experiences. The concept of*

> *containment of anxiety can also be adapted to institutional practice and the organisation and practices of a school can be experienced as containing."*
>
> *(Geddes, 2006, p 39)*

Attunement is typically defined as a sense of connection and a degree of understanding in an interaction, shown by the responsiveness of one person to the other's non-verbal communication. Douglas (2007) agrees with Geddes, identifying reciprocity in interaction, alongside attunement, as a significant element of containment. These authors are drawing on a long tradition which includes the work of Bowlby (1988), Winnicott (1987) and Fonagy (2002). Links to these and other authors from the psychodynamic tradition are a recurring theme in the post-analysis literature review.

For example, McLoughlin (2010) shares her reflections on applying a psychodynamic approach in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) in an area of Inner London similar to that of the current study. Through detailed case reports, McLoughlin describes how flexibility and listening were central to successful containment for traumatised children, their parents, PRU staff and also for the wider joint network of the PRU and the family. She concludes that containment comes from a clear, calm and receptive attitude rather than a consistent setting such as a clinic or consulting room; describing "concentric circles of containment", McLoughlin also highlights how a therapist can use the trust built through this containing attitude to rebuild the relationship between the family and the professional network.

Similarly, Pavia (2011) presents a descriptive study of clinical work in Inner London primary schools, working with South Asian families where children identified as having poor social relationships and/or violent temper at home. Again there are clear parallels with the location of

the current study, as well as the ethnic makeup of the area. Agreeing with McLoughlin, Pavia states that therapeutic work taking place at school can be more containing than work in the setting of a clinic, as it takes advantage of the reliability and predictability provided by pre-existing boundaries. Pavia also reminds us of the need for flexibility and cultural sensitivity when working with immigrant families around mental health and wellbeing.

Hyman (2012) presents further case examples of work in schools in the USA, illustrating how a holding environment fosters development and learning, through supporting feelings of security. In the tradition of Winnicott and Bowlby, Hyman defines holding as requiring "empathy" and he states that to build a "good enough" relationship, adults must be flexible enough about their own needs to meet the needs of children. In Hyman's clinical experience, an accepting and generally accurate view of the child held by the adult is internalised by the child, enabling both emotional and cognitive growth.

Working in the same area of London as McLoughlin (2010), and indeed in the same PRUs, Solomon and Thomas (2013) outline a broad and deep model of emotional containment which they state is vital for meeting both staff and pupil needs. A containing environment for the staff of the PRU, supported by time for reflection, meets their needs for security and safety, belonging and recognition:

> *"The more that staff feel secure and confident at work, the more they can be open, creative, innovative and sensitive with students and with each other. This is never something that can be achieved once and for all: creating a safe holding environment for staff and students is a constant, ongoing process."*
>
> *(Solomon & Thomas, 2013, p45)*

Drawing on Bion's idea of containment as a process through which difficult or painful thoughts and feelings can be tolerated, understood and put into words.

> *"For children's anxiety and disturbing feelings to be worked with effectively, both individual adults and the organisation of the school should provide emotional holding"*
>
> *(Greenhalgh, quoted in Solomon & Thomas, 2013, p48)*

Leadership in Solomon and Thomas's model contains staff through listening, putting difficult thoughts into words, helping staff feel valued and understood and that their experience is validated. This parallels the work of Weiss (2002), who explored the impact of teachers' autobiographies on their relationships with children:

> *"Working to understand the meaning and function of a child's point of view allows the teacher to select interventions strategies more likely to influence that child's life in positive and lasting ways."*
>
> *(Weiss, 2002, p125)*

Again Solomon and Thomas are building on the foundations laid by Winnicott (1997) – notably that a facilitating environment is one that is reliable, adaptive and secure – and by Bowlby (1988) to build:

> *"... a combination of emotional and structural containment that gives students an experience of a secure base."*
>
> *(Solomon & Thomas, 2013, p50)*

Within an organisation like a PRU, or indeed a school, Solomon and Thomas emphasise the need to adapt universal approaches with sensitivity and flexibility to respond to individual needs.

5.4.1.1 Summary and critique

In summary, this small but significant literature on emotional containment in schools, built primarily on the use of clinical case reports, many of from areas not far and with similar demographics to the location of the current study. As such this literature can be seen as dependable, and potentially transferable to the context of the current study.

This literature answers the first question it was undertaken to answer (section 5.4.1 on page 161), in that it has identified existing theories that provide a description of how schools could approach building emotional containment along with an explanation of a potential mechanism grounded in the psychodynamic tradition.

There are also therefore close links to the exploratory and explanatory purposes of this research, and the literature here provides a helpful structure through which the concept of containment may be applicable to person centred reviews.

In relation to the second question this part of the literature review was undertaken to answer, confidence in this literature as a robust evidence based is limited. The absence of research with purposes other than explanatory – any broad evaluation of impact, comparison with other approaches or testing of the theory – is especially notable. The research described also relies

entirely on the views of clinicians, and is not triangulated with an investigation of the views of the young people themselves, their parents or their teachers on how holding and containment have been implemented in schools.

5.4.2 Self determination

The development of the early selective codes **children's attitudes develop** and **children's self-awareness develops,** along with a stimulating discussion with a colleague following an unrelated training session in the EPS led the researcher to explore the literature on self-determination.

This search was conducted to answer the questions:

- Does the existing literature on self-determination relate to the developing grounded theory?
- What is the quality of the evidence relating to self-determination theory and special education?

Section 5.4.2.1, "Background" and section 5.4.2.2, "Self-determination theory and education", explore the general literature sourced through personal recommendations, in order to provide context for the theory and its application in education. Section 5.4.2.3, "Self-determination theory and special education" reports on the results of stage B2 of the systematic literature search.

5.4.2.1 Background

Self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2002, 2006; Deci & Ryan 2004) is a deeply integrated theory of human motivation, build on three postulated basic drives, for autonomy, relatedness and competence. The prodigious, decades-spanning literature on self-determination theory is beyond the scope of the current study to review; an outline of the theory will be presented, with a brief comment on how some of the criticisms have been addressed, before exploring in more detail applications of self-determination theory in special education.

Deci and Ryan define their core concepts as follows:

- Autonomy is the experience of directing one's own behaviour, when actions are endorsed by the self at the highest level of reflection. It is distinct from "independence" and from "individualism" and is more than just the act of making choices.
- Relatedness is the feeling of security and connection to others, expressly linked to Bowlby's concept of attachment.
- Competence is the sense of being able to cope with the demands we face, similar to the conception self-efficacy.

Ryan and Deci (2002; 2006, and also Deci & Ryan 2004) present empirical evidence from experimental, cross-sectional, longitudinal, introspective and naturalistic studies, which has broadly confirmed the central ideas of self-determination theory, along with its prediction that social environments can facilitate or forestall the development of self-determination. In addition, neuropsychological studies have shown that the neural mechanisms differ when humans are told what to do versus exercising autonomy.

Ryan and Deci address the behaviourist and reductionist critiques of self-determination theory (Pinker, 2002; Wegner, 2002), quoting research showing that intrinsic motivation cannot be explained by external reinforcement schedules alone. They also show that autonomy is orthogonal to automaticity – an automatic or impulsive action can be autonomous or not depending on whether it would be endorsed at the highest level of reflection.

> *"Some habits and reactions are ones we would experience as autonomous; others seem alien, imposed, or unwanted ... People's autonomy lies not in being independent causes but in exercising their capacity to reflectively endorse or reject prompted actions. When people take interest in an urge or a prompt and consent to its enactment, their behavior would be autonomous and the brain processes involved in its regulation would be different from those involved if the behavior were controlled."*
>
> *(Ryan and Deci, 2006, p1573-4)*

Criticisms that self-determination is a gendered cultural artefact of western individualism (Iyengar & DeVoe, 2003) have been answered through replication of findings across cultures, with Ryan and Deci (2006) noting that if autonomy is defined precisely, in line with current philosophical understanding, it can be shown in both individualist and collectivist cultures. They go on to warn that:

> *"While exploiting semantic ambiguities may draw attention to points one wishes to make, a danger is that it adds confusion to the field, and actually delays the solid advance of knowledge and its applications."*
>
> *(Ryan and Deci, 2006, p1580)*

5.4.2.2 Self-determination theory and education

Niemiec and Ryan (2009) discuss how self-determination theory can be applied in education. They draw on a long and coherent research tradition which demonstrates that intrinsic motivation comes from feelings of autonomy and competence, and further that autonomy is maximised by relatedness, having a voice, having a rationale for learning and through children tackling activities they can understand and master. In the same journal issue, Ryan and Niemiec (2009) emphasise how self-determination research has demonstrated that social context affects people's experience, with interpretation and meaning the "regnant" causes of behaviour[4].

> *"Not only are psychological events phenomenally the proximal causes of behaviour,* ***they are the most, if not only, practical level at which we can typically intervene."***
>
> *Ryan and Niemiec (2009, p266, emphasis in original)*

This prioritisation of the psychological level of explanation, with introspection an important aspect of the theory as well as a central research tool connects educational self-determination theory research to the work of Irvine Gersch, specifically his linking of the importance of listening to children to Person Construct Psychology (Gersch, 2001).

Ryan and Niemiec (2009) report research from the self-determination theory tradition, including cross-cultural studies which together show that where people have a voice they show greater engagement and performance and that autonomy-promoting educational environments

[4] "Regnant" is used by Ryan and Niemiec in the sense of "ruling", to mean that the psychological causes are at the most significant level of explanation, dominant over for example neurochemical or sociological explanations.

support the development of metacognitive skills such as persistence, as well as gains in learning and feelings of connection and psychological wellness.

5.4.2.3 Self-determination theory and special education

The literature on self-determination theory and special education was searched to explore the quality of evidence for its application in this area.

Examining the impact of explicitly teaching self-determination to students with disabilities outside the research tradition of Deci and Ryan, Karvonen et al. (2004) studied self-determination theory programmes in six US schools. The schools were selected for their "exemplary" practice and Karvonen et al. described the aims of the programmes in the study as "teaching students to take control of their lives." Using a multiple case study design involving individual interviews, classroom observations and review of documents (taking around 200 hours fieldwork over a period of 16 months), the coding and analysis carried out was cross-checked to ensure agreement between researchers in the team.

In the study, students reported showing self-determination behaviours (including self-advocacy and persistence) in a range of contexts, while parents reported "striking differences" in their children's self-determination behaviours. Teachers interviewed reported students began to apply flexible thinking skills as a result of the self-determination programmes. Karvonen et al. found that the benefits were independent of the nature of student's disability; success was linked to structured self-determination curricula, student participation in planning meetings, practice of self-advocacy, use of informed choices and the presence of a committed and enthusiastic "impetus person" at the school.

Karvonen et al. present rich data derived from in-depth design – their conclusions are credible within the context the research was carried out in. The wider transferability of the findings is questionable however, due to the homogeneity and relative affluence of the sample as well as the choice of "exemplary programmes" for the research.

Examining the application of self-determination theory to transition planning Andrus (2010) carried out a qualitative study of 11 students aged 14-16. In a multiple case study design utilising semi-structured interviews, field notes and examination of student journals, participants highlighted the importance of self-advocacy, family influences, autonomy and self-awareness, including their understanding of their disability. Andrus concludes that students engaged in transition planning best when the process was student centred, taking place in a caring environment. This study provides credible evidence for the value of self-determination to transition planning for the student themselves. However, the lack of triangulation with the views of teachers or parents and of any assessment of the long term impact of the work limits the confirmability of the study.

Krupp (2012) used a multiple-baseline-across-individuals design to assess the impact of a manualised self-determination programme on the attainment of three students with emotional-behavioural difficulties aged 11-14. The students set goals and made plans to adjust their behaviours in general and special education classes. All three made additional progress in their learning, a finding that was triangulated by interview data from adults who knew the students in school. Confidence in the findings of this small, in-depth study is weakened by the absence of any comparison group – the impact measured could have been an effect of additional attention and not of the programme itself.

5.4.2.4 Summary and critique

In answer to the questions for this search stated above, Deci and Ryan's concept of self-determination provides a helpful context for the grounded theory of the current study, linking it to a varied research tradition with a high quality of evidence overall. It therefore provides an answer to the first question this part of the literature review was undertaken to answer (see section 5.4.2, on page 166).

Within this broader tapestry of research supporting the application of self-determination to education is a smaller thread investigating its relevance to special education. Research evidence in this area draws heavily on case study designs, showing that in supportive schools with enthusiastic champions among the staff, students report benefits from being explicitly taught aspects of self determination through structured programmes.

The studies reported here can be seen as credible, with the potential for transferability due to the rich descriptions provided. There remains, however, a lack of comparative and evaluative research to support these contextually well-grounded. Overall, in answer to the second questions this part of the literature review was undertaken to answer, the evidence for the direct application of self-determination theory to special education is not strong.

5.4.3 School belonging

The selective code **caring community develops** led the researcher to investigate the literature on school community and the impact of students' sense of belonging. This search was carried out to answer the questions:

- Does the existing literature on school belonging relate to the developing grounded theory?
- What is the quality of the evidence relating to school belonging and special education?

Baumeister and Leary (1995) outline a theory that the need for belonging is a basic human drive. Drawing on contrasting psychodynamic and humanistic traditions, including Freud, Bowlby and Maslow, Baumeister and Leary comment that the historical approaches to belonging have generated valuable, but mostly speculative ideas. In their seminal 1995 paper, cited throughout the literature on self-determination theory, they lay out a wide range of empirical evidence from a range of methods which supports their view that:

> *"The need to belong is a powerful, fundamental and extremely pervasive motivation."*
>
> *(Baumeister & Leary, 1995,p 497)*

While it is beyond the scope of this literature review to review this literature in sufficient detail, Baumeister and Leary present a broad and deep body of empirical evidence, which supports their theory of a fundamental "need to belong", showing that humans seek out relationships which fulfil two criteria. To satisfy the drive, people need to experience "frequent, affectively pleasant interactions with a few other people," which take place in the context of "a temporally stable and enduring framework of affective concern for each other," (p497).

Looking at how this theory has been explored in education, Osterman (2000) conducted a literature review in two parts. The first part of Osterman's review supports Baumeister and Leary's theory that the need to belong is fundamental. It is interesting to note at this point that Osterman includes the idea of acceptance in her definition of belonging, closely aligning this area of the literature with that on containment. However, Osterman's decision not to report the search terms used to conduct the review casts doubt on the reliability of the conclusions.

Osterman goes on to conclude that student experience of acceptance and belonging has a positive impact on attitudes, behaviour and learning.

> *"Students who experience acceptance are more highly motivated and engaged in learning and more committed to school. These concepts of commitment and engagement are closely linked to student performance, and more importantly, to the quality of student learning."*
>
> *(Osterman, 2000, p359)*

Osterman also gives the opinion that many schools are organised in ways which actively prevent students developing sense of belonging to a caring community, although this evidence for this hypothesis is not presented in her review.

Baker et al. (1997) present a discussion of the historical problem of alienation – poor social relationships and problems with social fabric of school. They define relationships as "the glue of the community" and again there is an echo of the literature on containment, with Baker et al.

describing how caring exchanges build the perception that a person is valued and loved, resulting in "sustaining relationships".

> *"Community-oriented schools may provide the web of relationships and the ethic of care that enable students to model and develop pro-social values"*
>
> *(Baker et al., 1997, p589)*

Making explicit links to self-determination theory, to psychodynamic thinkers like Bowlby and humanistic psychologists like Maslow, Baker et al. describe a set of educational practices which includes group work and self-directed learning. The challenge for this view is the consistent finding that this approach to structuring learning is less effective for children at lower levels of attainment (Hattie, 2009), who may lack the cognitive resources and knowledge independently to master the skills required.

While the benefits of belonging and acceptance at school seem clear, at least at the social and personal level, Nepi et al. (2013) sound a warning in relation to the belongingness of children identified with SEN. In a large and well-designed study of 418 Italian children, 212 identified with SEN, Nepi et al. found that children identified with SEN in full inclusion struggle for social position, being less accepted, more peripheral in class, and feeling more distant from school than their peers without the label of SEN.

Johnson (2009) explored how student perceptions of staff caring related to measures of their effort and performance comparing a US charter school with a nearby "traditional school". She concluded that:

> *"How students feel about and do in school is, in large part, determined by their relationships with teachers"*
>
> *(Johnson, 2009, p101)*

However, Johnson's methodology cannot distinguish between correlation and causation, and this conclusion is therefore an example of overclaiming (CASP, 2014). Indeed the direction of causation could be stated the other way around, that children's relationships with teachers are determined by how well they are doing in school. The selection bias evident in the unrepresentatively able intake of the charter school compared to the "traditional school" in the study also seriously damages the validity of the findings.

Another international study, conducted by Cemalcilar (2010), sampled 799 middle school students in Istanbul, finding that satisfaction with social relationships was a strong predictor of belonging. Similarly, Gileen-O'Neal and Fuligni (2013) in a 4 year longitudinal study of 572 US high school students in 3 schools found that students who report a sense of belonging demonstrate signs of intrinsic motivation such as perseverance.

> *"A sense of personal connection to their academic institution supports internalisation of academic values"*
>
> *(Gileen-O'Neal and Fuligni, 2013, p680)*

Both of these studies have similar strengths, with well impressively large, fairly recruited samples and good use of validated measures. Gileen-O'Neal and Fuligni in particular offers strong evidence due to the length of time for which the participants were sampled.

Drawing a somewhat contrasting conclusion, Ma (2003), having carried out a survey of 13,751 middle school pupils in 92 Canadian schools, states that children's self-esteem predicts their feelings of belonging. She adds that the academic expectation and discipline of schools seems to be more important than school environment. Ma suggests that the causation could be seen as going both ways – that students transfer their view of themselves to the school, as well as developing their connection to school from their relationships with teachers. Again, Ma's impressively large sample size and use of validated measures give confidence in her findings.

Roffey et al. (2013) contrast positive connectedness (e.g. to a community) to negative connectedness (e.g. to a gang), describing the former as a resilience factor. Roffey et al. note that community is hard to define, using the idea of "social capital" built through trust, understanding and care, with staff attitudes – pro-collaboration and valuing others – central. Roffey et al.'s study report the finding that an adapted circle time activity increased a sense of inclusive belonging in Australian schools. Although this finding comes from large (albeit as yet unpublished) study across "more than 100" schools, Roffey et al. do not report the use of any kind of control group, meaning that the intervention in question may not have been itself responsible for the effect detected (McBride, 2013).

In Texas, Nichols (2008) carried out a mixed methods study of 45 children's belongingness beliefs in one middle school, where the school ethos was built around ideas of community. Nichols found belonging to be independent of attainment but negatively associated with absenteeism. Again, however, the direction of causation is not clear, and cannot be identified from their methodology (McBride, 2013).

McMahon et al. (2008) carried out a study of US students (77% of whom were identified as disabled) following a transition from special to mainstream school. 136 students aged 11-20 in 29 schools were sampled; for disabled young people, having a peer and staff support network increased their feelings of school belonging, whereas having experienced bullying decreased it. McMahon et al. conclude that beliefs about control of learning were a strong predictor of achievement, persistence, motivation and effort for students without disabilities, although this was sadly not explored for those with disabilities.

> *"School belonging appears to partially mediate the relation between school stressors and social resources on the one hand and psychological and academic outcomes on the other hand. If students report more stressors, they are likely to experience less belonging and more negative outcomes. If students report more social resources, they are likely to experience greater belonging and more positive academic and psychological outcomes."*
>
> *(McMahon et al., 2008, p 398)*

5.4.3.1 Summary and critique

In summary, there is an interesting and varied literature on school belonging built on the foundations of the need to belong as a fundamental drive and drawing on the same psychodynamic and humanistic traditions as the literature on self-determination theory and emotional containment in schools. In relation to the first question this part of the literature review was undertaken to answer (see section 5.4.3 on page 173), the general literature relates strongly to the grounded theory of the current study, and provides a helpful explanatory context.

To answer the second question, examination of the quality of the evidence relating to school belonging and SEN shows that, while many studies fail to make appropriate comparisons, or assume a particular direction of causation without sufficient evidence, findings from research in diverse cultures with large sample sizes consistently show that a sense of belonging is at least an important aspect of children's experience in school.

How school belonging is mediated by aspects of school culture and how it is related to the dominant outcome of academic success, especially for children and young people identified with SEN and disabilities is open for further exploration, but it seems clear that a positive sense of belonging is a significant challenge for children identified with SEN or disabilities to achieve.

5.4.4 Reciprocal listening

The work of Irvine Gersch (1996, 2001) was influential in the development of the local model of person centred reviews (see section 1.4.3). The researcher returned to the themes of Gersch's work as part of the literature review in response to the selective code **reciprocal listening**.

In a recent article, Gersch et al. (2014), reporting on several studies in London and Sydney, Australia, demonstrated that children aged 8-14 years can respond to conversations about deep issues, providing evidence that listening to children and young people is enhanced by paying attention to their deeper attitudes and motivations. Gersch's research also demonstrates that open-ended conversations or game-like activities are more effective in encouraging children to respond than are checklists or questionnaires (Lipscomb & Gersch, 2012).

Further searches were carried out to answer the following questions:

- Does the existing literature on reciprocal listening relate to the developing grounded theory?
- What is the quality of the evidence relating to reciprocal listening and special education?

Thomas and O'Kane (1999) used a mixed methodology to explore the experience of 223 children aged 8-12 in local authority care. They found that children in their study attended their reviews inconsistently, as did professionals who were formally involved. Children reported that the purpose of review was not clear to them, although Thomas and O'Kane conclude that there were benefits in building trust between children and adults. The qualitative results can be seen as credible; however, the lack of clarity about the validity of the measures used limits the strength of the quantitative evidence.

Bearne (2002), in a small study of year 3 pupils with and without SEN, make the case that pupil views on groupings, friendships and independence were useful for teachers, supporting Gersch's "pragmatic case" for listening.

> *"I think the project's shown that the children really think more than we give them credit for"*
>
> *(Headteacher, quoted in Bearne 2002, p127)*

Norwich and Kelly (2006) interviewed 91 children, SENCos, heads, teachers and TAs. They found that when schools made opportunities for listening to children, staff reported notable

benefits around tailoring provision and targets. Norwich and Kelly conclude that school ethos, staff commitment, established policy, practice and structure, as well as the use of formal and informal methods were all supportive of listening to children. Difficulties occurred where the child protection principle conflicts with the principle of pupil participation.

Both of these studies demonstrate how children and adults typically report that listening to children is a helpful process, however, as elsewhere in the literature there is no attempt to measure the impact or by comparing across settings. In both, there is some potential for transferability, given the rich descriptive nature of the findings and the use of triangulation, however, the dependability and confirmability are limited due to the lack of consideration of reflexivity and an audit trail.

Bragg (2010) presents a literature review of research into listening to children. She also argues Gersch's "pragmatic case", as well as the need to change adults' perceptions of children's ability. Bragg notes that issues of power are often a barrier to meaningful listening – adults are unwilling to give up their sense of authority, expertise or control despite a commonly held view that the process of being consulted will benefit children personally. Bragg also notes that actual outcomes are rarely investigated in research into listening to children.

In contrast, Kaehne and Beyer (2014) report a study of the outcomes of person centred planning in post-school transition for children with LD. They note increased attendance at person centred reviews for children (although no comparison group is reported) and conclude that the impact of person centred planning is dependent on the engagement and flexibility of services. This well focused study used a clear and reliable method for coding the content of plans through

documentary analysis, although the sampling of participants was dependent on decisions made within each school, rather than according to an established strategy.

Mercieca and Mercieca (2014) use analysis of case notes in EP practice to emphasise the need for an "ignorant" attitude for adults, working with uncertainty rather than from a position of expertise. Mercieca and Mercieca state that this attitude enables adults to learn how a child communicates (echoing Gersch, 1996), advocating "listening that moves beyond hearing."

The Merciecas' article uses their qualitative data, without a clear methodology, to construct an argument in favour of this "ignorant" attitude, going on to recommend a named tool for listening to children. It clearly therefore falls into the category of "practice-based evidence" and does not meaningfully contribute to an evidence base for practice.

5.4.4.1 Summary and critique

In summary, beyond the work of Gersch and colleagues, the literature on listening to children is mixed and generally weak. Many studies do not use appropriate comparison groups or investigate outcomes beyond an unstructured analysis of interview data. Like the literature around person centred planning reported in Chapter 2, there is a lot of enthusiasm, practice guidance and promotion of different tools and techniques, with much less explanatory or evaluative research.

5.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has reported the results of a multi-stage literature review carried out during and after the analysis, in accordance with Thornberg's (2012) model of "informed grounded theory". Codes within the analysis were used as prompts for explorations within the literature, in part shaping later stages of the analysis, through a process of constant comparison (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Different searches have had contrasting results, with some topics, including self-determination theory and belonging being too large to do justice to within the scope of the current study, and others, such as reciprocal listening revealing a less well developed literature. What has been striking is the way searches stimulated by different prompts have led to an interrelated literature – school belonging and community being closely related to self-determination theory and both anchored by the same psychodynamic and humanistic roots as the literature on reciprocal listening and emotional containment in schools. In the following chapter, the relationship between this literature and the grounded theory will be explored.

6 Discussion

"We pass through this world but once. Few tragedies can be more extensive than the stunting of life, few injustices deeper than the denial of an opportunity to strive or even to hope, by a limit imposed from without, but falsely identified as lying within."

Stephen Jay Gould (1982)

6.1 Chapter overview

This final chapter concludes the current study by relating the grounded theory developed during the process of analysis to the aims and the research questions of the current study. The grounded theory will also be considered in relation to the literature reviewed before, during and after data collection. Strengths and weaknesses of the current study will be outlined, before turning to its implications.

The relevance of the findings will be discussed in relation to children and young people with SEN and disabilities and their families, as well as in relation to school staff, EPs and local authorities. Possible directions for further research will be suggested and the strategy for disseminating the findings of the current study will be described.

6.2 Grounded theory and research questions

The current study was set up to answer two research questions, a primary question with an exploratory purpose and a secondary question with an explanatory purpose.

6.2.1 Primary research question

The primary, exploratory research question was framed as follows:

- What changes have come about in primary schools that have been running person centred annual reviews as part of the local pilot project, according to SENCos who have been leading them?

The grounded theory has answered this question in detail. SENCos who were themselves part of the pilot project told a rich story of the impact they had seen of adopting person centred reviews. The positive changes that they described included:

- Many children developed their skills and/or their self-determination.
- Improved relationships for all who take part in person centred reviews.
- A feeling of being part of a caring community developed.
- Better teamwork between children, parents and school staff.
- Developments to day-to-day SEN systems and practice, including gains in status and responsibility for Teaching Assistants.
- In some cases improved teaching of children with SEN results from taking part.
- The SENCo's workload often, if not always, reduced.

- A wider impact on the school, including the application of person centred principles in other areas of practice.

In addition, participants were clear about the risks and difficulties involved:

- Some children find the process stressful.
- Sometimes although relationships improve, they remain unequal.
- Some adults do not adapt their language to the principles of person centred planning.
- Setting up a system of person centred reviews and preparing for an individual review takes work.

The data also challenged the researcher's assumptions (detailed in section 3.5.11), building a picture of a set of changes that may not come about, at least as a direct result of the person centred nature of annual reviews in schools in the pilot project. According to SENCos:

- Children do not necessarily make gains in learning as a result of taking part in person centred reviews.
- Relationships between children with SEN and their teachers may not change, especially where the school ethos already supports equality and inclusion.
- Overall workload may not change.

6.2.2 Secondary research question

The secondary, explanatory research question was framed as follows:

- How, according to SENCos who have been leading person centred reviews, have these changes come about?

The analysis has answered this question, with participants identifying a wide range of causal factors, which they saw as giving person centred reviews their power. The findings have enabled a tentative understanding of which causes are responsible for which effects, especially when they are examined in the light of the later literature review (see section 6.3). This understanding is summarised in the following hypotheses derived from propositions of the grounded theory:

- When children practice speaking for themselves, and adults and children listen reciprocally to one another, both as part of an honest, positive and constructive process, children develop their skills and their self-determination.
- When people are brought together in a clear structure, which encourages reciprocal listening, relationships improve, developing teamwork and a sense of belonging to a caring community.
- Teaching assistants gain status because they take on an important role in preparing for a person centred review.
- Systems and practice for SEN improve because of the clarity and structure of the process and because it encourages people to be honest, positive and constructive.

Participants also told a detailed story of the contextual enabling factors and the specific effort required to make person centred reviews work:

- An existing inclusive ethos in the school enables person centred reviews to work.

- Children with speech and language difficulties or difficulties with social, emotional and mental health may benefit more than those with the most severe learning difficulties.
- Everyone needs time to prepare for a person centred review, and to learn what to expect from the approach.

6.2.3 Summary

The research undertaken has answered both research questions, providing a theory of person centred reviews as an intervention in their own right. In this theory it is hypothesised that person centred reviews have a number of inherent features which cause a range of positive changes to come about.

6.3 Grounded theory and existing literature

In the following sections, the grounded theory will be linked to the existing literature, both that reviewed as part of the initial literature review and the literature in stages during and after data analysis.

6.3.1 Person centred planning

The grounded theory both supports and complements the existing literature on person centred planning. Like much of the qualitative research in the field, the theory shows the enthusiastic and positive reactions people have to taking part in the process. In answering the primary

research question, it stands alongside the recent small scale and case study research, such as Burke and Ramcharan (2005) and Corrigan (2014), in outlining a set of benefits as they are subjectively perceived by those involved in the process.

The grounded theory also neatly aligns with the findings of Taylor-Brown's (2012) exploratory research. Taylor-Brown hypothesises that the reviews in her study built "social trust" and a sense of connectedness, ideas which are echoed in the theme of "caring community" in the current study. Similarly, Taylor-Brown's emphasis on the openness and reciprocity of her participants' reviews, along with the reduction of power imbalances, can be seen reflected in "reciprocal listening" and "honesty, positivity, constructiveness" from the core category CAUSES.

Where the grounded theory goes further than the existing research about person centred planning and reviews, is in the answer to the secondary research question. By using this methodology, the current study was able to outline a mechanism through which the process of a person centred review operates. This contribution is unique in the context of the published literature on person centred planning in schools (in the UK at least) and in connecting the process to established psychological traditions, the grounded theory presented here points to potential valuable additions to the evidence base.

Additionally, the grounded theory goes beyond the published literature to give an account of how adopting a person centred review process can influence change more widely in a school, through enabling the development of better SEN systems and practice, and through a reciprocal relationship with the existing ethos of a school. SENCos participating in the current study described a range of ways in which person centred tools and principles had

been applied to other aspects of their work and in some cases to the school as a whole. This aspect of the theory supports the work of Helen Sanderson and her colleagues (e.g., Sanderson et al., 2008; Erwin & Sanderson, 2010), suggesting that person centred planning can benefit schools at a systemic level.

The exploratory and explanatory purposes of the current study, however, and the choice of methodology, mean that it does not fully address the weaknesses of the evidence base on person centred planning in schools, although it does point out how they could be. A convincing demonstration that the beneficial outcomes of person centred planning in schools are due to the nature of the approach itself has, due to methodological weaknesses and a lack of appropriate comparisons, so far been absent from the published literature. The grounded theory of the current study is not on its own such a demonstration, but it in fulfilling its purposes, the current study has provided testable hypotheses around which such a study could be built.

6.3.2 Reciprocal listening

In relation to the literature on reciprocal listening in schools, the grounded theory supports the work of Irvine Gersch and his colleagues, in that participants' views support his "pragmatic case" for listening to children (Gersch, 2001). The tone and content of participants' comments painted a consistent picture, one in which person centred reviews support children to speak for themselves and adults to listen receptively, a process which results in both children and adults having a better understanding of how the children learn.

The grounded theory can also be taken as further evidence for Gersch's view that children, if they are supported by adults who take the time to learn how they communicate, can make helpful comments about their lives. Lipscomb and Gersch's (2012) finding that listening to children and young people is enhanced by paying attention to their deeper attitudes and motivations is certainly related to the emancipatory aims of person centred planning, and some aspects of the grounded theory, specifically the data represented by the axial code *can consider broader aspirations and outcomes*, suggest that this may be part of the mechanism of person centred reviews.

6.3.3 Emotional holding

The existing literature on emotional holding and containment in schools, drawn from the psychodynamic and therapeutic tradition of Winnicott, Bowlby and Fonagy, provides a mechanism by which the nurturing elements of person centred reviews described by SENCos lead to improved relationships and a sense of a caring community. There are clear parallels between the "clear, calm and receptive attitude" described by McLoughlin (2010) and the "empathy" of a "good enough" relationship described by Hyman (2012) on the one hand and the "honesty, positivity and constructiveness" and the "reciprocal listening" described by the participants in the current study.

The literature goes further than the grounded theory, with the concentric circles of containment described by McLouglin and also by Solomon and Thomas (2013), which support the individual worker to cope with emotionally demanding work, not explicitly present in the data. This literature drawn from the therapeutic tradition perhaps adds an additional warning to the risks and difficulties identified by participants: if a person centred

review is such an emotionally significant process, the role of leading the meeting is potentially even more demanding than previously thought. On top of the skill of maintaining balance at a person centred review and of making sure the discussion is accessible to the child, there is something extra required to ensure that the difficult emotions involved are handled sensitively, in a way that makes them tolerable.

6.3.4 School belonging

The grounded theory presents an optimistic picture in relation to the school belonging of children with SEN and/or disabilities. In the data, person centred reviews are described as a mechanism through which children with SEN build relationships that are stronger and more numerous and through which a sense of a caring community develops. This stands in contrast to the pessimistic picture presented by Nepi et al. (2013).

The literature on school belonging sits at the intersection between that on self-determination and that on emotional containment, with roots in both humanistic and psychodynamic psychology. The grounded theory describes a set of propositions which operate within this intersection, where a sense of belonging is fostered by an accepting emotionally containing experience, enabling the development of aspects of self-determination. In this way it seems that the grounded theory could be an operationalisation of the virtuous processes described by Baker et al. (1997) and Osterman (2000), through which pro-social values develop as a result of a sense of belonging.

Interestingly, the grounded theory suggests that fostering a sense of belonging is not enough on its own to improve the learning outcomes of children with SEN. Propositions of the

grounded theory state that progress in learning does not happen for all children (as a direct result of the review) and that children with language or behavioural difficulties benefit more than those with more severe learning difficulties (perhaps in keeping with Hattie, 2009).

In contrast to the conclusions of Ma (2003), the grounded theory describes a mechanism where it is the person centred review process which changes children's sense of belonging, rather than belonging being a product of children transferring their view of themselves to the school. The grounded theory does align with Roffey's (2013) description of school belonging as a protective factor built by trust, understanding and care, supported by a staff attitude of valuing others and their contributions. Similarly, the grounded theory triangulates McMahon et al.'s (2008) finding that belonging mediates the relationship between stressors and positive outcomes – though the propositions of the theory do not present as clear a model as McMahon's quantitative analysis of the relationships between variables.

6.3.5 Self determination

The grounded theory fits well within the tradition of self-determination theory, hypothesising as it does that person centred reviews are a "social context", which enables children with identified SEN to begin to fulfil their drives for autonomy, relatedness and competence (Ryan & Niemiec, 2009). Specifically, it echoes the findings that where people have a voice they show greater engagement and performance and that autonomy-promoting educational environments support the development of children's metacognitive skills.

Following the approach to literature review of "Informed Grounded Theory" (Thornberg, 2012), self determination theory itself influenced the developing grounded theory, giving a

structure to the emerging concepts relating to developments in children's perceived competence, their independence and their relationships. While the complete grounded theory more strongly suggests that children's relatedness develops than their autonomy and competence, all three concepts are well represented in the data, informing propositions that could be adapted as testable hypotheses for future research. This way the current study could be a gateway to more rigorous research into self determination and children with SEN and disabilities than can so far be found in the literature.

6.4 Strengths and limitations

In this section the strengths and limitations of the current study will be discussed, including ways in which potential weaknesses were identified and addressed.

6.4.1 Methodological limitations

The significant way in which the current study diverged from standard practice in grounded theory research was in the lack of developmental revision of the interview schedule. Typically, grounded theory researchers adapt their interview questions in the light of the emerging analysis, as part of the process of constant comparison (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In the current study, the overall structure of the interview schedule was not significantly changed – no new questions were added and none were abandoned.

This limitation is somewhat mitigated by developments in the researcher's use of prompts and elaboration questions and the priority given to particular areas, as evidenced in the

integrative memos written during data collection and analysis (see Appendix 7). For example, the decision after Interview 2 to allow more time at the beginning of the interview for following up on the rapport building question "What is your experience of person centred working?" by asking about how the participant prepares for and runs person centred reviews enabled participants to share more detailed views both about how person centred reviews make changes happen and about the steps SENCos take to ensure they are successful. Codes developed from this data formed a major part of the final theory, going some way to answering the secondary research question, and having significant implications for schools, EPs and local authorities (discussed further in section 6.5).

It also could be seen as a limitation of the current study that theoretical saturation was achieved after just five interviews. Although the coherence of the analysis was tested with a possible negative case (see section 3.5.5), which did not challenge the overall structure, it could be argued that five is too small a number to demonstrate confidence in its outcomes. However, the aims of the current study were to explore the specific impact of the local model of person centred reviews, and small as it was, the sample represented nearly half of the total population of SENCos in early stages of the pilot project. In this way the conclusions can be seen to have credibility in relation to the total population (further discussed in section 6.4.4).

A further possible issue is the variation in practice between the participants in the current study. It seems clear from the data that while there are commonalities in the process, there are also differences in the ways each participant prepares for and runs person centred reviews in their school. In a quantitative study, relying on fair comparisons, the consistency of how an intervention is implemented is known as the "treatment integrity" (Hayes et al., 2013) and it can be a major problem in attempts to demonstrate the impact of a therapy or medicine.

In the current study, this can be boiled down to the question: “When the participants talk about person centred reviews, are they all talking about the same thing?” However, by referring to the structured elements of the local model, and examining how this was reflected in the data, it can be seen that all five participants referred to aspects of the person centred agenda (see Appendix 9) as causal elements of person centred reviews, suggesting that fidelity to the approach was indeed a feature of the pilot project.

It may be that some of the contradictions in the grounded theory reflect differences in how each participant has implemented the approach, specifically around workload. In contrast, it is worth noting that the achievement of theoretical saturation, and the broad agreement expressed by participants when the complete grounded theory was presented to them.

6.4.2 Subjectivity and bias

One of the major challenges in a project such as this, where the researcher has a stake in the success of the approach being examined, is that of researcher bias (Robson, 2011). The current study carried the significant risk that the researcher’s own valuing of the process, along with his role as joint project lead, could affect the responses of the participants as well as the interpretations placed on them during the analysis.

A number of steps were taken to mitigate these related risks. Firstly, through constructing the interview schedule with open, tentative questioning alongside specific opportunities for participants to share examples of negative impact, or of no impact at all, the researcher attempted to reduce the chance of participants simply saying what they thought the researcher

wanted to hear. The opening out phase of the interview also established a context of "not knowing", stating that there are no right or wrong answers and that the research would be built on the participants' own views.

Within the analysis, great care was taken to identify and code comments within the data which contradicted or challenged the researcher's assumptions (see sections 3.5.11, 4.3.3 and 4.3.4). In using reflexivity during the process of coding and constant comparison, the possibility of confirmation bias distorting the findings was reduced. Thus the evangelically positive tone of much of the theory is tempered and balanced by the focus on the risks and difficulties of a person centred annual review process and the ways in which it may not have a direct impact.

Furthermore, Thornberg's (2012) "Informed Grounded Theory" approach to literature review, being pragmatic about the presence of pre-existing ideas before the start of the research, and the use of stages of literature review to inform and shape the developing theory, supported the researcher's openness to the content of the data and the grounding of the theory within it. Again the research diary (see Appendix 7), the researcher's use of supervision and the peer review process (both outlined in section 3.6.2) demonstrate the steps taken to minimise the impact of bias.

6.4.3 Theoretical validity

Stiles (2003) describes validity as a matter of how well readers can trust the interpretation the researcher has put on the data and how well it explains the phenomenon under study. Of the many ways validity can be considered, one of the most significant for grounded theory

research is "theoretical validity". Corbin and Strauss describe a framework for considering the theoretical validity of a piece of grounded theory research:

> *"Theory denotes a set of well-developed categories (themes, concepts) that are systematically interrelated through statements of relationship to form a theoretical framework that explains some phenomenon".*
>
> *(Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p55)*

The grounded theory of the current study meets this definition, with the hierarchically organised code system showing well developed categories, the outline (section 4.2.1) expressing "statements of relationship" and the conditional matrix (Figure 4.2 on page 98Error! Bookmark not defined.) showing how they are systematically interrelated to explain the phenomenon of person centred reviews. Furthermore, the process of grounding the theory in data was carried out transparently; both the research diary (see Appendix 7) and peer review (see section 3.6.2) provide evidence that the analysis is reasonable and can be traced through an audit trail.

6.4.4 Credibility and dependability

In grounded theory research, the concepts of credibility and dependability are typically considered as more important than other aspects of validity (Patton, 2002; Robson, 2011). Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe credibility as confidence in the "truth" of the findings of a piece of research. Credibility can be demonstrated through peer audit, exploration of negative cases and member checking.

The credibility of the complete grounded theory comes in part from the process of peer audit (section 3.6.2), which provided independent reflection on the developing theory and validated the researcher's approach to coding and decision making in relation to the progress of the analysis. In addition, the sampling of a negative case (section 3.5.5), which confirmed the patterns emerging from the data, supports the credibility of the findings.

"Member checking" involves asking participants to comment on the analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions of the researcher (Cresswell, 2003). This process on its own is not enough to demonstrate credibility, as participants may disagree with each other or agree with the researcher for reasons of social or organisational pressure.

Member checking is sometimes referred to as "respondent validity", and the approach taken in the current study is described in section 3.6.3. Responses from all five participants suggested that the researcher's interpretation was seen as meaningful and useful, with three of the participants commenting that it had prompted them to reflect on their established practice with a view to finding ways to improve it (Appendix 8).

Dependability refers to the extent to which findings are consistent and could be repeated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Cresswell, 2003; Robson, 2011). The main method for establishing dependability is through inquiry audit – where an external person reviews the analysis and considers whether the researcher's interpretations and conclusions are supported by the data.

Evidence for dependability in the current study comes from the process of peer audit and supervision (section 3.6.2) supported by the open and transparent process of coding and analysis, described in detail in Chapter 3 and documented through integrative memos (see

section 3.5.10 and Appendix 7 for further detail). At the methodological planning stage, the researcher's assumptions were examined, defined and reported, bringing clarity to the relationship with the data (see section 3.5.11).

6.4.5 Transferability

Transferability describes how people reading a study find it to have some relevance or applicability to their own contexts (Robson, 2011). The strength of the current study in relation to transferability is in the richness and detail of the theory as constructed from the views of participants. The data is also thoroughly contextualised in the setting of SEN work in primary schools in a diverse area of a large English city.

The restricted scope and scale of the current study could place limitations on the relevance the findings may have beyond the context of the local pilot project involving mainstream primary schools. It is not really justified by the data, for example, to assume that the findings of the current study will apply in local secondary schools, or in schools in different local authority areas, given the range of political contexts and local cultures across the country.

As discussed when outlining the aims of the current study (see section 1.6 and section 6.8), it should be seen in the context of its exploratory purpose, as the first step in a broader research undertaking, which could involve testing or extending the theory in different contexts (see section 6.6). However, the parallels with the conclusions of other research in the literature on person centred planning in schools (see section 6.3.1) could be seen as suggesting potential transferability of the findings.

In practice, aspects of the transferability of the findings will be demonstrated (or not) through the dissemination of the research (see section 6.7). The response from children and young people, parents and professionals locally, both within the pilot project group and more widely (for example, to staff in secondary and special schools and professionals in health and social care) and nationally, will give an indication of whether it has any applicability in other environments and contexts.

6.5 Implications

The following sections will outline the implications of the current study, from the immediate meaning for children and their families to its significance at the national level.

6.5.1 For children with SEN and their families

The current study presents a positive picture for children with SEN and their families, especially locally. It suggests that the local model is paying off for children and their families, with a theory of person centred reviews that paints a picture of children gaining in their perceived competence, their relatedness both at school and at home and in their autonomy, which could also be contributing to gains in learning.

Although they themselves did not contribute to the theory presented in the current study, it has potentially striking implications for parents. SENCos interviewed had observed that parents taking part in the local model of person centred reviews know their child better, are

more involved in planning for their education and are less likely to experience conflict with the school, suggesting that parents are benefitting because of the structure, clarity and constructiveness of the review process, as well as from the experience of being listened to.

However, as will be discussed in section 6.6 on possible new directions for research, a major implication for children and their families is that this model of how person centred reviews work has been constructed without exploring their experience in the same depth. Although parents and children have previously been consulted through less structured methods, to remain true to the humanist values of the person centred approach, it is vital that this is addressed.

6.5.2 For schools

For local schools who have been involved in the pilot project, the findings of the research go some way to justifying the effort involved in taking part in the pilot project. More widely, for those schools that have more recently begun to explore person centred planning, the findings provide a theory of what adopting the approach could offer, especially in terms of the proposed gains for children in self-determination and self-advocacy.

The current study also sets out a way to set up a person centred annual review process, offering SENCos and headteachers, in schools both locally and more widely, guidance that suggests a role for TAs, a need for preparation time and a reciprocal relationship between an inclusive school ethos and person centred planning.

The prospect of an approach to planning and review that reduces conflict with parents and professionals should be an enticing one for schools, although at the same time schools need to be aware of what the theory says about the risks and difficulties of the approach and the flexibility required to run them in a way that is appropriate to children's needs.

6.5.3 For the local model of person centred reviews

The main implication of the current study for local practice is what the theory says about the demands of the role of leading person centred reviews. If this aspect of the theory can be evidenced, there would be a need to refine the local practice guidance around person centred reviews and to develop professional development activities for professionals to address the risks inherent in running person centred reviews and the flexible approach required to make them work as well as they can for every child or young person (see section 6.7 on the dissemination of the findings). Similarly, the significance of emotional containment in the theory should be addressed in how the model is explained and promoted, with specific attention given to it in professional development activities as well as in written guidance.

A further implication of the current study is the challenge in making the local model of person centred reviews work in schools which may have a less supportive ethos than those of the pilot project. Similarly there is a challenge of persuading teachers and SENCos who feel they are being directed to change their practice by the top down pressure of the 2014 Code of Practice for SEND, rather than volunteering from personal interest, of the potential benefits of the approach.

In the researcher's local authority, a project was set up in September 2014 to support schools in developing their systems and practice in line with the 2014 Code of Practice for SEND. This project set out to address exactly this challenge, attempting to persuade and enable every school in the authority to move to a model of person centred practice in SEN, including the local model of person centred reviews. This project built on the pilot project described in section 1.4.2 on page 10. It was jointly led by the author and a colleague – the co-developer of the local model and the co-lead of the pilot project.

As part of this project, the Local Authority employed three "Specialist Teachers for Person Centred Planning", two of whom had been SENCos in pilot project schools and pioneers of pupil involvement in the authority. The project adopted two main strategies: an integrated, multi-level programme of training and workshops alongside direct work with schools. The direct work with schools involved coaching, joint planning and modelling of the person centred review process (including preparation for parents, staff and pupils). This strategy of "promotion through practice" has attempted to neutralise the perceived pressure from above, and has demystified the approach, enabling schools to take their first steps with person centred reviews, however their ethos differs from those in the pilot project.

6.5.4 For Educational Psychologists

EPs working in the area in which the current study was carried out, will have a theory of how person centred reviews work from the perspective of the SENCos with the most experience of setting them up and running them. This gives local EPs a role in contributing to the success of person centred reviews, through an understanding of which aspects of the process may have the capacity to make changes come about.

EPs involved locally in person centred reviews should also be aware of the demands of running them, for two reasons. Firstly, they may be very well placed to support schools and families by providing (at least semi-) independent facilitation, with an awareness of the need for emotional containment and an understanding of how to provide this. Secondly, this hypothesised element of emotional containment in the local model of person centred reviews suggests a role for EPs in offering supervision or reflective practice sessions to SENCos (or

other professionals) running them. This could support the creation of the "concentric circles of containment" described by McLoughlin (2010) and Solomon and Thomas (2013).

More widely, the current study contributes to the small but growing body of research suggesting that person centred planning has a positive impact in special education. The case for EPs adopting a person centred approach to assessment and intervention is developing nationally, with pressure coming from a number of directions, most significantly government guidance and what Gersch (2001) calls the "legal case".

The current study also begins to strengthen Gersch's "pragmatic case" for adopting person centred reviews, outlining the tangible benefits that those close to the process see as its consequences. The findings of the current study also support Gersch's "moral case" and the emancipatory power of listening to children. It is suggested that a critical reading of the findings of the current study could provide a valuable opportunity for EPs to refresh their thinking and to consider the bearing it could have on practice relating to the meetings we often attend, including annual reviews, Looked After Children's reviews, transition meetings and even consultation and planning meetings.

6.5.5 For local authorities

The current study highlights two challenges to local authorities. The first is how best to support schools to develop their capacity to meet their duties under the 2015 Code of Practice. The local pilot project which developed the model of person centred reviews explored in the current study provides a framework for harnessing the bottom-up enthusiasm for person centred planning found in local schools, as well as a model for sharing practice

with schools that may not have been ready to take the first step without the top-down encouragement of government guidance.

The second, possibly greater, challenge for local authorities, again set by the 2015 Code of Practice, is how to apply person centred approaches to the formal and statutory processes of assessment and planning leading to an Education, Health and Care Plan. This will require a significant structural and cultural change (Norwich, 2014), involving ongoing professional development for staff and a structure which enables families to take control while maintaining good financial management. It may be possible to scale up the benefits described by SENCos running person centred reviews to the local authority level, with parents feeling listened to, being involved more in planning and experiencing less conflict, however, this is by no means as easy to do as it is to describe.

6.5.6 National implications

The major implication at the national level is that the overall quality of the existing evidence base is not strong. The current study offers a clear direction for policy makers as to how this could be addressed, in providing testable hypotheses of the impact of person centred reviews derived from the experience of professionals running them. This will be discussed further in section 6.6, below.

6.6 Further research

When researchers talk about research, it is axiomatic that more is needed; the stories we come up with always generate more questions than they answer. Frequent mention has also been made here of the current study being the first step in a "broader research undertaking". Although the range of directions for this wider project is potentially unlimited, a small number proposals for future research into person centred planning in schools are outlined in the following sections.

6.6.1 Extending the current study

One way to build on the current study would be to extend its scope while remaining with a similar population. For example, the researcher could aim to interview SENCos who had joined the pilot project at later stages, as well as SENCos in the same position as Participant I, who had taken on the job in a pilot project school despite not having been involved in the development of the model themselves. This approach could help to deepen and refine the grounded theory further, perhaps aiming more precisely to map the relationships between the causes and effects identified here.

Given the striking number of studies in the published literature whose conclusions are weakened by the lack of a comparison or control group, it is important to consider how the grounded theory developed in the current study could be tested using a quantitative or mixed methods methodology.

There are a number of established scales which could be used or adapted for future quantitative research. For example, to measure children's sense of belonging to school the

Social Inclusion Survey, the Belonging Scale and the Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale (Verdugo et al., 2012) could be used. Drawing on the self-determination theory research tradition, the Perceived Autonomy Support Scale can be used to explore children's views that their school environment supports their autonomy, the Self-Regulation Questionnaires (academic subscale) can be used to assess the level of autonomy shown in children's learning behaviour and the Perceived Competence Scale to measure children's self-efficacy (Deci & Ryan, 2006).

Using a questionnaire methodology, drawing on the propositions of the grounded theory, a research question with an evaluatory purpose for such a study could be:

- Does taking part in a person centred review increase the self determination of children with SEN?

Derived from this research question, the following is an example of a testable, one-tailed hypothesis:

- Children with SEN who take part in a person centred review process will increase their score on the Belonging Scale, the Self-Regulation Questionnaires and the Perceived Competence Scale.

The related null hypothesis would be:

- There will be no change in the scores of children with SEN on the Belonging Scale, the Self-Regulation Questionnaires and the Perceived Competence Scale after taking part in a person centred review process.

Although it would be hard to sample enough participants to ensure groups are comparable and the studies are powerful enough to detect effects, these tools could be used to compare groups of children in various combinations:

- Compare children's scores before and after their first person centred review.
- Compare the scores of children before and after person centred reviews and children before and after non-person centred reviews.
- Compare the scores of children going through the model of person centred reviews to children going through the HSA model.

Given time and resources, it may yet even be possible to set up a randomised controlled trial (Haynes et al., 2013) of person centred reviews, testing the same hypothesis. Schools who have yet to adopt person centred reviews would be asked to volunteer, and would be randomly assigned to either an intervention group or a waiting list control group. In the intervention group, research assistants run person centred reviews for all children with statements or EHC Plans. In the waiting list group, research assistants spend the same amount of time, running a non-person centred review process.

Using a mixed methodology, quantitative data would be collected before and after the review, with qualitative data on people's experiences of the process gathered afterwards. Attainment data could also be collected. Although the research assistants could not realistically be

blinded to the type of review they are carrying out, researchers analysing the data collected could be, strengthening the methodology.

Finally, if the political will existed, a longitudinal study comparable in scale to that carried out by the Institute for Health Research (2006) into person centred planning for adults with LD could be carried out. Given the current political climate, it would be surprising if anyone is holding their breath waiting for this to be commissioned.

6.6.2 Broadening the current study

There are many ways to broaden and triangulate the findings of the current study. Perhaps the most pressing is to work with the children who have experienced the model of person centred reviews – what stories would they tell about taking part? Do they agree with the SENCo in their school? Do they agree with each other? How do children with different needs describe their experience of the process? These potential research questions could be answered with a range of qualitative methodologies, including for example IPA and narrative analysis as well as grounded theory.

An IPA study with an exploratory purpose could be designed to answer the research question:

- What is the experience of taking part in a person centred review process like for children with SEN?

Another approach could be to repeat the methodology of the current study with the parents who have attended person centred reviews, broadening the grounded theory to examine the

changes parents attribute to taking part. Indeed this approach could be used with all the adults involved in a person centred reviews: the teachers, teaching assistants, senior managers as well as external professionals like specialist teachers, speech and language therapists and social workers.

Looking beyond the location of the current study in primary schools, future qualitative research could ask whether SENCos in secondary schools or teachers in special schools see the same changes or explore other professional contexts where person centred reviews have been used, such as early years settings or looked after children's services.

Furthermore, looking even beyond annual review meetings, a future project could explore the view of children, parents and teacher into the application of person centred principles to other aspects of EP work, including consultation, assessment and report writing. A study could also be constructed to examine the outcomes that are framed as a result of a person centred planning or review process, with research questions such as:

- How do written outcomes differ between person centred and non-person centred planning processes?
- What do children and parents think of the outcomes written as part of person centred planning?
- Do children achieve the outcomes written as part of person centred planning? What helps them get there? What barriers are there? Is their progress better than that of children who do not take part in person centred planning?

6.7 Dissemination strategy

The findings of the current study will be disseminated through three parallel undertakings. Firstly, the findings will be used within the local project to promote person centred planning and to change practice across the local authority area. The findings relating to making person centred reviews work will be incorporated into the second edition of the local practice guidance document (Sutcliffe & Birney, 2015), along with information gathered through the literature review. Outreach work carried out in neighbouring and nearby authorities will also draw in future on the findings of the research.

The grounded theory itself, detailing the theorised impact of person centred reviews will also be used to update and develop local practice guidance, including the content of established professional development activities as well as being used to shape new and developing courses. Specifically, the existing one day introductory course in person centred planning will be updated and intermediate level courses addressing the theorised risks and difficulties of person centred reviews will be developed further. For example, intermediate training already includes a session on the language of person centred reviews, another could be developed exploring emotional containment at reviews.

A second strand in the dissemination strategy is to present the findings at conferences, with the first step again being a local one. The findings of the research will be presented at one of the termly conferences for SENCos held by the learning support service of the local authority. Research which draws on the experiences of colleagues working in familiar environments has a credibility that it is hoped will lead to the findings of the current study being received well. Completing the dissemination at the local level, the findings will be

shared with community groups, including through the local authority's established groups for parents and young people with SEN and disabilities.

This strand will also be expanded to the national level. A workshop proposal will be completed for the DECP conference in January 2016. This conference has a theme of exploring the impact and value of labelling on children identified with SEN; the theory of the current study in relation to how children respond to being involved in discussions about their difficulties would be an interesting note within this theme. Further opportunities, including through the BPS professional workshop programme or through national conferences for SENCos will also be explored.

The final dissemination channel for the findings of the current study will be through publications in professional journals. The first stage here would be to summarise the findings of the current study for UK Educational Psychology journals, but there is also a need to present the findings to teachers in special education, through journals like the British Journal of Special Education, the Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs and Support for Learning. There may also be opportunities to widen the dissemination through journals such as Emotional Behavioural Difficulties or into the social work literature.

6.8 Aims of research

The immediate aims of the research, stated in section 1.6, were to explore the impact of adopting person centred reviews and to explain how these come about. A broader aim was to open up the area for further research. In having constructed a theory of person centred

reviews, grounded in the views of the people running them, and which can be used to generate testable hypotheses, the current study can be seen as having fulfilled its aims.

While the current study does not completely address the deficiencies in the literature on person centred reviews in UK schools, it has opened a door to ways in which these weaknesses could be addressed. In linking the local model of person centred reviews to the literature on self-determination, school belonging and emotional containment, it has made a connection to a well developed research tradition, which provides a set of tools and methods that could, given the will and the resources, be used to build a more solid evidence base for the impact of person centred reviews.

6.9 Concluding comments – researcher reflections

Conducting this research has been a significant and challenging experience. While it is heartening to have heard SENCos who took part in the pilot project still speaking positively about the impact of person centred reviews after nearly six years, it has also been fascinating to hear about the difficulties and problems which the approach brings to those working most closely with it. The theory developed through this research has significantly changed and enhanced my understanding of the person centred review process, anchoring it in the day to day experience of the people most concerned with making it work. This, however, is just the first step; how we apply our understanding in practice, and whether we can use it to generate evidence of impact, are the important challenges ahead.

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Appendix 1: Results of literature searches, categorised by topic

Table 1: Adults with LD: Policy, practice and conceptual articles

Author(s) and year	Title	Search stage	Country	Participants
Burton & Sanderson (1998)	Paradigms in intellectual disability: compared, contrasted combined.	A1	UK	None: conceptual article
Sanderson (2000)	Person centred planning: Key features and approaches	A1	UK	None: policy, practice and conceptual article
Kinsella (2000)	What are the barriers in relation to person centred planning?	A1	UK	None: policy and practice article
Iles (2003)	Becoming a learning organization: A precondition for person centred services to people with learning difficulties	A1	UK	None: policy and conceptual article
Mansell & Beadle-Brown (2004)	Person-centred planning or person-centred action? Policy and practice in intellectual disability services	A1	UK	None: policy, practice and conceptual article
Felce (2004)	Can person-centred planning fulfill a strategic planning role?	A1	UK	None: policy and conceptual article
O'Brien (2004)	If person-centred planning did not exist, valuing people would require its invention	A1	USA	None: policy and conceptual article
Towell & Sanderson (2004)	Person-centred planning in its strategic context: Reframing the Mansell/Beadle-Brown critique	A1	UK	None: policy and conceptual article
Dowling et al. (2007)	Working on person-centred planning: From amber to green light?	A2	UK/USA	None: non-systematic literature review
Jones & Lowe (2008)	Active support is person-centred by definition: A response to Sanderson.	A1	UK	None: policy and conceptual article

Table 2: Adults with LD: Research evidence

Author(s) and year	Title	Search stage	Country	Purpose, Design & Participants
Sanderson et al. (2004)	Using person centred planning and approaches with children and their families.	A1	UK	Descriptive Multiple case study Parents, children with LD and support staff. Number not stated.
Institute for Health Research (2006)	The impact of person centred planning for people with intellectual disabilities in England: A summary of findings.	A1	UK	Evaluative Multiple case study 93 adults with LD
Robertson et al. (2006)	Longitudinal Analysis of the Impact and Cost of Person-Centered Planning for People With Intellectual Disabilities in England	A1	UK	Evaluative Multiple case study 93 adults with LD
Robertson et al. (2007a)	Person-centred planning: Factors associated with successful outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities	A1	UK	Evaluative Multiple case study 93 adults with LD
Robertson et al. (2007b)	Reported barrriers to the implementation of person-centered planning for people with intellectual disabilities in the UK	A1	UK	Evaluative Multiple case study 93 adults with LD
Wigham et al. (2008)	Reported goal setting and benefits of person centred planning for people with intellectual disabilities.	A1	UK	Evaluative Multiple case study 93 adults with LD
Ryan & Carey (2008)	Introducing person-centred planning: a case study	A2	UK	Descriptive Case study 1 adult with Down Syndrome
Claes et al. (2010)	Person-centered planning: Analysis of research and effectiveness	A1	A2	Evaluative Systematic review 15 studies involving 699 adults and children with LD

Author(s) and year	Title	Search stage	Country	Purpose, Design & Participants
Hoole & Morgan (2011)	'It's only right that we get involved': Service-user perspectives on involvement in learning disability services.	A1	UK	Descriptive Interviews 7 adults with LD
Espiner & Hartnett (2012)	'I felt I was in control of the meeting': Facilitating planning with adults with an intellectual disability	A2	UK	Evaluative Interviews 10 adults with LD, caregivers, advocates and key staff.
Harflett et al. (2015)	The impact of personalisation on the lives of the most isolated people with learning disabilities: A review of the evidence	A2	UK	Evaluative Non-systematic literature review

Table 3: Special education: Policy, practice and conceptual articles

Author(s) and year	Title	Search stage	Country	Participants
Quicke (2003)	Educating the pupil voice	A1	UK	None: conceptual article
Lindsay (2004)	Pupil participation: the NASEN policy	A1	UK	None: conceptual and policy article
Smith & Sanderson (2008)	Introducing person centred thinking in a primary school	A1	UK	None: practice article
Davis (2011)	An ordinary life: Supporting families whose child is dependent on medical technology or has complex health needs.	A1	UK	None: practice article
Ingram (2013)	Interpretation of children's views by educational psychologists: dilemmas and solutions	A2	UK	None: conceptual article

Table 4: Special education: Research evidence

Author(s) and year	Title	Search stage	Country	Participants
Hayes (2004)	Visual annual reviews: how to include pupils with learning difficulties in their educational reviews	A1	UK	Descriptive Case study 1 child, 1 parent, 2 teachers, 1 TA
Test, et al. (2004)	Student involvement in Individualized education program meetings	A1	USA	Evaluative Meta-analysis of 16 studies 309 young people 14-17 years old
Burke (2005)	Listening to young people with special needs: The influence of group activities	A1	UK	Exploratory Interviews 30 parents, 10 young people 8-15 years old
Erwin & Sanderson (2011)	Working together for change in schools	A1	UK	Descriptive Interviews 2 special schools – teachers, senior staff and outside professionals. Number not stated.
Corrigan (2014)	Person-centred planning 'in action': Exploring the use of person-centred planning in supporting young people's transition and re-integration to mainstream education	A2	UK	Exploratory Interviews 6 children and young people, 5-15 years old 43 adults including parents, school staff and professionals

Appendix 2: Confirmation of ethical approval

1. Letter of approval with significant amendments

Quality Assurance & Enhancement
Directorate of Education & Training
Tavistock Centre
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Tel: 020 8938 2548
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22.04.14

Mr Andrew Sutcliffe
22 Haroldstone Road
Walthamstow
London
E17 7AW

Re: Research Ethics Application

Title: From "child-friendly" to "person-centred". What changes do experienced SENCos describe in schools that have adopted person-centred annual reviews?

Dear Andrew,

I am writing to inform you that your application has been approved with significant conditions/amendments by the assessors.

Please note that approval is given subject to formal ratification by the Trust Research Ethics Committee on 19.05.14 and in the proviso to significant amendments being made and forwarded to – Kara Florish at the Trust Research Ethics Office (KFlorish@tavi-port.nhs.uk) by 09.05.14. (You can of course submit your amendments before this date).

In the meantime you MAY NOT begin to undertake your research work.

We do require that the amendments be made either in a revised application form or if appropriate in other specific documents e.g. consent letter, and not in an additional Word document or equivalent

The amendments are as follows:

'The overall application is very brief and whilst the project appears to be sound, more detail of background to the project, who the sample is, where the fieldwork will be conducted, what it will entail etc. and the methodology is required to guarantee its ethical robustness. Mainly in boxes 2 and 3.'

We appreciate that this requires further work on your part but it would be helpful if you could return your amended application by **09.05.14**. If you are unable to meet this deadline then please contact Kara Florish.

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

I am copying this communication to your supervisor.

Yours sincerely

LouisTaussig
Secretary to the Trust Research Ethics Committee

Cc Robert Pattullo (Supervisor)

2. Email confirmation of approval of amendments

ethics

Louis Taussig <LTaussig@tavi-port.ac.uk> 1 December 2014 at 11:42
To: Carol Greenway <CGreenway@tavi-port.nhs.uk>, Andrew Sutcliffe <andrew.sutcliffe@gmail.com>
Cc: Judith Mortell <JMortell@tavi-port.nhs.uk>

Dear Andrew

I can confirm that your amendments have been approved by a Trust assessor. I do apologise for the delay in confirming the outcome.

Regards

Louis

Louis Taussig

Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance

The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust

3. Signed final letter

The Tavistock and Portman NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

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By Email

Tuesday, 22 September 2015

Dear Andrew,

Re: From "child-friendly" to "person-centred". What changes do experienced SENCos describe in schools that have adopted person-centred annual reviews?

I am pleased to confirm that you fully addressed all the amendments required by the Trust assessors. You are thus able to conduct your research."

Kind regards,

Louis Taussig
Secretary to Trust Research Ethics Committee

Louis Taussig
Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance
The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust

Appendix 3: Information, consent and withdrawal form

Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee

[redacted] Person-Centred Research Project PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

The Researcher
Andrew Sutcliffe, Educational Psychologist
Educational Psychology Service, [redacted]
Tel: [redacted]. Email: *andrew.sutcliffe@*[redacted]

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in this study.

Project Title
From “child-friendly” to “person-centred”. What changes do experienced SENCos describe in schools that have adopted person-centred annual reviews?

Project Description
The aim of the project is to build up as rich and deep a picture as possible of what changes in schools who use person-centred planning for children with SEN. This is useful because we need to understand the impact of the government’s promotion of the approach through SEN and disability law. This piece of research should give us ideas and hypotheses for future research, including exploring what children think about the approach and its impact on their learning.

Your contribution will be to provide detailed information about the impact of person-centred ways of working on your school and the people in it, including children with SEN, their parents, classmates, teachers and teaching assistants as well as the leadership of the school and yourself as the SENCo.

You will be interviewed for between 30 minutes and an hour about what has changed in your school since you adopted person-centred ways of working.

There is a small chance of you becoming distressed or upset during the interview, in the unlikely event we stray onto a topic with person resonance or traumatic content for you. If this does happen, you can ask for a break or to end the interview.

You will have a chance at the end of the interview to debrief and discuss your experience of being interviewed. In the unlikely event you do become distressed, I will help you to find the most appropriate support and care.

The findings of the research will be reported in a written summary for all who have been involved and will be presented at future SENCo conferences and workshops in the borough. The findings will be used to refine the approach and the [redacted] guidance to schools on using person-centred approaches.

Confidentiality of the Data
The digital recording of the interview will be kept securely on password protected devices. When I transcribe your interview I will remove all information which could possible identify you, your school or the local authority.

I will keep your data until the project is completed, written up and my thesis has been assessed by the University. I will securely destroy it no more than six months after this point.

Location
Interviews will take place at your workplace, in a quiet and confidential location of your choosing, such as a private office or meeting room.

Remuneration
There is no remuneration or incentive to take part in the study.

Disclaimer
You are not obliged to take part in this study, and are free to withdraw at any time during tests. Should you choose to withdraw from the programme you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason. Choosing not to take part, or withdrawing having consented will not affect your relationships with [redacted] Educational Psychology Service.

If you feel you have been unfairly or unethically treated as a result of anything to do with this research, you can make a complaint to:

The Principal Educational Psychologist,
[redacted] Educational Psychology Service,
[redacted]

The Health & Care Professions Council
Park House,
184 Kennington Park Road,
London,
SE11 4BU.
Tel: 0845 300 6184
www.hpc-uk.org/complaints

If you have any queries regarding the conduct of the programme in which you are being asked to participate, please contact: Louis Taussig, Trust Quality Assurance Officer ltaussig@tavi-port.nhs.uk

Consent to Participate in a Research Programme Involving the Use of Human Participants

Title of research: From “child-friendly” to “person-centred”. What changes do experienced SENCos describe in schools that have adopted person-centred annual reviews?

I have the read the information leaflet relating to the above programme of research in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly anonymous and confidential. Only the named researcher involved in the study will have access to the original, non-anonymised, data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the research programme has been completed.

I understand that that data generated in the course of the research will be retained in accordance with the University’s Data Protection Policy. Confidentiality may only be breached subject to legal limitations, such as in the case of a disclosure of imminent harm to myself and/or others.

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the programme at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason, by filling in the withdrawal request overleaf and sending it to the researcher.

PTO

Participant's Signature _____

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) _____

Date: _____

✂----------

[redacted] Person-Centred Research Project WITHDRAWAL REQUEST

I am withdrawing from the project. Please remove my data from the analysis and ensure it is destroyed securely.

Signed: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

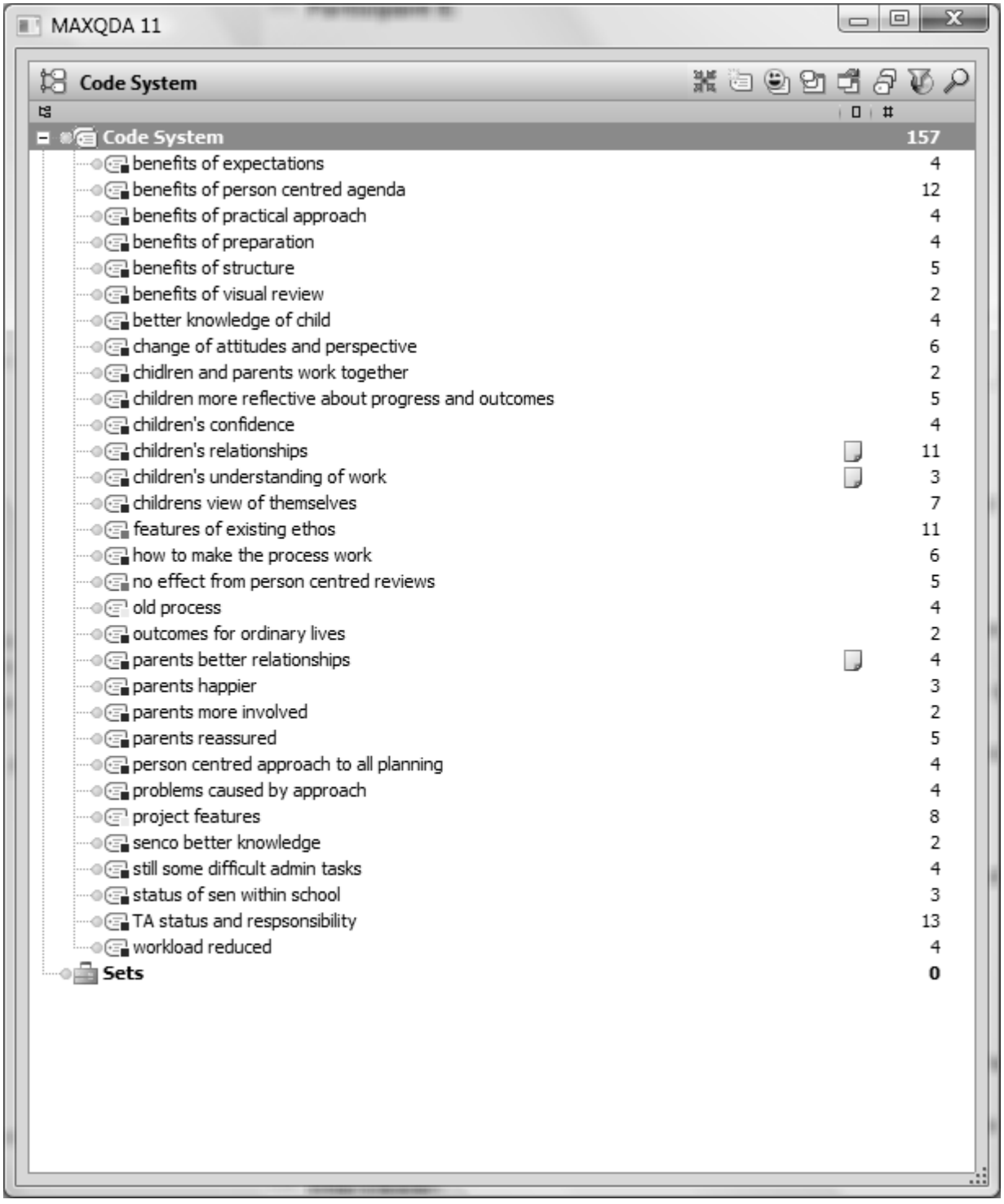
Please detach and send to:
Andrew Sutcliffe, [redacted] Educational Psychology Service, [redacted]

Appendix 4: Interview schedule

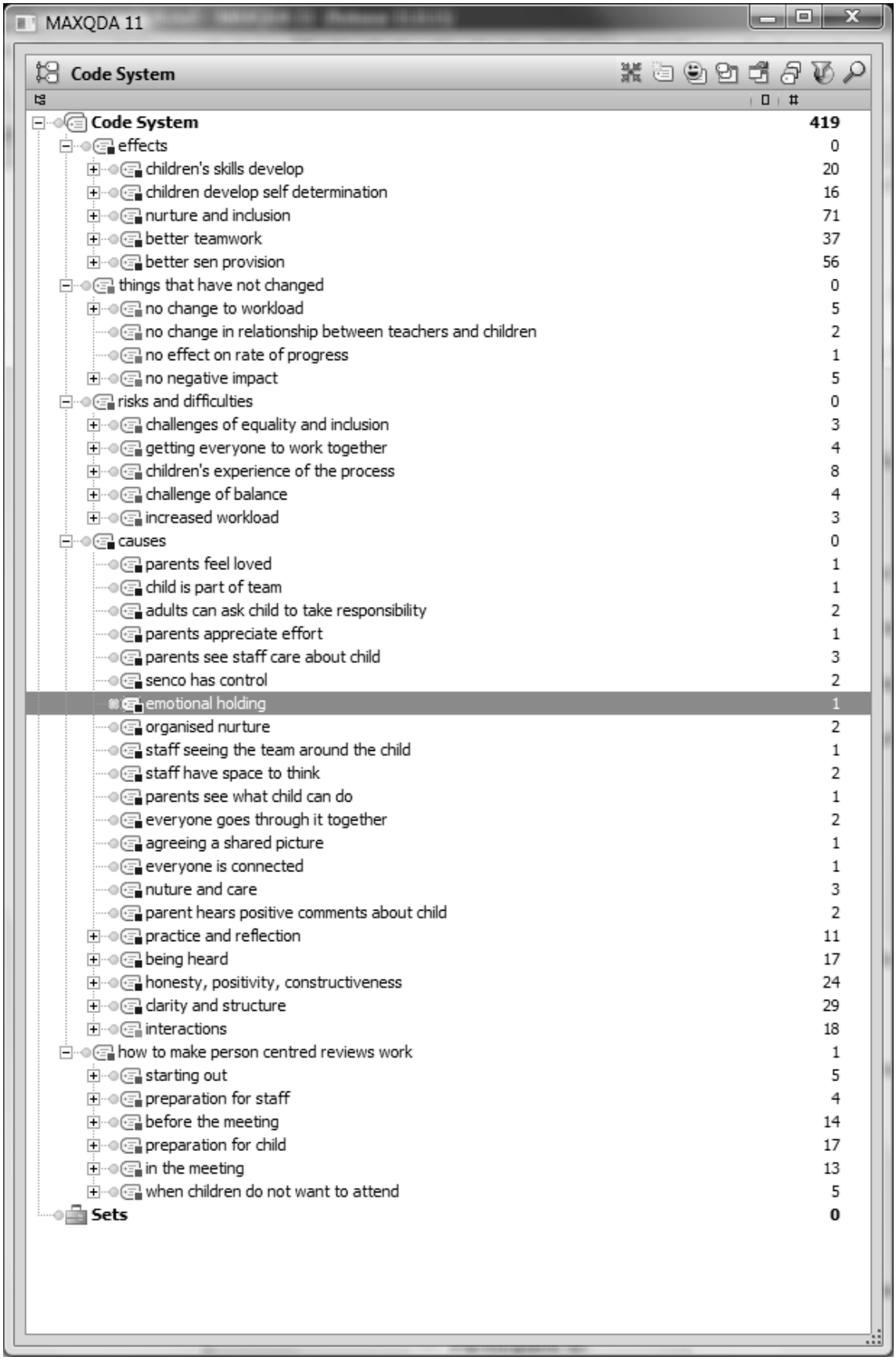
Topics/purpose	Questions	Prompts	Elaboration
Introduce and establish interview protocols	Opening out; purpose; timescales	Ethics (recording; confidentiality; withdrawal)	
Rapport	What is your experience of person centred working?		
Impact on the school as a whole	Has anything changed in your school as a result of working in person centred way?		for the better for the worse
Impact on people	Has there been any impact on people in school?	pupils parents teachers teaching assistants you as SENCo the school leadership	positive and negative impact how did that happen?
Impact on relationships	Have relationships changed in school?	between children and adults between children with SEN and disabilities and their peers between the adults involved	positive and negative impact how did that happen?
Impact on workload	Has workload changed?	for you for teachers for TAs for children	give examples
Impact on learning	Has there been any impact on children's learning?	progress motivation	positive and negative impact give examples how did that happen?
Impact on dealing with conflict	Has anything changed when dealing with conflict?		positive and negative impact give examples how did that happen?
Closing comments	Is there anything important I didn't ask about?		

Appendix 5: Development of coding system

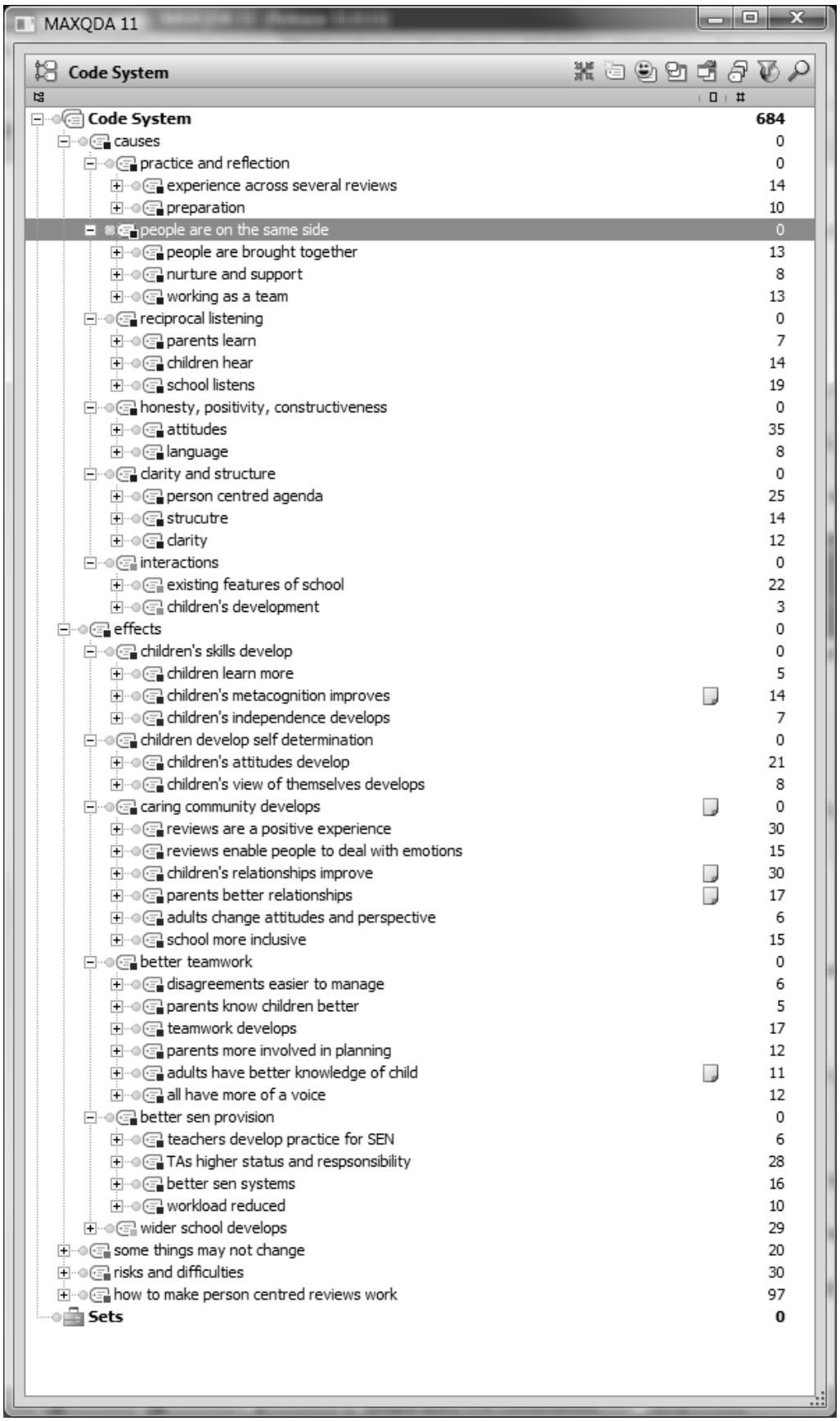
A Early coding system (after interview 1)



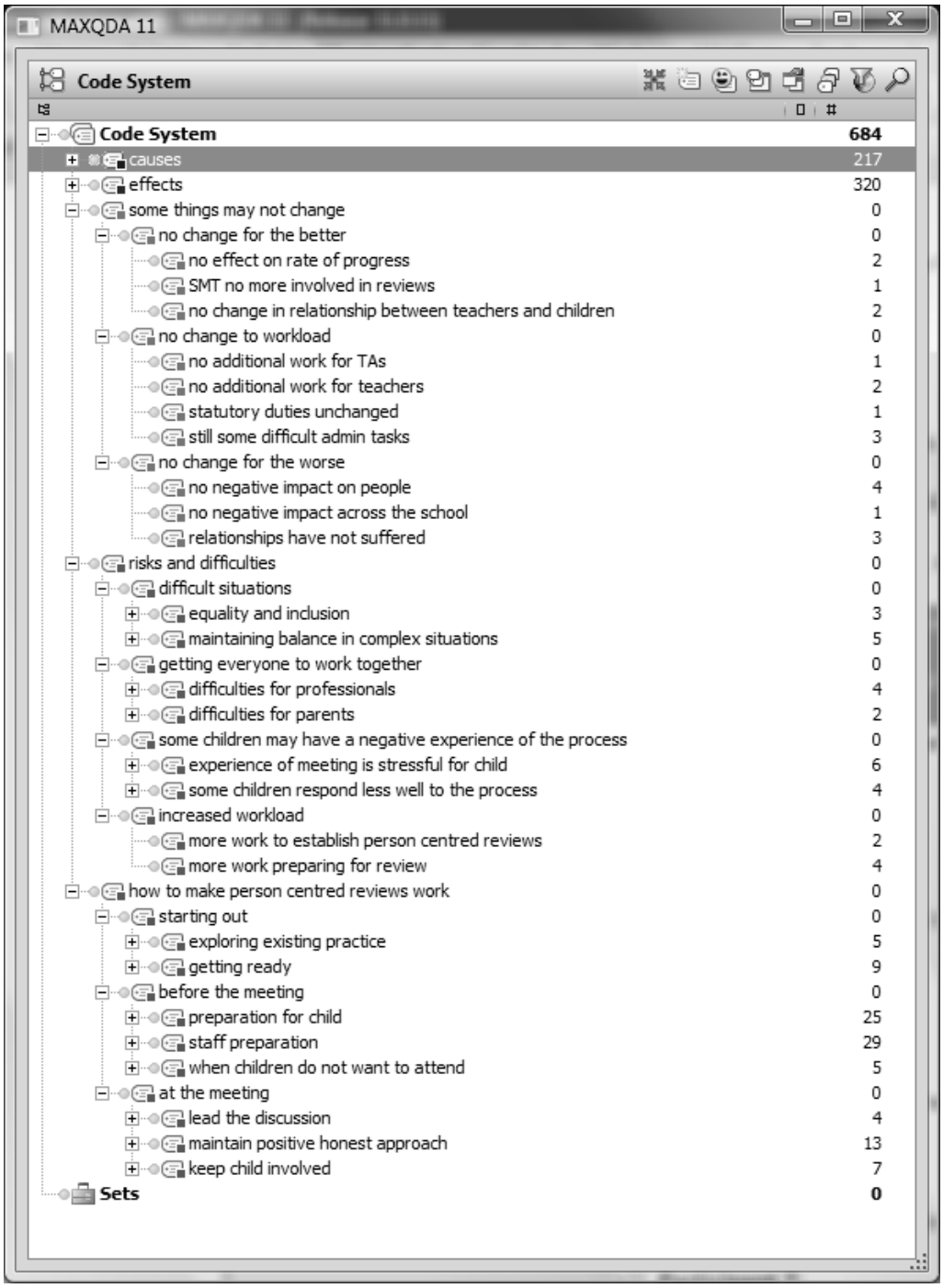
B Middle coding system (during coding of interview 3)



C1 Final coding system (after interview 5) – part 1



C2 Final coding system (after interview 5) – part 2



Appendix 6: Complete final coding system

Core categories	Selective codes	Axial codes	Open codes
causes			
	practice and reflection		
		experience across several reviews	
			peers see child's ongoing progress teachers experience benefits familiarity with process experience of talking at meeting
		preparation	
			preparation for child teacher's preparation TA coaching, acting as advocate
	people are on the same side		
		people are brought together	
			people see what they have in common everyone's efforts are recognised everyone is connected everyone goes through it together
		nurture and support	
			child feels supported by peer support and care for parents organised nurture emotional holding parents feel loved
		working as a team	
			child is part of team adults can ask child to take responsibility everyone contributes to a shared picture problem solving team approach
	reciprocal listening		
		parents learn	
			parents see staff care about child parents see what child can do parent hears positive comments about child
		children hear	
			children get a record of the meeting children hear adult discussions children hear contribution from other adults children hear contribution of peers
		school listens	
			school staff feel listened to staff see range of influences on the

Core categories	Selective codes	Axial codes	Open codes
			child
			parents feel listened to
			child feels listened to
	honesty, positivity, constructiveness		
		attitudes	
			holistic, child centred approach
			balance of honesty and positivity
			practical and constructive approach
			sharing ambitious expectations
			positive outlook and celebration
			open atmosphere - no defensiveness
		language	
			open conversation
			principled language
			careful use of language for honesty and positivity
			language that is clear and accessible
			conversation is spontaneous and dynamic
	clarity and structure		
		person centred agenda	
			steps of agenda
			like and admire
			important to
			what's going well
			what's not going well
			action planning
		structure	
			senco has control of tone
			staff have space to think
			structure of meeting
			structured thinking
		clarity	
			clarity about actions
			visual prompts at review
			clarity of process
	interactions		
		existing features of school	
			existing ethos of listening
			existing ethos of independent learning
			existing ethos supports person centred reviews
			existing ethos of inclusion and support
		children's development	
			children benefit more as they get older
			children with moderate lang diffs benefit
			children with sebd bigger impact

Core categories	Selective codes	Axial codes	Open codes
effects			
	children's skills develop		
		children learn more	
			children see a bigger picture children's communication improves children make more progress
		children's metacognition improves	
			children understand adult expectations better children more aware of how they learn children understand targets and outcomes better children understand work tasks better children understand support better
		children's independence develops	
			children feel ownership of learning children are less passive
	children develop self determination		
		children's attitudes develop	
			children's motivation develops children's confidence improves children develop sense of agency
		children's view of themselves develops	
			children's self-awareness develops children more aware of strengths and difficulties children more aware of what's not going well
	caring community develops		
		reviews are a positive experience	
			reviews matter to everyone people talk about reviews senco enjoys reviews children enjoy reviews parents enjoy reviews peers want to be involved staff enjoy reviews
		reviews enable people to deal with emotions	
			reviews allow positive feelings to be expressed parents reassured can express negative emotions and move on
		children's relationships improve	
			better relationships in family children feel supported children interacting more independently with peers

Core categories	Selective codes	Axial codes	Open codes
			children wider friendship group
			children better quality relationships with peers
			children better relationships with teachers
			children better relationship with TA
			children better relationship with senco
		parents better relationships	
			parents trust school more
			mutual understanding between parents and school staff
			parents build relationships with other parents
			school and parents work together better
		adults change attitudes and perspective	
			adults more motivated
			adults develop positive outlook
		school more inclusive	
			everyone supports children with SEN
			school more open about SEN
			children with SEN don't stand out
			peers understanding improved
			peers use respectful language
			playground, dining hall more inclusive
	better teamwork		
		disagreements easier to manage	
			conflict is defused
			difficult parents more engaged
			agreement about actions
			senco can be clear about what is not possible
			agreement about difficulties
			noone offended by discussion of problems
		parents know children better	
			parents see children's independence
			parents see children’s friendships
			parents see children's progress first hand
			parents see whole of child
		teamwork develops	
			school staff sense of responsibility for process
			shared agreement about actions
			staff recognise each others achievements

Core categories	Selective codes	Axial codes	Open codes
			teachers more involved in process developed teamwork of school staff
		parents more involved in planning	
			parents understand child's work parents able to share difficulties parents and teacher talk more about child's learning
		adults have better knowledge of child	
			school staff get to know children with seen better as people all adults hear child's voice adults see child's progress and difficulties
		all have more of a voice	
			senco better involvement at review parents more of a voice children have more of a voice TAs more confident to contribute
	better sen provision		
		teachers develop practice for SEN	
			adults understand child's learning better teachers take responsibility for SEN children
		TAs higher status and responsibility	
			TAs initiative and motivation develops TAs more status in school TAs take on responsibility TAs mentor child TAs in charge of preparation TAs prepare evidence of child's progress TAs more involved in reviews and planning
		better sen systems	
			better planning and review can consider broader aspirations and outcomes better system for accountability
		workload reduced	
			reviews generally shorter less work for senco preparation work shared out less time to write up review afterwards
	wider school develops		
		other applications of person centred agenda	
			person centred approach to line

Core categories	Selective codes	Axial codes	Open codes
			management person centred approach to all planning and review person centred agenda for other meetings with parents
		children make helpful contribution to school development	
			senco promoting children's voice in all areas listening to children's views on other issues
		status of sen within school improved	
		headteacher different approach when talking to children	
		person centred reviews support existing ethos	
some things may not change			
		no change for the better	
			no effect on rate of progress SMT no more involved in reviews no change in relationship between teachers and children
		no change to workload	
			no additional work for TAs no additional work for teachers statutory duties unchanged still some difficult admin tasks
		no change for the worse	
			no negative impact on people no negative impact across the school
			relationships have not suffered
risks and difficulties			
	difficult situations		
		equality and inclusion	
			some children with SEN still seen as "special" relationships still sometimes unequal
		maintaining balance in complex situations	
			risk of breaching confidentiality hard to be honest about difficulties risk other adults will be too negative risk difficulties are not made clear enough
	getting everyone to work together		
		difficulties for professionals	
			TAs intimidated by meeting professionals do not see benefits professionals take over meeting
		difficulties for parents	
			parent nervous about involvement of

Core categories	Selective codes	Axial codes	Open codes
			peers
			parent didn't want child to attend
	some children may have a negative experience of the process		
		experience of meeting is stressful for child	
			parent did not attend
			child will find it hard to attend meeting
			child didn't want to show dvd at review
			stress of meeting will mean child's voice is not heard
			child not able to speak at the review
		some children respond less well to the process	
			some children stressed by idea of meeting
			children with more severe difficulties get less from it
			some children don't realise that they have a voice
			it's not for every child
	increased workload		
			more work to establish person centred reviews
			more work preparing for review
how to make person centred reviews work			
	starting out		
		exploring existing practice	
			seeing examples of good practice
			speaking to other sencos trying the approach
		getting ready	
			starting small
			training for staff
			support from SMT
	before the meeting		
		preparation for child	
			child has chance to invite a friend
			adapt in response to child
			explain purpose of review to child
			children supported to participate in appropriate way
			make time for child's preparation
			give child choices about how to participate
		staff preparation	
			explain reviews to parents
			think of practicalities - rooms and

Core categories	Selective codes	Axial codes	Open codes
			cover collect photos and video teacher works with class anticipate how discussion will go
		when children do not want to attend	
			some children better represented when not present use child's views to shape adult decision making inform/consult child of decisions after meeting
	at the meeting		
		lead the discussion	
			clear beginning introducing structure meaningful and purposeful discussion
		maintain positive honest approach	
			consider issues of confidentiality use person centred language ensure clarity about strengths and difficulties intervene to stop negativity dominating park discussions which take over review support from headteacher
		keep child involved	
			child is there first to welcome others child speaks first be sensitive to how child is coping with the meeting child has option to go back to class

Appendix 7: Research diary – integrative memos

Date: 5th December 2014

Following interview 1 with participant E

- Good interview – felt interview style was ok
- A bit worried not open enough maybe
- E gave lots of detail – began to answer 2^{o} RQ
- Big focus on developments to children's confidence and relationships
- Also on status of TAs, SEN generally
- E clear that PCRs do not improve learning progress
- Also that PCR does not develop relationship teacher-child w/ SEN
- Challenges my assumptions a bit
- Impact of existing school ethos a big theme
- Interestingly more on developments to SENCo and teacher practice than expected
- Also comparison to old process and discussion of pilot project

Date: 9th January 2015

Following transcription and coding of interview 1

- Coding highlighted developments to children's relationships and confidence
- But definitely clear that children don't make more progress as a result of PCR
- A bit about metacognition "understanding of work", "reflective about progress"
- Some views on how changes come about – attitudes, preparation, practical approach
- Definitely coded lots relating to wider school
- Hard to resist applying grouping codes at a higher level
- Distinction between "Things that change" and "Things that don't change" seems clear at this point
- As well as coding "no effect", identified "problems caused"
- Interview schedule is enabling negative/cautious view – no need to change yet
- Next interview to check out SEN systems, ethos, wider school impact – approach M
- T as backup if M unavailable/unwilling

Date: 26th January 2015

Following interview 2, participant M

- Again really positive process – feel there is good data in interview
- Interviewing style seemed ok. Long responses from M and she seemed able to go where she wanted.
- M disagreed with E about progress – may need to explore further
- Seemed to expand ideas about wider school
- And agreed about significance of ethos
- Schedule seemed to work ok – broad responses and able to share problems

Date: 6th February 2015

Following transcription and coding of interview 2

- Axial codes emerging – most about effects - not surprising given RQs
- Axial codes/comparison really influenced coding of interview 1
- Pilot project and old process maybe not so relevant – need to remove/recode segments – need further comparison to new axial codes
- Coded more segments about difficulties when running reviews
- Also on risks to certain students
- No new Qs for schedule but want to focus more on how participant runs reviews – more emphasis at start
- Next interview to check out about children's progress – approach O as pioneer – may have valuable experience having run more reviews
- Possibly C as backup if O unavailable/unwilling

Date: 13th March 2015

Following interview 3, participant O

- Process felt less smooth – O perhaps felt more on the spot
- ?could have given more prompts
- Great content to interview anyway – seemed much more focus on emotional experience of meetings
- Focus on how reviews are run took time at start but seemed worthwhile

Date: 18th March 2015

Following <colleague> presentation at team meeting

- Self determination theory – drives for autonomy, relatedness and competence
- Big echo with codes from interviews 1 & 2
- Could it explain views of children's development through PCRs
- Approach <colleague> for background, search lit if appropriate

Date: 20th March 2015

Following transcription and coding of interview 3

- Self determination a good fit with existing code system
- Not coded so much with O though
- Selective codes starting to emerge clearly
- Huge focus on "organised nurture", "emotional support" from O
- O almost describing PCR as cathartic for parents
- Also linking causally to how teamwork develops
- Next interview: explore idea of "nurture"/emotional support – approach T due to similarity in school ethos and values
- May have to ask A if T unwilling
- Interview schedule still working as is
- Feel should change it but not clear how

Date: 26th March 2015

Following interview 4, participant T

- T came across as less confident
- But clearly explained views on children's confidence and relationships
- Ethos again!

Date: 1st April 2015

Following transcription of interview 4

- Lots coded about "web of support" and PCRs being "relational"
- Seemed to support E&M re self determination
- Also to support O re emotional containment
- More about "risks & difficulties" – schedule and interview style are enabling expression of negative/cautious views
- Overall all are still v positive but not apparently black and white biased

Date: 2nd April 2015

Following coding of interview 4

- Coded fewer segments than expected
- "Interactions" doesn't seem to be a core category on its own
- Same for "wider school develops"
- ?Part of causes and effects instead
- No new selective codes or other changes to core categories
- Could be approaching concept saturation
- Check issues through supervision before arranging next interview
- Lit search to support analysis: for "emotional containment" related to SEN

Date: 20th April 2015

Following supervision

- Feel more confident about concept saturation being near
- Next interview to test theory
- I is a possible negative case – not a pilot project SENCo
- School involved as early adopter
- ?I involved as teacher but not chairing PCRs
- If not, then maybe N or A.
- Keep schedule the same – broad questioning to allow contradictions to all areas of theory

Date: 1st May 2015

Following interview 5, participant I

- Interview less clear overall– seemed much less detail
- Am I probing less? Should I have been more directive?
- Seemed to be general agreement with theory as it stands
- ?contrasting position of I didn't create negative case
- Didn't seem more concepts came out
- Didn't get the sense new categories will be added in analysis
- I described developments to self determination and relationships for children
- I unclear about impact on learning though
- Possibly less about caring community than O & T
- Theme of developing practice for teachers, TAs and SENCo
- Probably not in fact negative case, therefore ?concept saturation

Date: 15th May 2015

Following transcription and analysis of interview 5

- Some changes to names of selective codes
- No new higher level codes or categories
- Pretty clear I was not a negative case
- Concept saturation seems to have come about
- Need to check with supervision and peer audit
- <Colleague> possibly good to check analysis

Appendix 8: Respondent validity exercise

Text of original email to participants:

Dear all

Thanks again for taking part in my research. This email is to update you as to my progress since the interviews. I have just completed the analysis of all the data, which has resulted in a "theory of person centred reviews", which is in the attachment. I hope the theory is interesting to you, and that it reflects what you said in the interview.

For my evaluation, it would be great if you could let me know if you have any thoughts about these three questions:

1. Does the theory make sense?
2. Is there anything you disagree with?
3. Is there anything important missing from the theory?

Also if you have any other comments about your experience of taking part in the research it would be great to hear them.

I will be circulating a more complete version of this at some point in the autumn term.

Best wishes

Anonymised reply 1

Thanks Andrew. Very quickly:

1. Yes it makes sense.
2. It reflects my experience pretty well although there are parts which were new to me.
3. Don't think there was anything missing.

I enjoyed taking part. As I said I could talk about these things all day! It was a very thought-provoking exercise.

Anonymised reply 2

Thanks for sharing this. It does chime with my experience. I don't think there is anything missing, but I'm interested in the differences between what people said and it would be good to hear a bit more about this. Is there a plan to share this more widely? The interview made me look at our process again and it gave me some ideas about how to go about it.

Anonymised reply 3

Wow! There's a lot in there. It's made me think about the way I run reviews certainly. Since the interview I've been working with the children more before the meeting and your theory makes this sound like a good idea! I can see my contribution in it and nothing is missing.

Anonymised reply 4

Thanks this is interesting to look at. It broadly speaking reflects my experience of using the person centred model as a SENCo. I've answered your questions one by one.

1. It makes sense to me
2. I agree with what it says.
3. There's nothing important missing that I can see.

One thing I want to know more about is the different ways people do reviews and the different things they see. I am always looking to develop how we do reviews so I would like to talk some more about this having seen the theory.

Anonymised reply 5

Sorry I've only just got around to looking at this. It does make sense and there's nothing missing from what I said. Some of the points I don't recognise so they must be from other people. Can we look at this at a future interest group? This has made me want to look again at our systems. Thanks for asking me to take part, it was a valuable experience even though I don't like being recorded!

Appendix 9: The person centred agenda

1. Welcome

- Introductions, ground rules and what to expect from a person centred review.

2. Presentations

- Share the contributions which have been prepared in advance by the child or young person, their peers and adults who are not at the meeting.

3. What do we like and admire about the child or young person?

- Make positive comments on the child or young person's character, strengths and achievements.

4. What is important to the child or young person?

- Summarise the child or young person's views and preferences about relationships, learning and the future.
- List any important questions which need to be answered.

5. Previous targets and actions

- If appropriate, recap the targets and actions from the previous review.

6. What is working well?

- Comment on progress, support, successful strategies, effective provision, targets that have been achieved and completed actions from the previous review.
- Include the views of the child or young person, the parents and professionals.

7. What is not working well?

- Comment on difficulties, problems, barriers to success, disagreements, targets that have not been met and uncompleted actions.
- Include the views of the child or young person, the parents, and professionals.

8. What do we want the child or young person to learn?

- If appropriate, choose up to five specific, realistic targets that are meaningful to the child or young person.

9. Person centred action plan

- Base the plan on tackling what is not working well.
- Use the child or young person's comments where possible to shape the actions.
- Be clear about who will do what, by when and who will check things are done.

10. Conclusion

- Finish with a positive summary of the meeting.