"My dreams now have colour": An exploration of homeless young people's experiences of

the 'Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope' (PATH)

Hannah Morris

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Abstract

Homeless young people (HYP) are among the most vulnerable and at-risk groups in society. Between 2023 and 2024, approximately 118,000 young individuals in the UK approached local authorities for support with homelessness or the risk of becoming homeless. Despite the scale and complexity of their needs, professionals, including Educational Psychologists (EPs), often report limited confidence and clarity in how best to support this population. Existing literature highlights an urgent need for practical, targeted interventions tailored specifically to HYP.

This study explored the use of Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH), a visual, goal-oriented tool designed to promote motivation, aspirations, and agency. Although widely used in other contexts, its application with HYP has not previously been investigated. By centring the experiences of HYP who engaged with the PATH, this research addresses a critical gap in the evidence base.

Four young people aged 16-19 participated in a PATH session followed by a semi-structured interview. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) revealed six group experiential themes: The Power of Imagery, "This PATH is Me", Stepping into the Future, The Influence of Others, Bridging the Abstract with the Practical, and Parts Create the Whole. Framed through Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, the findings challenge deficit-based narratives that limit HYP's potential, demonstrating the importance of supporting higher-order needs alongside basic ones.

This novel study contributes to a more hopeful, solution-focused discourse around HYP. It calls on EPs and professionals to foster supportive, aspirational spaces where all young people, regardless of housing status, can feel safe, access education equitably, and reclaim futures too often denied. Implications, limitations, and directions for future research are discussed.

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Abbreviations

AP- Assistant Psychologist

EET- Employment, Education and Training

EP- Educational Psychologist

HYP- Homeless Young People

LAs- Local Authorities

NEET- Not in Education, Employment and Training

PATH- Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope

PCP- Person-Centred Planning

SEN- Special Educational Needs

SEND- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

1. Introduction

"Every child has the right to an education"

(The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, Article 28)

1.1 Chapter Overview

Understanding the complex and multifaceted relationship between youth homelessness and engagement in education is a critical concern within both psychological research and social policy, requiring a nuanced exploration of the contextual, systemic, and individual factors that shape the lived experiences of homeless young people (HYP).

This chapter begins by situating the research within the national context of youth homelessness, outlining key definitions, subcategories, policy and legislation, and the structural challenges faced by HYP in accessing and sustaining educational engagement. It then introduces the Planning Alternatives Tomorrow with Hope (PATH) intervention, followed by a discussion of the theoretical frameworks that inform this research. The chapter concludes by sharing the rationale and significance of the research, positioning its contribution within the broader academic structures.

1.2 National Context

1.2.1 Definitions

Whilst there is not yet a universally accepted definition for homelessness, the Housing Act (1996) provides a legal definition for the UK (Table 1).

Table 1

Definition Of Homeless According to The Housing Act 1996

Homelessness and threatened homelessness

1. A person is homeless if he has no accommodation available for his occupation, in the United Kingdom or elsewhere, which he-
 	
    a) is entitled to occupy by virtue of an interest in it or by virtue of an order of a court,
 	
    b) has an express or implied licence to occupy, or
 	
    c) occupies as a residence by virtue of any enactment or rule of law giving him the right to remain in occupation or restricting the right of another person to recover possession.
 	
2. A person is also homeless if he has accommodation but-
 	
    a) he cannot secure entry to it, or
 	
    b) it consists of a moveable structure, vehicle or vessel designed or adapted for human habitation and there is no place where he is entitled or permitted both to place it and to reside in it.
 	
3. A person shall not be treated as having accommodation unless it is accommodation which it would be reasonable for him to continue to occupy.
 	
4. A person is threatened with homelessness if it is likely that he will become homeless within 56 days. A person is also threatened with homelessness if-
 	
    a) a valid notice has been given to the person under section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 (orders for possession on expiry or termination of assured shorthold tenancy) in respect of the only accommodation the person has that is available for the person's occupation, and
 	
    b) that notice will expire within 56 days.

Unlike this statutory definition, charities and advocacy groups often support broader definitions of homelessness that include both those currently homeless and those at risk (Amore et al., 2011). These wider definitions help highlight the scale of the issue at present and support efforts to secure funding for this population (Minnery & Greenhalgh, 2007). Critics argue that government definitions focus primarily on reducing the numbers of homeless people by prioritising only the most visible cases (Suzanne Fitzpatrick & Davies, 2021). Those who do not meet strict legal criteria may therefore receive less governmental support.

1.2.2 Subcategories of Homelessness

Public perception often equates homelessness with rough sleeping, but this represents only a small portion of the overall homeless population. A 2023 national survey in England found that while 2,400 individuals were sleeping rough, 15,000 were in shelters, and 151,630 children were in temporary accommodation (Nuttall, 2023).

Given the complexities surrounding the definition of homelessness, researchers have often focused on categorising different types of homeless individuals rather than addressing the population as a whole. These classifications vary across studies. For instance, Fitzpatrick et al. (2000) identify five distinct forms of homelessness:

1. Rooflessness: Lacking shelter of any kind including rough sleeping.
2. Houseless: Residing in emergency accommodation or institutions due to lack of mainstream housing.
3. Lack of secure tenure: Staying with friends, relatives, or sofa surfing due to housing instability.
4. Intolerable living conditions: Living in unsafe, overcrowded, or substandard housing.

5. Shared accommodation: Long-term housing arrangement without the ability to secure independent housing.

Understanding these subcategories is helpful in ensuring that the full spectrum of homelessness is acknowledged and addressed in policy and practice. By distinguishing between different forms of homelessness, services can be tailored to meet the specific needs of homeless people, who may not always fit the most visible categories.

1.2.3 Young and Homeless

HYP are among the most at-risk groups in society (Homeless Link, 2018). Data from Centrepoint's UK youth homelessness database indicates that between 2023 and 2024, approximately 118,000 young individuals reached out to their local authorities (LAs) for assistance due to being homeless or at risk of losing their homes. Nicoletti (2023) estimated that around 1 in 52 young people in England encounter homelessness at some point in their lives.

However, youth homelessness is a complex and often underreported issue, as LAs primarily rely on limited snapshot surveys to assess its scale (Ferguson & Francis, 2024). Research suggests that hidden homelessness, where young people temporarily stay with friends or family, is one of the most prevalent experiences among this population (Quilgars, 2010). Yet, government data often fails to capture this subgroup, contributing to the broader challenge of understanding the true extent of this population (Hallett et al., 2015). Each HYP faces unique challenges, which can be further compounded by intersecting factors such as gender, race, disability, and sexual orientation (Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021). Homeless Link (2018) reported that 27% of HYP come from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, 7% identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, or

other sexual and gender minorities, and 7% have experience in the care system, highlighting the disproportionate impact on marginalised communities.

Despite these challenges, public perceptions of homelessness are often shaped by damaging stereotypes that overlook the personal circumstances and dignity of those affected (Paat et al., 2021). Research by Lang (2024) highlights how homeless individuals are frequently ostracised and, at times, blamed for their situation, with media narratives reinforcing these misconceptions. Rather than recognising the structural and systemic factors contributing to homelessness, public discourse often frames those experiencing it as burdens to society (Paat et al., 2021). This disconnect is reflected in statistics, with 41% of the general public perceiving homeless individuals as offenders rather than individuals in need of support (Lang, 2024). For HYP, stigma can lead to feelings of shame and social rejection, making them hesitant to disclose their housing situation. This reluctance can have profound effects on their mental health, contributing to increased rates of anxiety, depression, and other psychological challenges (Evolve, 2018; Jones et al., 2018; Mulrenan et al., 2020; Paat et al., 2021). Furthermore, some HYP express feelings of worthlessness, perceiving themselves as having "nothing" and therefore being "nothing" (Wooding & Ennis, 2024).

1.2.4 Policy and Legislation

In the UK, LAs are legally required to safeguard young people under several key pieces of legislation, including Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.

1.2.4.1 Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. This section places a duty on LAs to provide accommodation for children in need, including those without a safe place to live or at risk of significant harm. It ensures that young people are supported under child welfare law rather than just housing law, granting them the status of a 'looked-after child'. This entitles

them to additional support, such as a personal advisor and a pathway plan to aid their transition to independent living.

1.2.4.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act (2017). This Act introduced a preventative, early-intervention approach to homelessness in England. LAs are now required to act within 56 days of a person being at risk of homelessness. For young people, it expands eligibility for support and mandates the creation of personalised housing plans, encouraging a more tailored and proactive response.

1.2.4.3 Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. Part 7 defines homelessness and sets out how LAs must assess and assist those at risk. It requires councils to provide accommodation for individuals who are homeless and meet the priority need criteria, such as families with children, pregnant women, and those considered vulnerable due to age, disability, or other factors. While this can offer a route to housing for some young people, those without children may struggle to qualify under this definition, limiting their access to guaranteed support.

1.2.4.4 The Care Act vs. The Housing Act. The Care Act 2014 and the Housing Act 1996 both address homelessness but from different perspectives, often creating tensions over which framework should take precedence in supporting vulnerable young people. The Care Act focuses on individual wellbeing, requiring LAs to assess and provide care for those with significant needs, such as mental health conditions or disabilities. In contrast, the Housing Act focuses on providing accommodation for those who meet the legal definition of homelessness, such as families with children or individuals assessed as particularly vulnerable.

Many HYP, particularly single individuals without dependents, often fail to meet the strict criteria under either law. As a result, they fall into a 'policy gap', left without adequate

access to housing or social care and are often forced into unsafe living arrangements (Cornes et al., 2011; Fitzpatrick et al., 2011).

1.2.5 Young and Homeless in Education

Education is crucial in shaping life opportunities and serves as a significant protective factor for young people. However, HYP remain largely invisible within the education system, as there is no common way of identifying children, young people, or families experiencing homelessness (Mihić et al., 2022; Pescod, 2020). As disclosure of housing instability is not required, many young people navigate the education system without any support. As a result, HYP frequently experience disrupted schooling, with unstable living conditions hindering their ability to engage in learning. These increased absences often lead to academic underachievement, exacerbating educational disadvantages (Action for Children, 2024).

Frequent school changes, difficulties with homework, and challenges with concentration are common experiences for HYP, all of which contribute to significant learning disruptions (Fantuzzo et al., 2012; Grothaus et al., 2011; Murran & Brady, 2023). Research from the United States of America (USA) has shown that children living in shelters often underperform on standardised assessments and experience a decline in academic motivation, particularly when placed in emergency accommodation (Bassuk & Rubin, 1987; Begg et al., 2017; Masten et al., 1997). Moreover, many HYP leave school with low attainment, often as a result of these unaddressed learning needs (Centrepoint, 2015).

Despite these educational challenges, schools can serve as critical sources of stability for HYP (Cutuli et al., 2013; Keogh et al., 2006; Moore & McArthur, 2011). Teachers, school counsellors, and dedicated homeless support teams often provide tailored academic and emotional support, mitigating the negative effects of housing instability (Chow et al., 2015; Clemens et al., 2018; Havlik et al., 2014). Protective factors such as strong support

networks (Clemens et al., 2018), parental involvement (Masten et al., 2012), and the development of social competence (Haskett et al., 2016) further support improved educational outcomes.

Beyond schooling, sustained engagement in education, employment, or training (EET) is widely recognised as a vital pathway to long-term stability and independence for HYP (Dibb et al., 2019). However, measuring access to EET opportunities remains difficult. According to a 2021 report by Homeless Link, 53% of service providers identified 'Not in Education, Employment, or Training' (NEET) status as a major concern among HYP, though comprehensive data remains limited.

While supported housing providers aim to promote EET as a route to financial independence and social inclusion, numerous barriers persist. Housing instability often disrupts routines, undermining the development of employability skills such as punctuality, attendance, and professional presentation (Buzzeo et al., 2016). Educational disruptions further weaken academic performance and social networks, which in turn erode confidence in pursuing EET opportunities (Galvez & Luna, 2014). Furthermore, negative past experiences in educational or workplace settings can reinforce feelings of failure, making it difficult for HYP to envision themselves as capable of success (Buzzeo et al., 2016). These challenges are often compounded by intersecting issues such as mental health difficulties, substance misuse, and trauma, all of which hinder engagement with structured educational or vocational pathways (Centrepoint, 2015; Slesnick et al., 2018).

To address these barriers, research emphasises the importance of tailored goal-setting approaches that empower HYP to take ownership of their educational and employment progression (Centrepoint, 2015; Galvez & Luna, 2014). Access to role models, supportive peer relationships, and financial assistance for essential needs such as travel and meals are

key facilitators of EET engagement (Buzzeo et al., 2016; Galvez & Luna, 2014). Furthermore, integrated support services, including mental health and behavioural interventions, alongside housing stability assistance, are critical in enabling HYP to transition successfully into education and employment (Centrepoint, 2015). While existing research has explored systemic challenges, further studies are needed to examine practical interventions that effectively support HYP in creating meaningful engagement with EET opportunities (Pescod & Gander, 2024).

1.2.5.1 The Role of Educational Psychologists. Educational Psychologists (EPs) play a crucial role in advocating for vulnerable children, using their expertise to influence inclusive policy and practice within educational settings (Fox, 2015). Through qualitative research, EPs are well-positioned to amplify the voices of marginalised groups, ensuring that their lived experiences inform school-based interventions and systemic change (Hardy & Hobbs, 2017). However, despite the clear relevance of homelessness to educational psychology, there remains a notable gap in research specifically focused on HYP. Existing literature often emphasises deficits and adverse outcomes, overlooking the strengths, resilience, and potential of this group (Fairchild et al., 2017). Moore et al. (2008) highlight the importance of researchers conducting ethical, sensitive studies that foster genuine engagement with HYP. By addressing these gaps, EPs can play a transformative role in shaping more responsive and equitable educational environments that promote both the academic progress and personal growth of homeless young people.

1.3 The Planning Alternatives Tomorrow with Hope Framework

The Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) framework, developed by Pearpoint et al. (1993), is a widely recognised Person-Centred Planning (PCP) tool underpinned by humanistic psychology principles (Rogers, 2003). This approach has been

applied extensively across health and social care sectors, particularly in transition planning for young individuals with learning disabilities as they move towards independent living (Bristow, 2013). Rather than focusing on deficits or barriers, the PATH emphasises goal-setting and the identification of supportive structures that can facilitate a young person's development and wellbeing (Wilson, 2013). The framework is highly collaborative, involving key individuals who typically contribute to a child's support network, such as parents, caregivers, and professionals from education, health, and social care. Uniquely, the PATH encourages the inclusion of informal support networks, such as extended family, friends, and community members, fostering a more holistic and inclusive approach to planning. By incorporating different perspectives, the framework seeks to minimise power imbalances often present in service-led meetings, ensuring that the young person remains central to the process. The facilitation of the PATH typically involves two professionals, one leading the discussion and the other creating a real-time visual representation of the planning process. Instead of generating a traditional written report, the final outcome is a visually engaging record that serves as a shared reference for all involved (Wilson, 2013).

More recently, EPs in the UK have started integrating the PATH into educational settings, recognising its potential as a structured, visual tool for multi-agency discussions, group consultations, and individual interventions (Bristow, 2013). A distinguishing feature of the PATH is its commitment to strengthening the child's voice, ensuring their aspirations, perspectives, and goals are central to the decision-making process. The use of large, hand-drawn graphics further reinforces this focus, providing a dynamic and accessible way to capture and organise discussions.

1.4 Theoretical Frameworks

1.4.1 Person-Centred Psychology

Person-centred psychology, developed by Carl Rogers in the 1950s, is a humanistic approach that emphasises the importance of creating an environment where individuals feel valued, understood, and empowered to reach their full potential. The PATH framework is grounded in the principles of person-centred psychology, drawing on many of its core concepts to guide its development. At the heart of person-centred psychology is the belief that every person has an inherent capacity for personal growth and self-actualisation, provided they are supported by the right conditions. Rogers (1980) identified three core conditions necessary for this growth: empathy, unconditional positive regard, and congruence. Empathy involves deeply understanding another person's experience and emotions from their perspective, while unconditional positive regard is the acceptance and support of the person, regardless of their actions or behaviours. Congruence refers to the therapist or helper being authentic and transparent in their interactions with the individual, creating a trusting and open relationship that fosters self-exploration and personal development.

In person-centred psychology, the individual is viewed as the expert in their own life, and the role of the therapist or facilitator is to promote personal growth by providing a non-judgmental, supportive environment. This approach encourages individuals to explore their feelings, thoughts, and experiences, leading to increased self-awareness and self-acceptance. Unlike more directive therapeutic models, person-centred psychology places a strong emphasis on the individual's autonomy and self-determination (Rogers, 1980). It views personal development as a continuous, self-driven process, where the individual's capacity for growth is maximised through the relationship with the facilitator, rather than through advice or intervention.
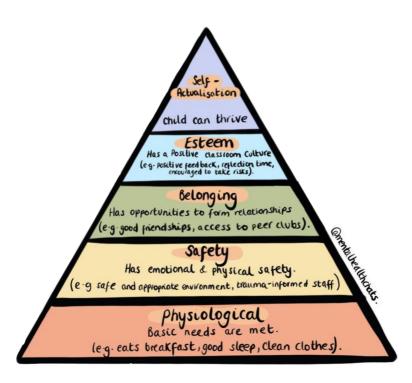
1.4.2 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943) provides a foundational framework for understanding human motivation, highlighting differences between housed and HYP. The theory proposes that human needs are structured in a five-tiered hierarchy, beginning with fundamental physiological requirements and progressing toward higher-order needs related to psychological growth and self-fulfilment. Maslow suggests that individuals must first satisfy lower-tier needs, such as food, water, shelter, and sleep, before they can effectively pursue higher levels of security, belonging, esteem, and ultimately, self-actualisation. When applied to HYP, this theory underscores the significant barriers they face in achieving stability and personal development, as their basic survival needs are often unmet or insecure.

For HYP, the first tier, physiological needs**,** is often compromised due to unstable housing, food insecurity, and inconsistent access to essential resources such as clean water and adequate rest. Unlike their housed peers, who may focus on education or social development, HYP must often use significant energy and effort simply securing a place to sleep or their next meal. This instability directly impacts their ability to move to the second tier and therefore to progress up the hierarchy. Figure 1 illustrates an education- focused adaptation of Maslow's hierarchy, demonstrating how unmet basic needs can significantly obstruct a young person's capacity to engage in learning and achieve positive educational outcomes.

Figure 1

Maslow's Hierarchy of Need (1943)

Note. From *An Updated Maslow's Hierarchy of School Needs* by @mentalhealthchats, 2023. Instagram.

1.4.3 Ecological Systems Theory of Development

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) also offers a valuable framework for understanding the complex and unique impact of homelessness on young people. The theory suggests that human development is shaped by interactions within a series of systems, ranging from immediate relationships to broader societal influences. These systems, which include the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem, interact dynamically to influence an individual's growth. The microsystem represents the immediate environments with which an individual directly interacts, such as family, peers, and school. These are the relationships that have the most direct impact on a person's development. The mesosystem refers to the interactions between different elements of the microsystem, like the relationships between home and school, or between family and

housing support, and how these interactions shape experience. The exosystem encompasses broader external environments that indirectly affect the individual, such as community resources, or local government policies, which can have a significant impact on a person's life despite not being part of their direct environment. The macrosystem involves the larger cultural and societal influences, including societal norms and cultural attitudes, which shape the opportunities and challenges an individual faces. Finally, the chronosystem reflects the role of time, considering how life transitions, and changes in societal values can impact development over time. Applying these systems to HYP reveals how disrupted or weakened support networks can have large implications for their wellbeing, development, and future outcomes.

1.5 Research Rationale

Homeless young people represent one of the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in society, facing substantial barriers related to discrimination, social exclusion, and housing instability (Homeless Link, 2018; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021). Research indicates that homelessness is often misunderstood, with public perceptions reinforcing harmful stereotypes that further exacerbate marginalisation (Lang, 2024; Paat et al., 2021). In addition, many HYP face significant challenges including poor mental health, disrupted education, and limited access to supportive interventions that could facilitate positive change (Jones et al., 2018; Mulrenan et al., 2020). Framing these issues through the lens of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory highlights the importance of addressing both the unmet basic needs of HYP and the complex, multi-layered systems that shape their development, wellbeing, and capacity to thrive. Despite these well-documented difficulties, however, there remains a critical gap in research exploring effective forms of support that respond to both the immediate and long-term needs of this population.

The PATH framework has been widely implemented in social care and is becoming a popular tool in educational settings (Bristow, 2013; O'Brien & O'Brien, 2000; Wilson, 2013). Designed as an inclusive, strengths-based tool, the PATH prioritises the voice of the individual, guiding them through a structured process to establish clear steps toward a desired future. While its use within educational psychology and multi-agency settings in the UK is increasing (Wilson, 2013) little is known about its effectiveness in supporting HYP. Traditional service-led approaches often fail to engage this population fully or support their unique profiles (Pescod, 2020), underscoring the urgent need to explore interventions that promote inclusion, empowerment, and positive outcomes.

Recently, The British Psychological Society highlighted the pressing need for research on homelessness, acknowledging the significant gap in the literature. In December 2024, they published a special issue titled 'Homelessness and Educational Psychology: A Hidden Group Within Our Community', marking an important step forward in recognising and addressing the needs of HYP, particularly in the UK. The issue includes an article by Pescod and Gander (2024) that argues that staff must 'push where it moves', emphasising that professionals need to support areas in HYPs lives that facilitate engagement in EET. Their analysis suggests that while there are opportunities to create systemic change, there is limited guidance on how to implement such strategies in practice. They call for research to identify practical interventions that enable HYP to transition into EET successfully.

This study aims to address that gap by exploring HYP's experiences of the PATH, hearing their perspectives on this intervention. For the purposes of this thesis, HYP refers to young people aged 16-19. By amplifying their voices and assessing whether the PATH serves as a meaningful framework for support, this research seeks to contribute to the evolving discourse on interventions that can support HYP, advocating for approaches that prioritise the aspirations and lived experiences of HYP themselves.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter will initially address the purpose of this literature review, the questions and goals it aims to explore. It will then focus on the methodology employed, including the systematic search strategy and the criteria for inclusion and exclusion of selected studies. Finally, the literature will be critically evaluated, with key findings and themes discussed in relation to the research questions guiding this review.

2.2 Literature Review Purpose and Questions

A literature review is a comprehensive, objective summary and critical evaluation of existing research on a given topic. Its primary purpose is to establish a solid foundation for expanding knowledge, supporting theoretical development, addressing gaps in current research, and guiding the researcher's future work (Snyder, 2019).

This literature review aims to provide a deeper understanding of youth homelessness and the PATH intervention. Research highlights that homelessness is often misunderstood, and despite the significant vulnerability of HYP, there is limited exploration of effective support for this population within schools, the workplace, or training centres. The PATH has been widely used in social care and is increasingly being adopted in educational settings, particularly among EPs (Bristow, 2013). This intervention prioritises the voice of the individual, a crucial factor in supporting HYP, and helps them outline clear steps toward a more positive future. Given the growing recognition of support that is needed for HYP, researchers have called for further investigation into the practical applications of psychological interventions to determine their impact for this population (Pescod & Gander, 2024).

Recognising the potential of the PATH, this study set out to explore whether it could serve as a valuable intervention for HYP. The initial literature question (LRQ) was: "What are homeless young people's experiences of the PATH?" However, this search yielded no existing literature. As a result, two further LRQs were developed:

LRQ 1. *"What are homeless young people's experiences of aspiring for education?"*

LRQ 2. *"What are the experiences of using Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope in educational settings?".*

This revision to LRQ 1 aimed to identify the push-and-pull factors influencing HYP's engagement with education and explore if there are any existing psychological interventions being used with this population. By reviewing the current experiences of HYP within the education system and synthesising key themes from the literature, gaps were identified regarding the support available and the specific needs of this group. The literature review therefore developed in a sequential manner, beginning with a broad exploration of the barriers to educational engagement and the factors that support re-engagement. Emerging themes such as the importance of relationships, goal setting, and motivation naturally aligned with key elements of the PATH intervention. These insights informed the development of LRQ 2, which sought to explore the PATH in greater depth, specifically within the context of education, to assess its potential as a meaningful intervention for HYP when thinking about their time in and returning to EET.

2.3 Review Method

A systematic and transparent approach was used to identify relevant literature, ensuring replicability. This involved a comprehensive search that aligned with the literature review questions, accompanied by well-defined inclusion and exclusion criteria for selecting studies.

2.3.1 Search Strategy

Due to the number of professionals working with HYP (including but not exhaustive of psychologists, social workers, and educational staff) the literature review covered six databases. For consistency within the searches, these databases were used for both literature review questions. The database searches were conducted in August 2024 via the EBSCOhost online research platform, using APA PsycInfo, APA PsycArticles, APA PsycExtra, Education Source, ERIC, and SocINDEX. These were supplemented by searches on Google Scholar and through a snowballing technique, where references from selected articles are used to identify additional relevant studies (Wohlin, 2014). Another literature search was conducted in March 2025 to check for up-to-date literature.

2.3.1.1 Search Terms The search terms were established based on the questions the literature review proposed to answer. Table 2 outlines the process of determining the important themes for each literature review question, with search terms developed based on key areas relevant to these questions. Truncation symbols were used to include words with the same root. For example, rough hous* would capture rough house, rough housed, and rough housing.

A Boolean/phrase search strategy was employed to identify relevant literature, using search terms such as 'youth', 'homelessness', 'education', and 'experience'. These terms were combined using the Boolean operator 'AND'. For LRQ: *"What are homeless young people's experiences of the PATH?",* article abstracts were explored. When this showed no results, LRQ1: *"What are homeless young people's experiences of aspiring for education?"* and LRQ2: *"What are the experiences of using Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope in educational settings?"* were formed. For LRQ1, the title field was used to conduct the search, as it contained sufficient information to identify relevant studies and helped refine the number of articles. In contrast, for LRQ2, the search was conducted using the abstract field.

This adjustment was made because fewer articles were available and expanding the search to
abstracts ensured that all potentially relevant literature was captured.

Table 2

Literature Review Search Terms

LRQ: "What are homeless young people's experiences of the 'Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope'?"

Keyword	Search Terms	Field
1. Youth* AND	OR young OR "young people" OR "young person" OR child* OR minor* OR student* OR pupil* OR teen* OR adolescen* OR learner* OR "young adult*"	Abstract
2. Homeless* AND	OR houseless* OR unhous* OR runaway* OR "rough sleep*" OR ""sleep* rough" OR shelter OR evicted OR displaced OR "temporary accommodation*" OR "temporary hous*" OR roofless OR "shared accommodation"	Abstract
3."Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope"	*(The 'PATH' was not used as a search term as it found a vast amount of irrelevant literature)*	Abstract

LRQ 1: *"What are homeless young people's experiences of aspiring for education?"*

Keyword	Search Terms	Field
1. Youth AND	OR young OR "young people" OR "young person" OR child* OR minor* OR student* OR pupil* OR teen* OR adolescen* OR learner* OR "young adult*"	Title
2. Homeless AND	OR houseless* OR unhous* OR runaway* OR "rough sleep*" OR "sleep* rough" OR shelter OR evicted OR displaced OR "temporary accommodation*" OR "temporary hous*" OR roofless OR "shared accommodation"	Title
3. Education AND	School* OR academ* OR college* OR "further education" OR apprenticeships* or "sixth form" OR "work-based learning" OR training	Title

LRQ 2: "What are the experiences of using Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope in educational settings?"		
1. "Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope" AND	*(The 'PATH' was not used as a search term as it found a vast amount of irrelevant literature)*	Abstract
2. Education	School* OR academ* OR college* OR "further education" OR apprenticeships* or "sixth form" OR "work-based learning" OR training	Abstract

2.3.1.2 Limiters and Expanders. For LRQ, the search was limited to articles published in English and sourced from peer-reviewed academic journals. This criterion was applied to ensure the inclusion of high-quality, credible literature. When no literature was found from this search, these limiters were copied and used for LRQ1. For LRQ2, while the English restrictor remained, the inclusion criteria were expanded to incorporate grey literature, specifically two academic theses. Given the limited number of peer-reviewed publications identified in this area, the inclusion of grey literature was considered appropriate to capture a broader and more comprehensive overview of emerging research.

2.3.2 Literature Selection

2.3.2.1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria. Table 3 details the inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to the articles to make sure they were relevant to the literature questions.

Table 3

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Rationale
LRQ 1: What are homeless young people's experiences of aspiring for education?	1. Research explored the educational experiences of HYP, either past or present.	1. Research that did not explore the educational experiences of HYP. This includes research focused solely on aspects such as health prevalence, typologies, or demographic classifications of HYP, without any exploration of their past or present educational experiences.	1. This focus ensured that the literature contributed to an understanding of the barriers and facilitators in education.
	2. The culture of the research is similar to that of the UK. Countries were included if they had a shared understanding of the homeless, which falls close to the that of the UK Government. Western European and North American countries, as well as Australia and New Zealand were considered due to this understanding.	2. The research occurred outside of Western Europe or North American countries, or Australia or New Zealand.	2. Given the variations in how homelessness is defined globally, only research with a shared cultural understanding were included. These regions were selected because their policies and societal perspectives align closely with the UK (Pescod, 2024). Studies from other countries were excluded to avoid issues of contextual mismatch.
	3. The methodology of the paper was empirical qualitative research.	3. The methodology of the research paper was not empirical qualitative, for example: a review, a theoretical based study, an opinion-based article.	3. The review prioritised empirical qualitative research to ensure a meaningful exploration of experiences and perspectives, and to capture rich, contextually grounded insights reflective of high-quality, rigorous inquiry.

	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Rationale
LRQ 2: What are the experiences of using Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope in educational settings?	1. Research explored the use of the PATH in an education setting.	1. Research did not specifically look at the PATH, for example talking more broadly about person centred planning.	1. This criterion ensured that findings were directly related to the intervention of interest. Research that examined broader person-centred planning approaches without explicitly discussing the PATH was excluded, as it would not provide targeted insights into its application.
	2. Research looked at the experiences opinions of pupils, parents, staff members at school, or organisations working in a school.	2. Research did not look at the experiences of pupils, parents or staff members.	2. The review prioritised studies that captured the perspectives of key educational stakeholders i.e., pupils, parents, school staff, EPs. Studies that did not incorporate these were excluded as they would not contribute directly to the research focus on stakeholder experience.
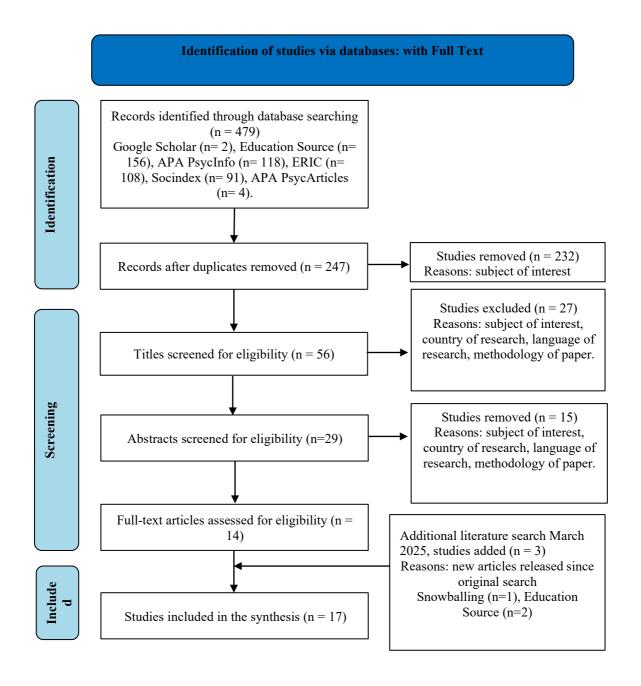
2.3.2.2 Selection Process. The literature selection process involved multiple steps. The first systematic search, that occurred in August 2024, aimed to answer, "What are Homeless Young People's experiences of the 'Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope'?". After this returned 0 articles, the question was split in two and a further two systematic searches occurred. The first part of this search, LRQ1, aimed to explore HYP's experiences of and aspiring for education. This search produced 454 articles. Once duplicates were removed, 247 results remained. These articles were then evaluated in line with the inclusion and exclusion criteria against their titles leaving 56 articles.

The next stage of the review involved reading the abstracts of the articles to assess their relevance to the current literature review question. At this stage, 27 articles were excluded, leaving 29 articles for further consideration. The full text of these 29 articles was

then reviewed to further evaluate their relevance to the literature review question. This resulted in the exclusion of 15 articles, leaving 14 articles. When this search was repeated in March 2025, three additional relevant articles were found: two from a repeated database search and one through snowballing. This brought the total number of articles in the second search to 17. See Figure 2 for a PRISMA flow diagram of this study selection process.

Figure 2

PRISMA Flow Diagram of Study Selection Process for LRQ 1: "What are homeless young people's experiences of aspiring for education?"
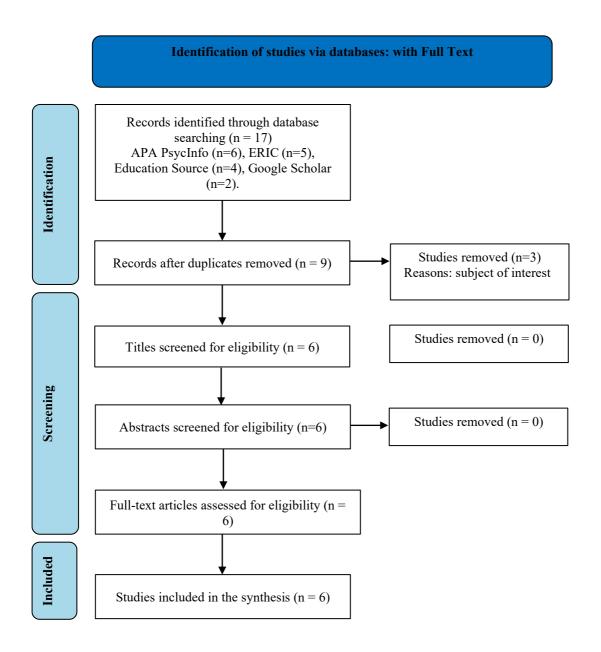
LRQ 2 was then conducted to look at the experiences of the PATH in educational settings. This aligned with the researcher's initial aim to use the PATH and was further supported by themes emerging from LRQ 1. Figure 3 shows the PRISMA flow diagram for this search.

The initial search produced 11 articles. After removing duplicates, seven articles remained. These articles were evaluated against the inclusion and exclusion criteria, resulting in four articles. The first review involved reading the titles and abstracts to exclude any inappropriate articles, leaving four articles. The second review involved reading the full text to determine the paper's relevance, and all four articles were retained at this stage. A snowballing technique was then used to identify additional research. This led to the inclusion of two pieces of grey literature, both postgraduate theses, given the limited volume of published research available on the topic. One was a master's thesis, which was retained after it was confirmed that it underwent a peer review process. As such, this piece of research was retained for inclusion in the review. In total, this literature review considered 23 articles.

Figure 3

PRISMA Flow Diagram of Study Selection Process for LRQ 2: "What are the experiences of

using Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope in educational settings?"

2.3.3 Organisation of the Literature Review

A data extraction table was created to systematically record essential information for the literature review. This table included details on the population, methodological approaches, findings and critiques (Appendix A). Furthermore, each study was evaluated using a critical appraisal tool and will be discussed in the subsequent section.

2.4 LRQ1: "What are homeless young people's experiences of aspiring for education?"

2.4.1 Overview and Appraisal

16 of the identified articles were evaluated using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) Qualitative Research Checklist (Appendix B). Bowers and O'Neil (2019) completed a qualitative meta-synthesis which was appraised using the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Critical Appraisal tool for systematic reviews and research syntheses (Appendix C). These tools were used as frameworks rather than as definitive evaluations of the research and supported the researcher's understanding of the quality and relevance of the literature, highlighting strengths and limitations. With the support of these tools, a methodological overview will be presented below.

2.4.2 Aims and Methodology

The aims of the studies varied across the literature review, reflecting the diverse challenges and considerations surrounding the educational experiences of HYP. Four articles focused specifically on the school and college experiences of unaccompanied homeless youth, with an emphasis on identifying the types of support that could be offered to this group (Gupton, 2017; Pescod, 2024; Pescod & Gander, 2024; Samarah et al., 2023).

Several studies applied distinct theoretical and analytical lenses to their investigations. For example, Hallett and Freas (2017) adopted a trauma-informed approach to explore HYP's experiences of education, while Edwards (2023) used an anti-deficit achievement framework

to analyse the counternarratives of young people who successfully graduated from high school during periods of homelessness. Similarly, Pavlakis and Pryor (2020) examined the achievements of high school graduates, with a specific focus on students of colour.

The literature also incorporated a range of perspectives. McKenna and Scanlon (2024) considered parents' views of how homelessness affects their children's access to education, while Havlik and Duckhorn (2023) captured the experiences of local homeless liaison officers working in a college setting. Mendez et al. (2018) identified recurring themes in the life stories of unaccompanied homeless youth to build a deeper understanding of their lived experiences. Likewise, Aviles de Bradley (2011) sought to offer a more nuanced and contextualised understanding of what it means to be homeless.

In addition to studies on unaccompanied youth, several articles focused on the experiences of young people whose families were experiencing homelessness. These included Begg et al. (2017), Powney (2001), and Walsh and Buckley (1994), all of whom examined the challenges these young people face in accessing education. Jones et al. (2018) explored similar issues, although the participants in this study were also involved with the child welfare system.

While the aims of the included studies varied, they were united by a common goal: to explore the educational experiences of HYP and identify how educational settings can better support this population.

Bowers and O'Neil (2019) completed a qualitative interpretive meta-synthesis (QIMS) of seven articles, all of which focused on homeless college students and their experiences of education.

To achieve the above aims, all the research in this literature review adopted a qualitative methodology or explored other qualitative research. This was deemed appropriate to explore participants' experiences in depth.

2.4.3 Participants and Sampling

Considering the aims of the LRQ 1, to explore homeless young people's experiences in aspiring for education, attention was given to the population of the studies.

Table 4

Demographic Characteristics of Participants from the Literature in LRQ1

Characteristics	Studies
Educational Stage	
Primary School	Begg, 2017; Moore & McArthur, 2011.
Primary and Secondary School	McKenna & Scalon, 2024; Powney, 2001; Walsh & Buckley, 1994.
Secondary School	Edwards, 2023; Havlik & Duckhorn, 2023.
College/ University/ Apprenticeship	Aviles de Bradley, 2011; Bowers & O'Neil, 2019; Gupton, 2017; Hallet & Freas, 2017; Mendez et al., 2018; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2020; Pescod, 2024; Samarah et al., 2023.
NEET	Jones et al., 2018; Pescod & Gander, 2024.
Country	
United States of America	Aviles de Bradley, 2011; Begg, 2017; Bowers & O'Neil, 2019; Edwards, 2023; Gupton, 2017; Hallet & Freas, 2017; Havlik & Duckhorn, 2023; Jones et al., 2018; Mendez et al., 2018;
Australia	Pavlakis & Pryor 2020; Samarah et al., 2023; Walsh & Buckley, 1994.
United Kingdom & Ireland	Moore & McArthur, 2011. McKenna & Scalon, 2024; Pescod, 2024; Pescod & Gander, 2024; Powney, 2001.
Type of homelessness	
Unaccompanied homeless youth	Aviles de Bradley, 2011; Bowers & O'Neil, 2019; Gupton, 2017; Hallet & Freas, 2017; Mendez et al., 2018; Pescod, 2024; Pescod & Gander, 2024; Samarah et al., 2023.
Temporary housing with family	Begg, 2017; McKenna & Scalon, 2024; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Powney, 2001; Walsh & Buckley, 1994.
Not discussed	Edwards, 2023; Havlik & Duckhorn, 2023; Jones et al., 2018

Begg (2017) and Pavlakis and Pryor (2020) were the only studies to focus on racial

minority groups (African American, Latinx, Multiracial, Black or Asian). Samarah et al.

(2023) made some reflections about the intersectionality of race and homelessness, and no

other studies mentioned race or ethnicity.

Of the 17 studies reviewed, the majority (12) were conducted in the USA, with four

from the United Kingdom and Ireland, and one from Australia. Since most of the research

originates outside the context of this thesis, variations in how homelessness is defined are

likely to be present.

The McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance Act (P. L. 107-110, 2002) enacted

legislation in the USA to ensure that children who are homeless have access to free and

appropriate education, requiring schools to remove barriers to their enrolment and attendance

at school (Begg et al., 2017). This Act is referenced in all the articles from the USA, with

many linking their definition of homelessness to this act. Moore and McArthur's (2011)

paper spoke to young people who were in temporary housing with their families, meaning

their definition of homelessness was specific to this group of people. In Powney's (2001)

study, the researcher speaks to the Scottish social inclusion policy and uses this to define

homelessness.

2.4.4 Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

2.4.4.1 Data Collection. All studies in the research used a qualitative research design

to explore the young people's thoughts except for Bowers & O'Neil (2019) who used a

qualitative interpretative meta-synthesis to explore a number of articles. Interviews were used

in the majority of studies. Within these, most used semi-structured interviews (Aviles de

Bradley, 2011; Begg et al., 2017; Edwards, 2023; Gupton, 2017; Hallett & Freas, 2017;

Havlik & Duckhorn, 2023; Mckenna & Scanlon, 2024; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Pavlakis

& Pryor, 2021; Pescod, 2024; Pescod & Gander, 2024; Powney, 2001; Walsh & Buckley, 1994), while two studies were minimally structured using prompts at the start of the interview, and then allowing the interview to flow naturally (Mendez et al., 2018; Samarah et al., 2023) (Mendez et al., 2018; Samarah et al., 2023).

Samarah et al. (2023) gave special consideration to child-centred methods, using a photovoice methodology to elicit the views of the young people in their study. Participants were asked to take photos of what it meant to them to be homeless, and then used these photos as prompts in their interviews. Moore and McArthur (2011) also used a methodology to support the young people's thinking, using art activities alongside their interviews.

Gupton (2017), unlike the rest of the articles in this search, completed multiple interviews with the young people in his study. The young people completed at least six interviews, three in 2010 and three in 2016. The rest of the research articles completed a one-off interview (Aviles de Bradley, 2011; Begg et al., 2017; Edwards, 2023; Hallett & Freas, 2017; Havlik & Duckhorn, 2023; Mckenna & Scanlon, 2024; Mendez et al., 2018; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021; Pescod, 2024; Pescod & Gander, 2024; Samarah et al., 2023; Walsh & Buckley, 1994).

2.4.4.2 Data Analysis. A variety of data analysis methods were used throughout this literature search. Six researchers used thematic analysis (Aviles de Bradley, 2011; Jones et al., 2018; Mckenna & Scanlon, 2024; Mendez et al., 2018; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021; Pescod & Gander, 2024), making it the most common data analysis methodology used in the search. Gupton (2017) used a hermeneutic style of data analysis to find connections between the participants' life story and the context of where the event took place. Pescod (2024) used interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA). Hallet and Freas (2017) used a narrative approach, while Moore and McArthur (2011) used a meaning-focused approach to collect

themes. Edwards (2023) analysed their findings with an inductive bottom-up approach that used four cycles of coding and analysis to identify common themes in each participant's narrative. Samarah et al. (2023) used a direct qualitative content analysis using inductive approach guidance, and Begg (2017) and Havlick and Duckhorn (2023) both used a grounded theory method. Two articles did not discuss the data analysis used in their research (Powney, 2001; Walsh & Buckley, 1994).

2.4.5 Reflexivity, Ethics and Value

2.4.5.1 Reflexivity. A weakness identified in the literature was the lack of researcher reflexivity, consideration of their own roles and potential relationship bias. Out of the 17 qualitative articles explored, only three (Moore & McArthur, 2011; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021; Pescod, 2024) thought about the role of the researcher and the potential power imbalances between the interviewer and interviewee. This was surprising considering the prominent theme around relationships and their importance when working with this population.

Another paper reflected on racial and ethnic disparities in HYP and how homeless young African Americans may be experiencing homelessness differently compared to their white homeless peers (Begg et al., 2017). However, the interviewer's own race was not considered in the paper, nor in any other of the articles in the review.

2.4.5.2 Ethics. Several ethical aspects related to research were mentioned across the articles, however four out of the 17 articles made no comments around ethics. Informed consent from both HYP and parents was considered (Begg et al., 2017; Mckenna & Scanlon, 2024; Mendez et al., 2018; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021; Pescod & Gander, 2024; Walsh & Buckley, 1994), as well as confidentiality through pseudonyms (Mendez et al., 2018), removing identifiable data (Begg et al., 2017; Moore & McArthur, 2011), and specific to Samarah et al.'s study (2023), which used photovoice, making sure no photos had other

people in them. Power imbalances were taken into consideration in Moore and McArthur's (2011) study, with a children's reference group being formed to support understanding. Finally, trustworthiness of interpreting data was addressed, with research findings being reviewed by other members in the team (Gupton, 2017; Mendez et al., 2018; Pescod, 2024; Pescod & Gander, 2024).

2.4.5.3 Value. The value of these studies is a strength of the literature. HYP are an under-researched population, and these studies focused on this population and shared insight into their feelings, views and opinions on education, something often missed for this population. Some of the literature also shares recommendations and implications for professionals working with HYP, as well as HYP's dreams for their future in education and employment.

2.5 Themes

To summarise the knowledge gathered from the reviewed literature on the experiences of HYP, the findings from the included articles were analysed thematically (Hempel, 2020). Themes were identified using NVivo 14, a qualitative data analysis software. Codes were formed based on recurring patterns in the literature, allowing for a structured exploration of the key issues faced and protective factors used to support this population. Safety, resilience, motivation, goal setting, relationships, external difficulties, and opportunities for support were the main themes that emerged and are discussed below.

2.5.1 Safety

Many HYP in the literature shared that safety was not a luxury they experienced (Begg et al., 2017; Gupton, 2017; Hallett & Freas, 2017; Moore & McArthur, 2011). However, they expressed that when they attended school and college, the physical space of the setting created a sense of safety for them as it felt familiar and there was an awareness of

who could be present (Hallett & Freas, 2017; Samarah et al., 2023). One participant in Hallet and Freas' (2017) study spoke of their time at university and disclosed that they spent a lot of nights on campus "because it felt safe and familiar" (p.732).

The young people also spoke about the importance of knowing that their parents and families were safe. The HYP in Moore and McArthur's (2011) research explained that they felt partially responsible for their parents' safety and knowing they were okay made being at school seem more attainable. This was of significant importance for those who were exposed to domestic and other violence.

In contrast, some young people shared school felt unsafe due to threats to personal safety which included exposure to drugs and weapons, fights at school, and belongings being stolen (Begg et al., 2017). The young people in Begg et al.'s (2017) research also spoke to the vulnerability they experienced when adapting to new school routines and learning unfamiliar rules, which further contributed to a diminished sense of safety.

2.5.2 Resilience

Many young people in the literature demonstrated high levels of resilience, expressing pride in their achievements and determination to succeed despite the extreme difficulties they had faced (Jones et al., 2018; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021; Powney, 2001; Samarah et al., 2023). In Bowers and O'Neil's (2019) study, one participant reflected: "I'm a different type of homeless person. When I say different type, not just in where I'm living but also in mindset. I haven't given up" (p. 10). Similarly, young people in other studies described how reflecting on their progress gave them a sense of motivation and hope for the future (Samarah et al., 2023). Jones et al. (2018) further highlighted this resilience, noting that many young people in their study successfully graduated from high school, pursued post-secondary education, and recognised their right to better support from the systems that served them. Beyond

education, employment was also seen as a key pathway to self-worth and a more stable future (Pescod & Gander, 2024).

Resilience in HYP has been linked to key traits such as agency, optimism, and wisdom, qualities Mendez et al. (2018) identified as crucial for overcoming adversity. In this context, agency refers to a young person's ability to take proactive steps toward exiting homelessness, optimism serves as a psychological buffer against stigma, while wisdom manifests in mature thinking, adaptive coping strategies, and a belief in one's ability to overcome past experiences (Mendez et al., 2018; Powney, 2001). Whether driven by an innate sense of determination or shaped by the hardships they had endured, the young people in the literature consistently demonstrated a willingness to invest their energy in education as a means of securing long-term stability (Bowers & O'Neil, 2019; Hallett & Freas, 2017; Pescod & Gander, 2024).

However, while resilience provides a hopeful perspective on homelessness, it is important to acknowledge the range of experiences among this population. Edwards (2023) highlighted this and cautioned against viewing resilience as an inherent trait, arguing that this perspective risks shifting responsibility away from schools and wider society. Rather than expecting HYP to overcome adversity through sheer determination, Edwards (2023) argued that there must be a systemic shift to help HYP with the barriers that they face.

2.5.3 Motivation

Motivation was often framed positively in the literature, with many young people expressing a strong desire to build a better future for themselves (Samarah et al., 2023). For some, this motivation stemmed from witnessing the hardships their families had endured and wanting to break free from similar cycles (Bowers & O'Neil, 2019). Others found motivation through education, whether by discovering subjects they were passionate about, drawing

inspiration from those around them, or fearing the consequences of giving up. Negative past experiences also played a significant role, particularly encounters with adults who had abandoned them, failed to support them or had given up on them (Bowers & O'Neil, 2019; Hallett & Freas, 2017). In response, many young people channelled their frustration into determination, seeking to prove both to themselves and to others that they were capable of success (Bowers & O'Neil, 2019).

The literature also emphasised that motivation is deeply personal and as with resilience, can fluctuate based on individual experiences. Professionals working with HYP noted that shifts in motivation were often triggered by significant life events, making it difficult to predict when or how these changes would occur (Pescod & Gander, 2024). Pescod (2024) highlighted that young people demonstrated varying levels of motivation, with some disengaging entirely, while others continued to attend education or training. These fluctuations were frequently linked to periods of crisis or major transitions, such as seeking asylum in the UK, illustrating the complex interplay between personal circumstances and engagement in education.

2.5.4 Goal Setting

A recurring theme in the literature was the challenge faced by HYP when attempting to balance multiple priorities, such as meeting basic needs and staying engaged in education (Bowers & O'Neil, 2019; Pescod, 2024; Pescod & Gander, 2024). Studies suggested that providing young people with predictability and a sense of achievement through goal-setting can help mitigate some of these obstacles (Begg et al., 2017). This idea was supported in Hallett and Freas' (2017) research, with HYP sharing that committing to education would have been easier if they had received structured support in setting goals and visualising their futures.

Pescod and Gander (2024) and Pavlakis and Pryor (2021) found that when HYP were given the opportunity to articulate their hopes and aspirations, and their goal-setting was tailored to their aspirations, their engagement in EET significantly increased. The research highlighted that goal-setting not only facilitated practical steps toward stability but also fostered a sense of autonomy and personal responsibility, empowering young people to take an active role in shaping their futures.

2.5.5 Relationships

Relationships have been shown to have a huge impact on the wellbeing of HYP (Aviles de Bradley, 2011; Gupton, 2017; Pescod & Gander, 2024; Samarah et al., 2023). Educational settings are able to provide a space to form these positive relationships with peers, staff, and those in the educational community (Gupton, 2017). This is because these settings create a space for HYP to build bonds of trust in a way that is comfortable for them, and can serve as an anchor of stability to maintain these relationships (Aviles de Bradley, 2011; Gupton, 2017). While these relationships have been noted as highly important, HYP in the literature recognised that there were gaps in support from family, school, and teachers (Aviles de Bradley, 2011).

2.5.5.1 Family. Children reported that being homeless affected their family relationships, whether that be due to the stressors placed on their families or a breakdown in relationship (Aviles de Bradley, 2011; Gupton, 2017; Walsh & Buckley, 1994). One young person explained that her relationship with her mother had become very difficult and she was no longer acknowledged by her family (Aviles de Bradley, 2011). Other literature spoke about family breakdowns being the reason for the young people's homelessness (Gupton, 2017). Aviles de Bradley (2011) found that as many young people were estranged from their families, they lacked a nurturing relationship with a trusted adult, having a negative impact on healthy development. This parental instability resulted in children being sent to live with

someone else, as their parents or guardians were unable or uninterested in taking care of them (Mendez et al., 2018).

Moore and McArthur's study (2011) focused on HYP who lived with their families. In their research, a more positive perspective was found in regard to family relationships, with young people wanting professionals to know their parents were doing their best to keep them safe. They also wanted professionals to treat their parents with greater respect and focus on what they could do rather than what they could not. A key message was to note that their families have strengths and have overcome many hardships during their lives (Moore & McArthur, 2011). Pavlakis and Pryor (2020) supported this notion, sharing that many of their participants cited their mothers as key sources of support, with seven of their participants claiming their mothers were their primary "go-tos" (p. 366) and were described as helpful and trustworthy. Begg et al. (2017) shared that as HYP can have good relationships with their families, it is important that professionals build a partnership with parents to help the young people.

2.5.5.2 Friendships. Throughout the literature, young people who had good friendships shared the many benefits they felt from this. These friendships offered them physical supports, such as a place to stay (Edwards, 2023) and books and stationary they could borrow in class (Hallett & Freas, 2017). They also offered them a space to motivate them to complete different educational opportunities, introducing them to college and getting them to attend classes (Edwards, 2023; Pescod & Gander, 2024) . Moreover, these friendships gave HYP a space to feel happy and normal, allowing them to experience warm relationships with their peers at school (Mckenna & Scanlon, 2024).

Considerations also focused on fostering peer relationships amongst HYP. Samarah et al. (2023) examined campus support programmes and how HYP could benefit from these

initiatives. Participants reported that the programme allowed them to feel part of a community, connecting them with other HYP and allowing mutual support in a shared space.

A lot of the young people in the literature explained that peer relationships were impacted by their homelessness (Bowers & O'Neil, 2019; Mckenna & Scanlon, 2024; Pescod & Gander, 2024). One young person shared that they did not have any friends at school as they were embarrassed of their situation and were worried that people would ask where they lived (Bowers & O'Neil, 2019). Another shared that they would keep their distance from peers to hide being homeless. This young person physically pushed children away from them to make sure the space between them would remain (Walsh & Buckley, 1994). Parents also noted that over time, their children's friendship groups had reduced to a small number of close friends and they believed this was due to not living in the local community (Mckenna & Scanlon, 2024). These parents' views were supported by HYP in Begg et al.'s (2017) study who shared that moving around a lot meant they often felt ostracised from social groups. While this feeling was normally caused due to the other people at the schools and colleges, HYP have reported social paralysis and feelings of immobilisation due to the constant moving and lack of knowledge on how to build new relationships (Begg et al., 2017).

2.5.5.3 School and support staff. Young people in this review emphasised the importance of having stable, trusting relationships with adults beyond their immediate family (Begg et al., 2017; Moore & McArthur, 2011). Many described how staff mentors and coaches played a key role in their education by offering academic support, mentorship, and personal guidance (Edwards, 2023; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021). One young person in Jones et al.'s (2018) study described the staff at her college as the "closest thing [she] had to family" (p. 71). She explained that having a supportive adult at university helped her stay motivated, provided a sense of warmth, and allowed her to manage her emotions while developing healthy social skills.

Teachers who fostered these personal connections were described as 'caring adults' in Edwards' (2023) study because they took the time to engage in informal conversations, offer encouragement, and provide emotional support beyond academics. Many participants found these relationships to be invaluable in their educational journeys (McKenna & Scanlon, 2024; Pescod, 2024). However, while some young people had access to supportive teachers, others reported never having this experience but wishing they had (Edwards, 2023). In addition to teachers, external professionals such as social workers, youth club staff, and mentors from organisations like Centrepoint were also noted as important sources of support in education (Pescod, 2024).

However, the literature also highlights how negative experiences with staff can be damaging (Begg et al., 2017). Some young people reported feeling ignored, pitied, or treated as outsiders by school staff (Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021; Samarah et al., 2023). Others described instances where staff were too busy to provide help, gave conflicting information about their academic progress, or failed to offer necessary support during exams, which in some cases led to students failing their GCSEs (Pescod, 2024).

Concerns around privacy and autonomy were also associated with support staff. In Jones et al.'s (2018) study, participants expressed frustration over staff sharing their personal information without consent, making them feel exposed and powerless. Additionally, some young people felt overlooked in decision-making processes, with staff speaking to their parents rather than addressing them directly. One participant, who lived in a refuge, described how staff would ignore the children, making them feel "weird" and "non-human" (Moore & McArthur, 2011). As a result, many HYP lost trust in these systems, making them less likely to seek help when needed (Jones et al., 2018).

Identity and shared experiences played a role in building relationships with staff. One young person in Gupton's (2017) study struggled to connect with her first mentor, who did not share any visible similarities with her. However, when she was paired with a new mentor who was also a woman of colour, she immediately felt more supported, describing their connection as something that "just clicked" (p. 202). Other studies highlighted similar challenges, noting that many volunteer mentors and staff lacked diversity, which created barriers to meaningful relationships. Some young people felt that the professionals in their area were part of an exclusive "uppity" group that was difficult to relate to (Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021).

2.5.5.4 Being alone. Throughout the literature, young people who struggled to build relationships with family, friends, and school staff described feeling alone (Havlik & Duckhorn, 2023; Jones et al., 2018). Many shared that loneliness was a defining aspect of their childhood, intensified by school staff who assumed their absences were intentional rather than recognising the challenges they faced (Havlik & Duckhorn, 2023). The absence of stable family connections meant that some grew up moving between different homes, reinforcing their sense of isolation (Jones et al., 2018). One young person in Jones et al.'s (2018) study explained: "No one really raised me. I raised myself" (p. 70).

Beyond the lack of family support, young people also felt isolated within their school communities. Since their peers and many staff members were unaware of their circumstances, they often faced the additional challenge of feeling different and misunderstood (Havlik & Duckhorn, 2023; Jones et al., 2018). Moreover, when staff did acknowledge their homelessness, it sometimes led to exclusion from key school experiences, such as prom, school photos, and the yearbook (Jones et al., 2018), further exacerbating their feelings of isolation.

2.5.6 External Difficulties

2.5.6.1 Housing and educational instability. Research indicates that homelessness often results in high levels of mobility, both at home and at school (Hallett & Freas, 2017; Havlik & Duckhorn, 2023; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021). In the USA, Mendez et al. (2018) found that HYP transition between accommodations approximately every three months, with some experiencing up to 18 moves before reaching adulthood. These frequent housing relocations often force young people to switch schools (Hallett & Freas, 2017), which can result in inconsistent learning experiences due to differences in curriculum (Walsh & Buckley, 1994). As a result, students may repeatedly cover some topics while missing out on others entirely. This means many HYP fall behind academically and are required to work harder to catch up, as they have often missed key foundational lessons necessary for mastering new material (Hallett & Freas, 2017; Havlik & Duckhorn, 2023; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021). Others become disengaged after repeatedly learning the same content at different schools (Jones et al., 2018; Samarah et al., 2023).

In addition to academic difficulties, frequent school changes disrupt social structures, forcing students to constantly navigate new environments with different social norms, peer groups, and hierarchies (Begg et al., 2017). This lack of stability can increase the risk of bullying, as young people must repeatedly adjust to new social circles (Powney, 2001). Moreover, specific challenges arise for those students with special educational needs as their records may be lost during transitions, disrupting evaluations and support services. Overall, these challenges have been linked to negative long-term outcomes, including fewer years of schooling, higher dropout rates, and limited access to employment opportunities later in life (Jones et al., 2018).

In some of the research, families attempted to provide stability by keeping their children enrolled in the same school despite moving away. However, this often required long and exhausting commutes. Parents in Mckenna and Scanlon's (2024) study reported that their children frequently arrived at school hungry after spending hours traveling. Poor living conditions, including noise, overcrowding, and shared sleeping arrangements, further disrupted sleep routines, making it difficult for students to concentrate in class. Teachers in this research noted that some children were so exhausted they fell asleep during lessons. Additionally, poor nutrition, inadequate hygiene facilities, and the long commutes contributed to frequent absences due to health issues.

Linked to their experiences of ongoing instability, many HYP in the literature expressed a strong need for stability in at least one area of their lives (Begg et al., 2017; Moore & McArthur, 2011). Research highlighted that schools have the potential to fulfil this need by offering a structured daily routine and access to essential resources such as bathrooms, showers, and lockers, which help meet students' basic needs (Bowers & O'Neil, 2019; Gupton, 2017; Hallett & Freas, 2017). Beyond practical support, Aviles de Bradley (2011) also shared that schools can create opportunities for young people to build meaningful relationships with peers and trusted adults, fostering a sense of belonging.

2.5.6.2 Finances. Limited financial resources were an issue for most HYP in the literature. Research reported that this population is often trapped in a cycle of poverty and economic hardship, making it difficult for them to achieve financial and personal stability (Gupton, 2017). Without adequate support, HYP can struggle to access basic necessities such as secure housing, food or healthcare (Samarah et al., 2023) and are at risk of neglect and violence (Begg et al., 2017). Additionally, financial constraints limit their ability to afford transportation to and from school, and to purchase essential learning materials. As a result,

some young people resort to risky survival strategies to obtain money (Aviles de Bradley, 2011; Pescod, 2024; Pescod & Gander, 2024).

Due to these financial barriers, many HYP have to prioritise immediate survival over educational goals, making it difficult for them to see the long-term benefits of education or training (Pescod & Gander, 2024). Furthermore, Havlick and Duckhorn (2020) found that children living below the poverty line tend to have reduced brain volume in areas critical for cognitive and academic performance compared to those raised above the poverty line. This suggests that, in addition to financial instability, HYP may also face heightened cognitive challenges that further impact their educational progress.

2.5.6.3 Emotional stress. Young people in the literature described the emotional stress of homelessness and its impact on their mental health, sharing feelings of overwhelm, depression and anxiety (Bowers & O'Neil, 2019; Gupton, 2017; Hallett & Freas, 2017; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Walsh & Buckley, 1994). Research has shown that many mental health illnesses such as those mentioned above and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are more common among HYP than their housed peers (Havlik & Duckhorn, 2023; Mendez et al., 2018). The participants in Begg et al.'s (2017) study shared that they struggled to manage feelings of sadness, anger, and anxiety about leaving their previous homes, school setting and friends. They expressed fears that others would judge or treat them differently, and concerns that they would struggle to become a part of the community in their new schools. Moreover, these feelings impacted them in the long term, with low confidence and lack of self-esteem preventing many HYP from entering further education. Participants in Pescod and Gander's (2024) research shared that their personal context, such as family background and the title of homelessness, rendered them inherently "good-for-nothing" (p. 69). It was felt as though these systemic difficulties had been internalised by the young people and served as a blocker for getting them into employment.

These mental health needs also led some participants to contemplate unhealthy coping skills such as running away, fighting, using drugs, and engaging in self-injurious or suicidal behaviours (Bowers & O'Neil, 2019; Mendez et al., 2018; Pescod & Gander, 2024). Some of the reasons for these feelings included past traumatic life events including death, loss, separation, teen pregnancy, racial discrimination, abuse, parental alcohol or other drug use, family violence or a lack of feeling loved or like they belonged (Bowers & O'Neil, 2019; Hallett & Freas, 2017; Havlik & Duckhorn, 2023; Mendez et al., 2018; Moore & McArthur, 2011). Others suffered abuse at home but suppressed their emotions out of fear, making it difficult to regulate their feelings and behaviour, which affected their relationships and school experiences (Jones et al., 2018; Mendez et al., 2018).

For some, this cycle of trauma felt inescapable. One young person reflected that homelessness had affected every generation of their family in some way, leading to deep feelings of shame and regret (Hallett & Freas, 2017). Without support, these experiences reinforced a sense of hopelessness, making it even harder for young people to move forward with their lives (Hallett & Freas, 2017; Moore & McArthur, 2011).

2.5.6.4 Race. Race was rarely discussed as a factor intersecting with homelessness in the literature, despite evidence that students experiencing homelessness are disproportionately Black or Latinx (Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021). Begg et al. (2017) interviewed 15 homeless African American children to understand their school experiences and educational aspirations, while Pavlakis and Pryor (2021) examined the perspectives of both students and service providers at an afterschool centre. The young people in this study, who identified as Asian, Black, Latinx, and multiracial, described experiencing both interpersonal racism and the broader structural barriers imposed by systemic racism in their neighbourhoods, schools, and support systems.

Similarly, racially minoritized HYP in Samarah et al.'s (2023) research highlighted the emotional and practical challenges of navigating predominantly white and affluent educational environments. Many reported feeling excluded from the broader school community due to their racial and ethnic identities, further demonstrating the difficulties they faced in accessing education and support (Samarah et al., 2023).

2.5.7 Opportunities for Support

Despite the significant challenges faced by HYP, much of the literature indicates that schools and colleges often lack the necessary services to support them effectively (Bowers & O'Neil, 2019). While various avenues for future support have been proposed, few have been fully explored.

2.6.7.1 Individual support. Many HYP shared that if they did not actively seek help, they often did not receive any support (Jones et al., 2018). Therefore, while HYP expressed discomfort in asking for one-to-one support, they recognised its importance, acknowledging that they struggled to navigate their challenges alone (Aviles de Bradley, 2011; Bowers & O'Neil, 2019; Samarah et al., 2023).

A key concern among HYP was their lack of individuality and autonomy in education-related decisions (Pescod, 2024). Many felt they had little agency over their academic journeys, which reduced their motivation to engage with education (Jones et al., 2018). Research highlights the importance of tailoring support to the unique needs of each individual, ensuring that their specific circumstances are acknowledged and addressed (Moore & McArthur, 2011).

Considering how this could be achieved, Moore and McArthur (2011) suggested that support staff should adapt their communication methods to align with the ways young people

express themselves, such as incorporating imaginative play for those who use it as a coping mechanism. By valuing individual differences, services could provide more effective and meaningful support. Begg et al. (2017) also explored school-based interventions, looking at improving HYP's sense of safety and social integration. These included fostering meaningful connections, setting academic ambitions, and developing resilience. After-school and lunchtime programmes were identified as valuable spaces where HYP could socialise, explore new activities, and complete schoolwork in a supportive environment (Begg et al., 2017; Gupton, 2017; Jones et al., 2018; Powney, 2001).

Feeling respected was also central when seeking help (Powney, 2001). HYP expressed a desire for support that preserved their sense of dignity while also fostering stability, security, and a sense of belonging (Begg et al., 2017; Mckenna & Scanlon, 2024; Pescod & Gander, 2024). Many reported experiencing stigma and judgment when accessing services and wanted reassurance that this would not be repeated within educational settings (Walsh & Buckley, 1994). They also emphasised the role of adults in advocating for them, particularly by setting high expectations and providing opportunities to achieve them (Jones et al., 2018).

Educational support needs also emerged as a significant theme in the literature. Some HYP, particularly those who were new to the UK, required language support before they could fully engage in education (Pescod, 2024). Additionally, many HYP had special educational needs (SEN) that were often overlooked or unmet, further hindering their access to education. Those affected expressed frustration over inadequate support, which heightened their academic struggles and feelings of exclusion (Pescod, 2024).

2.5.7.2 Collaboration between schools, services and families. The importance of collaboration between educational settings, service providers, and families was widely

acknowledged in the literature (Bowers & O'Neil, 2019; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Powney, 2001). Many HYP reported that services felt disjointed, requiring the young people to repeatedly disclose their living situations to access support (Bowers & O'Neil, 2019). Parents also reported feeling overwhelmed by the complexities of navigating systems and suggested that having a single point of contact would reduce the burden of having to continually explain their circumstances (Powney, 2001). Moreover, both HYP and their families often lacked knowledge of available resources, such as health, housing, and social services, highlighting the need for a more coordinated approach (Powney, 2001).

Transitioning between schools was noted as being particularly challenging due to a lack of collaborative support. HYP described arriving at new schools with little guidance, sometimes being misidentified as truants, or unknowingly repeating coursework due to administrative neglect (Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021). Such administrative failures disrupted their education and negatively impacted their academic progress.

2.5.7.3 Upskilling staff. Upskilling school staff was identified as a crucial step toward improving support for HYP. Training in trauma-informed practices was recommended to ensure that staff could better understand and respond to the needs of students who had experienced adversity (Bowers & O'Neil, 2019; Havlik & Duckhorn, 2023). Hallet and Freas (2017) emphasised that trauma cannot simply be ignored; schools must recognise its impact on educational engagement and tailor their responses accordingly. However, trauma-informed approaches must remain flexible, as each student is unique.

In addition to training, a shift in mindset among educators was seen as necessary. For example, staff must recognise that HYP may not conform to traditional expectations of students arriving at school "ready to learn" (Begg et al., 2017; p.236). Instead, they may be dealing with hunger, exhaustion, emotional distress, or feelings of defensiveness. Meeting

their fundamental needs for stability, security, and connection should be prioritised before academic success can be expected (Begg et al., 2017).

2.5.8 Conclusion

This section has explored the experiences of HYP through an analysis of the literature, uncovering key themes such as safety, resilience, motivation, goal setting, relationships, external challenges, and opportunities for support. It is evident that educational settings play a significant role in the lives of HYP: offering a space for stability, support, and relationship-building, while also posing challenges linked to systemic gaps and individual barriers. The research highlights the importance of tailored, collaborative, and trauma-informed approaches to address the complex needs of HYP, emphasising that holistic support is crucial for educational and personal development.

Building on these findings, the next section of this literature review will explore the use of targeted interventions in educational settings, specifically the PATH, to see its potential as a framework for supporting HYP in EET.

2.6 LRQ 2: "What are the experiences of using Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope in educational settings?"

2.6.1 Overview and Critical Appraisal of the Literature

As with the second literature search, all identified articles in this phase were subjected to critical appraisal using the CASP Qualitative Research Checklist (see Appendix B).

2.6.2 Aims and Methodology

The research aims varied across the included studies. Two studies focused on exploring the impact of the PATH intervention on young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (Haycock, 2014; Wood et al., 2019). Another two studies

investigated the implementation of the PATH with educational staff to facilitate organisational change (Hughes et al., 2019; Morgan, 2016). One study aimed to evaluate the development and facilitation of a support group, employing the PATH as a tool to gather the views of parents, school staff, and pupils (Carpenter et al., 2023). The final study examined the potential role of the PATH in future planning for pupils identified as vulnerable or exhibiting challenging behaviours (Bristow, 2013).

2.6.3 Participants and Sampling

Three studies explored the perspectives of young people, their parents, and school staff (Bristow, 2013; Haycock, 2014; Wood et al., 2019). Two studies focused on educational staff members' experiences with the PATH (Carpenter et al., 2023; Hughes et al., 2019). One study was based on the researcher's own reflections and experiences of implementing the PATH within a secondary school context (Hughes et al., 2019).

2.6.4 Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

2.6.4.1 Data Collection. All six studies adopted a qualitative research design. Five of the six used semi-structured interviews as their primary method of data collection (Bristow, 2013; Carpenter et al., 2023; Haycock, 2014; Warfield et al., 2015; Wood et al., 2019). Bristow (2013) distributed questionnaires to EPs alongside their interviews. Hughes et al. (2019) employed a case study approach, drawing upon the researcher's reflections following the implementation of the PATH in a primary school setting. In four studies, participants engaged in a PATH meeting with the researchers prior to being interviewed, allowing for exploration of their direct experiences with the intervention (Bristow, 2013; Carpenter et al., 2023; Haycock, 2014; Hughes et al., 2019). In contrast, Wood et al. (2019) conducted interviews with individuals who had participated in a PATH meeting within the previous six

months. Morgan (2016) selected participants who had recently taken part in the PATH process.

  2.6.4.2 Data Analysis. Three studies used thematic analysis to identify shared perspectives among participants (Bristow, 2013; Carpenter et al., 2023; Wood et al., 2019). Morgan (2016) utilised a grounded theory approach, employing a three-phase coding process to allow themes to emerge inductively from the data. Haycock (2014) described using a bespoke coding system tailored to her research objectives. Hughes et al. (2019), who adopted a reflective methodology, did not conduct formal data analysis.

2.6.5 Reflexivity, Ethical Considerations, and Value

  2.6.5.1 Reflexivity. Morgan (2016) considered rapport-building prior to data collection, acknowledging the potential influence of power dynamics and ethical sensitivities, particularly with young participants. Haycock (2014) reflected on previous contact with some participants and recognised how this may have contributed to a more comfortable interview environment. Other studies did not explicitly discuss the researcher-participant relationship or its potential impact on data interpretation.

  2.6.5.2 Ethical Considerations. Ethical issues were discussed in five of the six studies. Hughes et al. (2019) did not address ethical considerations explicitly. The remaining studies demonstrated engagement with ethical principles such as informed consent, confidentiality, and the management of power imbalances (Bristow, 2013; Carpenter et al., 2023; Haycock, 2014; Morgan, 2016; Wood et al., 2019). Carpenter et al. (2023) addressed additional ethical complexities related to conducting research during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the adaptation to telephone interviews and the corresponding ethical adjustments needed. Wood et al. (2019) implemented a traffic light system during interviews

with young participants, enabling them to indicate a desire to stop without the pressure of verbalising this directly.

2.6.5.3 Value. The reviewed studies offer significant contributions to a relatively under-researched area. While PCP approaches have been explored more extensively, there remains limited empirical literature specifically focusing on the PATH process and individuals' experiences of engaging with it. The included studies offer valuable insights from a range of stakeholder perspectives and provide an important foundation for future exploration into the value and impact of the PATH intervention.

2.7 Themes

A third literature search was completed on experiences of the PATH in education to consider its viability in the current study. Similar to the second search, themes were identified using NVivo 14. Codes were again formed based on patterns in the research. Below are the themes that were found using this process: child's voice at the centre, holistic perspective, collaborative voice, usefulness of the graphic, and practicalities.

2.7.1 Child's Voice at the Centre

Research consistently highlighted the strengths of the PATH. Participants associated positive emotions with the process, using words such as "fun, hopeful, confident, pleased, relieved, moved, blown away, inspired, and proud". A key benefit shared was that the PATH placed the young person's voice at the heart of decision-making, allowing them to lead, express their views, and actively participate (Carpenter et al., 2023; Wood et al., 2019). Participants emphasised that the PATH was structured around their decisions, and they appreciated having autonomy in shaping their plans and being seen as equal partners (Haycock, 2014; Hughes et al., 2019). Similarly, Bristow (2013) emphasised the importance of centring the child's voice, particularly for marginalised groups, citing legal frameworks

that uphold children's rights to participate in decisions affecting them. A head teacher in the same piece of research noted that traditional meetings often exclude pupils because they are not conducive to open discussions. However, the PATH was delivered in a way that encouraged meaningful and comfortable participation allowing all members to share their views. Carpenter et al. (2023) further reinforced the importance of this approach by referencing policies such as the Farrell Report (2006), Every Child Matters initiative (2004), and the Children and Families Act (2014), all of which support child-centred practices.

2.7.2 Holistic Perspective

The holistic nature of the PATH was seen as a strength, as it allowed group members to explore the multiple factors shaping a young person's situation (Hughes et al., 2019). Displaying colourful graphics that visually represented the young person as a whole further reinforced the holistic approach (Haycock, 2014). Bristow (2013) found that the PATH facilitated comprehensive discussions that were not typically included in meetings between staff and parents. By focusing on the young person's strengths, needs, and aspirations, the PATH ensured the young people remained at the forefront of planning, giving them power over the decisions in their intervention (Wood et al., 2019). A parent in Bristow's (2013) study was particularly moved by hearing positive comments about their child, sharing they were on the brink of tears. Having this holistic perspective, where you are able to present strengths and solutions alongside challenges, created a more constructive and inclusive environment.

2.7.3 Collaborative Voice

The literature highlighted the collaborative nature of the PATH as a significant advantage. One EP described it as "empowering [fostering] joint action and synchronised intentions" (Bristow, 2013, p. 90). Hughes et al. (2019) found that the PATH encouraged participation from all group members, leading to greater levels of collaboration. Carpenter et

al. (2023) similarly found that a shared approach was effective in achieving specific goals.
Building on this, Bristow (2013) shared that multi-agency collaboration occurred from the
PATH and helped to build a support network around the young person (Bristow, 2013).
Participants in this study described the process as energising, sparking creativity and a sense
of shared purpose. Parents and young people also reported that the intervention allowed them
to see their school experiences from a more positive perspective.

However, while collaboration was widely seen as beneficial, some participants
expressed concerns. Bristow (2013) noted that if key individuals were absent or if there was a
lack of cooperation, the group dynamics could become a barrier to progress. Haycock (2014)
also noted that some participants withheld certain aims due to anxieties caused by particular
staff or family members being present.

2.7.4 Usefulness of the Graphics

The visual component of the PATH was valued across multiple studies. Young people
appreciated the graphic representation, as they did not enjoy writing things down, and the
visual helped them track discussion (Bristow, 2013; Morgan, 2016; Wood et al., 2019). In
Bristow's (2013) study, participants who typically struggled with focus found that
contributing to the drawing and writing aspects helped to sustain their attention. Furthermore,
PATH was considered inclusive of cognitive needs, as it eliminated barriers related to
reading and writing (Wood et al., 2019). Parents in this research also noted that the visual
element made the process feel more collaborative, as it placed them on an equal footing with
professionals.

The use of colour was another factor that aided comprehension as participants shared
that the colour and contrasts helped the picture make more sense (Haycock, 2014).
Additionally, displaying the structure of the PATH on the wall from the outset helped

participants understand the meeting's progression and duration (Bristow, 2013). After the meeting ended, participants found it beneficial to take the graphic away with them as a visual reminder of their goals and achievements that had occurred throughout the session (Haycock, 2014; Wood et al., 2019; Morgan, 2016). However, one participant in Haycock's (2014) study noted that the poster was very large and too big to benefit them, suggesting a smaller version would be useful.

2.7.5 Practicalities

2.7.5.1 Preparation. In some cases, participants reported receiving minimal information about what to expect from PATH, and there was no evidence that young people were included in pre-session planning (Bristow, 2013). This lack of preparation led to feelings of uncertainty and apprehension (Haycock, 2014). Participants suggested that providing targeted information for young people in advance would be helpful, enabling them to reflect on their goals and the process beforehand (Bristow, 2013; Haycock, 2014). One young person proposed that a briefing video may have been useful. However, others suggested that due to the abstract nature of the PATH, this may have inadvertently led to more confusion rather than support (Bristow, 2013).

2.7.5.2 The Facilitator. All the research spoke to the importance of the facilitators (Bristow, 2013; Carpenter et al., 2023; Haycock, 2014; Hughes et al., 2019; Morgan, 2016; Wood et al., 2019). Participants in Bristow's (2013) research described facilitators as "nice, kind and helped put them at ease". The facilitator's interpersonal skills and knowledge about the PATH were noted as key factors in the effectiveness of the PATH (Morgan, 2016). Having facilitators come in from outside of the organisation was also seen as important as it instilled safety and inspired confidence (Hughes et al., 2019; Morgan, 2016).

The importance of having two facilitators in the intervention was shared in two articles, as it allowed for a smoother process and ensured clarity in the graphic representation (Bristow, 2013; Carpenter et al., 2023). Furthermore, participants shared that a skilled graphic facilitator was useful as it meant when they took their PATHs home they would have clarity over their dreams and the steps needed to get there (Bristow, 2013).

Managing group dynamics was another important role for the facilitator. Hughes et al. (2019) found that dominant voices sometimes overshadowed others, underscoring the importance of balanced participation for all. Being able to prompt participants to generate clear and specific goals and take part in the sections was also seen as helpful (Hughes et al., 2019). Additionally, Bristow (2013) highlighted the need for facilitators to navigate certain experiences delicately, as illustrated when a head teacher refused to participate in the enrolment part of the PATH, and the facilitator had to support this decision without allowing it to have detrimental effects on the rest of the process.

2.7.5.3 Adapting the PATH. The PATH process is inherently flexible, allowing facilitators to tailor it to the group's needs. In Hughes et al.'s (2019) research, certain standard PATH headings were deemed unsuitable and were subsequently modified or omitted. For example, headings such as 'The Dream' were reworded to 'Our Vision', and 'Strengths/Staying Strong' were adjusted to 'What Helps'. Additionally, the 'Enrol' section was removed, as it was felt that the vision should involve the entire staff team rather than only those directly participating in the PATH process. Adapting the PATH before the intervention began meant the group was able to start with a clear vision (Hughes et al., 2019).

While adaptation was seen as beneficial, other members noted how useful they found the 'who, what, where and when' questions as it helped to prioritise actions (Hughes et al., 2019). If these were removed, participants would not have found the process as useful.

Therefore, it is important to take time prior to the PATH to evaluate what should and should not be removed from the PATH, as to benefit the most people (Wood et al., 2019).

2.7.5.4 Different to Other Meetings. Participants in Bristow's (2013) research described the PATH as distinctly different from other meetings they had attended. Initially, some admitted feeling unsure, thinking: "God, what are we doing here?". However, as the meeting progressed, they found themselves engaged and enjoying the process. Concerns that the PATH might feel awkward or overly sentimental were also quickly dismissed. Instead, participants highlighted its unique structure, which contrasted with traditional meetings by emphasising inclusivity, equality, child-centeredness, solution-focused discussions, and a welcoming, informal atmosphere. Parents particularly appreciated that the PATH felt more enjoyable and less judgmental while still addressing important issues.

A key distinction of the PATH was its strong emphasis on including the young person in discussions. Parents expressed satisfaction in seeing their children actively listened to and involved in the conversation. Youth workers also noted a shift, recognising a previously overlooked aspect of pupil voice. They reflected on how traditional meetings often prioritised adult comfort, avoiding discussions in front of the child. In contrast, the PATH fostered an environment where language and interactions were more considerate of the child's perspective.

However, participants did note that while the PATH was positive overall, the differences between the PATH and traditional meetings may be anxiety provoking. One person shared "I guess this can be a little uncomfortable for some people as it's not what you expect when you walk through the door" (Bristow, 2013, p. 77).

2.7.6 Conclusion

This literature review has explored both the educational experiences of HYP and the application of the PATH intervention within educational settings. Findings from LRQ1, which focused on HYP's experiences and aspirations regarding education, revealed the critical role that education can play in providing stability, fostering supportive relationships, building resilience, and enabling goal setting. At the same time, systemic barriers and external challenges, such as residential instability and emotional stress, highlight the need for tailored, trauma-informed approaches to effectively support this vulnerable population.

LRQ2 examined the use of the PATH intervention in educational contexts. The literature emphasised the PATH's strengths in centring the voices of young people, promoting collaborative engagement, and offering a structured yet flexible framework for setting and achieving personal goals. The use of visual graphics, the facilitator's role, and the adaptable nature of the process were identified as key factors in ensuring the intervention's relevance and accessibility. These findings align with broader educational and social care policies that advocate for person-centred, participatory approaches when working with this population.

2.7.6.1 Strengths of the Review. A key strength of this review lies in its sequential structure. The findings from LRQ1 informed the development and focus of LRQ2, enabling a logically progressive examination that moved from an understanding of the challenges faced by HYP to the evaluation of a specific intervention designed to address those challenges. This design provided a coherent framework through which to explore both identified needs and potential support mechanisms, thereby increasing the relevance of the second review to the context established in the first.

Methodologically, the use of thematic analysis across both review questions allowed for the consistent identification of key concepts and patterns across diverse studies. The application of NVivo supported a systematic and transparent coding process, which contributed to the rigour and replicability of the analysis.

2.7.6.2 Limitations of the Review. Several limitations should also be acknowledged. In LRQ2, much of the available literature on the PATH was small-scale, often based on practitioner reflections or service evaluations. While these studies offer valuable insights into process and experience, the absence of longitudinal data or controlled designs limits the ability to assess the generalisability and sustained impact of the intervention.

Additionally, while themes such as autonomy and collaboration were consistently identified, there was limited exploration of how factors such as race, gender or special educational needs may influence the experiences of HYP or shape their engagement with interventions like PATH. This suggests a need for more intersectional research that attends to the diverse identities and contexts of the young people involved.

Together, the insights from this literature review have directly shaped the methodology of this study. The gaps identified in the existing literature, particularly around understanding HYP's direct experiences of the PATH intervention, highlight the need for a qualitative approach that prioritises their voices and lived experiences. The emphasis on adaptability and the importance of co-creation in the PATH process also informed the study's focus on exploring how HYP engage with and perceive the intervention within educational contexts.

The following chapter will detail the methodology employed in this study, outlining how these insights guided the design, data collection, and analysis processes to ensure the

research is grounded in the needs and perspectives of HYP. By doing so, the study aims to

contribute meaningful knowledge about HYP's experiences of the PATH for supporting them

in aspiring for education or employment.

3. Methodology

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter begins by outlining the purpose, aims, and research questions that guide the study. It then sets out the philosophical orientation of the research, including its ontological and epistemological foundations, before justifying the use of a qualitative design and the choice of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the methodological approach. The subsequent sections detail the research design, covering participant recruitment, data collection, and analysis procedures. The chapter concludes by addressing key ethical considerations relevant to working with this population.

3.2 Research Purpose and Aims

The purpose of this study is to explore HYP's experiences of the PATH. As outlined in the literature review, there is currently no research that specifically explores the experiences of the PATH for this group. However, existing studies with HYP have consistently identified themes such as safety, resilience, motivation, goal-setting, relationships, external challenges, and the need for meaningful support. Notably, motivation, goal-setting, and relational connection are core elements embedded within the PATH framework (Wood et al., 2019), making it a relevant and underexplored focus for this research.

This study offers an original contribution by addressing a clear gap in the literature. Listening to the voices of young people is a foundational principle of educational psychology (Gersch et al., 2017), yet such perspectives remain limited in current research on homelessness and educational interventions. By exploring HYP's experiences of the PATH, this study aims to deepen our understanding of how such structured, person-centred planning may support engagement in education and personal development. The findings have the

potential to inform practice within educational psychology services, training providers, and LAs, helping to shape more responsive support that promotes equitable educational access and positive long-term outcomes for HYP.

3.3 Research Questions

This research has a single research question:

"What are homeless young people's experiences of using the 'Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope' (PATH) intervention?"

The value of a single research question provides freedom and room for exploration, centring on how HYP understand their experiences of the PATH and its impact on their lives.

3.4 Research Orientation

3.4.1 Ontology

Ontology refers to the philosophical assumptions we make about the nature of reality, essentially, the question of 'what is' (Crotty, 1998). A central ontological concern is whether there is a single, objective reality that exists independently of human perception, or whether reality is constructed through individual experiences and interpretations (Ormston et al., 2014).

Ontological positions exist along a continuum, from realism to relativism. Realism posits the existence of one observable and objective reality, independent of human understanding (Howell, 2012). In contrast, relativism, which underpins this study, holds that multiple realities exist, each shaped by individual context, culture, and perspective (Moon & Blackman, 2014).

This research adopts a relativist ontological stance, rejecting the notion of a singular, universal truth. It assumes that reality is socially and experientially constructed, and

therefore, subjective. As such, the study does not seek to uncover a definitive version of events, but rather aims to explore and value the individual realities experienced by each HYP. The researcher also acknowledges that as a researcher they bring their own interpretations and experiences into the research process, shaping both data generation and analysis (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

3.4.2 Epistemology

Epistemology concerns the nature of knowledge, what it means to know something, and the relationship between the knower and what can be known (Crotty, 1998; Guba, & Lincoln, 1994). Epistemological assumptions are intrinsically linked to ontological beliefs, as our understanding of reality influences how we conceptualise and generate knowledge about it.

This study is informed by a constructivist epistemology, which posits that knowledge is not discovered but constructed through human interaction and interpretation (Guba, & Lincoln, 1994). Unlike objectivist perspectives, which see meaning as residing within objects independently of the observer, constructivism recognises that individuals actively make meaning based on their experiences and social contexts (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Crotty, 1998).

A constructivist approach is particularly well-suited to this research, as it supports the goal of understanding how HYP interpret and make sense of their experiences with the PATH. This position values the diverse and subjective meanings that participants attribute to the same phenomenon, acknowledging that knowledge about PATH is co-constructed through the researcher–participant interaction and rooted in personal lived experience.

3.5 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

3.5.1 IPA Overview

IPA is a qualitative research approach committed to the examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences (Smith et al., 2022). It is idiographic in that it is committed to the detailed examination of a particular case, wanting to know in detail what the experience for an individual is like, and what sense this individual is making of what is happening to them (Smith et al., 2009). Therefore, IPA is consistent with this study's aim of exploring HYP's lived experiences of completing the PATH and making sense of the process. Moreover, it is consistent with this research's ontological and epistemological perspectives. Employing IPA to investigate young people's experiences with the PATH is consistent with a constructivist epistemology, as it supports the construction of varied meanings for the same phenomenon by each individual. Furthermore, IPA accommodates relativism, acknowledging the multiple realities through which the PATH intervention is experienced.

IPA is informed by three theoretical perspectives: phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Smith et al., 2022), which are discussed below.

3.5.2 Theoretical underpinnings of IPA

3.5.2.1 Phenomenology. Phenomenology is a philosophical approach that examines human experience, emphasising the subjective nature of perception and acknowledging that individuals interpret phenomena in unique ways (Langdridge, 2007; Moran, 2000). In psychology, it informs methods that explore individuals' lived experiences within their personal and social contexts (Langdridge, 2007; Smith et al., 2022). This study aligns with phenomenological principles by focusing on HYP's experiences with the PATH intervention, recognising that these experiences are perceived in varied ways.

IPA applies phenomenology by engaging with individuals' distinct and subjective experiences, drawing on the work of major phenomenologists such as Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre (Smith et al., 2022). Husserl's influence is evident in IPA's focus on exploring particular experiences as experienced by particular people (Smith et al., 2022). His concept of intentionality involves reflecting on perceptions to bring meanings and feelings into consciousness, encouraging IPA researchers to bracket their preconceptions to authentically understand participants' experiences (Husserl, 1927; Smith et al., 2022). Heidegger extended Husserl's ideas by introducing the notion of the individual as a 'person-in-context,' embedded within relationships, language, and culture, suggesting that people interpret their experiences as part of a shared, meaningful world (Larkin et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2022). Consequently, IPA adopts a hermeneutic perspective, recognising experience as a process of interpretation within this relational context.

Furthermore, IPA incorporates Merleau-Ponty's perspective on embodiment, acknowledging that individuals interact with the world both cognitively and physically, with embodied experiences shaping perception and knowledge (Smith et al., 2022). This is evident through IPA researchers' considerations of how participants describe sensations or emotions that reflect their physical engagement with the world. Sartre's view that human perceptions are influenced by the presence or absence of others further informs IPA's emphasis on relationships in understanding lived experience (Smith et al., 2022).

By appreciating the complexity of individual lives within their biographical, social, and embodied contexts, IPA's interpretative phenomenology examines experiences as both unique to the embodied individual and inherently relational, integrating phenomenological insights to achieve an in-depth understanding of participants' lived experiences.

3.5.2.2 Hermeneutics. The second theoretical foundation of IPA is hermeneutics, the theory of interpretation (Smith et al., 2022). Schleiermacher, Heidegger, and Gadamer have all explored hermeneutic principles that shape IPA and are discussed in Smith et al.'s (2022) work. Schleiermacher (1998) proposed that text interpretation involves understanding both the text's objective meaning and the unique influence of the author. For IPA researchers, this approach enables a deeper examination of participants' experiences, generating insights that may go beyond what is directly stated. However, such interpretations are approached with care, recognising that they do not override or diminish the validity of the participants own understandings (Smith et al., 2022).

Heidegger (1962) argued that interpretation is inherently shaped by fore-conceptions, as we are influenced by our pre-existing experiences, biases, and assumptions within our contextual environment (Larkin et al., 2006), which in turn impacts how we perceive new information (Smith et al., 2022). The researcher must prioritise the new focus of study over their own preconceptions. The aim is not to eliminate one's natural perspective entirely, as prior experiences are essential for data interpretation, but rather to consciously manage these preconceptions, maintaining a balance between openness to new insights and reflective self-awareness (Finlay, 2008).

Gadamer (1990) extended this by positing that interpreters project an initial meaning in their attempt to understand a text, which is then continually revised as understanding evolves. Thus, interpreters may only become aware of certain preconceptions through the act of interpretation itself. For IPA researchers, the perspectives of Heidegger (1962) and Gadamer (1990) on interpretation and preconceptions support a cyclical approach to bracketing, viewed as an incomplete but essential process (Smith et al., 2022). Acknowledging that prior assumptions can shape and potentially restrict interpretation, IPA

researchers adopt reflexive practices to remain open to new understandings. This involves maintaining an ongoing dialogue between the researcher's existing perspectives and the meanings emerging from the participant's account (Smith et al., 2022).

Hermeneutic circles are influential in IPA and highlight the dynamic interplay between parts and the whole, advocating for a circular and iterative approach to data analysis (Smith et al., 2022). This concept suggests that the understanding of individual parts is deepened by considering their position within the entire context, similar to how the meaning of a word is enriched by its role within a sentence (Smith et al., 2022). This approach diverges from more linear qualitative methods, providing a more nuanced strategy for engaging with and interpreting data.

3.5.2.3 Idiography. Idiography is concerned with the particular (Smith et al., 2022). Thus, it focuses on how specific individuals understand phenomena within their contexts, allowing IPA to provide a detailed examination of unique lived experiences (Eatough & Shaw, 2019). IPA is committed to the particular at two levels. First, it is concerned with detail, hence the depth of IPA analysis, which should be thorough and systematic. Secondly, IPA seeks to understand how particular phenomena have been experienced by particular people, in a particular context, hence using a small, purposefully-selected sample (Smith et al., 2022). This is further reflected in the analysis process, starting with a detailed examination of each case, before moving to more general themes.

The idiographic approach, with its focus on individual experiences, stands in contrast to the nomothetic methods commonly used in psychology. Nomothetic approaches aim to identify general patterns across larger populations, often employing quantitative techniques to assess group averages rather than individual variations (Piccirillo & Rodebaugh, 2019; Smith et al., 2022). However, critics such as Lamiell and Kastenbaum have raised concerns about

the validity of generalising individual behaviour from such broad data, arguing that this practice risks constructing hypothetical profiles that do not reflect actual individuals (Datan et al., 1987).

Concentrating on the individual does not disregard the person's context; rather, each individual is situated within a world of shared, pre-existing structures (Ashworth, 2006). People's worlds are both unique and communal. as experience is not isolated to the individual but instead reflects the individual's distinct perspective on their relation to the phenomena under study (Smith et al., 2022). Analysing multiple individual cases enables researchers to construct theoretical insights through analytic induction, a method that iteratively refines hypotheses across cases (Hammersley, 2011). This process is both rigorous and deliberate, aiming to balance the preservation of individual detail with the identification of generalisable elements within their experiences (Eatough & Shaw, 2019). Consistent with IPA's idiographic approach, this research is interested in HYP's individual experiences of the PATH.

3.6 Alternative Approaches

3.6.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) approaches are methods of data analysis that allow for the examination of different perspectives, highlighting similarities, differences and new insights (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) is a TA approach used to analyse patterns across a whole dataset, considering the researcher's subjectivity and positionality (Byrne, 2022). Similar to IPA, RTA involves the researcher actively interpreting emergent themes, emphasising reflexivity (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Unlike IPA, RTA integrates both deductive and inductive approaches, facilitating a more holistic perspective by merging data-driven themes with theoretical frameworks (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

While RTA could have generated valuable thematic insights from the participant group, it was ultimately found to be less aligned with the study's aim of experiencing individual experiences in depth. Instead, IPA was preferred due to its idiographic focus, which prioritises understanding unique, individual experiences, without imposing preconceived theoretical structures (Smith et al., 2022).

3.6.2 Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is a structured, inductive approach designed to generate theories directly from qualitative data sources such as interviews, observations, and documents, with a particular focus on understanding social processes (Tie et al., 2019). This method enables theories to emerge organically from the data, minimising the influence of prior assumptions on the analytical process (Bowen, 2006). As such, research employing grounded theory typically aims to be explanatory, rather than purely descriptive or exploratory.

In contrast, the aim of the present study was exploratory, making grounded theory less suitable for this research. Unlike grounded theory, IPA emphasises subjective interpretation and a detailed exploration of individual experiences, aligning more closely with the study's objectives.

3.6.3 Narrative Analysis

Narrative psychology seeks to understand how individuals construct their experiences into coherent, meaningful stories (Silver, 2013). Underpinned by this psychology, narrative analysis examines both the content and the structure of these narratives, emphasising the individual's storytelling as a key mechanism for making sense of their experiences (Murray, 2015; Patterson, 2018). Although both narrative analysis and IPA can be employed to investigate lived experiences, their approaches and focal points differ.

While narrative analysis focuses on how experiences are framed and told, IPA prioritises a detailed, interpretative examination of how individuals make sense of their lived experiences on a personal level. For this study, IPA was deemed more appropriate as it allows for a deeper exploration of the personal meaning-making process without focusing on the narrative structure itself. This aligns better with the study's aim of understanding the unique, subjective experiences of the participants, particularly those from marginalised groups, rather than the way these experiences are presented or narrated.

3.6.4 Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis examines the role of language in shaping and constructing social reality, offering insights into how individuals use language to communicate their understanding of the world (Willig, 2013). This approach centres on the ways in which language actively constructs social reality. However, it was decided that discourse analysis was not well-aligned with the aims of this research, which focused on understanding how HYP make sense of their lived experiences with *the PATH,* rather than on how they use language to construct these experiences. Additionally, given the study's sample, the emphasis on language use could have posed challenges, due to differing levels of English fluency.

3.7 Research Design

3.7.1 Participants

3.7.1.1 Sampling Methods and Homogeneity. IPA research needs a homogeneous sample for whom the researched phenomenon will be meaningful (Smith et al., 2022). In line with this approach, purposive sampling, the deliberate choice of participants due to the qualities they possess (Etikan et al., 2016), was used to recruit participants.

Homogeneity is primarily concerned with the phenomena under investigation and may also encompass specific characteristics of the participants and their contextual

background (Smith et al., 2022). To ensure a homogeneous sample in this study, participants were selected based on their lived experience of homelessness in the UK. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed to address both practical and interpretative considerations, carefully evaluating the extent of variability that could be accommodated within the analysis while still addressing the research question (Smith et al., 2022).

3.7.1.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria. Table 5 illustrates a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria, devised by the researcher to support the recruitment of participants. The first criterion was that participants had lived experience of the research phenomenon: they were currently experiencing homelessness in the UK. The criteria also included aspects of the participants, such as their age and that they were being supported by Centrepoint, a charity that supports HYP from the ages of 16-25. Centrepoint was selected because of its unique, psychologically informed approach to supporting young people. Specifically, the researcher worked alongside the Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE) team, working closely with an Educational Psychologist (EP) and Assistant Psychologist (AP). These specialised roles are not available in many other youth homelessness charities, making Centrepoint's approach distinct and novel. Moreover, working alongside this team made it easier for the researcher to embed themselves in an organisation willing to complete psychologically informed research.

Table 5

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Participants

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Rationale
Young people are accessing support from Centrepoint, a charity in the UK which provides accommodation and support to homeless people aged 16-25.	Young people not accessing any support or are accessing it from a different organisation.	Centrepoint supported the researcher with a means to recruitment. Completing the research in one charity supports homogeneity. Completing psychological research at Centrepoint felt appropriate due to their PIE team.
Young people are accessing support from Centrepoint around education, employment, and training.	Young people not accessing specific support for education, employment or training.	The research aims to explore ways to support young people in returning to education. Achieving this requires that the young people are hoping to re-engage with their educational pathways.
Young people of any gender, with or without learning disabilities, and from diverse linguistic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds.	Young people with specific aspects of identity.	The research is interested in all experiences and the PATH is an inclusive process that can be adapted to all.
Young people are aged 16-19 years old.	Any age other than 16-19.	This is the oldest age you are legally expected to access full time education. 16–19-year-olds were selected to make sure they were able to coherently reflect on their experiences of PATH.

3.7.1.3 Recruitment Process. Participant recruitment began in August 2024 after gaining ethical approval for this research (Appendix D). An EP from Centrepoint supported the researcher in approaching and selecting the HYP accessing Centrepoint as a service. A number of meetings took place at Centrepoint, allowing the EP and safeguarding lead to discuss effective strategies for participant recruitment. Together with the EP, inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed and then shared with professionals to assist in identifying suitable participants. Centrepoint professionals introduced the research to young people, with the support of an information sheet (Appendix E), in their service whom they felt met these criteria. To clarify the process and purpose of the PATH, a PATH specific sheet with visuals was also provided (Appendix F) acknowledging both the novelty and complexity of the intervention. The identified young people were then reviewed with the researcher to ensure

they met all inclusion and exclusion criteria. For those interested in participating, an initial meeting was offered to address any questions or provide further details about the research. If they preferred to proceed without an initial meeting, a time and place to complete the PATH was arranged. At this stage, consent was gained from the young person (Appendix G).

3.7.1.4 Sample Size and Participant Information. IPA studies require a small sample size, due to its idiographic nature, with Smith et al. (2022) stating that for a first project, three to five participants is sufficient for a good study. The researcher aimed to recruit six participants, as it was unclear how engaged this participant group would be, and the decision to stop recruiting was dependent on external constraints. The researcher stopped recruiting in January 2025, as continuing beyond this point was likely to impact the deadline of this piece of work. A total of four participants were recruited within London, all of which were being supported by Centrepoint. All participants were aged 16 to 19, in accordance with the study's inclusion criteria. The lower age limit reflects the legal framework in England, where young people under the age of 16 are supported by local authorities under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 and are not classified as legally homeless in the same way as older adolescents. The upper age limit was selected as 19 represents the point at which young people are no longer legally required to be in full-time education or training and may begin to transition out of youth-oriented education and housing services. Contextual information about participants was not collected, given the challenges associated with recruiting this highly vulnerable population. Collecting such details was avoided to reduce any potential discomfort or concerns about identifiability, which might have deterred individuals from participating in the study.

3.7.2 Data Collection

3.7.2.1 The PATH. Each participant completed the PATH prior to their interview. This approach ensured consistency in facilitation and visual presentation across all

participants. In contrast to earlier studies where participants were required to have completed a PATH prior to taking part (Morgan, 2016; Wood et al., 2019), this study adopted a more inclusive strategy. Pre-requiring a PATH was deemed inappropriate and incompatible with the person-centred ethos of the research.

PATH sessions took place at the HYP's accommodations, typically in communal areas such as living rooms or service managers' offices. Facilitators brought a selection of food and drinks to the sessions, creating a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere. This reflected the study's commitment to person-centred principles by attending to participants' basic needs and wellbeing.

The AP from Centrepoint, who supported the pilot trial and had been a member of staff at the charity for two years, graphic facilitated all PATHs. Their familiarity with Centrepoint's systems and culture was beneficial as they were able to support the young people in unpacking Centrepoint-specific references that might not have been accessible to the process facilitator.

To ensure standardisation, a PATH script was followed (Appendix H), and the same graphic structure, drawn by the facilitator, (see Figure 4), was used in each session as a basic outline to be built upon. This graphic was created by the researcher and graphic facilitator the first time they met to explore the different images and colours that could be used throughout the process. To prepare for the sessions, the script and graphic structure were piloted in advance with the EP and AP from Centrepoint. A mock PATH session was conducted, with the AP acting as the participant and the EP taking on the role of graphic facilitator. This pilot helped refine the structure and delivery of the session, allowing both practitioners to draw on their knowledge of the participant group to suggest relevant adjustments.

From this pilot, it was agreed that the 'Enrol' section would be integrated into the 'Actions'. Additionally, the use of props was removed, based on a shared sensitivity to the fact that some participants may have had negative past experiences with relationships or authority figures, and might prefer a more grounded and professional approach in order to feel respected and taken seriously (Begg et al., 2017; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Pescod & Gander, 2024).

The team also reflected on the importance of maintaining a strengths-focused and emotionally supportive tone throughout the PATH. During the practice of the PATH script in the pilot of the PATH, the 'Staying Strong' section included the prompt, "What things might weaken you?" While this question provoked meaningful introspection, it also evoked discomfort for the AP, who reported feeling vulnerable when engaging with it. In response, the question was removed. Instead, the team chose to focus on resilience-based prompts, highlighting previous strategies that had helped participants stay strong. This shift aimed to foster empowerment by centring what had worked well in the past and could be drawn upon again in future challenges.

Figure 4

Graphic used for the PATH.

Note. Adapted from artwork by Chrissie Trower, Pinterest.

The stages of the PATH included:

3.7.2.1.1 The Dream. The PATH process begins by inviting the young person to imagine a future in which everything has gone well. This first stage centres on dreaming, encouraging them to picture a life that feels fulfilling and aligned with their hopes. The facilitator gently prompts them to think about what they would love to see happening in this ideal future: who is there, where they are, and what they are doing. The emphasis is on possibility rather than limitation, helping the young person explore their aspirations in a safe and creative space. Once the young person shares their vision, others present are invited to

add ideas, building and expanding on the dream. This stage sets the tone for the rest of the PATH, grounding the process in a vision that is meaningful and personal.

3.7.2.1.2. One Year from Now: Positive and Possible. The second stage invites the young person to imagine they are one year into the future, returning to the room and looking back on all the positive changes that have taken place. Sometimes, a visualisation or 'time travel' activity is used to help set the scene, for example, asking the young person to close their eyes and imagine stepping into a time machine.

The facilitator supports them in creating 'memories' from this imagined year by asking reflective questions such as: "Who is with you?", "What has changed?", and "What feels different?" These reflections are linked back to the dream and only recorded if they are both positive and realistically achievable. They become goals to work towards over the next year. The young person is also asked to name a few feelings they associate with this imagined future, which are added to the PATH visual to capture the emotional tone of their vision. As in the 'Dream' stage, other group members are invited to contribute after the young person has spoken, adding to the shared sense of hope and possibility.

3.7.2.1.3. Now. This stage brings the focus back to the present. The facilitator gathers 'facts and figures of the now', a snapshot of what life looks like for the young person today. This is often a quicker-paced step, where both strengths and challenges are named. The facilitator is mindful of holding a balance between positive and more difficult aspects of the present, and may note any tensions between the current reality and the earlier dream. The 'pull' of the dream is sometimes highlighted, to identify what is drawing the young person forward despite current obstacles. Feelings connected to the 'Now' are also invited and recorded, providing a contrast to the feelings associated with the dream and future vision.

3.7.2.1.4. **Staying Strong.** At this point in the PATH, the facilitator works with the young person to explore what will help them stay strong and focused as they move towards their goals. This includes naming personal strengths, skills, and qualities the young person already has, and reflecting on how these can be used to support their journey.

When others are present, they are also invited to share strengths they see in the young person, offering encouragement and reinforcing their capacity for change. This stage can be particularly empowering, helping the young person recognise that they are not starting from scratch as they already have many of the tools they need, both within themselves and around them.

3.7.2.1.5. **Action Plan and Next Steps.** The final stage of the PATH focuses on identifying clear and achievable next steps. The facilitator supports the young person in breaking down their goals into specific actions, clarifying who will do what, where, and by when. If others are present, they too can contribute to next steps or offer their support.

Where possible, someone is identified to take on a 'coach' or check-in role, someone who will follow up and help the young person stay on track. The group also agrees on a future date to review the PATH and reflect on progress.

The session closes with the young person being invited to share any final words or reflections, giving them a moment to voice what the process has meant to them or what stands out as important.

3.7.2.1.6. Enrol (Removed for this Research). The 'Enrol' stage typically takes place after the 'Now' section, where everyone in the room is invited to symbolically sign up to the PATH. The young person is asked first if they would like to sign their name, physically or in

a way that feels right to them. Others are then invited to do the same, often by writing their names or raising their hands. This gesture represents shared commitment and support.

However, for the purpose of this research, this stage was removed following feedback from the AP at Centrepoint during the trial. She expressed discomfort with this part of the PATH and raised the possibility that the young people might also feel uneasy. In light of this, and in order to maintain a safe and respectful experience for participants, this step was omitted.

3.7.2.2 Semi-structured Interviews. Interviews took place immediately following the PATH session. Participants were offered a one-hour break between the two activities, in recognition of the PATH's emotional and cognitive intensity. While some young people accepted this break, others preferred to move directly into the interview, sharing that they would rather keep going and finish earlier.

3.7.2.2.1 Interview Schedule. The interview schedule (Appendix I) was developed using guidance from Smith et al. (2022). Questions were designed to be open-ended, with follow-up prompts to encourage deeper reflection. Care was taken to avoid leading questions or those that made assumptions about participants' experiences (Smith et al., 2009).

Participants were offered optional adjustments to reduce anxiety and cognitive load. These included the opportunity to take breaks, have a support person present, and access a printed version of the interview schedule to refer to during the session. However, the schedule was not provided in advance of the meeting, as this could have influenced how participants engaged with the PATH itself.

At the start of the interview, an introductory script was read aloud. This explained the purpose of the interview and emphasised that there were no right or wrong answers, only

personal experiences. Participants were reminded of their rights, including their ability to skip any question or stop the interview at any time, without consequence.

3.7.2.3 The Process of Data Collection. During the interviews, each participant's PATH remained in the room as a tool to help evoke thoughts and feelings, yet it was not utilised as a source of data collection. Instead, only the interview transcripts were analysed, as the PATH is highly personal to each individual, and the graphics could raise confidentiality concerns. Additionally, the research question focused on participants' perceptions of the PATH process, rather than on the PATHs themselves.

The young people were interviewed by the researcher in the same quiet room that the PATH was completed in. The researcher made sure that the same questions were answered in all interviews, even when not addressed in the same order, to ensure consistency between interviews and adequacy of data (Smith et al., 2022).

From this point on, the young people will be addressed using pseudonyms. The young people were asked what they would like their pseudonyms to be, and all participants shared they would like it to be chosen by the researcher. The researcher acknowledges that naming is an act of power. Assigning pseudonyms without participant input can unintentionally reflect dominant cultural biases and risk erasing or misrepresenting minority identities (Itzik & Walsh, 2023; Wykes, 2015). Research into pseudonym practices highlights that when participants do not select their own pseudonyms, using careful, neutral strategies, such as random name generators, is recommended. This approach helps avoid racial assumptions and is preferable to selecting names manually, which can unintentionally favour culturally dominant (often white) names and reinforce inequality (Itzik & Walsh, 2023). In line with these findings, this research used a name generator 'behindthename.com' to create the names for the participants: Muhammad, Connor, Yuri, and Sabina.

Presentation and engagement during the interviews varied across participants. Muhammad and Yuri appeared relaxed and eager to share their experiences, while Connor was more reserved and needed additional prompts to elaborate on his responses. The researcher considered whether this difference might relate to the length of the PATH session preceding the interview, as Connor's PATH session was the longest.

Throughout the interviews, the researcher utilised skills and experience from her role as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP), particularly in building rapport with the young people during the PATH process and fostering comfort, such as by sharing food. She remained attentive to the participants' emotional states, adopting an empathetic approach when sensitive experiences were discussed and allowing participants ample time to share their stories.

3.7.3 Data Analysis

The data was transcribed verbatim by the researcher and analysed using IPA. The analytic focus in IPA is on how participants make sense of their experiences, adopting a double hermeneutic approach, where the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant making sense of their world (Smith et al., 2022). As such, the analysis is a joint product of both the participant and the analyst, involving interpretation, contextualisation, and meaning-making from a psychological perspective (Larkin et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2022).

This research adhered closely to Smith et al.'s (2022) seven-stage IPA analytic process. Analysis began with an in-depth exploration of the first case (Steps 1 through 5), before systematically applying the same process to each of the remaining accounts (Step 6). Finally, the researcher developed Group Experiential Themes (GETs) that reflected shared experiences across the dataset (Step 7). This process required balancing individual meaning-making with the development of broader patterns.

Throughout, the researcher was aware of her own positioning as a 26-year-old White British female, who had never experienced homelessness. This identity shaped her engagement with the data and was an integral part of the analytic process. Below, each step is outlined alongside personal reflections where appropriate.

3.7.3.1 Step 1: Reading and Re-reading. The analysis began with reading and re-reading the first transcript, while simultaneously listening to the audio recording. This immersive process was vital in shifting the researcher's attention fully back to the young person, not just their words, but the tone, pauses, and silences that framed them.

This step felt unexpectedly emotional for the researcher. Hearing the participants' voices again, months after the interview, brought her back to that moment. All the participants had been open to the process and shared some incredible dreams in their PATHs that were both inspiring and selfless. Hearing the interviews again reinforced the responsibility the researcher held in doing justice to their stories.

3.7.3.2 Step 2: Exploratory Noting. Next, exploratory comments were added to one side of the transcript. These included:

- Descriptive: staying close to the participant's explicit meaning, e.g., key words, phrases.
- Linguistic: exploring uses of language, e.g., repetition, pauses.
- Conceptual: more interrogative notes, asking questions of the data.

Emotion words were also tracked and used to shape early interpretative insights. The researcher was attentive to similarities, differences, contradictions, shifts in tone, and nuanced meaning across different parts of the transcript.

3.7.3.3 Step 3: Constructing Experiential Statements. Experiential statements were then generated from the exploratory notes. These were written on the opposite side of the transcript and aimed to capture what mattered to the participant, their experiences and the sense-making around those experiences. These statements remained grounded in the text, always linking back to the participant's words while offering a first layer of interpretation.

This stage engaged the hermeneutic circle, moving between parts and whole, from a phrase to a paragraph, to the entire transcript, in order to build deeper insight into the meaning of each experience.

3.7.3.4 Step 4: Searching for Connections Across Experiential Statements. The researcher then searched for patterns and relationships among the experiential statements. These were physically laid out and moved around, allowing for intuitive clustering and re-clustering (Appendix J). The goal was to explore how ideas were connected and to identify any emerging thematic patterns. Where connections weren't clear, statements were either set aside or noted as potentially significant in their singularity.

The researcher experienced a sense of vulnerability at this stage, questioning "am I getting this right?" Over time, however, themes began to reveal themselves. The researcher was aware of the uniqueness of using paper and physically moving the pieces to create themes. This was a time-consuming process but became incredibly rewarding when the themes were visually laid out in front of her.

3.7.3.5 Step 5: Developing Personal Experiential Themes (PETs). Each cluster was then refined and named to form PETs. These names reflected the key qualities of the experiential data within each group. PETs were documented in a table, accompanied by

illustrative quotes and page numbers (Appendix K), allowing a clear evidence trail and ensuring transparency.

3.7.3.6 Step 6: Individual Analysis of Other Cases. Steps 1–5 were then repeated systematically with the remaining three transcripts. Each participant's account was treated individually, maintaining IPA's idiographic focus and allowing each narrative to be understood in its own terms before any cross-case analysis began.

At this stage the researcher found it interesting how emotionally distinct each transcript felt. Though the structure of the interviews was the same, each young person brought their own tempo, story, and way of speaking. Hearing them talk about their PATHs brought vivid images of each participant back to mind. It became clear at this stage that although it is a shared intervention, the path can be experienced in different ways by each individual.

3.7.3.7 Step 7: Developing Group Experiential Themes (GETs) Across Cases. Once all four interviews were analysed, GETs were developed (Appendix L). In line with Smith et al. (2022), GETs were only constructed if reflected in at least two participant accounts. Each participant was colour-coded, and PETs were scanned for patterns of convergence and divergence. Where meaningful overlaps occurred, GETs were formed and supported by visual representations, included in the Findings chapter.

Although the potential use of subthemes was explored, they were ultimately not used in this study. With a small sample of four participants, the data did not naturally suggest subthemes and introducing them risked unnecessary division. The focus remained on preserving the depth and richness of each individual's voice within the broader GETs, in keeping with the idiographic commitment of IPA.

3.7.4 Research Quality

This section outlines how the quality of the research was established, guided by Yardley's (2000) four flexible principles for evaluating qualitative research: sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance. It is important to recognise that not all quality criteria are universally applicable across qualitative methodologies. Their inappropriate or overly rigid application can compromise the validity of research findings (Morse, 2018). Therefore, the researcher carefully considered the interpretative nature of IPA when applying these quality indicators.

3.7.4.1 Sensitivity to Context. Sensitivity to context refers to the researcher's attentiveness to both the theoretical and socio-cultural environments surrounding the study (Yardley, 2000). To address the theoretical context, this study included a comprehensive review of relevant literature, presented in the 'Literature Review' chapter, which informed the development of research questions and interpretation of the data (Yardley, 2017).

Socio-cultural context was particularly significant due to the nature of the research and the vulnerability of the participant group. Drawing on the Social GRACES framework (Burnham, 2012), the researcher reflected on elements such as age, cultural background, and language, acknowledging the diverse experiences of young people experiencing homelessness across different areas of London. The researcher recognised that her own contextual knowledge of each setting was limited and approached discussions with curiosity and openness. Terminology was also considered carefully, with the term 'homeless' being openly discussed with participants to ensure it felt appropriate and respectful, minimising the risk of disengagement.

The researcher also reflected on how her own identity and behaviour might influence the research process, particularly regarding power dynamics (Yardley, 2000). Recognising

the inherent power imbalance between researcher and participant, as well as between adults and young people, the researcher considered how her position as a White British female might be perceived. Additional consideration was given to the presence of two adults (the process and graphic facilitators) in the PATH sessions, and how this dynamic might affect young people. Efforts were made to reduce these imbalances through empathy, rapport-building, and a genuine interest in hearing participants' stories, thereby promoting a more equitable and respectful interaction.

During analysis, the researcher maintained sensitivity to the data by embracing its complexity and resisting the urge to impose meaning. This approach aligned with the study's relativist ontology and IPA's emphasis on double hermeneutics. The principle of multivocality (Tracy, 2010) was prioritised, ensuring that minority perspectives or views differing from the researcher's interpretations were included. This approach supported IPA's aim to represent both individual and shared experiences while acknowledging divergence and convergence across participant accounts (Smith et al., 2022).

3.7.4.2 Transparency and Coherence. Transparency in qualitative research involves clearly articulating how and why decisions were made throughout the study (Yardley, 2017). This study maintained transparency by explicitly detailing data collection and analysis methods and keeping a thorough paper trail. For example, excerpts of participant data are included in the 'Findings' chapter (Larkin & Thompson, 2012), and a sample transcript including notes and PETs tables (Smith et al., 2022) are provided in the appendices (Appendix M).

Transparency also extended to disclosing factors that may have influenced the research process, such as the researcher's own motivations, challenges encountered, and the

contributions of others. For instance, the role of the graphic facilitator and the purpose of the PATH in shaping the interview experience were clearly explained.

Coherence refers to the internal consistency and alignment across different elements of the study. This includes ensuring that research questions, philosophical positioning, and methodological choices all align (Yardley, 2000). These considerations were addressed in the 'Research Orientation' section, where the study's relativist ontology and constructivist epistemology were outlined, alongside IPA's phenomenological and idiographic orientation. This theoretical coherence underpinned both the design and interpretation of the research.

3.7.4.3 Commitment and Rigour. Commitment and rigour are demonstrated through deep engagement with the research topic, thorough data collection, and detailed, systematic analysis (Yardley, 2000, 2017). In this study, semi-structured interviews were used alongside the PATH, which was kept visible during interviews to support recall and reflection. These approaches were designed to elicit rich, idiographic data grounded in the participants' experiences.

The researcher drew on her skills as a Trainee Educational Psychologist to facilitate effective data collection, using interpersonal and communication skills to establish trust and understanding with participants.

In the analysis phase, commitment was shown through personal transcription of all interviews, supporting deeper immersion in the data. Rigour was further maintained through adherence to IPA's established analytic procedures and principles (Smith et al., 2022), ensuring that the process was both systematic and transparent.

3.7.4.4 Impact and Importance. The final principle, impact and importance, refers to the relevance and potential influence of the research (Yardley, 2000). This study offers

valuable insights into the experiences of HYP engaging with the PATH process, with implications for how professionals can better support their aspirations to return to education or employment.

Its significance lies in strengthening the voices of a group often underrepresented in academic research. The findings are relevant to young people themselves, their families, educational professionals, and allied services, including EPs.

The importance of the topic was evident in the interest and engagement it generated when shared with others, aligning with Tracy's (2010) criterion of pursuing meaningful and timely research. The study responds to current societal issues and has the potential to inform practice and policy in a way that benefits both individuals and systems.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this research was granted by the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust Research Ethics Committee. The researcher adhered to the ethical frameworks set out by the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2021), the BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (2018), and the HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (2016).

Given the involvement of young adults as participants, additional ethical considerations were carefully addressed. The researcher reflected on the inherent power dynamics within the interviewer-interviewee relationship and acknowledged the specific ethical responsibilities adults hold when working with young people, including the duty of care (Morrow, 2008). To help mitigate these imbalances, the researcher shared appropriate personal information to build rapport and emphasised that participants were free to ask questions and to disclose only what they felt comfortable sharing.

3.8.1 Informed Consent

As all participants were aged 17 or older, informed consent was obtained directly from the young people themselves. To support their ability to make an informed decision, the researcher provided all relevant information in a clear, accessible, and age-appropriate format. An information sheet was designed with simplified language and supplemented with visuals to explain the PATH process. It also outlined the research aims, procedures, confidentiality and anonymity protocols, data protection measures, and the participants' right to withdraw at any point.

To ensure that consent was freely given, the researcher explicitly stated that there would be no negative consequences for choosing not to participate. Recognising that power dynamics can influence a young person's ability to decline, the researcher remained attentive to non-verbal cues that might signal discomfort or unwillingness (BPS, 2021).

Participants were initially approached by their key workers, which introduced an additional layer of potential power imbalance. The researcher was mindful of the possibility that participants may have felt obligated to take part. To counter this, ongoing consent was emphasised throughout the process. The researcher regularly checked in with participants before and after the PATH, as well as during and after the interview, to confirm their continued willingness to participate. Consent to include the interview data in the research was confirmed at the conclusion of each session.

3.8.2 Minimising Harm

No questions were included that were likely to cause distress or discomfort. Participants were clearly informed that they were not required to answer any question they did not wish to. All questions focused on the PATH and the participants' experiences of it as an intervention, rather than probing into their personal histories. This approach was

consistent with the research question and also reflected the researcher's awareness that young people experiencing homelessness often spend significant time with professionals discussing their past. The intention was to create a different type of space, one aligned with the forward-looking ethos of the PATH.

Throughout the interviews, the researcher remained alert to any signs of emotional discomfort and responded with sensitivity, offering to pause or stop if needed. In practice, no interviews were paused or terminated for this reason. To ensure emotional support was available if needed, the researcher remained in close contact with the EP at Centrepoint, who could offer follow-up support to participants should any difficulties emerge.

The researcher also carefully considered whether engaging HYP in this research was justifiable in terms of potential benefit. To maintain ethical integrity, the research was designed to generate insights of value to both academic and professional communities, ensuring that participants' time and input were meaningfully respected.

3.8.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Steps were taken to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of participants:

- Interview transcripts were anonymised using pseudonyms. Identifiable details, such as names of staff members or accommodation services, were removed. Participants were informed of the limits of anonymity, particularly given the small sample size, which might allow for identification by those familiar with the context.
- All digital data was securely stored in password-protected files on the University of Essex OneDrive system, in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018).
- Physical copies of PATHs were not retained by the researcher. These remained with the participants, meaning no hard copy data was stored.

- In line with the fifth principle of the Data Protection Act (1998), data will be securely stored for 6–10 years before being disposed of securely.

- Participants were informed about who would have access to the data (i.e., the researcher's supervisors and examiners). No other individuals will have access to the raw data.

- The boundaries of confidentiality were clearly explained. Participants were made aware that confidentiality would be broken if any safeguarding concerns emerged. In such cases, local safeguarding procedures, aligned with Centrepoint's safeguarding policies, would be followed.

4.0 Findings

4.1 Chapter Overview
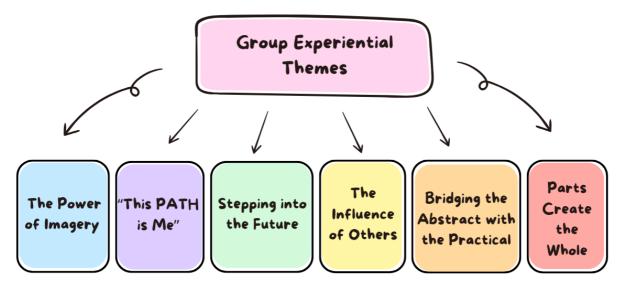
This chapter presents the IPA findings of four interviews. Data analysis was undertaken in response to the research question:

What are homeless young people's experiences of the 'Planning Alternatives Tomorrow with Hope' (PATH)?

This chapter opens with a brief descriptive summary of the participants educational aspirations, accompanied by a table outlining their PETs. In accordance with Smith et al.'s (2022, p. 110) guidance, the researcher chose not to discuss each individual PET in detail, rather the process of how the PETs formed the GETs is illustrated later in the chapter (Section 4.3). Due to the vulnerability of this population, participants were not asked to provide any personal demographic information, such as gender, racial identity, or disability, on their consent forms or during interviews. Where such information was disclosed, it emerged organically during the PATH process. Given the personal nature of these disclosures, the researcher ensured participants were reassured of confidentiality throughout. As a result, no identifying demographic information is shared in this chapter. Figure 5. presents the identified GETs:

Figure 5

Overview of GETs.

The chapter will then present each GET in turn, demonstrating how the PETs formed the GETs. The chapter will conclude with a summary to answer the research question.

4.2 Personal Experiential Themes (PETs)

This section briefly summarises each participant's education and employment aspirations, as shared in their interviews, followed by their PETs as a way of introducing them.

Appendix K contains a table of each young person's PETs, including illustrative quotes that formed the PETs. The researcher's interpretation of individual participants' findings will be incorporated throughout the presentation of the GETs.

4.2.1 Yuri

Yuri shared that she would like to become an actress in both the theatre and film. She also expressed an interest in using her passion for skincare and makeup in her career,

considering special effects makeup. Finally, Yuri mentioned wanting to build a TikTok following to stay relevant in her work.

Table 6

Yuri's PETs.

Main Theme
Y1. Authenticity and Openness
Y2. Motivation and Personal Growth
Y3. 'My Story'
Y4. Visual Representation Bringing Dreams to Life
Y5. Parts Create the Whole
Y6. Importance of Challenge/Resilience
Y7. Facilitator Relationship
Y8. Practicalities

4.2.2 Sabina

Sabina wanted to work in Health and Safety because it pays well and would allow her to work in different countries around the world. She was excited about the idea of travelling and seeing all the amazing places in the world, especially the Egyptian pyramids, due to her love for history.

Table 7

Sabina's PETs.

Main Theme
S1. Visualisation and Representation of her Journey
S2. Engagement and Enjoyment of the PATH
S3. Ease and Challenge of the Process
S5. Support and Facilitation
S4. Personal Ownership
S6. Commitment and Future Outlook

4.2.3 Connor

Connor shared he would like to study at a Russell Group university, with Oxford as his top choice. After completing his degree, Connor stated he would like to earn a lot of money. He thought about banking as a potential option, but he would also like to explore a range of career options. Alongside his ambition to make money, Connor expressed a desire to do something meaningful with his time, such as volunteering.

Table 8

Connor's PETs.

Main Theme
C1. The Impact of Visual Element
C2. The Presence of Others
C3. Experiencing the PATH
C4. Struggling with Structure and Flow
C5. The Emotional Challenge of Commitment

4.2.4 Muhammad

Muhammad shared he would like to become a mechanical engineer. He recognised that this career required more qualifications than he currently had, and he hoped to begin by completing a course near his supported living accommodation to help him get started.

Table 9

Muhammad's PETs.

Main Theme
M1. People in the PATH
M2. Turning Dreams into Achievable Steps
M3. Ongoing Reflection of the Process
M4. Powerful and Engaging Experiences
M5. Change of Perspective

4.3 Group Experiential Themes (GETs)

This section outlines the findings from analysing multiple individual cases, which resulted in six GETs. GETs are derived from identifying common patterns and divergences within shared experiences across cases (Smith et al., 2022). These themes highlight shared aspects of how four young people experienced the PATH. This section provides a detailed analysis of each of the GETs, using illustrative quotes from the participants.

To facilitate reader understanding, each participant has been assigned a colour: Sabina, Yuri, Muhammad, Connor. Under each GET title, the PETs used to create the GET are listed and colour-coded to match the participants. Verbatim quotes are italicised, and ellipses in square brackets "[...]" are used to indicate where quotations have been cut.

4.3.1 GET 1: The Power of Imagery

Figure 6

GET 1: The Power of Imagery in the PATH

Imagery and the use of graphics in the PATH emerged as a powerful tool for sparking

imagination, clarifying goals, and bringing participants' dreams to life. Yuri described how

the visual elements made her aspirations feel more tangible: "more real [...] it brings them

more into reality" (Yuri, p.6). Sabina echoed this, explaining that the graphics helped express

thoughts that were otherwise hard to articulate: "like more like you can see it with a vision

sort of, not just like it is in your head" (Sabina, p.4).

For Sabina, seeing her completed PATH evoked a sense of excitement and gave her a

visible version of the future she hoped for. Yuri similarly reflected that the visuals

encouraged her to think bigger, stimulating her imagination: "If you have a good imagination,

it's very good because you actually see yourself doing those things" (Yuri, p.6).

Colour also played a meaningful role for all participants. Yuri shared that seeing her dreams represented in colour helped her reflect more deeply on her goals, bringing them to life:

You can actually look at the things and be like, you know, my dreams now have colour, my dreams have like [...] like sometimes people might not really think of their dreams as a big thing or think of how they've never accomplished that (Yuri, p.6).

Similarly, Connor valued the creative and colourful elements of the PATH, commenting:

Writing stuff in general puts more stuff into visually appealing than I guess you know, it's better than having to have it black and white as well. So yeah, like it's more colourful, I guess it looks better. (Connor, p.4)

Sabina described the colourful graphics as "cool" and appreciated how they gave form to her ideas, making them feel more real and achievable than if they had remained just thoughts.

The interactive nature of the visuals further enhanced the process. Sabina liked being able to talk through her story while watching it take shape visually: "Yeah, good, to just like talk about it and then it's being written down for you" (Sabina, p.3). This helped to validate her experiences in the moment, as she saw them represented in front of her.

For Connor, however, seeing everything laid out was both helpful and overwhelming. He reflected:

I mentioned it earlier, quite daunting because I need to do a lot, but it's like I feel like you know with actions as well, if I build the good routine and like get help where I need it to be, it should go out pretty well. (Connor, p.7)

While the visuals allowed Connor to see where he needed to be, the number of unachieved goals created a sense of pressure. The visualisation process brought his future into sharper focus, but also made the distance between his current and desired situation feel more confronting. This highlights the dual role of the PATH, as both a motivating and reflective tool.

4.3.2 "This PATH is Me"

Figure 7

GET 2 "This PATH is Me"

2. "This PATH is Me"

AUTHENTICITY AND OPENNESS.	PERSONAL OWNERSHIP.	POWERFUL AND ENGAGING EXPERIENCE.

The PATH process fostered authenticity and openness, allowing participants to feel comfortable and genuine when expressing their dreams and goals. Yuri appreciated how the balance of respect and informality created a meaningful dialogue, avoiding unnecessary

politeness that might detract from the genuine feeling in the room: "we are still being respectful and formal, but [...] there's no need to sugar coat it" (Yuri, p.1). This relaxed yet intentional environment was important for Yuri, who described it as "nice vibes, good energy" (Yuri, p.1), enabling her to open up fully to the process. Muhammad echoed this sentiment, describing it as "the most enjoyable [...] comfortable" (Muhammad, p.8) meeting he had ever experienced.

Similarly, Sabina emphasised the importance of staying true to her own vision, expressing concerns that additional participants in her PATH could compromise its integrity: "it might throw you off a little bit" (Sabina, p.5). She explained that others' suggestions might unconsciously influence her decisions, leading to goals that did not align with her own: "they'll be saying stuff that they think you'll be good at [...] but it's not coming from your head" (Sabina, p.5). Sabina's insistence on preserving the authenticity of her own ideas highlighted her commitment to the truthfulness of the process.

Yuri believed that approaching the PATH with an open mind was key to benefiting fully from the process: "If you come with an open heart, you'll be open and accepted" (Yuri, p.1). This ability to be herself and to be vulnerable in the space enabled her to fully engage with the PATH, fostering a strong sense of personal accountability for its completion. Yuri's openness helped her feel deeply connected to her PATH: "Everything comes from me; this is because this PATH is me" (Yuri, p.4). This connection gave her a sense of control and self-focus, which she valued: "I like it just being about me" (Yuri, p.7).

Ownership was also important in participants' experiences, with each individual navigating the balance between collaboration and personal responsibility for their futures. Muhammad reflected on his sense of ownership, sharing "we've done it together, but yes, most is me" (Muhammad, p.8). Having the information in front of him was also helpful as it encouraged

him to start his journey as quickly as possible. When leaving the meeting, Muhammad spoke about wanting to put the PATH on his wall to maintain this strong sense of motivation:

> Muhammad: "seeing it everyday morning wake up and see on my wall this. It will be yea a big deal"
>
> Interviewer: "you should put it on your wall"
>
> Muhammad: "yeah I am going to think of that one now" (Muhammad, p.9)

The ability to visually track his progress appeared to give Muhammad a genuine sense of accomplishment, as he reflected, "I feel like everything is already achieved" (Muhammad, p.3). This sense of ownership may have stemmed from being able to clearly see and understand the steps required to reach his goals, something made possible through the PATH visual. For Muhammad, this clarity may have offered a rare and empowering perspective, enabling him to conceptualise a future that previously felt out of reach. His enthusiasm was evident in his response: "I'm excited to see it" (Muhammad, p.2), alongside a newfound sense of belief and determination: "Yeah, it is possible [...] Yes, there's no doubt now" (Muhammad, p.3). The pride he took in the visual representation of his journey suggests that the image not only reflected his goals, but also captured something meaningful about his identity and potential.

4.3.3 Stepping into the Future

Figure 8

GET 3 Stepping into the Future.

3. Stepping into the Future

MOTIVATION AND PERSONAL GROWTH.

COMMITMENT AND FUTURE OUTLOOK.

The PATH acted as a facilitator for motivation and self-improvement, encouraging participants to reflect on their lives and move forward with their dreams. Yuri described the PATH as a much-needed push to take action and overcome a sense of stuckness: "This is kind of a push for people to like get... up" (Yuri, p.6). She found the process inspiring, offering clarity on her ambitions and motivating her to take steps toward her goals: "from what I'm feeling, I'm very like, now I actually want to do something. I would not mind looking at this and every day. I might even add things to it" (Yuri, p.10). This externalisation of her dreams provided her with a clear plan and reignited her sense of purpose, as she shared, "I feel inspired [...] it gives me a clear set of what I want to do" (Yuri, p.2).

For Yuri, the PATH also offered an opportunity to think about her personal traits and consider areas for growth. She shared that completing the PATH allowed her to see herself "from an outside perspective [which is] really good for learning like maturing about who you

are, like being able to tell yourself that you're lazy and actually write that down" (Yuri, p.5). This self-reflection encouraged her to identify potential changes she could make in a safe, non-judgemental space.

Sabina expressed confidence in her ability to follow through with most of the steps outlined in her PATH, stating that she was "more than likely" to complete "a good fair few" of them (Sabina, p.7). The process of having her dreams in front of her motivated her to apply the steps to her life. She explained that "when it's all being drawed in front of you and like I don't know just speaking about it makes you like actually want to like do stuff, like apply it to your, to your life I guess" (Sabina, p.3).
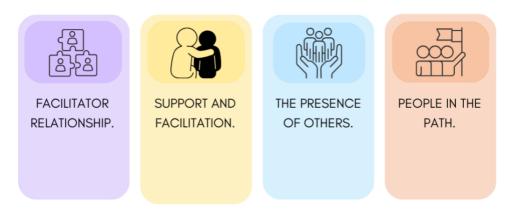
By integrating reflection and structured action planning, the PATH process helped the young people envision their futures in an optimistic and motivating way. The intervention provided a safe, non-judgmental space for self-reflection, allowing participants to critically assess their strengths and areas for growth while fostering a sense of agency in working toward their aspirations.

4.3.4 The Influence of Others

Figure 9

GET 4 The Influence of Others.

4. The Influence of Others

FACILITATOR RELATIONSHIP.   SUPPORT AND FACILITATION.   THE PRESENCE OF OTHERS.   PEOPLE IN THE PATH.

A recurring theme among participants was the feeling of being seen and heard by the facilitators. Yuri highlighted how the facilitators' active listening made her feel valued, as they helped translate her ideas into a clear plan through words and pictures: "it felt more like you genuinely wanted to hear what my dream was [...] you helped me put it down into like words and everything" (Yuri, p.9). The emphasis on the facilitators' genuine engagement underscores the importance of feeling heard for this group of young people. Yuri also described the facilitators as warm and welcoming, appreciating how their energy and behaviours, such as offering snacks, created an inviting atmosphere: "I think I was pretty welcomed. You guys were like, snacks, join in, let's have a chat, so it had nice vibes, good energy" (Yuri, p.1).

This sentiment was echoed by Muhammad, who valued the facilitators' friendly and approachable nature: "I'm comfortable with you friendly guys, you know" (Muhammad, p.8). He also reflected on how the facilitators' efforts to connect with him validated his thoughts and feelings, enhancing the overall experience: "you're kind of like helping people, making some confirmation on it and talking, and you're kind of like trying your best to interact with the person. I love that" (Muhammad, p.9).

Muhammad's reflections highlight the relational aspects of the PATH, emphasising the importance of authentic interactions with the facilitators. His appreciation for the facilitators' efforts suggests that not all past interactions may have felt as sincere, raising questions about the impact of previous engagements. The phrase "trying your best to interact" (Muhammad, p.9) implies some past interactions may have lacked sincerity. This raises the question of what happens when facilitators fail to engage with the same level of authenticity. If being "genuinely" heard is transformative, then the absence of this could reinforce previous feelings of disappointment.

Sabina, though more reserved, also acknowledged feeling listened to and respected throughout the process, simply responding "yeah" when asked if she felt heard.

Participants also appreciated the two-facilitator approach. Yuri found it created a more open, dynamic space for interaction. She appreciated how the presence of a third person alleviated any potential awkwardness, making the experience feel more natural and engaging:

I think it was it was good; it feels like a bigger room [...] when you meet somebody else, and it's just two people, it might get awkward, but then if there's a third person, they can break the awkwardness [...] there's more opinions, so there's more things to talk about. (Yuri, p.8)

Sabina also found the two-facilitator approach effective, emphasising how it allowed the PATH to flow smoothly. With one facilitator focused on conversation and the other on drawing, the process felt more structured and efficient: "it was quicker to get across [...] like she's drawing and you're speaking, and she's speaking as well. It just makes it easier" (Sabina, p.6).

For Connor, this dual dynamic stood out as key to maintaining momentum and engagement. He noted how it would have been more time-consuming with just one facilitator managing everything: "Probably two makes sense [...] you're trying to speak and get ideas from me, whereas someone's actually writing it down [...] it's just more efficient with two" (Connor, p.6).

While participants shared the benefits of having facilitators to foster their thinking, their views on the inclusion of additional people in the PATH process varied. For Muhammad, the facilitators were the only people he wanted in the room and saw having

others present as more of a practicality rather than a collaborative benefit. He explained that including friends or a key worker, might not always be beneficial, sharing *"to add a friend, to add a key worker [...] it requires your situation. For example, if I don't speak English [...] maybe I'd require someone, but if I'm speaking good English, there's no need"* (Muhammad, p.7). Muhammad also emphasised the importance of serious, worthwhile contributions during the PATH and was wary of friends who might not take the process seriously, sharing "some of them will come with some silly ideas [...] when it comes to serious, you cannot bring some friends, because this is like realistic" (Muhammad, p.7).

Connor similarly preferred a smaller, more intimate setting, explaining "if it's a lot more people [...] it's probably going to look more like, oh, it's a clinical research type of thing" (Connor, p.5). For Connor it felt like a larger group would make the process feel overly formal and less personal. He also expressed hesitancy about sharing plans with too many people, fearing that doing so might reduce his motivation: "if I told too many people my plan [...] I feel like I'm less likely to do it" (Connor, p.6).
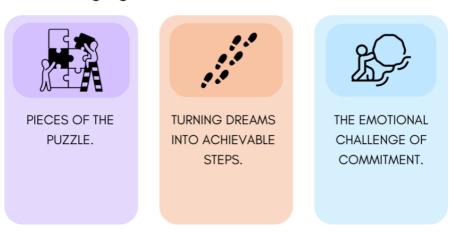
Yuri liked the possibility of involving others in her process, specifically appreciating the flexibility in choosing who participated, explaining "it's good that you give people options like that... some people can find meeting new people very nervous, you know, so it's a good way to think" (Yuri, p.8). Here, Yuri explained that having others with you might support your relationship with the facilitator, making the experience feel less intimidating. Although Yuri expressed a positive view on having others in the room, she did not bring anyone to the PATH, stating: "this was on me" (Yuri, p.8).

4.3.5 Bridging the Abstract with the Practical

Figure 10

GET 5 Practicality vs Abstract Thinking.

5. Bridging the Abstract with the Practical

PIECES OF THE PUZZLE.

TURNING DREAMS INTO ACHIEVABLE STEPS.

THE EMOTIONAL CHALLENGE OF COMMITMENT.

The PATH served as a bridge between abstract dreams and practical actions, helping participants navigate the tension between envisioning a future and creating the steps required to achieve it. For Yuri, the structured breakdown of the PATH ensured that her ambitions remained grounded in reality. She valued how each section contributed to the whole, offering guidance and motivation at different points in her journey: "I would take the whole PATH with me yeah [...] I think on each section there's a little thing" (Yuri, p.4).

Yuri's experience was similar to Muhammad's, who found comfort in seeing his aspirations organised into smaller, actionable steps: "But now I can see they're kind of organised, kind of like different PATHs, so I can follow each one of them in their own time" (Muhammad, p.10). By structuring his dreams into clear, progressive steps, Muhammad found reassurance that his ambitions were not only valid but also achievable. Moreover, the

structured nature of the PATH made his dreams feel almost pre-accomplished: "I feel like everything is already achieved" (Muhammad, p.3).

Connor, however, experienced a duality between aspiration and execution. While he saw value in the structured nature of the PATH, his commitment depended on routine: "if I get like the routine done, then it's like, everything else would definitely work" (Connor, p.7). The abstract nature of his dreams made it challenging for Connor to stay focused on what he had to do, increasing the possibility of him not completing the steps of his PATH. This struggle highlights the emotional challenge of commitment and the difficulty in transitioning from imagining a goal to consistently executing the steps required to achieve it. Unlike Muhammad and Yuri, who found motivation in the PATH's step-by-step structure, Connor saw the necessary actions as a reality check: "having a list of everything you need to do kind of puts it more into perspective like damn you know you have a lot to do" (Connor, p.3).

For this group of HYP, the PATH functioned as both a motivational tool and a reality check. The participants' varied responses highlight the importance of individual agency in interpreting and engaging with structured planning processes. While the PATH provided a framework for achieving goals, its effectiveness was shaped by each participant's ability to engage with it emotionally and practically, revealing the deeply personal nature of navigating one's future.

4.3.6 Parts Create the Whole

Figure 11

GET 6 Parts Create the Whole.

The PATH process is divided into distinct sections, each contributing uniquely to the overall experience. Participants reflected on the individual elements, considering what was straightforward, what posed challenges, and how each part added to their journey.

A central strength of the PATH was its ability to break participants' dreams into manageable, actionable steps, shifting focus from an abstract goal to a structured plan. Yuri appreciated how each section held significance, remarking:

> I think on each section there's a little thing, there's something that you can learn,
>
> > there's something that you can remember, there's something that can give you
>
> like that sort of, I want to do this, let me follow this. (Yuri, p.4)

However, while the structure provided clarity, the difficulty of engaging in different stages varied between participants. The 'Dream' section was seen as the easiest to complete

by most participants, with Yuri explaining, "The dream obviously, I already know what I wanted to do" (Yuri, p.3) and Muhammad sharing: "the only thing I can see every day, sooner or sooner, is the future and the now" (Muhammad, p.4). In contrast, the 'Actions' section proved the most challenging for many. Sabina noted, "the most difficult would probably be the actions" (Sabina, p.3), while Yuri emphasised the struggle of thinking through the necessary steps, reflecting, "actions... actually thinking of what you wanna do towards... we never think of the bad aspects" (Yuri, p.4).

Connor spoke to the structural difficulties within the PATH. He found the nonlinear structure confusing, suggesting, "maybe like having more of a like, I guess like the way it's drawn right out isn't really that straight it's like dream to one year and then it skips all the way to now" (Connor, p.5). He also felt the transitions between sections could be improved: "Yeah, so like kind of like flow, like, I feel like that, though, would make it better" (Connor, p.5). Additionally, he pointed out overlap between sections, sharing, "some of them kind of like interlinked, like staying strong and actions kind of like similar in my opinion" (Connor, p.2).

Despite these structural concerns, the PATH was generally regarded as a meaningful and comprehensive process. Yuri underscored its holistic nature, noting that she would take the entire PATH with her because "on each section there's a little thing" (Yuri, p.4), and Connor shared that although the actions were the hardest to think about, they "also help show you how you could work on it, how you can actually fix it, so that's pretty useful" (Connor, p.3).

Ultimately, while some sections were easier to engage with than others, the participants explained that each section contributed to the overall process. Despite the individual differences in how the sections were experienced, the PATH functioned as both a

reflective and practical tool, offering a framework that participants could engage with on their own terms.

4.4 Deeper Interpretation

Smith et al. (2022) suggest a deeper level of interpretation, completing an even more detailed micro-analysis of the data that connects back to the whole interview and group experiences, providing a more sophisticated level of analysis. Two areas stood out in the interviews. The first was the difference observed in how participants conveyed their experiences and thoughts during the PATH process compared to the interview. Notably, they appeared to find it easier to express themselves throughout the PATH process compared to the interviews. The second was the construct of time being apparent throughout the process. Both of these areas are explored in more detail below.

4.4.1 The PATH as a facilitative tool

Each participant spent between one and two hours completing their PATHs. During this time, the young people built a relationship with the facilitators that felt comfortable and genuine. By the end of the intervention, the atmosphere felt relaxed, with participants eating the provided snacks, laughing, and using more informal language and social cues.

Interestingly, however, once the interviews began, two out of the four participants reverted to their initial demeanour. A possible explanation for this shift lies in the nature of the PATH. While engaging in the PATH, participants had a visual framework to focus on, additional time to articulate their thoughts, and a sense that the attention was not solely on them, thereby reducing pressure. The structure of the PATH may have facilitated deeper conversation by offering a dynamic, non-linear, and visually engaging medium, as opposed to the direct and structured nature of an interview. By interacting with various sections,

participants were encouraged to expand on their thoughts naturally rather than feeling as though they were being interrogated. Furthermore, the presence of elements such as colours, drawings, and structured steps likely created a less intimidating environment, fostering deeper self-reflection and openness.

The contrast between the PATH and the interviews highlights the role of facilitative tools in shaping engagement and self-expression. The PATH provided participants with a sense of agency, allowing them to navigate their thoughts and aspirations in a less rigid manner. The collaborative nature of the process, supported by visual and interactive elements, may have contributed to a heightened sense of ownership over their narratives. Conversely, the shift in demeanour during the interviews suggests that when this facilitative structure was removed, participants may have felt a return to their usual guardedness, possibly due to previous experiences with formal assessments or a lack of familiarity with open-ended dialogue.

Additionally, the PATH may have functioned as a unique mechanism for emotional processing, offering a more accessible means of articulating complex thoughts and emotions. The visual and interactive elements may have acted as cognitive scaffolding, helping participants externalise their inner experiences in a way that felt more comfortable. The transition from a facilitated, co-constructed environment to a more traditional interview setting may have removed these supportive structures, resulting in a return to previous patterns of engagement.

This deeper interpretation underscores the significance of the PATH as a tool that not only aids in goal-setting but also provides a psychologically safe space for participants to engage more fully in self-exploration. It allows for a more profound exploration of personal

aspirations and challenges that might not surface in conventional assessment or interview contexts.

4.4.2 Time

Time emerged as a significant theme in three out of the four interviews conducted. Participants' experiences of time appeared deeply embedded in their personal and contextual narratives. Notably, three out of four participants arrived late to their scheduled meetings. Both Connor and Sabina arrived 30 minutes late, while Yuri requested to postpone her meeting by four hours as she did not feel ready to attend at the time organised.

The participants' delayed arrivals raised questions about their previous experiences with time and whether these were connected to broader themes of instability, disrupted routines, or challenges with planning. Their past interactions with structured services may have influenced their expectations and attitudes toward scheduled sessions. This raised further questions about how HYP construct meaning around time and whether their delayed arrivals reflected disengagement, ambivalence, or prior experiences with assessments that felt impersonal or irrelevant.

Time was explicitly discussed by Yuri, Connor, and Sabina within their interviews, further demonstrating its presence. Connor highlighted the role of facilitators in managing time efficiently. He stated:

Two makes sense [as having] one I feel like it would be much longer and like take like because like with you, you were asking my ideas and stuff, right? Whereas if you were writing it down as well, it would slow you down so then I would need to slow down as well, so yeah, I think it's just more efficient with two. (Connor, p.6)

His interpretation of the process being "already quite long" (Connor, p.6) suggests that the duration was a critical factor in his engagement. Sabina had similar views, appreciating the efficiency of two facilitators, stating that it helped to "get it done quicker" (Sabina, p.2). For both Connor and Sabina, time was something to be managed and minimised, reflecting an underlying need for the PATH to feel useful and possibly a discomfort with prolonged introspection. Connor's frequent checking of his phone and reference to post-meeting plans further indicated an underlying tension with time, potentially revealing his struggle with engaging in the reflective aspect of the PATH.

In contrast, Yuri's perception of time within the PATH was more positive. She described the session as engaging, stating "it was not boring [as] I am a person who likes talking about herself, so this is a very great time to just like talk about yourself" (Yuri, p.3).

For Yuri, the PATH provided a structured opportunity for self-reflection, with dedicated time and attention focused on her experiences and future aspirations. Her perception of time as a valuable and affirming experience contrasts with Connor and Sabina's more transactional approach, illustrating the complex and individualised ways in which time was experienced.

Given the prominence of time throughout the PATH, it is noteworthy that the interviews were significantly shorter than initially anticipated. While they were expected to last approximately half an hour, based on discussions with the psychology team at Centrepoint, the average duration was 12 minutes 30 seconds, ranging from 10 minutes to 14 minutes. This discrepancy may suggest that for these young people, time is not merely a logistical concern but a deeply embedded experiential construct that influences their engagement. The contrast between their perceptions of the PATH and the interviews

highlights how time may be constructed differently depending on the perceived meaning and purpose of the interaction.

4.5 Summary of Findings

The PATH intervention showed a strong ability to inspire motivation, support personal growth, and help participants rethink how they see themselves and what's possible for their future. By encouraging reflection, creativity, and collaborative action with facilitators, the PATH gave participants the chance to take a step back and look critically at their lives in a safe, non-judgmental space.

One theme that came through clearly was the impact of the creative and visual elements of PATH. Drawings, colourful visuals, and collaborative conversations helped participants connect emotionally with their goals. Sabina spoke about how seeing her dreams "drawn in front of her" made them feel more real and achievable. Muhammad described the experience as "mind-blowing", deeming it one of the most positive professional interactions he'd ever had. These creative elements made the process more engaging and enjoyable, helping participants feel more empowered and invested, especially in comparison to other interventions they had experienced.

The PATH also played an important role in breaking big, sometimes overwhelming aspirations into smaller, manageable steps. This shift helped participants feel more optimistic and capable. Muhammad went from seeing his goals as unreachable to feeling confident and clear about how to achieve them. Sabina also felt she could complete many of the steps outlined in her PATH, and Yuri found the process motivating and flexible, expressing a desire to return to it and continue shaping her future plans. The structure of the PATH, with its focus on practical steps and future thinking, gave most participants a clearer way to move forward with confidence. However, Connor found this future thinking quite overwhelming

and although he could see his future more clearly, this did not negate the slight worry he now felt.

Overall, these findings show that the PATH's mix of creativity, emotional connection, and structured planning had a strong and positive impact on participants. It created a supportive space for self-reflection and meaningful conversation, helping the young people clarify their goals and feel more in control of achieving them. By combining visual tools with a clear planning process, the PATH encouraged participants to imagine their futures in a way that felt both hopeful and realistic. Moreover, the emotional engagement that came from this process played a big part in deepening participants' connection to their goals and strengthening their sense of agency.

5. Discussion

5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the research findings in relation to existing literature, psychological theory, and the overarching research question. In keeping with the idiographic nature of IPA, the aim is not to generate broad generalisations but to explore the deeper meaning and potential transferability of participants' lived experiences (Smith et al., 2022). The implications of these findings for EP's and other professionals are discussed. The chapter then considers the study's limitations, provides recommendations for future research, and outlines plans for disseminating the findings. Finally, the researcher offers personal reflections on the research process.

5.2 Commentary on Findings

The study aimed to explore homeless young people's experiences of The Planning Alternatives Tomorrow with Hope (PATH). The research question was:

"What are homeless young people's experiences of 'Planning Alternatives Tomorrow with Hope' (PATH)?"

This question will be answered by using each of the six GETs that were identified from the analysis of the four participants' interview data. These will be discussed in turn, in the same order as within the 'Findings' chapter. Throughout the discussion, the researcher has located the findings in the context of existing knowledge discussed in the 'Literature Review'. The researcher included additional relevant literature, by drawing on her existing knowledge of psychological theories and frameworks, through snowballing from the research articles in the literature review and selective searches of relevant research.

It is important to acknowledge that much of the historical literature on HYP has framed the challenges they face as 'within' the individual. Over time, research has increasingly recognised the role of systemic factors in shaping these difficulties. The present study adopts a perspective that considers HYP's circumstances as the result of multiple interacting contextual influences, both internal and external to the individual. Given that the PATH in this piece of research aimed to support HYP in re-engaging with EET, its evaluation may inherently take on an individualistic focus. However, this intervention represents only one aspect of a broader support system, and the researcher does not seek to overlook the significant systemic challenges faced by this group. Therefore, this section will integrate reflections on systemic factors alongside participants' individual perspectives and experiences.

5.3 Exploration of GETs and Deeper Interpretation

5.3.1 The Power of Imagery

Consistent with previous research (Bristow, 2013; Rimmer et al., 2011; Wood et al., 2019), all participants responded positively to the visual elements of the PATH process. The use of graphics was particularly valued, with participants noting that this approach made their dreams and aspirations feel clearer and more real. Yuri specifically highlighted the use of colour as something that enhanced the overall experience. The multisensory engagement with colourful imagery contributed to a sense of excitement and personalisation for all participants.

These findings align with principles of person-centred psychology (Rogers, 1951), which emphasise the importance of environments that promote self-expression, authenticity, and emotional validation. The creative and collaborative nature of the PATH process appears

to support these conditions by enabling participants to externalise their thoughts and emotions in ways that feel engaging and attuned to their individual communication styles.

The visual format also played a key role in improving accessibility. Several participants expressed appreciation for having their spoken ideas translated into images, which supported both emotional expression and cognitive processing. This supports findings by Pescod (2024), who notes that many HYP, particularly those newly arrived in the UK, require language support before they can effectively access education. Without such support, traditional planning approaches that rely heavily on written or verbal communication may feel inaccessible, overwhelming, or disengaging.

This emphasis on visual communication aligns with wider efforts to promote inclusive practices for young people with diverse learning and communication needs. Research from the National Council for Special Education (NCSE, 2020) highlights that many young people benefit from visual scaffolding, particularly when language presents a barrier. They note several advantages to using visual supports, including reduced anxiety, increased processing time, ease of transferability, and the permanence of visual cues. For HYP, these features are especially important, given the prevalence of disrupted education, neurodiversity, and other barriers that may render traditional, text-based planning approaches alienating or inaccessible (Pescod & Gander, 2024).

These practices are supported by the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework (CAST, 2018), which advocates for proactively addressing learner variability by offering multiple means of representation. Through its visual and collaborative nature, the PATH process contributed to a more equitable communicative space, enabling participants to see their ideas come to life without the pressure to conform to rigid or unfamiliar formats. In

doing so, it not only enhanced accessibility but also reinforced participants' sense of inclusion and personal value.

Through this increased accessibility, participants' sense of agency and control over their lives appeared to grow. Importantly, the act of seeing their thoughts and aspirations represented visually reinforced the message that their voices were being heard and valued, something that is often absent from professional interactions with young people (Moore & McArthur, 2011). As Hayes (2004) argues, when young people see their perspectives reflected visually, it can serve as a powerful form of recognition, strengthening trust and supporting the development of more meaningful relationships with professionals.

5.3.2 "This PATH is Me"

Participants described the PATH process as authentic and open. They valued the opportunity to develop a vision that remained true to their own goals, expressing concerns that too many external voices might dilute the personal nature of their plans. This emphasis on maintaining something true to them reinforces the person-centred nature of the PATH which prioritises a non-judgemental, accepting environment as the foundation for meaningful self-expression and goal setting.

The psychological foundations of person-centred work lie in Carl Rogers' (1951) humanistic theory, which asserts that individuals possess an innate capacity for growth when supported by the right relational conditions. Three core principles underpin this theory: unconditional positive regard, empathy, and congruence. Within this research context, unconditional positive regard was embedded through an affirming and non-judgemental stance, ensuring that participants felt valued regardless of the challenges they disclosed. Empathy was demonstrated through active listening and attunement to participants' emotional and verbal cues, allowing the facilitator to understand and reflect their perspectives with

sensitivity. Congruence was maintained by approaching interactions with authenticity and transparency, which modelled trustworthiness and helped foster honest dialogue. Collectively, these conditions supported a psychologically safe space where participants felt empowered to share their experiences and engage meaningfully with the process.

Personal ownership over their PATHs also emerged as a central theme. Participants stressed the importance of having control over their goals, noting that this autonomy made the process feel more relevant and meaningful. Not only did participants stress the importance of their goals being self-directed but Sabina feared that having anyone else in her PATH would negatively impact her ability to share her aspirations, suggesting an underlying fear of losing control over her narrative. Her words reveal a deeply felt need for agency, where ownership over decisions becomes not just a preference but a crucial part of self-identity. This reflects a broader tension often experienced by HYP, who must navigate the need for support while protecting their independence (Aviles de Bradley, 2011; Samarah et al., 2023). For the participants in this study, this fight for autonomy may underscore the emotional weight attached to making independent choices, representing an opportunity to reclaim some control over their lives. The balance between external guidance and self-determination is therefore central to their experiences, shaping how they engaged with the process and ultimately how they envisioned their future.

This emphasis on personal ownership aligns closely with Empowerment Theory (Zimmerman, 1995) which describes empowerment as a process through which individuals gain control over their lives and actively engage in shaping their futures. For HYP, the opportunity to take ownership of a process like the PATH may represent more than just goal-setting, it may serve as a practical act of reclaiming agency. Sabina's desire to protect her PATH from external influence, for example, can be seen as a response to previous

experiences where control was taken from her, and decisions were made on her behalf. In this context, the visual plan becomes a manifestation of identity, something that is wholly hers, shaped by her voice, and reflective of her hopes. Empowerment Theory highlights that such experiences are not just meaningful in the moment, but can also contribute to longer-term psychological resilience, motivation, and a redefined sense of self-efficacy (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). Thus, ownership over the PATH process may have acted as a vital step toward restoring a sense of control in the participants' lives and futures.

This sense of ownership was further reinforced by the ability to take the PATHs home, a detail that held meaning for participants. Being able to physically keep their PATH served as a reminder that the process was theirs alone: created by them, reflective of their voice, and representative of their goals. For Muhammad, displaying his PATH on the wall was more than decorative, it offered an ongoing sense of motivation and reassurance, a visual anchor he could return to when needing clarity or encouragement. This ability to revisit the plan reinforced the idea that his future was something he could actively shape. As echoed in previous research, the visual outcome of the PATH can foster a lasting sense of clarity, pride, and personal accountability (Bristow, 2013; Morgan, 2016). For participants in this study, the physical PATH appeared to symbolise something deeply personal, proof that their aspirations were valid, visible, and most importantly, their own.

5.3.3 Stepping into the Future
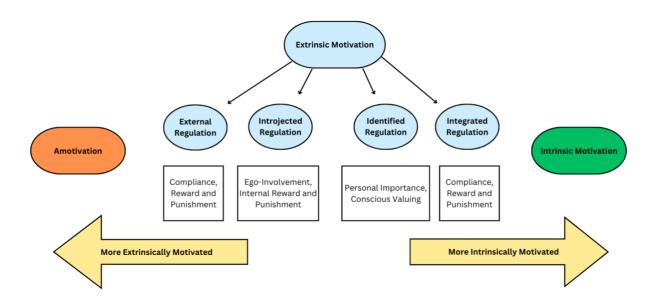
Participants described how the PATH process supported their motivation toward a more hopeful future by offering clarity around their dreams, contextualising their current circumstances, and helping them identify actionable next steps. The literature has shared that many HYP experience psychological barriers to motivation, such as feelings of helplessness and disengagement (Bowers & O'Neil, 2019; Pescod, 2020). In this context, the PATH may

act as a facilitator, helping to shift participants from a state of amotivation towards increased engagement with their future goals.

This shift can be understood through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Figure 12), which explores the conditions that foster both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). According to SDT, intrinsic motivation, the drive to act based on interest or enjoyment, is innate and essential for psychological growth and wellbeing. However, motivation exists along a continuum, ranging from amotivation (a complete lack of intention to act), through varying forms of extrinsic motivation, to fully intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Figure 12

The Self-Determination Continuum

Note. Based on Deci and Ryan (2000).

Within extrinsic motivation, SDT identifies four subtypes: external regulation (driven by rewards or punishment), introjected regulation (driven by internal pressures such as guilt), identified regulation (where the person recognises the value of the activity), and integrated

regulation (where the activity aligns with one's sense of self). Initially, all participants appeared to demonstrate externally regulated motivation, engaging in the PATH largely due to encouragement from the facilitator or trusted adults at Centrepoint. However, as the process unfolded, participants began to exhibit signs of more internalised motivation, developing a stronger personal connection to their goals. This mirrors findings that structured, supportive interventions can enhance feelings of autonomy and competence, two key components of intrinsic motivation, thereby fostering sustained engagement and self-directed growth (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

When thinking about motivation, Yuri specifically described the PATH as a "push for people" (Yuri) to think about and move toward their futures. This notion of a "push" is called for in Pescod and Gander's (2024) recent research into HYP's engagement in EET. They argue that participation in EET is rarely a matter of individual choice alone but is shaped by a complex interplay of systemic influences that can significantly affect a young person's motivational stance. To conceptualise this, the researchers used Tony Ryle's phrase "push where it moves" a key principle that suggests practitioners should focus their therapeutic efforts in areas where their patients show potential for change or movement rather than pushing against those areas where there is rigidity or resistance (Ryle & Kerr, 2001). It may be that the person-centred nature of the PATH enables participants to share where they want and need support, highlighting where this "push" could occur. In this way, the PATH may function both as the "push" articulated by Yuri to support her newfound internalised motivation, and as the responsive, motivational "push" called for by Ryle and the literature. When considering what this "push" might look like for HYP, it is important to recognise the nuanced and individual nature of their trajectories. This underscores the need for Educational Psychologists and other professionals to identify and support multiple, individual "pushes" rather than relying on a single, uniform approach. For this population, progression may be

better conceptualised as emerging through small, well-timed movements aligned with each young person's readiness for change.

5.3.4 The Influence of Others

Participants consistently reflected on the role of interpersonal dynamics in shaping their experience of the PATH process. In particular, they emphasised the significance of their relationship with the facilitators and the implications of having others involved or not involved in the session.

The facilitators' warm, welcoming approach was repeatedly highlighted as a key factor in creating a positive experience. Small acts of offering snacks, using humour, and maintaining a non-judgemental demeanour, contributed to a sense of ease and belonging for the participants. As Yuri described, these actions made her feel "genuinely welcomed" (Yuri). Given that many HYP frequently report encounters with professionals who hold negative assumptions or low expectations (Begg et al., 2017; Ferguson & Francis, 2024; Moore & McArthur, 2011), participants' reflections that the facilitators were emotionally supportive highlights a strength of this tool.

The structure of facilitation itself also contributed to a comfortable dynamic. Participants spoke positively about the presence of two facilitators, noting that this helped to ease tension and fostered a more relaxed, collaborative atmosphere. This dual facilitation model may have subtly addressed and reduced the inherent power imbalance between adults and young people (Bristow, 2013).

Visible identity markers of the facilitators also shaped participants' sense of comfort and openness. One facilitator identified as White British and the other as Greek, a dynamic that participants shared aided feelings of cultural inclusivity. This sense of inclusivity appeared to create a safe space where young people felt more able to explore and express

their own identities, particularly in relation to how it felt to move to the UK or to London as well as their individual culture and ethnicity. Age proximity further contributed to this sense of psychological safety. Both facilitators were in their twenties, which participants noted made them feel more understood and less fearful of judgment. As noted in the researcher's reflexive diary (Appendix N), one young person shared how refreshing it felt to talk about their aspiration of becoming a TikTok influencer without being dismissed or met with scepticism. They commented on the absence of the typical 'eye-roll' response from adults who might not view this as a valid career goal.

This young person's comments demonstrated how relatability fostered a mutual understanding rooted in cultural fluency and generational awareness. For HYP, who frequently report feeling excluded or misunderstood (Evolve, 2018; Jones et al., 2018), the ability to engage with professionals who understand and respect their worldview can serve as a powerful foundation for trust.

The role of shared identity in building these relationships is supported by existing research. Gupton (2017) found that identity alignment between professionals and young people was a key factor in the success of mentoring relationships. One participant in Gupton's (2017) study initially struggled with a mentor who did not share visible similarities but later flourished when paired with someone who did. This speaks to the concept of mirroring within systemic theory, which suggests that individuals feel validated when they see aspects of their identity reflected in others (Burnham, 1993). Within the PATH process, such mirroring likely contributed to the sense of affirmation and inclusion that participants described.

Although the PATH is designed to be a collaborative experience involving people from the young person's support network, none of the participants in this study chose to invite

others. Some appreciated having the option but doubted whether those they could invite would take the process seriously. Others felt that the presence of additional people might hinder their ability to focus or feel motivated.
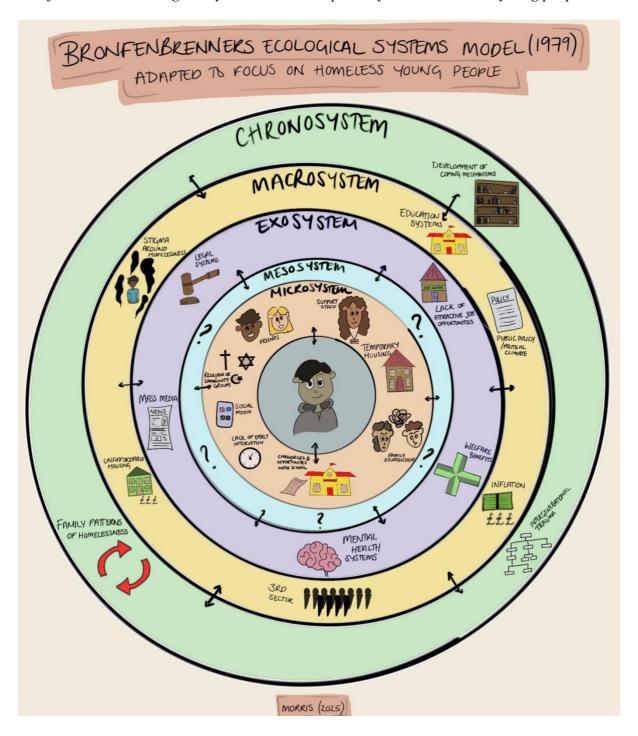
From an attachment theory perspective, this reluctance to involve others may reflect deeper relational patterns shaped by past experiences. Attachment theory, developed by Bowlby (1969), posits that early relationships with caregivers shape an individual's expectations of others and their ability to form secure connections. He argued that secure attachments develop through consistent caregiving, enabling individuals to view others as trustworthy. In the absence of such care, defensive or avoidant relational patterns can form, and a negative internal working model may develop, leading individuals to adopt self-reliant strategies as a form of protection (Bowlby, 1973). This suggests that the choice to complete the PATH alone may not reflect a preference for independence, but rather a self-protective strategy aimed at avoiding further rejection, an idea frequently supported in the literature for this population (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2024; Sochos et al., 2023).

Due to these relational inconsistencies, some participants spoke about feeling alone, noting that others would not understand them or their experiences. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory offers a useful lens to explore these dynamics more holistically. For most young people, the microsystem, consisting of stable environments such as home and school, provides the foundation for emotional development. For HYP, however, these systems are often fractured. Disruptions in the microsystem can affect relational trust, while weak connections between systems at the mesosystem level (e.g., between home and school) may further enhance feelings of instability. At the exosystem level, barriers such as limited access to housing, healthcare, or employment deepen their marginalisation. Finally, the

macrosystem, societal attitudes, cultural narratives, and policies, can reinforce cycles of

exclusion. See Figure 13 for a visual graphic of this information.

Figure 13

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Model adapted to focus on homeless young people.

Note. Based on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Model (1979)

Where HYP's ecosystems differ from those of their housed peers, these differences create significant barriers to the development of secure attachments, emotional regulation, and long-term goal-setting. As such, the absence of stable, trusting relationships across ecological layers helps explain why participants may have felt hesitant to involve others in the PATH process, relying instead on self-protection and autonomy to navigate their world.

5.3.5 Bridging the Abstract with the Practical

The findings from this study underscore the role of the PATH as a structured planning tool that enabled participants to explore their aspirations and commit to practical steps toward achieving them. Participants' experiences revealed the dual function of the PATH, as both a motivational framework and a structured method for maintaining focus on long-term goals. While its structured nature was vital in translating aspirations into actionable steps, its overall effectiveness was mediated by individual motivation, emotional readiness, and broader systemic barriers.

For most participants, the sequential breakdown of goals within the PATH provided a sense of structure that made their dreams feel more attainable. They appreciated the clarity offered by small, manageable steps, which supported motivation and provided guidance throughout their journeys. These findings align with existing literature that highlights the value of structured goal-setting in fostering self-efficacy and motivation (Edwards, 2023; Pavlakis & Pryor, 2021). By transforming participants' aspirations into a step-by-step process, the PATH offered a psychological mechanism for nurturing hope.

However, the structured approach was experienced differently by Connor, finding the breakdown of actions overwhelming. For him, the structured nature of the tool served as both a helpful reality check and a source of emotional strain, as it revealed the gap between his current situation and his aspirations. This emotional response can be understood through

Weiner's Attribution Theory (Weiner, 1972, 1985), which explores how individuals explain success and failure, and how these explanations affect motivation. According to the model, people tend to attribute outcomes to dimensions such as locus of control (internal vs. external), stability (stable vs. unstable), and controllability. In Connor's case, the recognition of multiple challenges ahead may have prompted internal attributions, seeing the difficulty of achieving his goals as a reflection of personal inadequacy, or external attributions, where systemic barriers felt immovable. Both interpretations can diminish motivation if the young person begins to view success as unlikely or out of their control. The experience of mapping out the future in such detail may have unintentionally intensified a sense of helplessness, particularly if the goals created felt distant or unattainable. This highlights the importance of pacing, emotional support, and validating setbacks within structured planning tools, especially when used with young people navigating complex life circumstances.

In addition to individual responses, broader systemic challenges emerged as significant influences on participants' capacity to act on their goals. Two of the four participants specifically discussed how structural barriers limited their ability to follow through with aspects of their PATH plans. Reflections captured in the researcher's diary (Appendix N) highlighted how these young people aspired to secure full-time employment and live independently. However, they explained that pursuing full-time work would result in a significant increase in their rent, rendering their current supported accommodation unaffordable. Consequently, they were faced with the difficult choice of either limiting themselves to part-time work or remaining unemployed – neither of which aligned with the long-term aspirations they had mapped out during the PATH process.

This reflection highlights a phenomenon commonly referred to as the 'welfare trap', a position in which engagement with employment leads to a loss of benefits for people that

ultimately makes work financially unsustainable (Barrett & Carter, 2013). Research has identified this as a recurring issue for HYP in supported accommodation (Pescod & Gander, 2024). Typically, these young people enter hostel settings with housing benefit support. Once they begin to settle and seek paid employment, they face significant rent increases as benefits are withdrawn. This systemic disincentive can deter HYP from entering the workforce, as they are unable to save, may incur debt, and risk further instability (Pescod & Gander, 2024). In addition, reductions in welfare may limit access to food banks, free prescriptions, and other critical services.

Such systemic instability increases vulnerability and adds layers of complexity to the process of achieving life goals. Within the context of this research, these challenges often constrained participants' capacity to implement their PATH actions, as they remained preoccupied with navigating financial insecurity and housing uncertainty.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) provides a valuable theoretical lens for understanding these dynamics. According to Maslow, individuals must satisfy their foundational physiological and safety needs, such as access to food, shelter, and financial stability, before engaging with higher-order pursuits like self-development and personal fulfilment. The findings of this study illustrate how systemic barriers often prevent HYP from moving beyond these foundational needs. The 'welfare trap' can keep them in a cycle of survival, limiting their ability to focus on growth-oriented goals and making self-actualisation an unattainable ideal. For this population, personal development remains largely out of reach, not because of a lack of desire, but because of persistent structural obstacles that prevent progression beyond immediate needs.

5.3.6 Parts Create the Whole

The PATH is typically structured around a sequence of sections designed to guide individuals from the sharing of their dreams to the development of actions to achieve their goals. Participants valued this structure, noting that it allowed them to articulate their dreams before stepping back to consider how they might organise and motivate themselves to realise those goals.

However, engagement with the various sections of the PATH differed among participants. Echoing findings in the literature, the 'Dream' section was widely regarded as the most enjoyable and accessible part of the process (Bristow, 2013; Wood et al., 2019). Yuri noted that she found this section easy because she had already spent time reflecting on her aspirations, while Muhammad explained that he thought about his future every day. In contrast, the 'Actions' section emerged as the most challenging. Participants expressed difficulty in thinking through the concrete steps required to realise their goals, particularly when doing so involved confronting the more complex or painful aspects of their journey.

This disparity in engagement reflects broader findings in research on homelessness and young people's participation in EET. Studies have shown that HYP often struggle to conceptualise futures beyond their immediate survival needs (Maslow, 1943; Pescod, 2024). Consistent with this, participants in this study were more comfortable engaging with the present-focused and aspirational elements of the PATH, while the shift to goal-oriented planning posed greater challenges.

Snyder's Hope Theory (1991) provides a valuable framework for interpreting these experiences. Within this theory, hope is conceptualised as a dynamic cognitive motivational construct consisting of two key components: pathway thinking, the perceived ability to generate routes toward desired goals, and agency thinking, the motivational drive and self-

belief to pursue those routes (Snyder et al., 1991). The 'Dream' phase of the PATH process aligns closely with the goal-setting dimension of hope, offering a psychologically safe space for participants to envision their ideal future. However, the transition to the 'Actions' phase requires both pathway and agency thinking, which may be particularly challenging for HYP who have faced persistent systemic disadvantage. Where this population has been told they are incapable or have experienced doubt from professionals, nurturing self-belief can be deeply difficult (Jones et al., 2018). This may help to explain the increased discomfort and hesitancy participants expressed during this phase of the PATH process.

In addition, research has shown that chronic stress and instability, common among HYP, can significantly impair executive functioning (Shields et al., 2016). These cognitive impacts may further hinder young people's ability to engage in complex future planning. As such, moving from goal-oriented thinking to concrete action may be cognitively and emotionally taxing for this population. In response, facilitators may need to adapt the PATH by allowing more time for reflection, and by breaking down the planning process into smaller, more manageable components. For instance, the 'One Year from Now' section could be divided into smaller goals, with tailored actions collaboratively identified for each.

Some participants also struggled with the non-linear design of the PATH, finding that it did not align with their preferred ways of organising information. Transitions between sections and perceived overlapping of content contributed to feelings of confusion and anxiety, suggesting that while the structure of the PATH offers significant strengths, it may benefit from adaptations that better account for individual cognitive styles and emotional needs. Notably, all participants reported feeling unsure about what to expect upon arrival. Although the researcher provided a visually supported information sheet beforehand, it appeared to have been overlooked or not useful. This echoes earlier findings from Bristow

(2013) and Haycock (2014), who noted that participants reported knowing minimal information about the PATH in advance, leading to uncertainty and apprehension. Some young people in these studies suggested that a simple guide or a short briefing video might have helped them feel more prepared and confident.

In this study, while the absence of preparation was unintentional, it highlights a key tension that the abstract and unfamiliar nature of the PATH may place participants on the back foot. Had they been given an opportunity to see what the process entailed, particularly its visual format, they may have experienced less confusion or cognitive overload in the session itself.

These reflections underscore the value of trauma-informed approaches in planning interventions with HYP. Trauma-informed care frameworks (Bath, 2008; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014) emphasise the importance of predictability, safety, and collaboration, principles that could strengthen the PATH process. Offering youth-friendly materials in advance, such as a short briefing video (as suggested by Bristow, 2013), while giving young people the autonomy to choose whether or not to engage with them, may help strike a balance between preparation and openness. This kind of scaffolding could reduce initial anxiety, support psychological safety, and increase young people's sense of control. By embedding trauma-informed principles more deeply into the design and delivery of the PATH, the intervention can better honour young people's readiness, emotional needs, and individual ways of engaging.

5.3.7 Time

A deeper analysis of the findings revealed that time was a recurring and significant theme across all participants' experiences. Notably, three out of four participants arrived late to their scheduled PATH sessions, and each referenced time, directly or indirectly, during

their PATH and follow-up interviews. This is particularly striking given that the PATH framework is itself inherently temporal, guiding individuals to visualise a trajectory of goals and the steps required to achieve them over time.

This observation prompted reflection on how participants' past experiences with time and professional services might have shaped their current patterns of engagement. It raised questions about whether delayed arrivals reflected a lack of engagement, difficulty navigating expectations, or the lingering impact of previous interactions with professionals that felt impersonal, inflexible, or disconnected from their needs. Existing research also suggests that the instability associated with homelessness can hinder the development of soft skills such as punctuality, attendance, and self-presentation (Buzzeo et al., 2016). These challenges likely influenced how participants engaged with both the researcher and the PATH process, particularly in relation to more conventional or structured expectations.

Some HYP emphasised the need for the PATH process to be as efficient as possible, expressing a preference for a quick, outcome-focused approach. For these individuals, the perceived usefulness of the PATH was directly linked to its ability to fit within a specific timeframe. In contrast, other participants valued the extended duration of the PATH, seeing it as an opportunity for deeper self-reflection and future planning. For them, the additional time created a richer and more meaningful experience.

These varying perceptions of time may be influenced by broader cultural and societal constructs. In modern Western contexts, time is generally perceived through a linear lens, structured by clocks, calendars, and the nine-to-five organisation of work and education (Wajcman, 2019). This linear understanding emphasises forward planning and the timely completion of tasks. In contrast, many HYP may experience time in a more cyclical way, where days and weeks blur together, driven less by routine and more by the unpredictability

of daily life (Elias, 1992; Van Doorn, 2010). Within this framework, the focus is often on immediate needs rather than long-term goals, making future planning difficult to prioritise or sustain.

This survival-oriented perception of time is reinforced by systemic instability and unmet basic needs (Maslow, 1943). For young people navigating homelessness, adhering to structured timelines or attending scheduled appointments may reflect less about their motivation and more about how deeply uncertainty has shaped their worldviews. Additionally, trauma-related responses such as hypervigilance, anxiety, or dissociation can distort an individual's perception of time. These responses may cause some to struggle with organising their day, while others may rush through structured sessions, possibly driven by an unconscious sense of urgency or fear of emotional discomfort.

Taken together, these insights suggest that flexibility around time is essential when supporting HYP. Traditional expectations around punctuality, session duration, and structured engagement may not align with their lived realities and practitioners may need to adopt a more flexible and empathetic approach.

5.4 The Balance of Power

The PATH process requires skilled and thoughtful facilitation, particularly when working with vulnerable populations where power imbalances may unintentionally silence or limit authentic participation. Previous literature has identified inadequate facilitation as a significant barrier to effective person-centred planning (Reid & Green, 2002). This concern is especially pertinent when working with HYP, who may be less likely to assert themselves in the presence of professionals due to prior experiences of disempowerment. The British Psychological Society (BPS, 2022) explicitly encourages psychologists to remain aware of such dynamics and to take active steps to mitigate them.

In this study, intentional efforts were made to reduce the potential for hierarchical dynamics. These included using open and collaborative communication, ensuring that participants retained a central role in decision-making, and physically positioning the facilitator at the same height as the young person to promote a sense of equality. However, despite these measures, power imbalances remained present. One participant, for instance, asked "you guys want to hear that" (Yuri) after finishing an answer, prompting critical reflection on how the researcher's role may still have carried implicit authority, potentially shaping participant responses.

This moment underscores the complexity of neutralising power within facilitated sessions. Even within person-centred frameworks, facilitators may unknowingly exert influence through tone, body language, or institutional affiliation. While the PATH is designed to promote autonomy and self-direction, such subtle dynamics can persist, particularly among individuals with histories of marginalisation or trauma.

Literature on the PATH process highlights the importance of balancing professional involvement with contributions from 'natural' supports, unpaid individuals from the participant's personal life (Pearpoint et al., 1993). This is intended to diffuse power, encourage diverse perspectives, and create a more supportive environment (Wilson, 2013). However, in this study, none of the participants invited natural supports to their sessions, resulting in a professional-dominated setting in which participants were outnumbered. This absence limited opportunities to observe how the presence of trusted, non-professional allies might have shifted the power dynamics or enhanced the sense of psychological safety.

The setting of the PATH sessions may also have influenced participants' perceptions of power. While conducting the sessions within the Centrepoint hostels was intended to increase accessibility and comfort, these environments have been reported to have specific

rules and monitoring, which can subtly reinforce a sense of control (Van Doorn, 2010). Within such settings, participants may have felt pressure to present the PATH process positively, motivated by a desire to avoid perceived repercussions or to maintain favour with staff. This raises important considerations about the authenticity of participant feedback and the ways in which contextual power structures may shape the expression of voice.

5.5 Implications

5.5.1 Educational Psychologists

The implications for EPs will be structured in accordance with the five core functions of educational psychology practice (Fallon et al., 2010). These functions were first defined by the Scottish Executive Education Department's Review of Provision of Educational Psychology Services in Scotland (Currie, 2000).

5.5.1.1 Research. Research on HYP remains limited, particularly in relation to strengthening their voices and understanding their experiences of education. To date, much of the research has a negative focus meaning HYPs successes and strengths tend to be marginalised (Edwards, 2023). There is also a notable gap in the literature regarding effective strategies for facilitating educational reintegration. EPs play a crucial role in addressing this gap by contributing to research and ensuring that the perspectives of HYP inform policy and practice. Although accessing this population presents challenges, EPs can collaborate with other services, to access this group of young people and explore further avenues for research. To the researcher's knowledge, this study is the first to examine interventions aimed at supporting HYP in accessing or returning to education. Expanding this area of research could generate valuable insights into how EPs and other professionals can provide more effective support for this vulnerable group.

5.5.1.2 Consultation. Consultation models aim to effect change at the individual, group, and systemic levels through communication of information and the use of evidence-based approaches, all within a collaborative relationship that values all participants as equal (Guiney et al., 2014). The findings of this study suggest that the PATH could be used as a tool to facilitate reflective conversations among the professionals supporting HYP. Rather than reinforcing a problem-saturated narrative, the strengths-based structure of PATH can guide consultations towards solution-focused planning and collective responsibility. This would be particularly valuable when working with key adults whose support for HYP may currently feel fragmented or uncoordinated. By integrating elements of the PATH into consultation practices, EPs can help multi-agency teams establish shared goals, clarify roles, and commit to realistic actions, ultimately fostering a more cohesive and effective support network.

5.5.1.3 Assessment. The SEND Code of Practice (2015) emphasises that children and young people must be central to all decisions about their education and future. Similarly, personal construct psychology (Kelly, 1955) highlights that to fully understand a problem, it is necessary to ask the person most concerned. These principles align with the role of EP assessment, which seeks to inform interventions and remove potential barriers to learning. For HYP who often face instability, disrupted education and emotional distress, a person-centred assessment approach is vital. By actively involving them in the assessment process, EPs can better understand their unique experiences and needs and work collaboratively with professionals to develop tailored support.

The PATH process also holds valuable potential for informing and co-constructing Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNAs). Current guidance from the Joint Professional Liaison Group (JPLG, 2020) emphasises that EHCNAs should be person-

centred and include outcomes that are meaningful and time-bound, with shorter-term goals being reviewed annually. In this context, the 'One Year from Now' section of the PATH could be directly used to help shape these outcomes in a way that reflects the child or young person's own aspirations. Additionally, the 'Staying Strong' section offers insight into existing strengths and supports, which can inform personalised provision within the EHCNA. If the PATH process was used as part of a multi-agency meeting, it could provide a rich, visual and collaborative framework for gathering the young person's voice and aligning input from all involved professionals. In doing so, much of the information gathered could be meaningfully incorporated into the final Education, Health and Care plan, ensuring it reflects both the individual's lived experience and their future goals

5.5.1.4 Intervention. This study highlights the benefits of using the PATH as an intervention for HYP. Its structured, visual, and collaborative nature provided participants with a space to reflect on their experiences, identify personal strengths, and develop a clear, individualised vision for their future. For many HYP, this type of structured reflection can be particularly beneficial, as the process of planning for the future can otherwise feel overwhelming within the context of homelessness (Bowers & O'Neil, 2019).

For EPs, the PATH offers a practical framework for supporting young people in reclaiming a sense of agency during periods of uncertainty. By breaking down long-term aspirations into manageable, actionable steps, the PATH can help mitigate the sense of helplessness and lack of control that many HYP experience (Pescod & Gander, 2024). Importantly, the relational aspect of the PATH process, where facilitators establish a supportive and collaborative environment, helps to build trust and psychological safety, a crucial consideration when working with young people who may have experienced negative relationships with professionals in the past.

5.5.1.5 Training. Conducting research in this area highlighted the researcher's initial lack of knowledge regarding the structures of support, legislation, and terminology associated with youth homelessness. A thorough understanding of these systems is essential for EPs to provide effective support to this population. Given that continuous professional development (CPD) is a fundamental requirement of the EP profession (HCPC, 2024), it is crucial for EPs to actively engage in learning about homelessness and its impact on young people. Collaborative learning within EP teams can facilitate deeper exploration of this issue, leading to more informed and responsive practice. Additionally, professionals with expertise in youth homelessness could disseminate their knowledge and experience across services to support better understanding.

Beyond their own learning, EPs are well-positioned to share their expertise with other professionals. By delivering training to teachers, senior leadership teams, and other key stakeholders, EPs can enhance awareness of the unique challenges faced by HYP and promote strategies to better support their educational and social needs.

With specific regard to the PATH framework, EPs are well-equipped to facilitate and train others on the use of the PATH. Provided they have undergone appropriate training and have practical experience of conducting PATH sessions, EPs can support professionals working with HYP to effectively integrate this tool into their practice. By expanding awareness of how the PATH can be used, EPs can play a pivotal role in equipping educators, social workers, and support staff with strategies to help HYP engage with EET opportunities.

This study underscores the potential for EPs to contribute meaningfully to the support of HYP across research, consultation, assessment, intervention, and training. By furthering research, fostering multi-agency collaboration, and delivering targeted interventions such as the PATH, EPs can play a key role in enhancing the educational and life outcomes of this

vulnerable population. Continued reflection is needed to ensure that HYP are truly at the centre of these processes, with their voices shaping future developments in practice and policy.

5.5.2 Educational Professionals

From my professional experience of working in schools over the past six years, youth homelessness is rarely discussed. This is reflected in wider research that shows many professionals do not realise they are working with this population or do not know how to best support this group (Bowers & O'Neil, 2019; Havlik et al., 2014). However, the fact that these young people often remain hidden does not lessen their need for support. It is crucial that key educational professionals develop an awareness of the challenges faced by HYP and actively consider how to support their access to and engagement with education.

Given that HYP frequently interact with multiple services, including charities, social workers, and housing teams, schools have an important role to play in ensuring a joined-up approach is used to support this group. In particular, Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCos) and pastoral staff are well-placed to collaborate with external professionals to create tailored, multi-agency support plans. As research in this area continues to evolve, it is essential that emerging findings are shared with schools and used to inform practice. Raising awareness through training, professional discussions, and reflective practice can help educational settings become more attuned to the presence and needs of HYP within their communities.

Beyond awareness, educational professionals must also develop the knowledge and skills required to support this group effectively. This could involve learning from colleagues with expertise in youth homelessness, engaging in joint working with specialist services, or undertaking independent research to build conscious competence in this area (Curtiss &

Warren, 1974). Research suggests that many educational professionals currently fall within the unconscious or conscious incompetence stages of the four stages of competence model (Curtiss & Warren, 1974) in regard to youth homelessness (Figure 14). This means they may either be unaware of their knowledge gaps or recognise their limitations but lack the skills to address them (Pescod, 2020, 2024). This model outlines a progression from unconscious incompetence (not knowing what you do not know) to conscious incompetence (awareness of a knowledge gap), conscious competence (developing and applying new skills), and ultimately unconscious competence (mastery, where skills become second nature). By increasing knowledge and advocacy for HYP, it is hoped that educational professionals can move from unconscious incompetence towards unconscious competence, where supporting this vulnerable group becomes an embedded and instinctive part of practice.

Figure 14

Visual Representation of the Four Stages of Competence Model

Note. Based on Curtiss and Warren (1974).

5.5.3 Other Professionals

The PATH framework can be implemented by a range of professionals working with HYP. When professionals first engage with HYP, the PATH could serve as a valuable tool for understanding their aspirations and future goals, shaping the next steps of support. Within the specific charity where this research took place, the researcher discussed with the AP the potential benefits of using the PATH during initial meetings between HYP and housing officers or social workers. This approach could provide young people with a structured opportunity to share their stories, express their ambitions, and articulate their needs. It would also offer professionals a meaningful way to demonstrate their commitment to supporting HYP, fostering a collaborative and welcoming environment from the outset. Although not a primary focus of this research, the positive outcomes from the 'One Year from Now' section of the PATH could be revisited over time, allowing professionals and young people to track progress against their goals.

In the context of supporting HYP into EET, several systemic challenges often arise, including repeated breakdowns in support, a lack of stable and trusting relationships, and limited access to positive role models (Pescod & Gander, 2024). The PATH can help address these challenges by offering a structured, yet flexible space for young people to reflect on their dreams while gradually rebuilding trust with professionals. For support workers and housing staff, participating in a PATH can shift conversations beyond immediate crisis management, creating a future-focused conversation that explores the young person's goals, strengths, and the practical steps needed to achieve them.

By supporting the young person's voice, the PATH ensures that planning for the future occurs alongside addressing day-to-day challenges. For HYP this person-centred approach promotes continuity, shared responsibility, and a genuine belief in their potential.

5.6 Strengths and Limitations

A key strength of this study is its focus on amplifying the voices of a population that has been largely overlooked in research. In the United Kingdom, existing literature on HYP primarily examines pathways into homelessness and statistical trends, rather than centring their lived experiences. While these broader insights are important, this study moves beyond generalised data to contribute to the small but growing body of work that prioritises HYP's perspectives. By focusing on their experiences, this research not only highlights their individual experiences but also strengthens its findings through their own reflections and beliefs.

Furthermore, the use of the PATH with this population is a novel contribution. This study provides an initial exploration into an intervention that could offer meaningful support to HYP. Recent research into HYPs disengagement from EET has suggested that introducing a 'push' within a young person's support system may encourage change, yet there is little guidance on how to implement this in practice (Pescod & Gander, 2024). This study serves as a first step in addressing this gap by examining how the PATH could be used as a structured intervention to help HYP re-engage with education, employment, or training.

Despite these strengths, the study has some limitations, particularly regarding the participant sample. The young people involved in this research were all supported by Centrepoint, a charity working with homeless individuals aged 16–25. While their insights are valuable, they do not fully represent the wider homeless youth population, including those receiving support from other organisations or those not engaging with services at all. While

this was a weakness of the research, and may impact the generalisability of the findings, this study offers meaningful contributions by engaging with a hard-to-reach group and helping to amplify their voices.

Additionally, the researcher made the deliberate decision not to collect detailed demographic information about the participants. This was done to ensure the research process remained as simple and safe as possible, recognising that HYP may have previously shared extensive personal information with professionals and may feel discomfort about how their data is used. However, this decision also meant that the study could not explore how intersecting social or personal characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity, or disability, may have influenced participants' experiences. In retrospect, a more nuanced and sensitive approach to collecting limited demographic data, in collaboration with participants, may have enhanced the depth of the analysis without compromising trust or psychological safety. Future research in this area could build on these findings by considering the role of intersectionality in shaping the experiences and needs of HYP.

5.7 Future Research

The current research introduces the PATH as an intervention that can benefit HYP and support them to think about their future in a positive way, particularly in relation to re-engaging with EET. While the findings illustrate some short-term benefits of the PATH in supporting this population, this research lacks information on the long-term success of the PATH and the follow-up procedures that could take place. Future research would be valuable in exploring how the goals set during the PATH are experienced over time, and what follow-up processes or ongoing support might help young people maintain momentum towards their goals. Listening to the experiences of HYP through this research has been a crucial first step, but the next step must be to understand whether the PATH can offer lasting support and how it can continue to motivate HYP beyond the initial intervention.

In considering how these findings might apply more broadly, it is important to recognise that this research focused on young people supported by Centrepoint, and therefore it would be useful to explore the use of the PATH with a wider range of HYP. This research has highlighted the challenges of engaging with this often-hidden population but has also shown that working in partnership with charities can be a successful way to build trust and work with this population. In the future, there is potential for EPs to play a key role in broadening this work, using the PATH in schools, community settings, and alternative education provisions to reach young people who may be at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Expanding this research on a larger scale would help to strengthen the evidence base and promote the use of person-centred approaches, such as the PATH, across services. This would ensure more young people have the opportunity to reflect on their goals, take ownership of their futures, and feel supported by the adults around them.

A limitation of this research was the lack of exploration of how intersecting aspects of identity, such as race, gender, and disability, may shape the experiences of homelessness and influence how young people engage with interventions like the PATH. Future studies would benefit from considering these factors in more depth, particularly as identity may impact both the barriers young people face and the support they find most beneficial. Previous research into person-centred planning, an approach that underpins the PATH, has shown that implementing interventions in culturally and linguistically different communities led to key differences in how the intervention was experienced (Trainor, 2007). With this in mind it would be valuable to investigate whether these findings hold true within the homeless population. With limited homeless research focused on aspects of identity, there is an important opportunity to explore how these aspects of identity interact, aiming to develop more inclusive and responsive interventions.

Ultimately, this piece of research has shown that psychological interventions, when delivered thoughtfully and collaboratively, can have a meaningful impression on young people experiencing homelessness. To the best of the author's knowledge, this is one of the first studies to explore psychological intervention work with this population. Future research looking into other psychological approaches and interventions will be beneficial to this population to help explore their futures.

5.8 Dissemination

Disseminating research findings is a fundamental aspect of educational psychology practice (BPS, 2018; HCPC, 2016). The findings from this study will be shared at academic conferences and published in peer-reviewed journals, contributing to the growing body of research in this area.

In addition, the research will be disseminated within Centrepoint, the charity where the study was conducted. This will provide an opportunity for those who contributed to the work to engage with the findings, reflect on their implications, and consider how they might inform future practice.

To further extend the reach of this research, accessible summaries will be shared through social media platforms and professional networks. This will help engage a broader audience, including practitioners, policymakers, and educators, ensuring that the findings can be applied in real-world contexts where they have the potential to create meaningful change.

5.9 Reflections on the Research Process

As I reflect on my research journey, I am struck by how much I have learnt and the strong emotions I have experienced throughout this project. My initial motivation for this work came from a desire to support underrepresented and often misunderstood young people. Early in my role as an AP, I often heard that young people without stable housing were "too

hard to reach" or that little could be done for them in school. That never felt right to me. I entered this research hoping to explore how EPs might engage with this group in a way that felt both meaningful and hopeful.

Recruitment proved to be one of the most challenging aspects of the process. Although there was initial interest from participants, sustaining and expanding engagement with more young people was difficult. Our ethical commitment, that the PATHs would belong solely to the young people and would not be shared, felt entirely appropriate at the time. However, in retrospect, I recognise that this stance may have inadvertently limited my ability to promote the project effectively. Without concrete examples to illustrate the richness and relevance of the work, housing workers may have found it difficult to fully appreciate its potential, making the project seem abstract and inaccessible. If conducting this research again, I would consider co-producing anonymised or composite examples with participants' consent, as a way to enhance dissemination while continuing to uphold their ownership and wellbeing. This tension between upholding ethical integrity and ensuring research rigour and reach prompted significant reflection. I continue to think about how these competing demands might be more effectively balanced: protecting participants' agency while also fulfilling the broader aims of research dissemination and impact.

Another key methodological reflection was around the rich data generated during the PATH sessions that could not be shared within this piece of research. As discussed, the young people invested significant time and effort in completing their PATHs, offering deeply valuable insights into their experiences and reflections on the process. Through this engagement, I developed a strong sense of connection with the participants, and it became clear that their contributions could meaningfully inform both practice and future research. However, where information was not explicitly shared during interviews, it would not have been ethical to include it in the analysis. As a researcher who wanted to produce a piece of

work that was impactful and useful to the population, I experienced a sense of frustration at being unable to draw upon this information. I wonder whether this personal investment subtly shaped my interviewing style or analysis over time, perhaps unconsciously seeking positive or affirming responses about the process. Looking back, I recognise a lingering frustration that parts of the thesis could have been strengthened by incorporating insights that remained ethically inaccessible, and I am mindful of how this tension may have influenced my interpretation and repeated emphasis on this aspect throughout the analysis.

What I did not expect was just how emotional this journey would be. Some PATH sessions left me feeling overwhelmed not because of distress, but because of how powerful they were. The young people's goals were often about helping others, and their stories stayed with me long after the sessions ended. There were moments when I left feeling incredibly overwhelmed due to the honesty, resilience, and humanity I had witnessed. Those moments reminded me of the importance of holding space for others with compassion and care.

Thinking about the double hermeneutic nature of IPA, I became increasingly aware of the emotional weight of my own sense-making during analysis. After the research process I reflected deeply on how my interpretations of participants' experiences, through the creation of PETs and subsequently GETs, may have been influenced by my own emotional responses and hopes for the young people involved. Although I greatly enjoyed the analytical process and wished for participants to benefit from the research, I remain critically aware that my motivations and emotional investments could have inadvertently shaped the way I made sense of their narratives.

Meeting and working directly with the young people was the most transformative part of the process for me. It made the research feel real. Before then, the project had felt quite abstract. However, sitting with them, seeing how they engaged with the PATH, and hearing

their reflections gave me clarity and motivation. It also made me think more critically about how we speak about this group. I noticed how often the language used around homelessness strips people of their strengths and identity, yet in this space I was learning so much about the young people. I also reflected on these issues in relation to the use of pseudonyms within the research. A name is one of the most personal and significant aspects of identity, and I was keen to avoid making choices that might unintentionally strip away participants' individuality. Literature on pseudonyms (Itzik & Walsh, 2023) highlights that naming is an act of power, with imposed names historically contributing to the marginalisation of minority groups. Although participants were given the opportunity to choose their own pseudonyms, none opted to do so. I found myself wondering about the reasons for this. Perhaps it reflected a deeper experience of learned disempowerment, where so many decisions in their lives, such as where they live, are made for them without genuine consultation. I also questioned whether, despite creating a research environment that emphasised autonomy, the act of choosing a pseudonym felt unfamiliar or overwhelming – one decision too many in a context where agency was being explored. This reflection deepened my awareness of the complex balance between offering choice and recognising when autonomy itself needs to be scaffolded thoughtfully and sensitively.

The PATH process also brought me back to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, a theory I speak to a lot within this piece of work. I kept returning to the differences between the young people's systems and my own. I wrote in my reflective diary:

Figure 15

Reflexive Diary Extract.

A theme that keeps coming up after each meeting is the systemic insufficiencies and the stereotypes that are trapping this group of young people (macrosystem/exosystem). Isolation is constantly coming to mind. It feels like there are so many systems lacking for this group, and the systems that do exist often reinforce isolation instead of building relationships. When I compare my ecosystem to theirs, I notice my privilege in many areas. The stability in my microsystem keeps coming back to me. These young people are navigating a world without consistent family, friends, or professionals—without the foundational relationships most of us rely on. It feels like they're being asked to survive without the support needed to thrive.

This experience has also changed how I think about communication and accessibility. Many of the young people said they connected more with visuals than with written or spoken information. That insight made me rethink how I work. I have even changed how I have written parts of this thesis to reflect those values because accessibility is not just a style choice, it is an ethical one.

Although I do not fully know the impact of this research, I hope the PATH sessions gave the young people a sense of agency, reflection, and hope. They all spoke positively about the experience, which made me feel proud. One comment from the AP, who was the graphic facilitator in all of the PATHs, stayed with me. She said she had learned more about the young people in the PATH sessions than in all her time working at Centrepoint. For me, that felt like a turning point, evidence that this work could live on beyond the scope of the

project. I hope this research can continue to support professionals in both education and housing services, and that it can contribute, in some small way, to building more humanising and supportive practices for young people experiencing homelessness.

Now that the thesis is complete, I feel a huge sense of achievement. Not just on the final product but of the journey, the learning and the relationships formed along the way. This work has solidified my commitment to working alongside this population, and I am actively seeking ways to continue doing so in my professional life. This research began with a sense of uncertainty but ends with clarity, pride, and gratitude.

5.10 Conclusion

This research has explored HYP's perspectives of the PATH, with the aim of understanding whether it could be a meaningful tool. The study set out to learn directly from HYP about their experiences of completing the PATH and to consider whether this approach could offer genuine benefits to this population. A key intention of the research was also to provide a platform for HYP to share their voices and stories.

Four young people took part in this study, each completing a PATH with the researcher and then reflecting on their experiences through semi-structured interviews. These interviews were analysed using IPA, which led to the development of six GETs: The Power of Imagery, "This PATH is Me", Stepping into the Future, The Influence of Others, Bridging the Abstract with the Practical, and Parts Create the Whole.

In exploring HYP's views of the PATH, participants highlighted the value of imagery in helping them express their dreams and the importance of having clear next steps that they could take with them. The person-centred nature of the PATH was appreciated as it created a supportive environment that encouraged self-reflection, autonomy, and motivation for the future. Participants also reflected on the role of others within the process, sharing insights

into the dynamics between facilitators, the helpfulness of having two people guide the session, and considerations about who they would and would not want involved in their PATH. The balance between abstract thinking and practical planning was another area of discussion, with most participants valuing the way the PATH helped turn big ideas into achievable actions. Finally, the structure of the PATH itself was explored, including which steps felt most useful, which felt less relevant, and suggestions for how the process might be improved for other young people.

This research led to a range of important implications for HYP, as well as for EPs, schools, and wider professionals. These focused on the need to deepen understanding of this population and to ensure that those working with HYP do so in ways that are competent, thoughtful, and supportive. The findings also highlight the importance of continuing to develop and refine interventions for this group, ensuring their needs remain visible in both research and practice, and that their voices continue to shape the services designed to support them.

This research has shown valuable insights into the benefits of the PATH. It has also served as a reminder of the urgent need to do more. HYP deserve better than the limited and inconsistent support currently available to them. Government action has so far fallen short in addressing the structural inequalities that leave too many young people without stable housing, adequate education, or meaningful opportunities. In being serious about improving the futures of this group, we must commit to hearing their voices and embedding their experiences at the heart of policy, education, and services. These young people are not defined by their homelessness; they are talented, ambitious, and capable of achieving their goals when given the right support. It is vital that we continue to push for change, ensuring they are not forgotten, and that professionals and the wider society are investing in their futures with the same care and determination we would hope for any young person.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Data Extraction Table for the Literature Review

Article	Research design	Data Collection method	Participants	Aims	Findings	Critique
			Literature review question 1			
			N/A			
			Literature review question 2			
Gupton (2017)	Qualitative	Interviews. These were held over an 8-month period, with each participant taking part in a minimum of 3 interviews.	4 homeless students between the ages of 16 to 24.	1. What might be learned from the narratives of homeless youth and their experiences in postsecondary education? 2. How might community colleges promote interpersonal and institutional resilience for homeless students?	The study suggests that community colleges serve as a critical access point to higher education for underrepresented students, highlighting the need for supportive services and policies that address the unique challenges face by homeless students to enhance their academic success.	**Strength:** highlights the potential of community colleges to support homeless students. **Weakness:** limited participant diversity may affect the applicability of findings.

Hallett & Freas (2017)	Qualitative	Semi-structured, life history, interviews.	7 community college students.	The study aimed to explore how community college students experience housing insecurity, using a trauma-informed lens.	Findings showed that participants' often prioritised immediate basic needs over academics, leading to emotional distress and academic challenges. Despite these difficulties students viewed education as a pathway to future stability. The findings advocate for integrated support services within community colleges to assist young homeless students.	**Strength:** provides in-depth insights into the personal challenges faced by HYP.
Moore et al. (2011)	Qualitative	Semi-structured interviews, art activities and group discussions.	25 children and young homeless people, 14 male and 11 female.	The research aimed to explore the perspectives of children and young people who had accompanied their parents during periods of homelessness.	Findings showed that while these children face numerous challenges and anxieties related to homelessness, schools can provide a sense of belonging and stability. The research highlights opportunities for schools to support homeless children and their families during periods of instability.	**Strength:** Centres children's voices. **Weakness:** lacks longitudinal data to assess long-term educational outcomes for participants.
Samarah et al. (2023)	Qualitative	Photos were collected from participants. Interviews then occurred to discuss their photos.	18 young homeless students.	Researchers wanted to understand students' who have experienced foster care, relative care or homelessness' college experiences.	The visual narratives from the photos provided insight into the young people's challenges and successes, emphasising the importance of understanding their perspectives to inform policies and practices that support success.	**Strength:** uses the photovoice method, allowing participants to express themselves visually. **Weakness:** findings may not be generalisable due to the specific subgroup.

Walsh & Buckley (1994)	Qualitative	Interviews.	55 homeless children from 4 to 18 years of age.	The research aimed to explore the experiences of homeless children, particularly in relation to their schools, and suggest strategies and approaches that school counsellors can use to support learning development.	The paper examined the experiences of homeless children. It highlighted the emotional and psychological impact of homelessness on children and underscores the critical role school counsellors play in providing support, advocating for resources, and implementing interventions that address the unique needs of homeless students.	**Strength:** early recognition of the critical role school counsellors plays in supporting homeless children. **Weakness:** the study's age means some recommendations may no longer align with current best practice.
Bowers & O'Neil (2019)	Qualitative Interpretive Meta Synthesis	Qualitative Interpretive Meta-Synthesis	60 homeless college students across 7 studies.	To hear the experiences of homeless college students experiences of education.	The analysis identified four central themes: trauma, highlighting the adverse experiences impacting these students, priority hierarchy, illustrating the balancing act that occurs between basic needs and academic responsibilities, homeless identify, speaking to the fluid nature of their homelessness, and resilience, showcasing their determination to overcome obstacles. The research calls for policy and practice changes to better support these participants'.	**Strength:** integrates multiple studies to provide a holistic view of homeless students experiences. **Weakness:** The reliance on existing studies limits the inclusion of more recent data.

Begg (2017)	Qualitative	Semi-structured interviews.	15 African-American children between the ages of 9 and 13.	The research wanted to examine the experience of homeless, African American children (grades 3-6), with a focus on their school experiences, as well as their future educational and career aspirations.	Findings showed that the participants strived for a safe and predictable future by seeking stability, forming personal connections, and aiming for academic success. The research underscores the importance of understanding the unique challenges faced by this demographic to develop targeted interventions that support their educational engagement and well-being.	**Strength:** focuses on a specific demographic, offering nuanced insights into the intersection of race, homelessness, and education. **Weakness:** The study identifies key themes but struggles to further explore systemic factors contributing to the children's experiences.
Aviles de Bradley (2011)	Qualitative	Interviews.	6 young homeless people.	The first aim was to obtain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of what it means to be homeless for youth. The second aim was to better understand the manner in which schools respond to the needs of unaccompanied homeless youth.	Themes were found around the status of 'homelessness' emphasising that many youths do not identify with the term, the involuntary nature of their homelessness, the significant of supportive adults in their educational journey, and the agency needed to navigate their worlds. This study highlights the critical role schools play in providing support and resources, suggesting that educational policies needed to be updated to address the needed of unaccompanied homeless youth.	**Strength:** provides first-hand insight into the experiences of unaccompanied homeless youth, emphasising the role of schools. **Weakness:** limited sample size may make generalisability difficult.

Powney (2001)	Qualitative	'In-depth' interviews.	23 professionals from various services: housing, homelessness advice, social work, community development, health promotion, LA policy development, voluntary agencies.	The researcher aimed to highlight the challenges some students may face when their family is homeless, while also offering recommendations for teachers.	The research explored the experiences of homeless students within the school environment, identifying key challenges they face, including stigma, lack of resources, and emotional distress. The study emphasised the need for schools to develop supportive strategies and policies that address the specific needs of homeless students to enhance educational outcomes.	**Strength:** emphasises the need for teacher awareness and in-service training to better support students. **Weakness:** the study's age may mean some findings are outdated given changes in policy and societal contexts.
Mendez et al. (2018)	Qualitative	Minimally structured Interviews.	9 students receiving support from a community-based organisation.	The research aimed to highlight common themes in the life stories of unaccompanied young homeless youth. By doing this the researcher wanted to provide educators with a deeper understanding about this population and inform school-based supports and services.	Themes were identified including resilience, vulnerability, and the important role of supportive relationships. The research provides insights for educators on how to better support HYP, emphasising the importance of understanding their unique experiences.	**Strength:** focuses on a resilient subgroup, providing insights into factors that support them in education **Weakness:** the study was unable to capture the experiences of those who disengage from education due to homelessness.

Jones et al. (2018)	Qualitative	Interviews.	20 youth who were involved with child welfare and homeless serving systems, and who had experienced school challenges.	The study aimed to build knowledge in an emerging area by examining facilitators or and barriers to educational success through a cross-system framework.	The research demonstrated that these students often feel completely let down by the education system, which didn't support them properly. Many talked about needing teachers and schools that understood their situations and could help in a more caring, trauma-informed way. The authors argue that better connections between schools and other support systems are essential.	**Strength:** the study provides valuable insights into the lives experiences of a marginalised group. **Weakness:** the sample size and demographic details are not specified, limiting the generalisability of the findings.
Edwards (2023)	Qualitative	Interviews.	8 young homeless students.	The researcher used an antideficit achievement framework to focus on the collective success of students experiencing homelessness.	The findings shared the participants' 'counternarratives' meaning the ways they succeeded despite their odds. The students shared how they pushed through school due to determination, and often thanks to a few supportive adults. The study challenged the idea that homeless students cannot succeed in school.	**Strength:** uses an anti-deficit narrative, looking at the strengths of homeless young people. **Weakness:** focuses only on students who graduated. One does not get to hear from those who did not make it.

Havlik & Duckhorn (2023)	Qualitative	Semi-structured interviews	23 liaisons.	The research aimed to shed light on liaisons roles and observations in the college preparation process for youth experiencing homelessness.	This paper talks to school staff (called liaisons) who help homeless high schoolers move on to college. These staff members said they tried their best to guide students but struggled with limited resources, overwhelming workloads, and complicated systems. The paper showed how much these students rely on the liaisons, and how much more support liaisons themselves need.	**Strength:** gives a helpful view from those how support homeless young people. **Weakness:** Does not include what the students themselves think.
Pavlakis & Pryor (2020)	Qualitative	Interviews and focus groups.	21 students from a summer program.	The research wanted to explore how student experiencing homelessness prepare and plan for their postsecondary education and what key assets and challenges shape their experiences.	This study focused on homeless youth of colour who are with their families and how they think about life after high school. Despite facing a lot of uncertainty, many of them stayed hopeful and used things like family support, ambition, and community knowledge to keep pushing toward college or a career. The researchers argue that these strengths should be recognized more by schools and colleges.	**Strength:** focuses on strengths and resilience's of the young people instead of just the challenges. **Weakness:** does not specifically say what schools or education systems can do to help this population.

Pescod & Gander (2024)	Qualitative	Semi-structured interviews.	9 staff members working at Centrepoint.	The aim of the study was to investigate the barriers and facilitators to HYP's engagement in EET	Findings were shared from support workers who shared the key to working with this population is building trust first and meeting basic needs like food and housing before pushing school or work goals. They also emphasised how important it is to treat each young person as an individual rather than taking a one-size-fits-all approach. They shared that knowing this EPs should think about interventions that might support getting the young people back into EET.	**Strength:** gives practical advice for those working with this population. **Weakness:** it does not include the voices of the young people.
McKenna & Scanlon (2024)	Qualitative	Interviews	19 parents.	The research aimed to explore the findings from the HomeWorks Study, which explored parent and teacher perspectives on how homelessness impacted children's educational access and participation. It aimed to explore the parent part of this piece of research.	This study shares what parents in Ireland say about how homelessness affects their children's schooling. Many talked about how stress, stigma, and constantly moving made it hard for their kids to focus or even attend school regularly. Parents also felt schools didn't always understand or accommodate what their kids were going through.	**Strength:** gives a voice to parents, which is often missing. **Weakness:** the research is specific to Ireland, so it may be difficult to generalise it to other countries and school systems.

| Pescod (2020) | Qualitative | Semi-structured interviews. | 7 young people from Centrepoint, aged 18-19. | The research aimed to explore educational experiences of young people (16-25) who are currently in education and experiencing homelessness with specific consideration to their motivation towards education. | Findings shared that HYP in the study saw school as a way to escape homelessness, but they face a lot of barriers to experiencing education including unstable housing, mental health difficulties, and feeling unsupported by schools. Despite this, may of the participants had strong aspirations for the future and wanted to do well. | **Strength:** Centres the voices and motivations of the young people. |

| Literature review question 3 |

| Carpenter et al. (2023) | Qualitative | Interviews and surveys. | 8 members of staff from a special school for pupils aged 4-16. | The study aimed to use participatory methods with the PATH to collaboratively devise and run a relationship and sex education (RSE) support group. | The study found 4 main themes from research question 1, which looked at the perceptions of group members of the support group: facilitating change, evolving purpose and function of group, resilience and reasonable adjustments and positive outcomes. 4 main themes also arose for research question 2, the perceptions of the group members of the EP: EPs and change, EP as facilitators, value of EP as a group member, conceptualisation of the EP role. 5 themes arose for research question 3, the perceptions of the group members of PATH: practicalities, collective voice, harnessing creativity and energy, setting a PATH for change, importance of process and graphic facilitation, practicalities. | **Strength:** integrates PATH and participatory research methodologies promoting collaborative and participatory approaches in educational settings. **Weakness:** a single special school as the participant group may limit the generalisability of findings. |

| Wood et al. (2019) | Qualitative | Semi-structured interviews. | 3 students with SEND (between 11 and 16) and one of their parents. One member of staff who had facilitated their PATH also joined. | The aim was to evaluate the impact of the PATH for CYP with SEND from one local authority in the South of England. Longer-term impact was also investigated through recruiting participants who had participated in PATH up to 6 months previously. | Four main themes arose in the data: usefulness of the graphic, positive effects, child-centredness, and possible barriers to successful implementation. PATH was described as having a variety of useful benefits, such as increasing CYPs confidence and motivation. In addition, barriers to successful implementation of PATH were identified by participants, which in turn may limit its impact. Families and children also identified that they would benefit from receiving additional information and guidance about the process before the meeting to maximise its utility. | **Strength:** focuses on the application of the PATH with CYP with SEND, addressing a critical area in educational psychology. **Weakness:** potential biases may occur due to the researcher's involvement in the intervention. |

| Hughes et al. (2019) | Qualitative | Interviews. | 2 EPs. | The aim was to explore the practical use of PCP in education, specifically using the PATH. | The EPs reflected on the process and its outcomes. They shared that the authors were able to adapt the PATH to suit the needs of the school staff. This helped shift meeting dynamics. All participants' engaged with the process. the approach appeared to encourage each member of the group to participate. Core values emerged from the discussions such as respect, trust, communication, knowledge and evidence-based practice. the structure of the process meant that while barriers were raised, these did not become the sole focus of the discussion. | **Strength:** demonstrates the application of person-centred planning beyond individual cases to facilitate broader organisational change. **Weakness:** relies on a single case study, which may not capture the variability of different organisational settings. |

Morgan (2016)	Qualitative	Semi-structured interviews.	A deputy head teacher, a SENCo, 3 EPs and a strategic manager.	Four research questions were formed: (1) What are respondents' perceptions about factors within a solution-focused approach which enhance systemic change? (2) What factors within organisations allow for a solution-focused approach to be useful? (3) How important are practitioners' stylistic presentation and interpersonal skills in the delivery of a solution-focused approach? (4) How does this approach bring about change within organisations?	The research showed that adopting solution-focused practice was beneficial. The study also suggests how EPs can embrace change and support change in organisations and demonstrates the significant of how a local authority needs to engage in change. Change was often limited by the extent to which other organisational and outside influences hindered further change. It became evident that change was needed elsewhere, which was harder to achieve, leading to feelings of frustration. A sense of ownership was achieved for many individuals, feeling in control of their futures.	**Strength:** provides qualitative insights from participants', enriching the understanding of the PATH. **Weakness:** potential biases from participants who are directly involved in the change process.

| Bristow (2013) | Qualitative | Semi-structured interviews. | 6 young people, 6 parents, 5 mainstream school staff, 5PRU/ARP school staff, 6 other professional, the EP team, 3 senior staff members from PRU, 1 senior EP. Total= 34. | The aim of the research was to establish a potential role of the PATH in the process of futures planning for vulnerable and challenging pupils. | The findings indicated that PATH impacted participants' positively, and pupils attributed increased confidence and motivation to achieve their goals to their PATH. Parents and young people felt they had contributed to the process as equal partners, feeling their voices were heard. Improved pupil-parent relationships and parent-school relationships were reported and the importance of having skilled facilitators was highlighted. Participants also shared they felt daunted beforehand, possibly due to a lack of preparation. | **Strength:** focuses on the role of EPs in using the PATH. **Weakness:** potential biases may occur due to the subjective experiences reported by EPs. |

Haycock (2014)	Qualitative	Interviews.	4 students, 4 parents, 1 support worker.	Haycock's aim was to explore the impact of the PATH for young people with SEND.	While exploring the PATH process, it was found that the CCL programme was more inclusive than students past educational experiences. The responses of the participants to the PATH process were in relation to: 1. Their expectation of PATH 2. Who should be present for PATH 3. Over-lapping goals 4. Recollection of PATH and 5. The parent's changed perception of their child. All of the participants' stated how beneficial it was for the student to make their own choices in relations to their futures.	**Strength:** provides insights into the personal experiences and engagement of students with the PATH process. **Weakness:** limited to a specific program, affecting the broader applicability of results.

Appendix B

Critical Assessment Skills Programme (CASP) for qualitative studies

CASP Qualitative Critical Appraisal LRQ 1: What are homeless young people's experiences of aspiring for education?

Critical Appraisal Question	Gupton (2017)	Hallett & Freas (2017)	Moore et al. (2011)	Samarah et al. (2023)
1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes. Two research questions were shared: 1. What might be learned from the narratives of homeless youth and their experiences in postsecondary education? 2. How might community colleges promote interpersonal and institutional resilience for homeless students?	Yes. The study wanted to explore how community college students experience housing insecurity, using a trauma-informed lens.	Yes. The research aimed to explore the unique perspectives of children and young people who had accompanied their parents during periods of homelessness.	Yes. The purpose of the study was to understand students', who have experienced foster care, relative care or homelessness', college experiences. The larger aim was that through understanding these experiences the campus support programmes could better meet the students' needs and promote wellbeing.
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes. The research wanted to explore the detailed experiences of young homeless people.	Yes. Qualitative methodology allowed the researchers to gain young homeless people's views of community college.	Yes. This methodology allowed the research to explore the constructs of young homeless people.	Yes, as the research sought to understand the meaning of photos taken by participants.

3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes. The research was framed around resilience theory and based on narrative enquiry. It was hoped this technique would examine the ways in which participants make meaning of their experiences as personal narratives. Personal narratives were formed for each student based on interview and observational data.	Yes. A life history was completed with one participant to understand how the individual perceived their life and how they made choices over time. From this, the second stage drew upon an emerging understanding of the life history, was used to identify a research question and interview protocol. Semi-structured interviews were then conducted with seven additional students. A brief follow-up later occurred.	Yes. Qualitative interviews were appropriate to explore young people's experiences. A children's reference group was used to assist with the development and trialling of the research tools.	Yes. The qualitative design gave a structure to support the participants sharing their experiences in semi-structured interviews.
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the strategy?	Yes. Participants were recruited through non-profit organisations supporting young homeless people, with staff at the organisation introducing the researcher to the young people.	Yes. Researchers spoke to counsellors and provided them with the information for the study. The counsellors then shared this information with the young people, who would come forward if they were interested.	Yes. Recruitment occurred through homelessness, family support and children services. Workers were provided with a letter explaining the project and were asked to speak to potential families. Families would contact the researcher if interested.	Yes. Flyers were shared to inform about the study. A research team member also met with the student advisory board who helped with recruitment. Students were invited to an additional information session to help then decide if they would like to participate.
5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes. Interviews were held with 4 participants in 2010 and in 2016. Over an 8-month period, each participant took part in at least three 1-hour interviews. The researcher also observed participants at their group home/ shelter/ high school/ college/ etc.	Yes. Semi-structured interviews were used allowing the students to share their experiences of community college.	Yes. Semi-structured interviews, art activities and group discussions were used. The paper reports on the interviews and group discussions.	Yes. Photos were collected via Qualtrics online form or by handing in a digital camera. Interviews were then conducted in a private setting on campus or online.
6. Has the relationship between the researcher and participants been adequately considered?	No	No	No	No

7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes. Issues of trustworthiness were thought about when interpreting the data.	Somewhat. Small thought occurred around the use of one college.	Yes. Ethical approval was sought from the ethics committee, with thought around privacy, confidentiality, power imbalances and control for the young people involved.	Yes. Confidentiality was thought about when taking the photos. A brief training was also given about safety, ethics, and photography.
8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes. A hermeneutic style of data analysis was used to find connections between the participants life story and the context in which the events took place. Observational data was analysed through the constant comparative and emergent theme process. Composite summaries were created from both data sources and for each participant. After the data was analysed, narratives were composed for the participants transition to college.	Yes. Narrative data analysis was used to highlight the students voices and experiences. Three readings of the transcript occurred. The third reading involved analysing the narratives as a group and identifying themes that emerged from their collective experiences.	Yes. A meaning focused data analysis approach was used. At the first level of analysis transcripts were reviewed and recurrent themes were coded for each participant. Second level of analysis identified and coded recurrent themes and areas of difference across participants. Interpretations and conclusions were discussed with individual children and the children's reference group.	Yes. A direct qualitative content analysis using an inductive approach was used, guided by the research questions. Researchers either had previous experience using this or were trained to use it on a doctoral course. Data was collected over an extended period of time using multiple data collectors. Reflexivity was discussed during meetings. Data was analysed by multiple coders working independently.
9. Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
10. How valuable is the research?	The research presents detailed perspectives from four young homeless individuals, framed within a resiliency model to guide understanding. It also suggests alternative frameworks researchers could use to interpret the data and highlights various ways society and its members can support young homeless people in their education.	The research is valuable as it contributes to the limited studies in this field. However, it's important to note that the study is focused on a single urban college, which limits the ability to explore how students in rural areas experience homelessness.	This research is highly valuable as it contributes to the scarce body of work that listens to the voices of young homeless individuals, helping to inform how services operate and respond to homeless families.	This study adds to the existing literature on the experiences of college students who have faced foster care and homelessness. It also begins to highlight the types of support young homeless people may seek, while underscoring the need for further research in this area.

Critical Appraisal Question	Walsh & Buckley (1994)	Begg (2017)	Aviles de Bradley (2011)	Powney (2001)	Mendez et al. (2018)	Jones et al. (2018)
1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes, the research aimed to explore the experiences of homeless children, particularly in relation to their schooling, and suggests strategies and approaches that school counsellors can use to support their learning and development.	Yes. The research wanted to examine the experience of homeless, African American children in grades 3- 6, with a focus on their school experiences, as well as their future educational and career aspirations.	Yes. The first aim was to obtain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of what it means to be homeless for youth. The second aim was to better understand the manner in which schools respond to the needs of unaccompanied homeless youth.	Yes, the researcher aimed to highlight the challenges some students may face when their family is homeless, while also offering recommendations for teachers.	Yes. The research aimed to highlight common themes in the life stories of unaccompanied young homeless youth. By doing this the researcher wanted to provide educators with a deeper understanding about this population and inform school-based supports and services.	Yes. The study aimed to build knowledge in an emerging area by examining facilitators or and barriers to educational success through a cross-system framework.
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes. The study wanted to focus on the stories of the young homeless people and their views on school.	Yes. Qualitative methodology was used to hear the young people's perspectives.	Yes. The project wanted to hear experiences from students, teachers, administrators and advocates on their experiences of homelessness and their knowledge of policies that address education for homeless students.	Yes, to explore perspectives of young people and the challenges they may face due to homelessness.	Yes. To explore views and experiences which could then be used to enhance educators understanding of this population.	Yes. The study wanted to provide a summary of the experiences of cross-systems youth and their reflections on how the system could improve.

3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes. A qualitative design was supported with interviews to explore individual experience.	Yes. Two pilot interviews were conducted with the lower age bracket to ensure thy could meaningfully comprehend and respond to interview questions. Interviews were then held 2 weeks prior to and following the start of the school year. This study design was approved by the University Institutional Review Board.	Yes. Interviews with young people in their educational setting supported exploration of their experiences.	Yes. Two case studies were used to gain a detailed understanding of what both the parent and child felt were the challenges to education when being homeless. In-depth interviews were used for both case studies to explore these perspectives in detail.	Yes. Interviews allowed the experiences of young homeless people's times in education to be explored.	Yes a short demographic questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used which took approximately an hour to complete.
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the strategy?	No.	Yes. Participants were recruited from the same association in Tennessee. Participants were recruited based on their interest and availability to participate in interviews. For their participation each student received a school backpack and school supplies.	Yes. Participants were recruited through their education setting.	Yes. People families were approached and offered a small payment to support them attending the interviews.	Yes. Students were recruited through a study flyer placed in the office of a community-based organisation. Students could use the contact information if they wanted to take place in the study.	Yes. The research team partnered up with local youth-serving organisation including a supervised independent living program (SILP) to help with recruitment.

5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes, interviews were used, and tape recorded with the young people to hear their perspectives. Children were asked open-ended questions about the experience of becoming homeless and about what shelter living was like.	Yes. Semi-structured interviews were used with the young people to hear their perspectives. Interviews were conducted privately at the young people's housing. Each semi-structured interview lasted from 90 to 120 minutes. All questions were open-ended to reduce bias and were phrased to be relevant to each participant.	Yes. Students engaged in three interviews to share their experiences.	Yes. In-depth interviews were held with parents and children about their experiences of homelessness.	Yes. Interviews were used. These interviews were minimally structured so the young people could share what they felt was most appropriate about their stories.	Yes. Interviews were recorded and then transcribed. Atlas.ti was used to assist with analysis. An inductive process of open coding was then used by three researchers to form codes.
6. Has the relationship between the researcher and participants been adequately considered?	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes. Informed written consent was gained from the parents.	Yes. Confidentiality was preserved by removing any identifying data from transcripts. Consent was obtained from parents and assent from participants.	No.	No.	Yes. Informed consent was gathered, the participants were allowed to pick a pseudonym for confidentiality. Transcripts were reviewed for accuracy by other members of the research team.	Yes. Informed consent was discussed.

8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	No.	Yes. Grounded Theory Method was used, with the final hierarchy consisting of seven layers and including 864 meaning units.	Yes. Thematic analysis was used. Four themes were found in the data.	No.	Yes. Thematic analysis revealed nine themes from the data.	Yes. Three researchers supported the process.
9. Is there a clear statement of findings?	No.	Yes, each layer is discussed from the grounded theory methodology and the dominant theme that emerged is shared.	Yes. Different homeless youth were able to share their views on education and how it fits into their lives.	No.	Yes. Nine themes were highlighted and discussed in the results section. Themes 1-6 linked to risk and themes 7-9 more closely related to resilience.	Yes. Youth shared that they had a lot of negative experiences including welfare placement, school mobility, lack of agency and lack of control over their circumstances.
10. How valuable is the research?	The research shared a qualitative perspective on youth homelessness, which was relatively new at the time. It presents the views of young people and explores how school counsellors can support this population in education.	It is valuable because it gives educators, counsellors, and psychologists insight into the perspectives and experiences of these young people, helping to shape their interventions.	It is valuable because it offers unaccompanied homeless youth a rare opportunity to share their stories. It is hoped that these perspectives will help inform policies, programs, and services for this population.	This research is one of the few studies in the UK that provides valuable insights on the topic from an educational perspective, contributing to the limited body of existing research. However, it lacks some important details on ethics and recruitment, which could have enhanced its validity and overall significance.	This research highlights the resilience of young homeless people in the face of considerable risks. It gives them a platform to express their thoughts on school and the impact of homelessness on their education. Additionally, it opens the door for suggestions for future research stemming from these findings.	The research demonstrated the gap that is currently present in HYPs support systems. It shows that HYP often want support from adults and different support networks but do not always get this. this research is valuable as it shows the want and need for additional support within this population.

Critical Appraisal Question	Edwards (2023)	Havlik & Duckhorn (2023)	Pavlakis & Pryor (2020)	Pescod & Gander (2024)	McKenna & Scanlon (2024)	Pescod (2020)
1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes. The researcher used an antideficit achievement framework to focus on the collective success of students experiencing homelessness.	Yes. The research aimed to shed light on liaisons roles and observations in the college preparation process for youth experiencing homelessness.	Yes. The research wanted to explore how student experiencing homelessness prepare and plan for their postsecondary education and what key assets and challenges shape their experiences.	Yes. The aim of the study was to investigate the barriers and facilitators to HYP's engagement in EET.	Yes. It aimed to explore the findings from the HomeWorks Study- which explored parent and teacher perspectives on how homelessness impacted children's educational access and participation. It aimed to explore the parent part.	Yes. The research aimed to explore educational experiences of young people (16-25) who are currently in education and experiencing homelessness with specific consideration to their motivation towards education.
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes. The research wanted to hear the experiences of the participants time in education.	Yes. The research wanted to hear the views of liaison officers.	Yes. This research wanted to hear from HYP at a specific community-based afterschool centre.	Yes. The research wanted to hear from the staff working with HYP and gain rich data from them.	Yes. Semi-structed interviews were used to explore parental perspectives, focusing on their child's access to education.	Yes. The researcher wanted to hear the voices of HYP. Semi-structured interviews were used to gain this.
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes. In-depth, in-person interviews were used, examining four domains.	Yes. Semi- structured interviews were completed to hear their experiences. These were then explored with grounded theory using a constructivist methodology.	Yes. Interviews and focus groups were used to hear from students and program providers at the centre.	Yes. Semi-structured interviews were used to hear staffs opinions of remaining NEET and support factors for EET.	Yes. A bio-ecological approach was used to consider the children's unique context and the impact and influence of multiple environmental and social factors from their lives.	Yes. Semi-structured interviews were used and analysed using IPA to explore individual themes.

4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the strategy?	Yes. A 10-month outreach program was completed with community stakeholders to find participants.	Yes.	Yes. Participants were students who attended a community-based afterschool centre; identified as Latinx, Black, multiracial, or Asian; were still in the physical custody of a parent/ guardian and were experiencing homelessness.	Yes. Originally this was an internal piece of work at Centrepoint and so all recruitment was completed internally.	Yes. A purposeful sampling approach was used. This approach was supported by organisations and services that provide emergency homeless accommodation.	Yes. 7 Participants were found from a charity and analysed against a rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria.
5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes. Interviews were completed and divided into three sections to support the research issue: life history, concrete experiences of being homeless, how each individual made meaning of their experience.	Yes. Semi-structured interviews were done over the phone or on Skype.	Yes. Interviews, and focus groups were used to explore the complex notions of the community. the young people were able to choose if they wanted to join a focus group or not.	Yes. Participant information and semi-structured interviews were used to hear more from staff.	Yes parents were invited to participate in interviews at a time and place that suited them. 14 interviews took place in a private room at the accommodation sites (school or education setting).	Yes. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data.
6. Has the relationship between the researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Yes. The researcher spoke to their personal experiences of homelessness and being aware that they might bring those views into the room. They also spoke to validity checks.	No.	Yes. Researchers spoke about positionality and their race/age/gender compared to those they were interviewing.	Yes.	No.	Yes. Power and vulnerability were thought about.

Question						
7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Somewhat. The researchers own bringings were identified and explored in the findings but typical ethical procedure around the research was not explored.	Yes. Steps were taken to ensure trustworthiness, minimise bias and improve reliability. Informed consent was also sought.	Yes. Assent and Consent was gained.	Yes. A subsection was dedicated to ethics. Consent and withdrawal are mentioned. Anonymisation and pseudonyms are discussed.	Yes. Ethical approval was obtained from DCU ethics committee. Information forms were given in advance. It was made clear the research was about their perspectives not their personal circumstances. The interview approach was flexible. Consent was obtained. Check-ins occurred. Debriefing occurred.	Yes. The research focused on procedural elements making sure participants and their data were kept safe. Power, vulnerability and the role the research plays in wider society was also thought about.
8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes. The researcher spoke to the four cycles of coding that he completed in trying to answer the research question.	Yes. The researcher explained in detail their Grounded Theory approach.	Yes. All data was transcribed and coded through NVivo 11. Both authors open coded separately to allow themes to naturally emerge.	Yes. Thematic Analysis was used to analyse the data and generate themes.	Yes thematic analysis was used as a framework to guide the analysis.	Yes. IPA was used to explore the individual and the group themes that arose from the interview data.
9. Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes.	Yes. Findings showed that the HYP's basic needs must be supported for college readiness. It also showed that college liaisons were very supportive in HYPs lives.	Yes. Suggested that students had many assets to support them as they prepared for college. There were also a number of barriers that could complicate their aspirations.	Yes. The share that the findings illuminate that HYP are impacted by various contextual factors, which occur at varied levels within their systems	Yes. 5 main themes arose from thematic analysis and within these narratives were shared that included physiological needs, security, routine and predictability, friendship, trust and belonging, relationships.	Yes. 9 themes are shared exploring HYPs voices when thinking about education

10. How valuable is the research?	This research is very valuable as it shows what HYP valued in education. It is also novel as it uses an antideficit framework making the paper feel very positive. This type of paper is currently very rare, with the sparse research that is out there feeling deficit based.	This research was valuable in that it demonstrated through Maslow's hierarchy of needs what HYP need to get to college successfully,	Extremely valuable. This piece of research not only looks into HYP but thinks about the intersections of race. To date the researcher only knows of one other paper that does this.	The research is valuable as it speaks to a population that has little research in the area. The research also uses Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory to psychologically think about the information shared.	This research was valuable as it shared information on an under researched population. It gave a space for parents voices to share how their children are currently experiencing homelessness.	This research is valuable as it explored HYPs voices and their thoughts about education. A lot of the research on this populations ask adults working with this population their views rather than working with the population themselves.

CASP Qualitative Critical Appraisal LRQ2: What are the experiences of using Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) in educational settings?

Critical Appraisal Questions	Carpenter et al. (2023)	Wood et al. (2019)	Hughes et al. (2019)	Morgan (2016)	Bristow (2013)	Haycock (2014)
1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes. The study wanted to use participatory methods with the PATH to collaboratively devise and run a relationship and sex education (RSE) support group.	Yes. The aim was to evaluate the impact of the PATH for CYP with SEND from one local authority in the South of England. Longer-term impact was also investigated through recruiting participants who had participated in PATH up to 6 months previously.	Yes. The aim was to explore the practical use of PCP in education, specifically using the PATH	Yes. Four research questions were formed: (1) What are respondents' perceptions about factors within a solution-focused approach which enhance systemic change? (2) What factors within organisations allow for a solution-focused approach to be useful? (3) How important are practitioners' stylistic presentation and interpersonal skills in the delivery of a solution-focused approach? (4) How does this approach bring about change within organisations?	Yes. The aim of the research was to establish a potential role of the PATH in the process of futures planning for vulnerable and challenging pupils.	Yes. Haycock wanted to explore the impact of the PATH for young people with SEND.

2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes. An exploratory ethnographic case study using participatory action research was used. This allowed access to a depth of knowledge while allowing the creation of many accounts from a single method.	Yes. This methodology fell in line with the inductive exploratory approach used and gave primacy to the data.	Yes, a case study was conducted, and information was gathered from the educational psychologists facilitating the PATH, who also acted as the researchers.	Yes. In-depth detailed data was collected.	Yes. Qualitative methodology was appropriate to hear the CYP's views	Yes, so that the voices and opinions of the young people could be heard.
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes. Action research was used to allow for collaboration and participation between authors and participants (second authors). From this semi-structured interviews, field notes and graphic notes were used.	Yes. An inductive exploratory design was used.	Yes. A qualitative research design was appropriate. Observation data was obtained as the researchers were part of the PATH process. Their thoughts on the process were then shared in the research.	Yes. A qualitative interpretive case-study design was used.	Yes. Semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were used after the PATH was completed with participants.	Yes. Semi-structured interviews were used. Participants had completed the PATH up to 6 months before.
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the strategy?	Yes. Opportunity sampling was used in one special school to recruit pupils aged 4-16.	Yes. Purposive sampling was used to recruit three students with SEND who had been a part of the PATH process in the last six months. In addition, one parent of each student and one member of staff who had been a part of the PATH took part in the research.	Yes. A case study was used with a school that the researcher worked in as an educational psychologist.	Yes. Opportunity sampling was used, with participants having taken part in the PATH in the previous months. Six participants were chosen; a deputy head teacher, a special educational needs coordinator, 3 EPs and a strategic manager.	Yes. Purposive sampling was used. Participants came from a PRU the researcher worked closely with.	Yes. Purposive sampling was used. Participants came from a college and were all completing a course for adults with an intellectual disability.

5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes, participatory action research was used, as well as interviews and surveys to gain different perspectives from staff, teachers and pupils.	Yes. Semi-structured interviews were used to understand the impact of the PATH from students, parents and school staff members. Piloting of the initial interview schedule allowed questions to be refined and led to a final interview schedule.	Yes. Opinions of EPs completing PATHs in school were gained through interviews.	Yes. Semi-structured interviews were used to capture the complexity and unique situation of participants.	Yes. Semi-structured interviews were used and questionnaires to hear the different perspectives of pupils, parents, staff and EPs.	Yes. All pupils had to complete a PATH at their college. Interviews were then used to hear about their experiences of completing this intervention.
6. Has the relationship between the researcher and participants been adequately considered?	No.	No.	No.	Yes, there were considerations about establishing rapport before an interview and how that might influence power dynamics and ethical concerns.	No.	Yes. The researcher had worked with participants' before and spoke about the benefits of this when making participants feel comfortable.

7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes, letters, information sheets, and consent forms were provided to both students and parents. Due to Covid-19, additional ethical considerations arose, necessitating phone interviews and the distribution of further consent forms.	Yes, informed written consent was obtained from parents for both themselves and their children, as well as from the staff. Children and young people were provided with a traffic light system to express their feelings during the interview. All information was kept confidential (with names removed from transcripts and original recordings deleted), and a debrief was provided.	No.	Yes. Consent, confidentiality, withdrawal, and power were discussed.	Yes. Consent and confidentiality were discussed for a variety of parties involved in the research.	Yes. Consent, confidentiality and power dynamics were thought about.
8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes. Telephone interview data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis, supported by participatory thematic analysis.	Yes. Thematic Analysis was used. Three researchers individually transcribed the data. These transcripts were then shared across researchers who read the transcripts. As a group the researchers then searched for and developed themes.	No.	Yes. Grounded Theory was used within a case-study format.	Yes. Thematic Analysis was used.	Somewhat. The author spoke about coding but was not clear on how this was done
9. Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.

10. How valuable is the research?	Research on RSE in special schools, as well as how the PATH can facilitate group thinking and promote a collective voice, is quite limited. This study contributes valuable insights to the existing knowledge in this area, highlighting its significance.	This research is extremely valuable as it is one of the first to explore the impact of the PATH with mainstream children and young people, making it a novel addition to the psychological literature.	This research is valuable as it adds to the growing research around PCP and the PATH in the UK.	This research was beneficial as it answered 4 research questions looking into the workings of the PATH as an intervention.	The research is valuable as it gives insight into the PATH from many different perspectives. This research is specifically valuable to this research thesis as it speaks about EPs use of the PATH, something this paper is doing.	This research was useful as it shared YPs voices about the PATH, something that is new. It adds to the limited research in the field. It is important to note this is MSc level research and so may not have been peer reviewed.

Appendix C

The Joanna Briggs Institute Critical Appraisal Checklist for Systematic Reviews and

Research Syntheses

THE JOANNA BRIGGS INSTITUTE

JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist for Systematic Reviews and Research Syntheses

Reviewer_____Hannah Morris_____Date____28th August 2024_____

Author _____Bowers and O'neil_____Year____2019_____Record Number_____

	Yes	No	Unclear	Not applicable
1. Is the review question clearly and explicitly stated?	☑	☐	☐	☐
2. Were the inclusion criteria appropriate for the review question?	☑	☐	☐	☐
3. Was the search strategy appropriate?	☑	☐	☐	☐
4. Were the sources and resources used to search for studies adequate?	☑	☐	☐	☐
5. Were the criteria for appraising studies appropriate?	☑	☐	☐	☐
6. Was critical appraisal conducted by two or more reviewers independently?	☑	☐	☐	☐
7. Were there methods to minimize errors in data extraction?	☑	☐	☐	☐
8. Were the methods used to combine studies appropriate?	☑	☐	☐	☐
9. Was the likelihood of publication bias assessed?	☑	☐	☐	☐
10. Were recommendations for policy and/or practice supported by the reported data?	☑	☐	☐	☐
11. Were the specific directives for new research appropriate?	☑	☐	☐	☐

Overall appraisal: Include ☑   Exclude ☐   Seek further info ☐

Comments (Including reason for exclusion)

_____

_____

_____

Critical Appraisal Checklist 3
for Systematic Reviews and Research Syntheses

Appendix D

Application for Ethical Review Form

The Tavistock and Portman **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee (TREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL REVIEW OF STUDENT RESEARCH

PROJECTS

This application should be submitted alongside copies of any supporting documentation which will be handed to participants, including a participant information sheet, consent form, self-completion survey or questionnaire.

Where a form is submitted and sections are incomplete, the form will not be considered by TREC and will be returned to the applicant for completion.

For further guidance please contact Paru Jeram (academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk)

FOR ALL APPLICANTS

If you already have ethical approval from another body (including HRA/IRAS) please submit the application form and outcome letters. You need only complete sections of the TREC form which are NOT covered in your existing approval

Is your project considered as 'research' according to the HRA tool?   Yes

(http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/research/index.html)

Will your project involve participants who are under 18 or who are classed as vulnerable?   Yes

(see section 7)

Will your project include data collection outside of the UK?   No

SECTION A: PROJECT DETAILS

Project title	What are young homeless people's experiences on using the 'Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope' (PATH)?		
Proposed project start date	March 2024	**Anticipated project end date**	**June 2025**
Principal Investigator (normally your Research Supervisor): Dr Maria Wedlock			
Please note: TREC approval will only be given for the length of the project as stated above up to a maximum of 6 years. Projects exceeding these timeframes will need additional ethical approval			
Has NHS or other approval been sought for this research including through submission via Research Application System (IRAS) or to the Health Research Authority (HRA)?	**YES (NRES approval)** **YES (HRA approval)** **Other** **NO**		
If you already have ethical approval from another body (including HRA/IRAS) please submit the application form and outcome letters.			

SECTION B: APPLICANT DETAILS

Name of Researcher	Hannah Morris
Programme of Study and Target Award	M4 Doctorate in Child, Community and Educational Psychology
Email address	hmorris@tavi-port.nhs.uk
Contact telephone number	07950586915

SECTION C: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Will any of the researchers or their institutions receive any other benefits or incentives for taking part in this research over and above their normal salary package or the costs of undertaking the research? **YES   NO** If **YES**, please detail below:
Is there any further possibility for conflict of interest? YES   NO

Are you proposing to conduct this work in a location where you work or have a placement?

YES   NO

If **YES**, please detail below outline how you will avoid issues arising around colleagues being involved in this project:

Is your project being commissioned by and/or carried out on behalf of a body external to the Trust? (for example; commissioned by a local authority, school, care home, other NHS Trust or other organisation). *Please note that 'external' is defined as an organisation which is external to the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust (Trust)	**YES NO**
If **YES**, please add details here:	
Will you be required to get further ethical approval after receiving TREC approval? If **YES**, please supply details of the ethical approval bodies below AND include any letters of approval from the ethical approval bodies (letters received after receiving TREC approval should be submitted to complete your record):	**YES NO**
If your project is being undertaken with one or more clinical services or organisations external to the Trust, please provide details of these:	

The project will be taking place with Centrepoint. It has been agreed that I will go to different local authorities across, but remaining in, London that currently have contracts with Centrepoint. There are no additional expectations for ethical approval from the various local authorities. Attached is the letter of approval from Centrepoint, including information about safeguarding.

If you still need to agree these arrangements or if you can only approach organisations after you have ethical approval, please identify the types of organisations (eg. schools or clinical services) you wish to approach:

Do you have approval from the organisations detailed above? (this includes R&D approval where relevant) Please attach approval letters to this application. Any approval letters received after TREC approval has been granted MUST be submitted to be appended to your record	YES NO NA

SECTION D: SIGNATURES AND DECLARATIONS

APPLICANT DECLARATION

I confirm that:

· The information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, correct and up to date.

· I have attempted to identify all risks related to the research.

- I acknowledge my obligations and commitment to upholding ethical principles and to keep my supervisor updated with the progress of my research

- I am aware that for cases of proven misconduct, it may result in formal disciplinary proceedings and/or the cancellation of the proposed research.

- I understand that if my project design, methodology or method of data collection changes I must seek an amendment to my ethical approvals as failure to do so, may result in a report of academic and/or research misconduct.

Applicant (print name)	HANNAH MORRIS
Signed	
Date	20.12.23

FOR RESEARCH DEGREE STUDENT APPLICANTS ONLY

Name of Supervisor/Principal Investigator	DR MARIA WEDLOCK

Supervisor –

- Does the student have the necessary skills to carry out the research?

YES   NO

§ Is the participant information sheet, consent form and any other documentation appropriate?

YES   NO

§ Are the procedures for recruitment of participants and obtaining informed consent suitable and sufficient?

YES   NO

§ Where required, does the researcher have current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance? **YES NO**	
Signed	
Date	01.03.24

COURSE LEAD/RESEARCH LEAD   Does the proposed research as detailed herein have your support to proceed?   YES   NO

Signed	
Date	03.03.2024

SECTION E: DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

1. **Provide a brief description of the proposed research, including the requirements of participants. This must be in lay terms and free from technical or discipline specific terminology or jargon. If such terms are required, please ensure they are adequately explained (Do not exceed 500 words)**

The proposed research will involve young homeless people (YHP) engaging in semi-structured interviews regarding their experience of engaging in a workshop using the person-centred tool, 'The Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope' (PATH) (Pearpoint et al., 1991).

The aim of the PATH is to create a positive vision of the future through solution-focused questioning, creating a colourful graphic of one's future dreams and visions (Wood et al., 2019). The PATH has seen beneficial results in the literature for children and young people (CYP), with themes arising around increased motivation and confidence (Philp & Brown, 2017; Wood et al., 2019).

Participants will be recruited from Centrepoint, a homeless charity for young people. They will be asked to attend an initial meeting where the nature of the study will be explained. At this point information sheets and consent forms will be shared, which they can take with them to give ample time to digest and understand the study, before deciding whether to consent.

The research will involve asking YHP to engage in the PATH. The completion of the PATH will involve the YHP being in a room with myself, an assistant psychologist from Centrepoint, to help with graphic facilitation, and a minimum of two people, of their choice, from their ecological system i.e., their centre point support worker or a family member. The PATH will take between 60-120 minutes to complete. The researcher has had some teaching on the PATH as part of the Doctorate in Child, Community and Educational Psychology and has undertaken further training at Merton Local Authority.

After this task has been completed the YHP will be invited to engage in a semi-structured interview, with the aim of exploring their personal experiences of the PATH. This will occur on the same day, after an hour break, as discussed in a meeting with Centrepoint. The interview will involve participants engaging 1:1 with myself in a semi-structured interview (see interview schedule: Appendix E). This will last no more than an hour. The recording of the interview data will be collected with a digital recording device before being transcribed, analysed and encrypted to ensure confidentiality. Both the completion of the PATH and the interviews will take place in a building used by Centrepoint, therefore within a space known to the participants.

The data will then be analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis as to support the understanding of the unique ways that the young people will have experienced the PATH.

There will be a group feedback session after data analysis. All participants will be invited, by email, to attend the feedback session, and this will be in the same Centrepoint building. This session will be no longer than an hour and will involve the researcher providing feedback on the findings from

the study, giving participants the opportunity to comment and ask any questions they may have. The participants PATHs will not be shared as the contents of these are specific and confidential to individuals.

2. **Provide a statement on the aims and significance of the proposed research, including potential impact to knowledge and understanding in the field (where appropriate, indicate the associated hypothesis which will be tested). This should be a clear justification of the proposed research, why it should proceed and a statement on any anticipated benefits to the community. (Do not exceed 700 words)**

The relationship between education and homelessness is complex with a lack of support currently being offered to help YHP navigate through this stage of their lives (HomelessLink, 2018). The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the Centre for Homelessness Impact (CHI) have created a joint set of guidelines on integrated health and social care for people experiencing homelessness (NICE & CHI, 2022). Incorporating more person-centred ways of working with homeless people is discussed in these guidelines, with the PATH being an example of a person-centred tool.

The research aims to give a voice to a population which so far has been relatively unheard in the education system, by exploring their views of a tool that has been successful with many other populations (Wood et al., 2019). Young homeless people have shared their keenness to access services to help with their education (Hallett & Freas, 2018) and this research aims to support this. There is also a lack of understanding from professionals of what may be needed to support this population (Lopez, 2020), and it is hoped this research will aid their thinking.

The PATH is a person-centred tool and was developed by Pearpoint et al., (1991). Four published studies in the UK have looked at the use of the PATH with children:

· Interviews with young people in a secondary mainstream setting, their parents and, their teachers (Wood et al., 2019)
· Interviews with two facilitators thinking about the views of the young people in a mainstream setting (Trainor, 2007)
· Interviews with vulnerable young people not attending a mainstream setting, their families, staff, and PATH facilitators (Bristow, 2013)
· Interviews with young people and teachers in a specialist setting (Philip and Brown, 2017)

The findings from these qualitative studies have been positive but it is clear that more research needs to be conducted in order to explore the PATH and its use with a wider range of individuals and settings.

Currently, at Centrepoint YHP who are aspiring for education complete a skill mapper (Appendix F) which is a document that supports them to think about their future, focusing on immediate goals, next steps, who can help, target date, and whether the goal was achieved. The PATH is more in-depth than this document but is underpinned by similar person-centred and goal-based approaches. This research hopes to augment the care already afforded to the YHP at Centrepoint and gain new information around their experiences of the PATH.

This piece of research hopes to support professionals and the general population, to gain a greater understanding of ways we can support YHP into education. This piece of research will focus on the voice and ideas of young homeless people within the area of education. It is also hoped that

through the research, the researcher is able to support the YHP that are participants, co-creating a PATH with them where they can visualise their goals and potential next steps.

The proposed research aims to explore the utility of the PATH as a tool for YHP through exploring how it is experienced by this group of young people.

3. **Provide an outline of the methodology for the proposed research, including proposed method of data collection,** *tasks* **assigned to participants of the research and the proposed method and duration of data analysis. If the proposed research makes use of pre-established and generally accepted techniques, please make this clear. (Do not exceed 500 words)**

This research will use a qualitative methodology, underpinned by a relativist ontology and constructivist epistemology. From a constructivist perspective, it is thought that participants who engage with the PATH tool will experience this in a unique way, dependent on their individual experiences and contexts. The research does not aim to discover a single, generalisable finding, instead exploring insights into individual experiences from the participants' unique perspectives.

An initial meeting will be facilitated with the YHP describing the purpose of the study, allowing a space for them to express their interest in taking part and ask any queries. The purpose of this is to make sure any potential participants feel fully informed before agreeing to take part in the research. It will also explain in detail all parts of the study, including the process of the PATH and what it looks like, the interview stage and the feedback stage.

For those who give their consent to participate, they will be asked to attend a session where they will complete the PATH with myself and an assistant psychologist who works for Centrepoint. A minimum of 2 and maximum of 7 members of the young person's system will also be in attendance. This session will be between 60-120 minutes long and will be conducted in a Centrepoint owned building.

After an hour break, a semi-structured interview will take place by the researcher, who will have facilitated the PATH tool. The interviewer will therefore already be familiar to the interviewee and support them to feel more at ease in the scenario. The interview will be approximately 1 hour long and will be conducted in the same building. The purpose of the interview is to get the individual's experience and perception of the PATH, hence best realised via individual interviews. The semi-structured nature of the interview will allow the researcher to adopt an explorative approach, moving and adapting to the individual experiences of each participant whilst maintaining a list of set questions.

Interview data will be analysed through interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). IPA is an idiographic approach, that explores the meaning of experience. IPA recognises that experiences will be unique to individuals and does not seek to make broad generalisations (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). IPA values the influence of the researcher, acknowledging that any findings are an interpretation of a participants account. Below are the 6 steps that will be followed in the analysis:
1. Reading and re-reading
2. Initial noting
3. Developing emergent themes
4. Searching for connections across emergent themes
5. Moving to the next case
6. Looking for patterns across cases

The researcher will conduct a group feedback meeting with the participants, after all the data has been collected and analysed. This meeting will feedback the results of the analysis and explore the young people's opinions on what was found. The space will also be used as a second space to debrief.

SECTION F: PARTICIPANT DETAILS

4. Provide an explanation detailing how you will identify, approach and recruit the participants for the proposed research, including clarification on sample size and location. Please provide justification for the exclusion/inclusion criteria for this study (i.e. who will be allowed to / not allowed to participate) and explain briefly, in lay terms, why these criteria are in place. (Do not exceed 500 words)

Centrepoint is a charity based in London which supports young people who are no longer living with their family. Centrepoint support young people by housing them and giving them access to their services. Recruitment of this research will be supported by Centrepoint.

Marc Pescod, an Educational Psychologist, employed at Centrepoint, will support the researcher in approaching, selecting and contacting the YHP accessing their services. Three meetings have been had with Marc and an additional meeting with the safeguarding lead to discuss the best way to recruit participants. Inclusions and exclusion criteria will be shared with the professionals, and they will help share the research idea with the young people in their service. An initial meeting will then be held with the researcher to share more information about the research and the professionals at Centrepoint will help guide YHP to this meeting if they meet the research criteria. This meeting will be used to support the potential participants to get fully informed before agreeing to take part in the research and sign a consent form. It will also allow the researcher to make sure all participants fit the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Exclusion/ inclusion criteria
Due to the focus of the research, participants will be recruited if they are currently accessing support in Centrepoint around aspiring for education, employment, and training, from the information, advice and guidance team. This is an area of support offered at Centrepoint where the YHP has already asked or agreed for support in this area and is then given a variety of support to help them try to transition back into education, employment, or training. The participants will be aged between 16-19. This age group was selected as it is the oldest age you are legally expected to access full time education. Older participants were selected to make sure participants were capable to coherently reflect on their experience of the PATH and link this to any future steps or engagement with education.

However, the potential difficulty in recruiting individuals from this population might mean the inclusion criteria needs to be broader. In this case participants who have just begun accessing education, employment or training will be considered. They will still need to be between the ages of 16-19.

There will be no inclusion or exclusion criteria in relation to gender, learning disability, language, culture or ethnic background.

Sample size

The researcher will look to recruit 6-8 participants due to the focus on in-depth experiences of specific individuals. Smith et al (2022) shared that 6 participants are appropriate when completing IPA and is a further reason for this decision. As research like this is yet to be completed, it is unclear how much the participants will have to say about their experience during the interview. With this in mind, the researcher will consider the amount of data collected after 6 participants and extend the number to 8 if needed.

5. **Please state the location(s) of the proposed research including the location of any interviews. Please provide a Risk Assessment if required. Consideration should be given to lone working, visiting private residences, conducting research outside working hours or any other non-standard arrangements.**

    If any data collection is to be done online, please identify the platforms to be used.

All research with be completed in a building owned by Centrepoint. During the completion of the PATH a minimum of 2 members of staff from Centrepoint will be present in the room. There will also be an assistant psychologist to help with the graphic facilitation of the PATH. Centrepoint's current policy is that a risk assessment is only needed if the researcher is alone with the YHP

and therefore one is not needed for this section of the research as Centrepoint staff will be present.

During the interview the researcher will be alone with the young person. Please see risk assessment (Appendix A) for more information.

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6. Will the participants be from any of the following groups? *(Tick as appropriate)*

Students or Staff of the Trust or Partner delivering your programme.

Adults (over the age of 18 years with mental capacity to give consent to participate in the research).

Children or legal minors (anyone under the age of 16 years)[1]

Adults who are unconscious, severely ill or have a terminal illness.

Adults who may lose mental capacity to consent during the course of the research.

Adults in emergency situations.

Adults[2] with mental illness - particularly those detained under the Mental Health Act (1983 & 2007).

Participants who may lack capacity to consent to participate in the research under the research requirements of the Mental Capacity Act (2005).

Prisoners, where ethical approval may be required from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).

Young Offenders, where ethical approval may be required from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).

Healthy volunteers (in high risk intervention studies).

Participants who may be considered to have a pre-existing and potentially dependent[3] relationship with the investigator (e.g. those in care homes, students, colleagues, service-users, patients).

Other vulnerable groups (see Question 6).

Adults who are in custody, custodial care, or for whom a court has assumed responsibility.

Participants who are members of the Armed Forces.

[1] *If the proposed research involves children or adults who meet the Police Act (1997) definition of vulnerability[3], any researchers who will have contact with participants must have current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance.*

[2] *'Adults with a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness, or a reduction in physical or mental capacity, and living in a care home or home for people with learning difficulties or receiving care in their own home, or receiving hospital or social care services.' (Police Act, 1997)*

[3] *Proposed research involving participants with whom the investigator or researcher(s) shares a dependent or unequal relationships (e.g. teacher/student, clinical therapist/service-user) may compromise the ability to give informed consent which is free from any form of pressure (real or implied) arising from this relationship. TREC recommends that, wherever practicable, investigators choose participants with whom they have no dependent relationship. Following due scrutiny, if the investigator is confident that the research involving participants in dependent relationships is vital and defensible, TREC will require additional information setting out the case and detailing how risks inherent in the dependent relationship will be managed. TREC will also need to be reassured that refusal to participate will not result in any discrimination or penalty.*

7. Will the study involve participants who are vulnerable? YES   NO

For the purposes of research, 'vulnerable' participants may be adults whose ability to protect their own interests are impaired or reduced in comparison to that of the broader population. Vulnerability may arise from:

- the participant's personal characteristics (e.g. mental or physical impairment)
- their social environment, context and/or disadvantage (e.g. socio-economic mobility, educational attainment, resources, substance dependence, displacement or homelessness).
- where prospective participants are at high risk of consenting under duress, or as a result of manipulation or coercion, they must also be considered as vulnerable
- children are automatically presumed to be vulnerable.

7.1. If YES, what special arrangements are in place to protect vulnerable participants' interests?

Consent

A consent form and information sheet have been created for the young people. Simple language and pictures have been used to help the young people understand what is being asked of them. The young people are able to go away with these sheets, giving them ample time to digest the information.

Initial meeting

An initial meeting will be held to support the young people to understand the purpose of the study and what will be involved if they wish to take part. It will be explicit as to why this population is being researched i.e. in the hope of enabling professionals to better meet the needs of young homeless people and support them back into education. If any of the young people are unsure about the purpose of the research or have any further questions, there will be an opportunity to ask the researcher any questions without being obligated to be involved. This research will also be discussed with the Centrepoint workers so that if the young people want to speak about it after the meeting, and gain any clarification, they can.

PATH and the Interview
Right to withdraw

It will be made clear by the researcher, that all individuals have the right to withdraw at any point throughout the PATH and the interview and have no obligation to remain involved for any longer than they want to. If a participant decides midway through the research, they don't wish to participate they will be allowed to leave, and the information recorded will be destroyed. At the point of starting analysis, the young person will no longer be able to have their data removed. This has been shared in the consent form and will be reiterated after the interview.

Confidentiality

The researcher will respect participant's confidentiality and data shared will not be given with any identifiable information. This is to support the population to feel safe that no information is shared with anyone outside of the research. All data will be de-identified.

Feedback meeting

A feedback meeting will be arranged, after the completion of the research, but before the research is reported and disseminated, to encourage the young people to give their opinion on how their views have been interpreted and presented in the research. This is an opportunity for them to express any concerns or queries they may have and ask any final questions.

If YES, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check **within the last three years** is required.

Please provide details of the "clear disclosure":

Date of disclosure: 22.7.2023
Type of disclosure: Enhanced Certificate
Organisation that requested disclosure: Original: EdPsychs Ltd Update by: The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation
DBS certificate number: 001704035828

(NOTE: information concerning activities which require DBS checks can be found via

*https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-check-eligible-positions-guidance). Please **do***

***not** include a copy of your DBS certificate with your application*

8. **Do you propose to make any form of payment or incentive available to participants of the research? YES   NO**

If **YES**, please provide details taking into account that any payment or incentive should be representative of reasonable remuneration for participation and may not be of a value that could be coercive or exerting undue influence on potential participants' decision to take part in the research. Wherever possible, remuneration in a monetary form should be avoided and substituted with vouchers, coupons or equivalent. Any payment made to research participants may have benefit or HMRC implications and participants should be alerted to this in the participant information sheet as they may wish to choose to decline payment.

While no payments will be offered, the young person will have the benefit of accessing the PATH intervention and completing a PATH that may be able to support them with future aspirations and goals.

9. **What special arrangements are in place for eliciting informed consent from participants who may not adequately understand verbal explanations or written information provided in English; where participants have special communication needs; where participants have limited literacy; or where children are involved in the research? (Do not exceed 200 words)**

Supporting resources, such as the consent form and information sheets, will be as free from jargon and academic language as possible. Participants' educational experiences are unknown and therefore it is important to consider making the processes of the research as easy to access as possible.

The initial meeting for participants will be a chance for individuals of all abilities to attend, to explore the purpose of the research, discuss what is involved, decide whether they want to participate and ask any questions in a safe, casual environment.

I will make myself available for the young people, either through email or in person at Centrepoint, if any of the young people want to have a conversation about being involved in the research and wanting to learn more.

I have spoken to the Educational Psychologist and safeguarding lead at Centrepoint to discuss my research and think about how it will work. They have agreed to be available if a young person might need further explanation of what is involved. They have also agreed to share the research information with the Centrepoint support workers so if the young people have questions, they want to explore with their support worker, at a different time, they can.

SECTION F: RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

10. Does the proposed research involve any of the following? *(Tick as appropriate)*

use of a questionnaire, self-completion survey or data-collection instrument (attach copy)

use of emails or the internet as a means of data collection

use of written or computerised tests

interviews (attach interview questions)

diaries (attach diary record form)

participant observation

participant observation (in a non-public place) without their knowledge / covert research

audio-recording interviewees or events

video-recording interviewees or events

access to personal and/or sensitive data (i.e. student, patient, client or service-user data) without the participant's informed consent for use of these data for research purposes

administration of any questions, tasks, investigations, procedures or stimuli which may be experienced by participants as physically or mentally painful, stressful or unpleasant during or after the research process

performance of any acts which might diminish the self-esteem of participants or cause them to experience discomfiture, regret or any other adverse emotional or psychological reaction

Themes around extremism or radicalisation

investigation of participants involved in illegal or illicit activities (e.g. use of illegal drugs)

procedures that involve the deception of participants

administration of any substance or agent

use of non-treatment of placebo control conditions

participation in a clinical trial

research undertaken at an off-campus location (<u>risk assessment attached</u>)

research overseas (<u>please ensure Section G is complete</u>)

11. Does the proposed research involve any specific or anticipated risks (e.g. physical, psychological, social, legal or economic) to participants that are greater than those encountered in everyday life?

YES   NO

If **YES**, please describe below including details of precautionary measures.

Although it is not anticipated, it is possible that the PATH may elicit responses of distress. Where the young person is speaking about their current life, as well as a future goals, painful thoughts and feelings could occur. There is also a possibility the semi-structured interview could elicit responses of distress. This might happen due to information being shared in the PATH being linked to a difficult time in the young person's life and hence bringing negative experiences to their conscious thought. This topic of conversation may then come up in the interview and be spoken about again.

12. Where the procedures involve potential hazards and/or discomfort or distress for participants, please state what previous experience the investigator or researcher(s) have had in conducting this type of research.

In the event that a participant does become upset or distressed during the research, the researcher has previous experience of carrying out research with vulnerable participant groups. In this study the researcher has arranged interviews and feedback groups. The researcher had to be aware of participants mental states, make sure participants could withdraw from the research if they wanted and remain present if a case conversation arose around uncomfortable thoughts or experiences that had occurred through the interviews or feedback groups.

Currently, the researcher is studying and working in a profession which requires them to talk and support young people exploring different aspects of their education and helping them to access college and the community. The researcher has experience of working with young people, supporting them throughout their time in education as well as after they have demonstrated some level of distress and upset.

The researcher also has access to regular supervision.

13. Provide an explanation of any potential benefits to participants. Please ensure this is framed within the overall contribution of the proposed research to knowledge or practice. (Do not exceed 400 words)

NOTE: Where the proposed research involves students, they should be assured that accepting the offer to participate or choosing to decline will have no impact on their assessments or learning experience. Similarly, it should be made clear to participants who are patients, service-users and/or receiving any form of treatment or medication that they are not invited to participate in the belief that participation in the research will result in some relief or improvement in their condition.

The research hopes to benefit the participants through the process of completing the PATH, allowing them to formulate a goal that will guide their next steps, as well as building on relational aspects with the other people in the room.

In addition, the purpose of the study is to better improve professionals' understanding of what may support this population to start their return into education. Therefore, through taking part, the participants will be supporting the capacity of professionals to better understand their experience of the intervention and consequently, will be able to better support YHP to create a set of education-based goals to use when aspiring for education. This will contribute to filling a gap in research literature and this increase in knowledge may benefit the participants and YHP in general in the future.

Voice-centred research for YHP is currently lacking, and it is hoped that this piece of research can add to this research pool.

14. **Provide an outline of any measures you have in place in the event of adverse or unexpected outcomes and the potential impact this may have on participants involved in the proposed research. (Do not exceed 300 words)**

PATH

The researcher will provide a check in at the start and end of the PATH intervention. Participants will be asked to choose from a selection of words to gage how they are feeling. These words will be preselected and presented on a page with pictures to help stimulate thinking. Using this multimodal approach hopes to support the young people to process the work. Having choices of words hopes to alleviate pressure from the young people. The researcher is aware that as there will be multiple people in the room, the environment may get overwhelming. To support this, the researcher will let the participant know they can have a break at any point, whether that be pausing the PATH intervention, or giving space to leave the room and have another pre-determined safe space to go to within Centrepoint.

Interview

The researcher will be conducting 1:1 interviews with the participants and therefore will have the opportunity to check-in with the participant whenever they feel they might be in distress. The researcher will do a check in before starting the interview, and at points throughout the interview. This check-in will be similar to the PATH, with a page of words and pictures being available to support the young person's thoughts at the time. At the end of the interview, time will be saved for the participant in case they need some space to talk about any distress or upset. The researcher will make themselves available to support the young person. To support with distress that may have occurred, signposting will be available to the Centrepoint psychological team, led by Marc Pescod, Educational Psychologist. Further referrals within Centrepoint will be made if necessary. External signposting will also be shared, including The Centrepoint Helpline, Samaritans, and the young person's GP surgery.

15. **Provide an outline of your debriefing, support and feedback protocol for participants involved in the proposed research. This should include, for example, where participants may feel the need to discuss thoughts or feelings brought about following their participation in the research. This may involve referral to an external support or counseling service, where participation in the research has caused specific issues for participants.**

At the end of the interview the researcher will remind the participants of their right to withdraw at any time. It will be made clear that this will be available up to the point of analysis as at this point the data will be collated. The researcher will also remind participants that they have the opportunity to discuss any further questions or anything that might be causing distress or concern directly after the interview with the researcher.

The researcher will signpost the young people to their case workers within Centrepoint or external organizations that are available to support them.

The feedback session will be an additional opportunity for the participants to express their views or opinions on the research and its findings. This is a time to debrief the participants on the research as a whole.

16. **Please provide the names and nature of any external support or counselling organisations that will be suggested to participants if participation in the research has potential to raise specific issues for participants.**
After the intervention there will be a member of the Centrepoint psychological team available to support the participants. This will be set up by the Educational Psychologist at Centrepoint. Referrals within Centrepoint will be made by that member of staff when necessary. The Centrepoint Helpline, Samaritans and the young person's GP surgery will also be signposted.
17. **Where medical aftercare may be necessary, this should include details of the treatment available to participants. Debriefing may involve the disclosure of further information on the aims of the research, the participant's performance and/or the results of the research. (Do not exceed 500 words)**
N/A

FOR RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN OUTSIDE THE UK

18. Does the proposed research involve travel outside of the UK?

YES NO

If YES, please confirm:

I have consulted the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website for guidance/travel advice? http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/

I have completed ta RISK Assessment covering all aspects of the project including consideration of the location of the data collection and risks to participants.

All overseas project data collection will need approval from the Deputy Director of Education and Training or their nominee. Normally this will be done based on the information provided in this form. All projects approved through the TREC process will be indemnified by the Trust against claims made by third parties.

If you have any queries regarding research outside the UK, please contact academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk:

Students are required to arrange their own travel and medical insurance to cover project work outside of the UK. Please indicate what insurance cover you have or will have in place.

N/A

19. Please evidence how compliance with all local research ethics and research governance requirements have been assessed for the country(ies) in which the research is taking place. Please also clarify how the requirements will be met:

N/A

SECTION G: PARTICIPANT CONSENT AND WITHDRAWAL

20. Have you attached a copy of your participant information sheet (this should be in *plain English*)? Where the research involves non-English speaking participants, please include translated materials. **YES   NO** If **NO**, please indicate what alternative arrangements are in place below:
21. Have you attached a copy of your participant consent form (this should be in *plain English*)? Where the research involves non-English speaking participants, please include translated materials. **YES   NO** If **NO**, please indicate what alternative arrangements are in place below:

22. The following is a <u>participant information sheet</u> checklist covering the various points that should be included in this document.

Clear identification of the Trust as the sponsor for the research, the project title, the Researcher and Principal Investigator (your Research Supervisor) and other researchers along with relevant contact details.

Details of what involvement in the proposed research will require (e.g., participation in interviews, completion of questionnaire, audio/video-recording of events), estimated time commitment and any risks involved.

A statement confirming that the research has received formal approval from TREC or other ethics body.

If the sample size is small, advice to participants that this may have implications for confidentiality / anonymity.

A clear statement that where participants are in a dependent relationship with any of the researchers that participation in the research will have no impact on assessment / treatment / service-use or support.

Assurance that involvement in the project is voluntary and that participants are free to withdraw consent at any time, and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.

Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

A statement that the data generated in the course of the research will be retained in accordance with the Trusts 's Data Protection and handling Policies.: https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/about-us/governance/policies-and-procedures/

Advice that if participants have any concerns about the conduct of the investigator, researcher(s) or any other aspect of this research project, they should contact Head of Academic Registry (academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk)

Confirmation on any limitations in confidentiality where disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others may occur.

23. The following is a <u>consent form</u> checklist covering the various points that should be included in this document.

Trust letterhead or logo.

Title of the project (with research degree projects this need not necessarily be the title of the thesis) and names of investigators.

Confirmation that the research project is part of a degree

Confirmation that involvement in the project is voluntary and that participants are free to withdraw at any time, or to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.

Confirmation of particular requirements of participants, including for example whether interviews are to be audio-/video-recorded, whether anonymised quotes will be used in publications advice of legal limitations to data confidentiality.

If the sample size is small, confirmation that this may have implications for anonymity any other relevant information.

The proposed method of publication or dissemination of the research findings.

Details of any external contractors or partner institutions involved in the research.

Details of any funding bodies or research councils supporting the research.

Confirmation on any limitations in confidentiality where disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others may occur.

SECTION H: CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

24. Below is a checklist covering key points relating to the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. Please indicate where relevant to the proposed research.

Participants will be completely anonymised and their identity will not be known by the investigator or researcher(s) (i.e. the participants are part of an anonymous randomised sample and return responses with no form of personal identification)?

The responses are anonymised or are an anonymised sample (i.e. a permanent process of coding has been carried out whereby direct and indirect identifiers have been removed from data and replaced by a code, with <u>no</u> record retained of how the code relates to the identifiers).

The samples and data are de-identified (i.e. direct and indirect identifiers have been removed and replaced by a code. The investigator or researchers <u>are</u> able to link the code to the original identifiers and isolate the participant to whom the sample or data relates).

Participants have the option of being identified in a publication that will arise from the research.

Participants will be pseudo-anonymised in a publication that will arise from the research. (i.e. the researcher will endeavour to remove or alter details that would identify the participant.)

The proposed research will make use of personal sensitive data.

Participants consent to be identified in the study and subsequent dissemination of research findings and/or publication.

In writing this research, the researcher will present findings in such a way as to preserve the anonymity of participants with specific identifiable details e.g. gender or ethnicity. The researcher does acknowledge that due to the small size of participants there is a limitation to the extent in which the researcher can maintain the participant's information as confidential.

25. Participants must be made aware that the confidentiality of the information they provide is subject to legal limitations in data confidentiality (i.e. the data may be subject to a subpoena, a freedom of information request or mandated reporting by some professions). This only applies to named or de-identified data. If your participants are named or de-identified, please confirm that you will specifically state these limitations.

YES   NO

If **NO**, please indicate why this is the case below:

NOTE: WHERE THE PROPOSED RESEARCH INVOLVES A SMALL SAMPLE OR FOCUS

GROUP, PARTICIPANTS SHOULD BE ADVISED THAT THERE WILL BE DISTINCT

LIMITATIONS IN THE LEVEL OF ANONYMITY THEY CAN BE AFFORDED.

SECTION I: DATA ACCESS, SECURITY AND MANAGEMENT

26. Will the Researcher/Principal Investigator be responsible for the security of all data collected in connection with the proposed research? YES   NO

If **NO**, please indicate what alternative arrangements are in place below:

27. In line with the 5th principle of the Data Protection Act (1998), which states that personal data shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes for which it was collected; please state how long data will be retained for.

1-2 years   3-5 years   6-10 years   10> years

NOTE: In line with Research Councils UK (RCUK) guidance, doctoral project data should normally be stored for 10 years and Masters level data for up to 2 years

28. **Below is a checklist which relates to the management, storage and secure destruction of data for the purposes of the proposed research. Please indicate where relevant to your proposed arrangements.**

Research data, codes and all identifying information to be kept in separate locked filing cabinets.

Research data will only be stored in the University of Essex OneDrive system and no other cloud storage location.

Access to computer files to be available to research team by password only.

Access to computer files to be available to individuals outside the research team by password only (See **23.1**).

Research data will be encrypted and transferred electronically within the UK.

Research data will be encrypted and transferred electronically outside of the UK.

NOTE: Transfer of research data via third party commercial file sharing services, such as Google Docs and YouSendIt are not necessarily secure or permanent. These systems may also be located overseas and not covered by UK law. If the system is located outside the European Economic Area (EEA) or territories deemed to have sufficient standards of data protection, transfer may also breach the Data Protection Act (1998).

Essex students also have access the 'Box' service for file transfer: https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/it-services/box

Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, e-mails or telephone numbers.

Collection and storage of personal sensitive data (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political or religious beliefs or physical or mental health or condition).

Use of personal data in the form of audio or video recordings.

Primary data gathered on encrypted mobile devices (i.e. laptops).

NOTE: This should be transferred to secure University of Essex OneDrive at the first opportunity.

All electronic data will undergo secure disposal.

NOTE: For hard drives and magnetic storage devices (HDD or SSD), deleting files does not permanently erase the data on most systems, but only deletes the reference to the file. Files can be restored when deleted in this way. Research files must be overwritten to ensure they are completely irretrievable. Software is available for the secure erasing of files from hard drives which meet recognised standards to securely scramble sensitive data. Examples of this software are BC Wipe, Wipe File, DeleteOnClick and Eraser for Windows platforms. Mac users can use the standard 'secure empty trash' option; an alternative is Permanent eraser software.

All hardcopy data will undergo secure disposal.

NOTE: For shredding research data stored in hardcopy (i.e. paper), adopting DIN 3 ensures files are cut into 2mm strips or confetti like cross-cut particles of 4x40mm. The UK government requires a minimum standard of DIN 4 for its material, which ensures crosscut particles of at least 2x15mm.

29. Please provide details of individuals outside the research team who will be given password protected access to encrypted data for the proposed research.
N/A
30. Please provide details on the regions and territories where research data will be electronically transferred that are external to the UK:

N/A

SECTION J: PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

30. How will the results of the research be reported and disseminated? *(Select all that apply)*

Peer reviewed journal

Non-peer reviewed journal

Peer reviewed books

Publication in media, social media or website (including Podcasts and online videos)

Conference presentation

Internal report

Promotional report and materials

Reports compiled for or on behalf of external organisations

Dissertation/Thesis

Other publication

Written feedback to research participants

Presentation to participants or relevant community groups

Other (Please specify below)

SECTION K: OTHER ETHICAL ISSUES

31. Are there any other ethical issues that have not been addressed which you would wish to bring to the attention of Tavistock Research Ethics Committee (TREC)?

Upsetting narratives about the participants lives and personal information may be spoken about during the PATH and in the semi-structured interviews which could cause distress to the young people.

Due to the nature of the research, the researcher will also have structures in place to manage their own well-being. This will include a self-care plan and monthly supervision sessions.

SECTION L: CHECKLIST FOR ATTACHED DOCUMENTS

32. Please check that the following documents are attached to your application.

Letters of approval from any external ethical approval bodies (where relevant)

Recruitment advertisement

Participant information sheets (including easy-read where relevant) (Appendix B)

Consent forms (including easy-read where relevant) (Appendix C)

Assent form for children (where relevant)

Letters of approval from locations for data collection (Appendix D)

Questionnaire

Interview Schedule or topic guide (Appendix E)

Risk Assessment (where applicable)

Overseas travel approval (where applicable)

34. Where it is not possible to attach the above materials, please provide an explanation below.

Appendix A: Fieldwork Risk Assessment Audit

Name: Hannah Morris	School: Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust
Student number: 22002862	Supervisor / Director of Studies: Maria Wedlock
Thesis Title: Young homeless people's experiences of 'The Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope' (PATH) intervention: An exploration.	
Fieldwork location: Institutional setting/Centrepoint Building	Type of Fieldwork: Face-to-Face completion of 'The Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope' intervention and Interviews.
Proposed dates or periods of Fieldwork: March 2024- June 2025	

Potential hazards or risks: *(rate high medium or low)*	
1. Young person might become aggressive towards researcher (Low)	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.
7.	8.
9.	10.

Potential Consequences for each hazard: *(please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)*
The young person might become aggressive towards researcher during the interview: The interviewer might be hurt during the interview if the interviewee gets aggressive and/or violent within the interview. This would mean the interviewer is at risk of minor or serious harm and could result in the interviewee going through legal implications.

Controls in place for each hazard in order of likely risk: *(please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)*

Interviewee might become aggressive towards researcher:

- Interviewer to be aware how issues such as values and culture can affect interviewee's emotional state. In addition, how the use of recording equipment and body language might impact on individual's emotions.

- Check the interviewee is the person they say they are at beginning of the interview

- Check the questions/prompts being asked/used with supervisor and ethics committee to ensure they are not overtly provocative

- Let the interviewee know they can leave when they want, if they get upset or frustrated.

- Let the interviewee know they do not have to answer any questions they do not feel comfortable with.

- Discuss with a member of Centrepoint staff where I will be and how long (approximately) the interview will be. Check in and out with this individual before and after interview/s

- Inform an individual outside of the building where I will be and approximately how long for. Check in and out with this individual before and after interview/s

By signing this document you are indicating that you have consulted the policy and have fully considered the risks.	I agree to the assessment of risk in relation to this project.
Signature of Student:	Signature of Supervisor of Studies:

Date: 29.02.24

Date: 25.01.24

Appendix B- Information Sheet and Visual information sheet

Information sheet

The following information is provided to ensure that you have a clear understanding of the current research and what would happen if you would like to be involved. The information is shared with you so that you can me know if you want to take part.

Research title:

What are young homeless people's experiences on using the 'Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope' (PATH)?

Who is doing the research?

My name is Hannah Morris, and I am currently studying a course in Child, Community and Educational Psychology at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust. I am carrying out this research and writing it up for my doctoral thesis, something that is a part of my training.

My Research Supervisor is Dr Maria Wedlock and she will be helping me with this piece of research.

What is the aim and purpose of this research?

The aim of this research is to explore the experiences of young homeless people when completing an intervention called The 'Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope' (The PATH). This intervention asks you to think of goal(s) and then helps you to start working out what you will need to do to move towards them. It uses visuals to do this helping you to create your own 'path' to get to your goal(s). It also asks you to bring some people you trust to the intervention, such as your Centrepoint worker. This is so they

can help you think about how you will reach your goal(s). After this intervention, the researcher hopes to gain your perspectives of the work and what it felt like completing the task.

The aim is to give professionals working in education an insight and knowledge into your experiences of the PATH to help them better understand what interventions can be used to support young homeless people. This will hopefully allow them to better support young people in this situation in the future.

What happens if I take part?

If you wish to take part in the research you will be invited to complete the PATH with me, and some people close to you. It is up to you how many people you ask to join in with your PATH, as long as there are a minimum of two people with you and no more than eight. You will then be asked to complete an interview with only me. Both of these activities will take place in a Centrepoint building at a time agreed between us. At the beginning of the PATH and interview I will explain what will happen and you'll be given space to ask any questions.

For the PATH section, we will complete the intervention together, where I will ask you some questions about your goal(s) and guide you to think about how to move closer towards your goals. There will be an Assistant psychologist with me from Centrepoint who will be drawing out what we discuss so that it looks like a PATH to your goal. This section should take between 60-120 minutes. If you want to learn some more about the PATH, please see the 'The PATH information sheet' at the bottom of this sheet or follow this link to see any videos: https://westsussex.local-offer.org/information_pages/128-person-centred-planning-pcp-path-training-videos.

During the interview I will then ask you questions about your experiences of the PATH. This interview will take around 45-60 minutes and the session will be audio recorded. At the end of the interview, you will be given time to ask any further questions. It is important to note that you do not need to talk about anything you do not wish to during the interview.

After the analysis phase of the research, you will be invited to attend a meeting where I will feedback the results.

What are the benefits and risks?

This study is an opportunity for you to share your thoughts on this specific intervention and for it to be heard by a wider group. The research aims to be published so it can be read by professionals working in education to support them to get a better understanding.

You will be given space to create your own PATH, thinking about your goals in relation to education, and then given support to think about how to get to those goals. You are able to take this visual away with you, if you would like, and can hopefully use it when thinking of your goals in the future.

There is little risk involved in participating in this study. However, when talking about your PATH, past experiences may be brought up which can sometimes be upsetting or distressing. If you do begin to feel like this, I can stop the interview or will be able to talk to you afterwards. In this situation you will also be given information about other people or organisations who may be able to help you. It is important to note that involvement in this research will have no impact on the support you get from Centrepoint.

What will happen to the information collected?

Responses from all individuals taking part in the research will be reported under a pseudonym, meaning you will not be identifiable in any way. Up until the point of analysis, if you decide you do not want your data to be included, you can contact the researcher at hmorris@tavi-port.nhs.uk. After the point of analysis, the researcher will be unable to remove your data as it will have been used to create themes for the results of this research.

The information you give will be analysed alongside data given from other participants. From this point it will not be possible for the information you gave to be deleted from the analysis. However, the raw data given can be deleted on request.

Anonymised notes and recordings will be kept for 6-10 years, in line with the Data Protection Act (1998) and will then be destroyed.

Will everything be kept confidential? (Will my name or other identifiable information be used?)

All the information collected from you will be kept safe and confidential. This includes any records or notes made from the meetings or interviews; these will be kept in a safe, secure location with you name being changed to a code to prevent you being identified. This will be done in line with the University's Data Protection Policy.

It is important for you to know data cannot be kept confidential if you mention something that makes me concerned about either your safety or that of someone else. In this case, I would have to share this information with others to maintain your safety. Wherever possible, this would be discussed with you first.

Do I have to take part?

This research is completely voluntary. This information sheet has been provided to help you decide if this is something you want to do or not. Even if you do decide to take part but change your mind later, you are free to withdraw at any time, including during interview, up to the point where I have started to analyse your data. You will not be expected to give a reason for your withdrawal and all information gathered about you up to that point will be destroyed.

Who has given permission to do this research?

The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust Ethics Committee has given ethical approval for this piece of research to be carried out. In addition, Centrepoint have agreed for me to come in and work with you with your permission.

What if I complain?

If you have any concerns about the research or how you have been treated, you can speak about these with myself, email my supervisor, Dr Maria Wedlock: mwedlock@tavi-port.nhs.uk, the Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance at academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk, or the Trust Quality Assurance Officer, Paru Jeram, pjeram@tavi-port.nhs.uk

Further information

If you have any further questions about the research or you would like to know more about it, you can contact me at hmorris@tavi-port.nhs.uk

If you would like to speak to anyone in the Centrepoint research team about the project you can contact Marc Pescod at mpescod@centrepoint.org

 Thank you for taking the time to read this information

 Hannah Morris

Visual information sheet

1, The Dream

The PATH begins by thinking about what matters most to you when thinking about your future.

2, One Year on..

You are asked to imagine a successful year has passed and think about what has been achieved to move you closer to your dream.

3, The Now

You are asked to think about where you are now, this is your starting point.

4, Who/ Enrol

The group is asked 'who will join/ support you on this journey' towards your future.

5, Staying Strong

Think about what you will need to do to keep focused on the 'PATH' ahead.

6, Next Steps

The group think about next steps to help achieve the dream.

Gifts/ Strengths

The group name your gifts and strengths.

Bricks

The graphic facilitator notices key words and themes throughout the PATH and writes them down here.

Appendix C: Consent form for young homeless people

Consent Form

A study looking into young homeless people's experiences on using the 'Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope' (PATH)?

Please circle your answer to the following questions

1. I am 18+ years old

YES   NO

If you answered NO:

I am between the ages of 16-17 years AND have spoken to the researcher about giving consent to this project.

YES   NO

2. I have read and understand the information sheet for the study and have been given the opportunity to ask questions.

YES   NO

3. I understand my participation in this study is voluntary and I can withdraw at any point up to the data being analysed, without providing a reason

YES   NO

4. I agree to be interviewed one hour after the PATH has finished and for the interview to be audio-recorded.

YES   NO

5. I understand that my data will be anonymised but, due to the small nature of the research, confidentiality might be impacted by people close to me knowing my story.

YES   NO

6. I understand that the findings of this research may be published and available for the public to read.

YES   NO

7. I understand that if I share information that leads the researcher to be concerned for my safety or the safety of others, the researcher will share this information in order to keep people safe.

YES   NO

8. I have read and understood the above and agree to take part in the research

YES   NO

Participant's name..

Participant's email address (to be used to contact you about a group feedback meeting only)

....

Participant's signature...

Date.....................................

Researcher's name...

Researcher's signature...

Date.....................................

Appendix D: Confirmation Email from Centrepoint

Re: EP Trainee Research- Ethical Submission

To: 'Hannah Morris' <HMorris@Tavi-Port.nhs.uk>
Subject: FW: EP Trainee Research- Ethical Submission

Hey Hannah,

This is a forwarded email from Darren (safeguarding lead).
From our side at Centrepoint we are happy with your research and the procedures you are putting in place to keep our young people safe.
Look forward to working with you.

All the best,

Marc

From: Darren Thompson <D.Thompson@centrepoint.org>
Sent: 23 January 2024 09:48
To: Marc Pescod <M.Pescod@centrepoint.org>
Subject: RE: EP Trainee Research- Ethical Submission

Hi Marc,

Thank you for sending the information over.

All in order from our side.

Kind regards

Darren

Darren Thompson (He/Him)
Head of Compliance
Finance and Compliance
Centrepoint
21 Foyle Street
Sunderland
Tyne & Wear SR1 1LE
T: 0191 510 9762
M: 07799034481
E: d.thompson@centrepoint.org
W: www.centrepoint.org.uk

Appendix E: Interview Schedule

Introduction: Thank you for meeting with me today. I know it has been a long morning and will make sure to not take more than an hour of your time. I will be asking you about the PATH project we completed this morning. I would like to record the interview so that I do not miss anything. Is that okay? I will keep this audio safe on my computer and will change your name so that no one will know it is you. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to and can stop the interview at any stage. Do you have any questions before we start?

Topic	Questions	Follow up, probing and specifying
The PATH		
	1. How did you feel before and in preparation for the PATH?	
	2. How do you feel now, after completing the PATH?	Ask about their dreams and aspirations- how it feels to see them.
	3. How did you find completing the overall process of the PATH?	
	4. Were there any parts of the PATH that were easier or harder than others to think through? *(probing Q's: list the steps of the PATH)*	What do you mean by that? Could you please tell me more about that? What did you do then? What did you think of that?
	5. What did you find useful about the PATH process?	So do you mean...?
	6. Was there anything you did not find useful about the PATH?	
	7. What impact do you think the pictures/ drawings/ graphics had on your PATH experience?	
	8. What would have improved your experience of the PATH?	

People in the PATH	9. What role do you think the other people had in the process?	What do you mean by that? Could you please tell me more about that?
	10. Did you feel like your views were heard; did you feel listened to?	What did you do then? What did you think of that? So do you mean...?
	11. What was it like having 2 facilitators at the front of the room?	
	12. Has this meeting felt different to other professional meetings you have had?	
	13. To what extent do you think different people contributed to the process?	
The Future	14. How do you feel about your next 12 months?	What do you mean by that? Could you please tell me more about that?
	15. How likely do you think it is that you will follow the steps of your PATH over the next 12 months?	What did you do then? What did you think of that? So do you mean...?

Appendix F- Centrepoint Skill Mapper (parts linked to the PATH are highlighted)

Centrepoint Skills Mapper

(For use by Centrepoint Jobs and Education Team only)

te of assessment:	
ung person's initials:	
orm ID:	
te of birth:	
e:	
ferred Gender Identity:	
vice:	
bile number:	
ail Address:	
yworker:	
Officer:	
ferred method of contact:	

(JET team- please check Inform for details in advance of this meeting)

Last updated 15.10.20

Enjoy and Achieve
1. Are you happy to talk about school/College? YES/NO
2. What was school/college like for you?
3. Which subjects did you like or dislike and why?
4. How do you think you prefer to learn? **Does listening, seeing or doing things make it easier for you to understand?**
5. Do you like to learn in a group or on your own? Why do you think that is?
6. How do you think your housing situation has affected your education/employment?
7. What are you currently doing during the day?

8. How would you rate your organisation and punctuality? (scale of 1-10) and why?

Skills and Interests

9. What are you interested in?

Cooking ☐　　　Dance ☐　　　Fashion ☐　　　Fixing things ☐

IT ☐　　　Music ☐　　　Reading ☐

Painting/Drawing/Art ☐ Photography ☐　Social Media ☐　　　Sport ☐　　　Watching films ☐

Other :

10. What do you think you are good at? (Think about what your friends say you do well.)

11. Tell us about your experience of using a computer or your digital skills.

Barriers

12. What things stop you doing the activities/ learning/ job that you want to do?

e.g. money,
benefits, literacy
and numeracy,
disability,
language, travel,
criminal record,
learning support

12a.

<u>**Disability or Health Problem**</u> ☐ **None**

Visual ☐ **Hearing** ☐ **Mobility** ☐

        Neurological ☐

Mental Health ☐

Emotional Behaviour ☐ **Neurological** ☐ **Profound Complex**

    ☐

Other Physical ☐ **Other Medical** ☐ **Temporary Disability**

    ☐

Asperger's Syndrome ☐ **Other** ☐

If other please specify

Learning Difficulty ☐ **None**

Moderate ☐ **Severe** ☐ **Dyslexia** ☐ **Dyscalculia** ☐

   Autism ☐

Other ☐ **If other please specify**

Aspirations

13. What 6 and 12-month education/ training or job goals do you have?

(please tick where you want to be)

In 6 months time	Where I want to be	In 12 months time	Where I want to be
Full time job		Full time job	

Part time job		Part time job	
Education		Education	
Training		Training	
Volunteering		Volunteering	

Achievements

14. Please tell us if you have any of the qualifications levels below

Level 4 and above(e.g. Foundation Degree, Cert or Dip in FE/HE, HNC/D, NVQ 4/5, BA)	☐
Level 3 (e.g. NVQ/BTEC L3, A Levels)	☐
Level 2 (GCSE A-C, GNVQ Intermediate, BTEC L2)	☐
L1 Foundation Level (GCSE D-F, BTEC L1 or equivalent)	☐
L2 Functional Skills (English/maths/IT)	☐
L1 Functional Skills (English/maths/IT)	☐
E3 Foundation Level	☐
E2 Foundation Level	☐
E1 Foundation Level	☐
Pre-entry Level Functional Skills (English and maths)	☐
Qualifications from outside the UK (please give details)	

15. Please can you provide more detail on the qualifications you have?		
Subject and level	Grade	Date achieved

Do you have copies of your certificates Yes ☐ No ☐

If no, please tell us why:

16. Do you have a CV?

☐ Yes (please can you email it to us to update if required?)

☐ No (please complete the table below and we will arrange to help you create a CV)

17. Do you have a right to work in the UK YES/NO?

17b. Work Experience/Volunteering /Sport/Other

Job Title	Start Date	End Date	Duties	Where? Address

18. Do you think you need financial support for:

Books? Yes ☐ No ☐ Clothing for work? Yes ☐

 No ☐

Equipment? Yes ☐ No ☐ Student finance? Yes ☐

 No ☐

Travel? Yes ☐ No ☐

Other - please state:

19. Have you ever had an assessment to give you more support at school of college?

Yes ☐ No ☐

20. Please tell us if you have anyone helping you to move into jobs / training

Comments

LEARNING ACTION PLAN						
Immediate Goals (*Things you want to do in the next 6/12 months*)	Next Steps (*Things you need to do to get there*)	Who	Target Date	Was the goal achieved? (Y/N/Partially)	Comments	Target Completed Date

Learner

Signature:		Print Name:
Date:		

Learning Worker

Signature		Print Name:
Date:		

The Tavistock and Portman **NHS**

NHS Foundation Trust

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

Tel: 020 8938 2699

https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/

Hannah Morris

By Email

22 March 2024

Dear Hannah,

Re: Trust Research Ethics Application

Title: *'What are young homeless people's experiences on using the 'Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope' (PATH)?'*

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

Please be advised that any changes to the project design including changes to methodology/data collection etc, must be referred to TREC as failure to do so, may result in a report of academic and/or research misconduct.

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

I am copying this communication to your supervisor.

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

Yours sincerely,

Michael Franklyn

Academic Governance and Quality Officer
T: 020 938 2699
E: academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk

cc.   Course Lead, Supervisor, Research Lead

Appendix E

Participant Information Sheet

Information sheet

The following information is provided to ensure that you have a clear understanding of the current research and what would happen if you would like to be involved. The information is shared with you so that you can me know if you want to take part.

Research title:

What are young homeless people's experiences on using the 'Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope' (PATH)?

Who is doing the research?

My name is Hannah Morris, and I am currently studying a course in Child, Community and Educational Psychology at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust. I am carrying out this research and writing it up for my doctoral thesis, something that is a part of my training.

What is the aim and purpose of this research?

The aim of this research is to explore the experiences of young homeless people when completing an intervention called The 'Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope' (The PATH). This intervention asks you to think of a goal and then helps you to start working out what you will need to do to move towards this. It uses visuals to do this helping you to create your own 'path' to get to your goal. It also asks you to bring some people you trust to the intervention, such as your Centrepoint worker. This is so they can help you think about how you will reach your goal. After this intervention, the researcher hopes to gain your perspectives of the work and what it felt like completing the task.

The aim is to give professionals working in education an insight and knowledge into your experiences of the PATH to help them better understand what interventions can be used to support young homeless people. This will hopefully allow them to better support young people in this situation in the future.

What happens if I take part?

If you wish to take part in the research you will be invited to complete the PATH with me, and some people close to you. It is up to you how many people you ask to join in with your PATH, as long as there are a minimum of two people with no more than eight. You will then be asked to complete an interview with only me. Both of these activities will take place in a Centrepoint building at a time agreed between us. At the beginning of the PATH and interview I will explain what will happen and you'll be given space to ask any questions.

For the PATH section, we will complete the intervention together, where I will ask you some questions about a goal and guide you to think about situations leading to the goal. There will be someone with me from Centrepoint who will be drawing out what we discuss so that it looks like a PATH to your goal. This section should take between 45-90 minutes. If you want to learn some more about the PATH, please follow this link: https://westsussex.local-offer.org/information_pages/128-person-centred-planning-pcp-path-training-videos

During the interview I will then ask you questions about your experiences of the PATH. This interview will take around 45-60 minutes and the session will be audio recorded. At the end of the interview, you will be given time to ask any further questions. It is important to note that you do not need to talk about anything you do not wish to during the interview.

After the analysis phase of the research, you will be invited to attend a meeting where I will feedback the results.

What are the benefits and risks?

There is currently little information available within educational or psychology research about interventions that can help young homeless people in education. This study is an opportunity for you to share your thoughts on this specific intervention and for it to be heard by a wider

group. The research aims to be published so it can be read by professionals working in education to support them to get a better understanding.

You will be given space to create your own PATH, thinking about a goal in education, and then given support to think about how to get to that goal. You are able to take this visual away with you, if you would like, and can hopefully use it when thinking of this goal in the future.

There is little risk involved in participating in this study. However, when talking about your PATH, past experiences may be brought up which can sometimes be upsetting or distressing. If you do begin to feel like this, I can stop the interview or will be able to talk to you afterwards. In this situation you will also be given information about other people or organisations who may be able to help you. It is important to note that involvement in this research will have no impact on the support you get from Centrepoint.

What will happen to the information collected?
Responses from all individuals taking part in the research will be reported anonymously, meaning you will not be identifiable in any way. If you decide you do not want your data to be included in the analysis, you can contact the researcher at hmorris@tavi-port.nhs.uk.

The information you give will be analysed alongside data given from other participants. From this point it will not be possible for the information you gave to be deleted from the analysis. However, the raw data given can be deleted on request.

Anonymised notes and recordings will be destroyed on completion of the research.

Will everything be kept confidential? (Will my name or other identifiable information be used?)
All the information collected from you will be kept safe and confidential. This includes any records or notes made from the meetings or interviews; these will be kept in a safe, secure location with you name being changed to a code to prevent you being identified. This will be done in line with the University's Data Protection Policy.

It is important for you to know data cannot be kept confidential if you mention something that makes me concerned about either your safety or that of someone else. In this case, I would have to share this information with others to maintain your safety. Wherever possible, this would be discussed with you first.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide if you wish to take part or not. This information sheet has been provided to help you decide if this is something you want to do or not. Even if you do decide to take part but change your mind later, you are free to withdraw at any time, including during interview, up to the point where I have started to analyse your data. You will not be expected to give a reason for your withdrawal and all information gathered about you up to that point will be destroyed.

Who has given permission to do this research?

The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust Ethics Committee has given ethical approval for this piece of research to be carried out. In addition, Centrepoint have agreed for me to come in and work with you with your permission.

What if I complain?

If you have any concerns about the research or how you have been treated, you can speak about these with myself, email my supervisor, Maria Wedlock: mwedlock@tavi-port.nhs.uk or email the Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance at academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk.

Further information

If you have any further questions about the research or you would like to know more about it, you can contact me at hmorris@tavi-port.nhs.uk

If you would like to speak to anyone in the Centrepoint research team about the project you can contact Marc Pescod at mpescod@centrepoint.org

Thank you for taking the time to read this information

Hannah Morris

Appendix F

Information Sheet Specific to the PATH

The PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope) Information sheet

1, The Dream

The PATH begins by thinking about what matters most to you when thinking about your future.

2, One Year on..

You are asked to imagine a successful year has passed and think about what has been achieved to move you closer to your dream.

3, The Now

You are asked to think about where you are now, this is your starting point.

5, Staying Strong

Think about what you will need to do to keep focused on the 'PATH' ahead.

6, Next Steps

The group think about next steps to help achieve the dream.

Bricks

The graphic facilitator notices key words and themes throughout the PATH and writes them down here.

Appendix G

Participant Consent Form

The Tavistock and Portman
NHS Foundation Trust

Consent Form

A study looking into young homeless people's experiences on using the 'Planning Alternative

Tomorrows with Hope' (PATH)?

Please circle your answer to the following questions

1. I am 18+ years old

YES   NO

 If you answered NO:

I am between the ages of 16-17 years AND have spoken to the researcher about giving

consent to this project.

YES   NO

2. I have read and understand the information sheet for the study and have been given

   the opportunity to ask questions.

YES   NO

3. I understand my participation in this study is voluntary and I can withdraw at any

   point up to the data being analysed, without providing a reason

YES   NO

4. I agree to be interviewed one hour after the PATH has finished and for the interview

   to be audio-recorded.

YES   NO

5. I understand that my data will be anonymised but, due to the small nature of the research, confidentiality might be impacted by people close to me knowing my story.

YES   NO

6. I understand that the findings of this research may be published and available for the public to read.

YES   NO

7. I understand that if I share information that leads the researcher to be concerned for my safety or the safety of others, the researcher will share this information in order to keep people safe.

YES   NO

8. I have read and understood the above and agree to take part in the research

YES   NO

Participant's

name...

Participant's email address (to be used to contact you about a group feedback meeting only)

....

Participant's signature..

Date....................................

Researcher's name...

Researcher's signature...

Date....................................

Appendix H

PATH Script

Prompt sheet for PATH

==Welcome and Introductions==

Welcome group and go round group - How does everybody know ==X== and what is their name. Who are you in relation to ==X==? Why are you here?

A PATH is a way of getting to where you want to be and to find a way through. This will be a different kind of meeting. It has 7 steps.

We'll be creating a picture as we go which ==X== can keep at the end if they want to.

==Ground rules== (for bigger groups)

Chains – avoiding being weighed down by the past

Wig - no judgements

Chicken – stay away from jargon that others won't understand

PATH is about ==X==- while we may have good ideas, this PATH is for ==X== and if they agree with the point, it does not have to go on the PATH

Would anyone like any additional rules? Record these up.

How would you like us to remind you of these additional rules if they get broken?

==Step 1 - Dreaming==

We are now going to dream for ==X==. Take a minute to shut your eyes and imagine your best thoughts for ==X=='s future. Ask ==X==

- · Where will you be? (PLACES)
- · Who will be with you? (PEOPLE)
- · What will you be doing? (ACTIVITIES)

- · To describe your best future / dream, what matters most to you?
- · If you could have it all, what would it be?
- · What does this dream bring/give you? If dream is very unrealistic.
- · Why is that important to you?
- · What will others be noticing about you and your life?
- · Why is that important?
- · How can I picture that?
- · Tell me again.

Ask X who he would like to hear from next. Then move on to others, one by one:

Ask them - What would you like to add?

- · If you could have your best future for X what would you see?
- · Where will they be? (PLACES)

- · Who will be with them? (PEOPLE)

- · What will you they doing? (ACTIVITIES)

Each time check back with X:

- · Do you like that?
- · Do you agree with it? Is there anything missing / anything else you would like me to add?

As dream develops ask whole group "What do you notice about X's dream?"

Step 2 – One year on - what's positive and possible?

We are going to move into the future. Please can everyone close their eyes and imagine we have stepped into the future and are now in MONTH/2025.

I want you to imagine it's been a really good year, when you look back and think how far X has come towards his dream. This part is more realistic and we want the steps to be positive and possible.

- · What do you notice that says positive change has happened for X?

·   What positive steps has X taken towards the dream?

·   What has happened to X? When? How?

·   What will X be doing?

·   Who will he be with?

·   What activities will X be doing?

Elicit positive action focused points.

As group contributes - check with X

·   Did this happen to you?

·   What did that feel like?

Phrase steps in past tense - we are looking back from the future.

Check - Is this positive? Is it possible? Thumbs up or down from group - only positive and possible get recorded. Re-word to avoid dreaming.

Step 3 - The Now

Let's close our eyes again and set the date back to the present day. We are now standing and sitting in the now in **MONTH/2025**.

The one year on has yet to happen and becomes the goal that we are working towards. How would we describe where X is now?

·   What facts and figures do we know about the now for X?

·   How does it feel to be in the now?

Capture a snapshot / summary of the present - 5/6 points are all that is needed.

Step 4- Staying Strong

Moving on from where you are now to where you want to be will take energy and skills.

·   What do you need to do to stay strong as you move along your path?

·   When are you at your best?

· What things can encourage you to achieve your goal?

· What knowledge and skills do you most want / need to develop?

· How can you stay healthy and strong as you move along this journey?

Step 5 – Actions (who, what, where, when)

Think about the next few days and months.

· What do you need to do?

· Who will do what by when?

· Who's going to help you do that?

· When are you going to make that request?

· What/when/how?

· What is the first thing you will need to do?

· How is the group going to review these actions? Who/when?

BUILDING BLOCKS – Core Values and Important themes e.g., inclusion, safety, independence... Check in on building blocks at this point if not already done during a pause and review at an earlier point during the PATH. Graphicer to name what they've added there and check that we've understood and are all on the same page. Opportunity to add to / refine these.

TITLE THE PATH

Say thank yous and goodbyes.

Appendix I

Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule

Introduction: Thank you for meeting with me today. I know it has been a long morning and will make sure to not take more than an hour of your time. I will be asking you about the PATH project we completed this morning. I would like to record the interview so that I do not miss anything. Is that okay? I will keep this audio safe on my computer and will change your name so that no one will know it is you. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to and can stop the interview at any stage. Do you have any questions before we start?

Topic	Questions	Follow up, probing and specifying
The PATH	1. How did you feel before and in preparation for the PATH?	
	2. How do you feel now, after completing the PATH?	Ask about their dreams and aspirations- how it feels to see them.
	3. How did you find completing the overall process of the PATH?	
	4. Were there any parts of the PATH that were easier or harder than others to think through? *(probing Q's: list the steps of the PATH)*	What do you mean by that? Could you please tell me more about that? What did you do then? What did you think of that? So do you mean...?
	5. What did you find useful about the PATH process?	
	6. Was there anything you did not find useful about the PATH?	
	7. What impact do you think the pictures/ drawings/ graphics had on your PATH experience?	

	8. What would have improved your experience of the PATH?	
People in the PATH	9. What role do you think the other people had in the process? 10. Did you feel like your views were heard; did you feel listened to? 11. What was it like having 2 facilitators at the front of the room? 12. Has this meeting felt different to other professional meetings you have had? 13. To what extent do you think different people contributed to the process?	What do you mean by that? Could you please tell me more about that? What did you do then? What did you think of that? So do you mean...?

| The Future | 14. How do you feel about your next 12 months? | What do you mean by that? Could you please tell me more about that? |
| | 15. How likely do you think it is that you will follow the steps of your PATH over the next 12 months? | What did you do then? What did you think of that? So do you mean...? |

Appendix J

Clustering Experiential Statements

Appendix K

Participant's PETs Tables

Table K1.

Yuri's Personal Experiential Themes (PETs)

Theme	Illustrative quote
Y1. Authenticity and Openness	
Yuri felt the PATH made her dreams feel real.	'it makes it more real... it brings them into reality.' **(p6)**
Yuri felt the process balanced respect and formality with authenticity, suggesting that excessive politeness could have hindered meaningful conversation.	'yeah, it's a way to make, I don't know you guys, but it's a way to, like we are still being respectful and formal, but like, you don't need all of that. Yeah. There's no need to sugar coat it if that makes sense?' **(p1)**
Yuri emphasised the importance of creating a positive and relaxed environment in facilitating open conversation.	'it was a nice, had nice vibes, good energy' **(p1)**
Yuri shared that if you are open to the process of the PATH, you'll benefit from it more.	'I think if you come with an open heart, you'll be open and accepted' **(p1)**
Y2. Motivation and Personal Growth	

Yuri believes that sometimes people need a push, and the PATH feels like the right kind of push.	'But sometimes if you get a little bit of a push, I think this is kind of a push for people to like get the ****, get up.' **(p6)**
The PATH pushes you to keep going, to stay on track with what you want to achieve.	'either way it inspires you to continue with what you want to do.' **(p4)**
The PATH helped Yuri to take an outsiders perspective on her life, giving her a change to reflect on what had happened so far and be acknowledge traits that she would like to change such as laziness.	'seeing yourself from an outside perspective and I think it's really good for learning like maturing about who you are, like being able to tell yourself that you're lazy and actually write that down.' **(p5)**
Yuri felt inspired from the PATH as it allowed her to think about what is possible in her life.	'I feel inspired... I feel like it gives me a clear set of what I want to do.' **(p2)**
Yuri thought the PATH was a good tool to inspire others to persist in following their dreams.	'if you were going to look, if you were looking to have that aspect on people, to inspire people to follow their dreams, I think this is a really good thing.' **(p4)**
The PATH process motivated Yuri to start working towards her dream.	'from what I'm feeling, I'm very like, now I actually want to do something. I would not mind looking at this and every day. I might even add things to it.' **(p10)**
Y3. 'My Story'	

I wouldn't mind looking at this every day and keep adding to it as my life changes and my dreams grow	'I would not mind looking at this and every day. I might even add things to it.' **(p10)**
Yuri enjoyed the opportunity to have a time dedicated to her, dedicating time to her thoughts and goals.	'I like it just being about me.' **(p7)**
Yuri's PATH represents her.	'everything comes from me, this is because this PATH is me.' **(p4)**
The PATH creates a judgement free space where Yuri felt she could share her story.	'I am a person who likes talking about herself so this is a very great time to just like talk about yourself if you have to and just say what you need to say. I didn't feel like I was being judged or anything it was kind of more like you guys were actually wanting to listen to what I was trying to like say.' **(p3)**
Y4. Visual Representation Bringing Dreams to Life	
Yuri shared that the pictures on her PATH helped make her dreams feel more real.	'it makes it more real... it brings them more into reality.' **(p6)**
The process of the PATH stimulated Yuri's imagination	'If you have a good imagination, it's very good because you actually see yourself doing those things.' **(p6)**
Seeing her dream in colour allowed Yuri to further think about what she wanted from her future, motivating her to dream big.	'You can actually look at the things and be like, you know, i, my dreams have like... like sometimes people might not really think of their dreams as a big thing or think of how they've never accomplished that.' **(p6)**

Yuri found the use of colour in her PATH really important.	'there could be more colour on the PATH.' **(p7)**
Y5. Pieces of the Puzzle	
The PATH helps you focus on the steps needed to achieve your dream, turning it into a practical plan rather than just the end goal.	'yeah I feel like it gives me a clear set of what I want to do and it doesn't feel like because sometimes when you think of when you think of what you want to do you kind of just think of this part yeah that's the big dream that's what I want to do but you put like all the different steps next to it so that you can understand it.' **(p2)**
Yuri found value in the PATH as a whole but also saw how each section added something to the overall process.	'I would take the whole PATH with me yeah... I think on each section there's a little thing.' **(p4)**
Each section offered something meaningful for Yuri- a lesson to learn, a memory to hold on to or a spark of motivation	'I think on each section there's a little thing, there's something that you can learn, there's something that you can remember, there's something that can give you like that sort of, I want to do this, let me follow this.' **(p4)**
Y6. Importance of Challenge/ Resilience	
Recognising traits like laziness and writing them down allows you to be honest with yourself- becoming more self-aware.	'seeing yourself from an outside perspective and I think it's really good for learning like maturing about who you are, like being able to tell yourself that you're lazy and actually write that down is a good thing because you're being honest with yourself.' **(p5)**
Yuri felt that thinking about the areas of the PATH that she did not want to do helped her to stay strong.	In response to is there anything you wouldn't want to do again? 'it does keep you strong yeah.' **(p5)**

From looking at the PATH, Yuri felt that she held the responsibility for her future.	'this was on me'. **(p8)**
Yuri noted that people tend to focus on the positives often avoiding challenges. However, challenge was important for Yuri.	'we never think about the more bad aspects of this... the bits we have to do yea, we have to get through.' **(p4)**
Y7. Facilitator Relationship	
Having two facilitators made the space feel bigger for Yuri. She thought with two people the space might have felt awkward but with three it reduced this tension and opened up more opportunities for conversation.	'I think it was it was good if it feels like a bigger room, you know sometimes when when you meet somebody else and its just like two people it might get awkward but then if there's like a third person that third person can like break the awkwardness if they notice it you know there's more people's opinions so there's more things to talk about.' **(p8)**
Yuri felt welcomed when she entered the room. This was because the facilitators had good energy and provided snacks.	'I think I was pretty welcomed. You guys were like, snacks, join in, let's have a chat. So, it was a nice, had nice vibes, good energy.' **(p1)**
The facilitators made Yuri feel like they genuinely wanted to hear her dream. They listened and helped her to articulate her thoughts clearly, using pictures and words.	'it felt more like you genuinely wanted to hear what was my dream and you actually put it down and you thought about it and you it's like you guys thought about it as if it was yours and what would you do in that situation and you put it and you helped me put it down into like words and everything.' **(p9)**
Y8. Practicalities	

Yuri felt that good initial communication is needed as it is easy to forget some of the process and then you arrive not know what is going to happen.	'I don't remember what he said. I came here confused because I completely forgot what he said. And I was like, but you know I still have to go, because I must, because if I agree to it, it must be something good. So yeah I came, but even even not really knowing what was going to happen.' **(p1)**
Yuri found the dream the easiest part as she already knew what her dream was.	'the dream obviously, I already know what I wanted to do.' **(p3)**
Yuri found the hardest part of the PATH the actions as she had to think about what she needed to reach her dreams.	'Actions...actually thinking of what you wanna do towards... we never think of the bad aspects' **(p3&4)**
Yuri thought there should be a section to write about past setbacks so she could remind herself to not repeat previous mistakes.	'I would say though like there's something I feel like there should be a section of like where you write down things that you have done that you wouldn't do it again; you wouldn't repeat it yeah like mistakes that you have done but you don't want to like yeah you want to keep a reminder of yourself of like don't do this again'. **(p5)**
Yuri liked that she had the option of who was at her PATH	'it's good that you give people options like that, you know, some people can find like meeting new people very nervous, you know, so it's a good, it's a good way to think'. **(p8)**

Table K2

Muhammed's Personal Experiential Themes (PETs)

Theme	Illustrative quote
M1. People in the PATH	
Muhammed liked the guidance from the facilitator, supporting where he should go next.	'And you kind of like nice also knowing like where I'm gonna go next. It was perfect'. **(p3)**
Muhammed formed a good relationship with the facilitators and felt comfortable with them.	'but I'm comfortable with you friendly guys, you know, yeah' **(p8)**
Muhammed enjoyed the collaborative work of the PATH. He shared that understanding another's perspective enriched his own thinking.	'But yes, all of them are kind of helpful, kind of shows you what maybe could look like if you asked someone else. For example, she was drawing and then I see the way she sees. so yea and maybe i see different ways, but i also see the same way she sees.' **(p6)**
Muhammed did not think having his friends there would be helpful as there answers would not be thought through.	'Yeah, so they will add whatever they think of. ' **(p8)**
Muhammed valued the effort made to help, validate, and connect with him.	'No, most of it was you guys, because you kind of like helping people, like making some confirmation on it and talking and you know you're kind of like trying your best to interact with the person, I love that one. Yeah' **(p9)**

The PATH showed Muhammed that he is not alone, and that people can help him to achieve his dreams.	'Yes, yes it's helpful because now I can see where I am now. I can see this before all of them, remember when I say this is now it's too big. It's kind of like boring but before it was kind of like together all of us because everything before was kind of charged with me like, you know' **(p10)**
Muhammed enjoyed that the graphic facilitator was able to draw pictures alongside our conversation, helping to illustrate his story.	'i like the way she is following the words and then making like pictures.' **(p3)**
Muhammed did not want to include his keyworker because they were already included in many aspects of his life. He appreciated the facilitators were new bringing fresh perspectives.	'Bringing a key worker. Maybe it's overdone like over too much. Yeah, because it's when it's like serious really really serious the way you're talking about and you kind of like uncomfortable, but I'm comfortable with you friendly guys, you know, yeah' **(p8)**
Muhammed felt he would only need additional people in his PATH for situational support i.e. language support.	'errm to add a friend, to add a key worker, to add all of that, it requires your situation. For example, if I don't speak English quietly nice and don't understand some of it, maybe I'll require to have someone, but if I'm speaking a good English and I can ask some question and answer for me, there's no need for that one.' **(p7)**

Muhammed shared his future was important to him and felt having his friends in the rom wouldn't be useful as they would be 'silly'.	'Some of them will come with some silly ideas, but yeah... when it comes to serious, you cannot bring some friends, because this is like realistic. For you, it's big deal, but for them, maybe they say, oh, it's a joke, so add something.' **(p7)**
M2. Turning Dreams into Achievable Steps	
The PATH made Muhammed's dreams feel possible- no doubt he could achieve them.	'Yeah, it is possible... Yes, there's no doubt now.' **(p3)**
The PATH allowed Muhammed to organise his thoughts and helped him to follow the steps to reach his goals.	'But now I can see they're kind of organized, kind of like different Paths, so I can follow each one of them in their own time.' **(p10)**
He liked how close the sections were to one another, seeing it as a sign that he could do each step.	'it's like the way they are close to each other is, i mean it shows me that I can do this, it's perfect.' **(p3)**
In the past Muhammed feared his dream was 'too' big, but having it broken down into steps made it feel manageable.	'I didn't know my plan was so big, even if it was so big, I would be like, oh, I'm tired of this. But it's too big... Yeah, it was good all of them.' **(p7)**
Looking at his PATH, Muhammed felt as though he had already accomplished his goals.	'I feel like everything is already achieved' **(p3)**

The PATH was able to show Muhammed where he was now. This helped his dream to feel more manageable to achieve.	'But now I can see they're kind of organized, kind of like different Paths, so I can follow each one of them in their own time.' **(p10)**
M3. Ongoing Reflection of the Process	
Muhammed thought the easiest part of the PATH was the 'now' and the dream as he thought about them most days.	'The only thing I can see every day, sooner or sooner, is the future and the what's it called, the now, those one mostly every day I can see them.' **(p4)**
Muhammed found it challenging to focus on a single dream as he had so many different ideas.	'but it's something that I can it could be changed every minute... kind of like' **(p4)**
Muhammed found some actions straight forward to create as he had already thought about them. Others were more challenging as they were new and required greater effort.	'yeah, the action is kind of some of them easy to choose some of them like say oh yeah, the brain already give you the ideas and then like you do it... um some of them is harder some of them easy like finding a tutor it's gonna be hard yeah so yeah' **(p5)**
Being able to keep the PATH and look at it regularly was important to Muhammed.	'Seeing it everyday morning wake up and see on my wall this. It will be yea a big deal' **(p9)**
When arriving Muhammed knew he was going to talk about his future but was not clear about the logistics of the PATH.	'Sorry I forgot his name and then he explained to me you but he didn't explain to me you can do this, but he said the same thing Asif said like you gonna like figure out the future things and stuff like that I said, okay, I'm excited to see it.' **(p2)**
M4. Powerful and Engaging Experience	
Muhammed found all parts of the PATH useful.	'The all of them is helpful.' **(p5)**
Muhammed found the process perfect.	'i think everything here is much perfect.' **(p6)**

Muhammed experienced a strong emotional engagement to the PATH, describing it as mind-blowing.	'I wasn't expecting it, but this you are mind blowing guys.' **(p6)**
Muhammed found the PATH process easy to follow.	'no no it's good. It's good' **(p4)**
Muhammed shared that he sees the PATH meeting as a standout experience in his lifetime.	'Yeah that my entire life I will be in a lot of meetings but the most enjoyable uncomfortable err comfortable one is this one' **(p8)**
Muhammed felt excited to do the PATH.	'I'm excited to see it.' **(p2)**
Muhammed loved the drawings on his PATH.	'I like the way she is following the words and then making like pictures.' **(p3)**
Muhammed reflected on a sense of ownership over his PATH while acknowledging the collaborative nature of the task	'Yeah, we've done it together, but yes, most is me. Yeah.' **(p8)**
M5. Change of perspective	
Muhammed reflected on a history of unenjoyable meetings and compared these to the PATH emphasising it as a uniquely positive experience.	'My entire life I never had any meetings that the meetings that I see I enjoyed and it's more comfortable yes... Yeah that my entire life I will be in a lot of meetings but the most enjoyable uncomfortable err comfortable one is this one' **(p8)**
Muhammed's perspective of the intervention shifted with the experience exceeding expectations.	'I wasn't expecting it, but this you are mind blowing guys.' **(p6)**
From previous work with professionals, Muhammed thought it would be boring.	'and I was expecting like something like maybe boring but what I find I was like' **(p2)**

Table K3

Sabina's Personal Experiential Theme's (PETs)

Theme	Illustrative quote
S1. Visualisation and Representation of her journey	
Sabina liked that she could see her journey.	'Yeah, it's good' (in response to 'how does it feel kind of looking at it all and sort of seeing your journey') **(p1)**
Sabina thought it was exciting to see her PATH.	'Errm, exciting I guess' **(p1)**
Sabina felt inspired by her PATH.	'Errm, yeah good, inspired' **(p2)**
Sabina liked that she was able to talk about her life and have it written down in front of her.	'yeah good, to just like talk about it about it and then it's being write down for you' **(p2)**
Sabina thought the pictures made it more interactive.	'it made it like more interactive' **(p4)**
The graphics helped with Sabina's vision.	"like more like you can see it with a vision sort of' **(p4)**
Sabina liked that the pictures took the ideas from her head and put them on paper.	'you can it with a vision sort of, not just like it is in your head' **(p4)**
Sabina thought the graphics were cool.	'yeah it was cool' **(p4)**
S2. Engagement and enjoyment of the PATH	
Sabina thought the dream was the best part.	'errm maybe the dream not necessarily easier but found it like the best' **(p2)**

Sabina shared that having it drawn in front of her and being able to talk about her dreams made her want to do it in her life.	when it's all being drawed in front of you and like I don't know just speaking about it makes you like actually want to like do stuff like apply it to your... to your life I guess' **(p3)**
Sabina thought the PATH was more fun than other work she had done with professionals.	'errm probably a bit funner' **(p6)**
Sabina felt positive about her PATH	'yeah' (in response to okay so you are feeling positive about it?) **(p6)**
S3. Ease and Challenge of the process	
Sabina found all parts of the PATH easy.	'no' (in response to: 'what about the least useful' **(p4)**
Sabina found the actions part the hardest and had to think about what she needed to do.	'but the most difficult would probably be the actions' **(p3)**
Sabina found '1 year from now' useful because it was realistic	'Errm because its just like realistic I guess and its like that what you want to achieve' **(p4)**
Sabina liked that in a year she would be able to look at her PATH and feel good if she had reached her aims	'that's what you want to achieve in a year from now if you've done that then that's good I guess' **(p4)**
S4. Support and Facilitation	
Sabina liked the efficiency of the PATH and having two people doing it	'get it done quicker' **(p2)**
Sabina felt 2 facilitators made it quicker and therefore better	'I feel like it was quicker to get across and like I dunno it probably did help' **(p6)**

Sabina thought two facilitator's were the perfect number to support her in the PATH	'like she's drawing and you're like speaking and like she's speaking as well but like do you know what I mean it just makes it easier' **(p6)**
Sabina felt listened too	'yeah' (in response to did you feel listened too?) **(p6)**
S5. Personal Ownership	
Sabina did not want anyone extra in her PATH as she thought it would throw her off.	'it's just that it might throw you off a little bit and they'll be saying stuff that don't that they think you'll be good' **(p5)**
Sabina thought extra people might negatively influence the PATH as they might say stuff she wouldn't want to do.	'they'll be saying stuff that don't that they think you'll be good at but like it's not like what you want to do I guess and even you could be influenced oh yeah that sounds but it's not coming from your head I guess' **(p5)**
Sabina explained that more people her PATH would make it feel less authentic.	'and even you could be influenced oh yeah that sounds but its not coming from your head I guess' **(p5)**
S6. Commitment and Future Outlook	
Sabina shared it was more than likely she would follow her PATH.	'more than likely... naah more than likely, maybe not all of them but like a good fair few' **(p7)**
Sabina did not think anything would improve the PATH.	'errm I don't think so' **(p5)**

Table K4

Connor's Personal Experiential Theme's (PETs)

Theme	Illustrative quote
C1. The impact of visual element	
Connor enjoyed the colourful and creative aspects of the PATH.	'I think I guess like just like writing stuff in general puts more stuff into like visually appealing than I guess you know, it's better than having to pin it black and white as well. So yeah, like it's more colourful I guess it looks better.' **(p4)**
Connor thought the visual elements enhanced clarity and interest.	'I think I guess like just like writing stuff in general puts more stuff into like visually appealing than I guess you know.' **(p4)**
Connor found the visual elements useful.	'So it like makes you more aware like you need to use certain stuff. And I guess its useful.' **(p2)**
Connor found having the information in front of him quite daunting.	'I mentioned it earlier, quite daunting because I need to do a lot, but it's like I feel like you know with actions as well, if I build the good routine and like get help where I need it to be, it should go out pretty well.' I mentioned it earlier, quite daunting because I need to do a lot, but it's like I feel like you know with actions as well, if I build the good routine and like get help where I need it to be, it should go out pretty well. **(p7)**
C2. The Presence of Others	
Connor didn't want too many people to know his future plan and felt if they did, he wouldn't reach the goals he set.	'Nah, cause with me I feel like if I told too many people my plan right, I feel like I'm less likely to do it. Yeah. Whereas if it's like I know what I want to do, I just silently keep building on it and I'm more likely to actually do it.' **(p6)**

Connor liked having two facilitators and thought it was good for flow and time management.	'Um, I guess probably two make sense because like you're like trying to speak and like get the ideas from you, whereas someone's like it's needed to like actually write down, whereas if it was only one I feel like it would be much longer and like take like because like with you you were asking my ideas and stuff, right? Whereas if you were writing it down as well, it would slow you down so then I would need to slow down as well, so yeah, I think it's just more efficient with two.' **(p6)**
Connor spoke about preferring smaller groups to larger groups and that the increase in group size would make the situation feel more formal.	'um i guess i just wouldn't mind to be honest but for like if it's a lot more people than i guess if it's not like you like person you're asking to be there it's probably going to look more like oh it's like a clinical research type of thing so it's like yeah for like two's okay.' **(p5)**
Connor prefers a more relaxed environment with less people.	'I mean, I guess it depends on the person, but like with me, that's just not really something I would do. Whereas I guess maybe some people would want that.' **(p5)**
C3. Experiencing the PATH	
Connor felt listened too.	'Err yeah, no, I felt like I was listened too.' **(p6)**
Connor found the PATH interesting.	'it's like kind of interesting I guess.' **(p1)**
Connor found it interesting to see what he was currently doing and trying to do.	'I guess its interesting to like visualise what you're actually doing and what you're trying to do.' **(p2)**

Connor felt his views were listened too as he could see them written down on his PATH.	'Um, yeah, I'm pretty sure because like that's what was written down. So yeah.' **(p6)**
Connor found the actions useful at they were like having a list of everything you need.	'Um probably like the help on the actions because it's like already like having a list of everything you need to do kind of puts it more into perspective like damn you know you have a lot like you know you need like sort out and stuff and like the actions also help like like show you like over here how you could work on it how you can like actually like fix it so that's pretty useful.' **(p3)**
C4. Struggling with Structure and Flow	
Connor thought that PATH took a long time	'Yeah, like, it's already quite long.' **(p6)**
Connor did not find the bricks section useful.	'I don't know I guess like it's kind of separate it's more like saying like or what you think you have whereas it's different from like actions you can see it's like I can like say oh you have like brown hair right because it's not going to really like do anything crazy.' **(p4)**
Connor did not like the nonlinear structure of the PATH.	'maybe like having more of a like I guess like the way it's drawn right out isn't like really that straight because it's like dream to one year and then it skips all the way to now then staying so it's like not going like kind of in like a straight line which is slightly better.' **(p5)**
Connor thought the transitions between stages did not flow well.	'Yeah, so like kind of like flow, like, I feel like that, though would make it better.' **(p5)**
Connor thought there could be some additional sections to the PATH.	'I'm not entirely too sure, but maybe have like more sections, I guess.' **(p2)**

Connor though some of the sections were too similar i.e. the actions and the stay strong section.	'So I feel like some of them kind of like interlinked like staying strong and actions kind of like similar in my opinion.' **(p2)**
C5. The Emotional Challenge of Commitment	
Connor based a lot of his PATH off of routine in his life. He thought if he could get into a routine than he could follow his PATH.	'Um, with me, probably like a 50 -50 in the sense that like, if I get like the routine done, then it's like, everything else would definitely work. Whereas it's like, if I, if the routine doesn't get done, then every fit, like as in the actions wouldn't really get done. Whereas with the other like, now stuff it's just me procrastinating, but I would get it done, but it's, you know, it wouldn't be as well as, you know, yeah.' **(p7)**
Connor felt that there was a 50-50 chance he would follow his PATH.	'Um, with me, probably like a 50 -50 in the sense that like, if I get like the routine done, then it's like, everything else would definitely work.' **(p7)**
Connor felt the meeting was similar to the work he was doing with a psychologist.	'I'm pretty sure we'll like the schedule as well, so similar vibe...' **(p7)**
Connor found the staying strong/ actions the hardest as you have to focus on what you need to sort out in your life.	'Umm maybe it's like the actions or staying strong because it's more of like what you're gonna need to do in between that so it's like you know sometimes I think some people struggle with that part but even with me it's like you know part of like actually sort out what I need to sort out so yeah, I'd say like staying strong and just thinking what you need to do'. **(p3)**
Connor thought the actions helped put his life into perspective.	'Um probably like the help on the actions because it's like already like having a list of everything you need to do kind of puts it more into perspective like damn you know you have a lot like you know'. **(p3)**

Connor found the dream the easiest to complete as there was a sense of freedom in what he could say.	'Um well I guess your dream because like you know it's like anything goes essentially yeah whereas with like everything else is more of like you know it's what you're currently doing so it could be completely unrelated to that yeah, but I guess it like makes sense because that's kind of what its meant to do'. **(p3)**
Connor explained he was not sure what he was going to do in advance of the PATH. He knew he would be talking about his dreams but not the logistics of the PATH.	'Um I guess I didn't really have an idea exactly it was kind of vague just that oh yeah its about like your dreams kind of thing, so I didn't really exactly know what I was in.' **(p1)**

Appendix L

Developing GETs from PETs

Appendix M

Yuri's Transcript Including Exploratory Notes and Experiential Statements

Experiential Sentences	Transcript 3	Notes
	Hannah: *Yeah, and to explain what I do with the recordings, so after all the paths that I've done, I do an interview and I ask everyone the same questions and it's basically to go away and decide whether I think the path would be useful to use more in psychology and with sort of young people your age, more like teenagers and slightly sort of younger adults, errm or if I don't.* *Yuri:* *Okay.* *Hannah:* *Yeah? Okay, cool. So my first question is, how did you feel before the path? So before you met us and you came in the room, how were you feeling about it?* *Yuri:*	
Yuri felt welcomed when she entered the room. This was because the facilitators had good energy and provided snacks.	*How I was feeling about it, I was confused. I was thinking, what is this large paper on a table? errm but I think, I wasn't confused for long. I think I was pretty welcomed. You guys were like, snacks, join in, lets have a chat.*	*welcomed *initial confusion

	Yuri:	
Yuri emphasised the importance of creating a positive and relaxed environment in facilitating open conversation.	So it was a nice, had nice vibes, good energy. And I think if you come with an open heart, you'll be open accepted.	*good energy *importance of positive, relaxed environment *open heart *a want to be accepted?
	Hannah:	
	yeah nice i like that okay so it's thinking about the snacks and things	
	Yuri:	
Yuri felt the process balanced respect and formality with authenticity, suggesting that excessive politeness could have hindered meaningful conversation.	yeah it's a way to make, I don't know you guys, but it's a way to, like we are still being respectful and formal, but like, you don't need all of that. Yeah. There's no need to sugar coat it, if that makes sense?	*informal/ conversational *'no need to sugar coat it' *value honesty/ directness * preference for authenticity *authentic connection?
	Hannah:	
	And did Mark tell you about this before? What sort of happened before with Mark?	
	Yuri:	
	I cant lie I saw Mark once, and I barely remember his face.	
	Hannah:	
	That's so fair.	
	Yuri:	

Yuri felt that good initial communication is needed as it is easy to forget some of the process and then you arrive not know what is going to happen.	*So due to all respect to Mark, I don't remember what he said. I came here confused because I completely forgot what he said. And I was like, but you know I still have to go, because I must, because if I agree to it, it must be something good. So yeah, I came. But even even not really knowing what was going to happen, I think you guys explained it very well.*	**'if I agree to it, it must be something good' *needs to be explained well, in advance= something around initial contact*
	Hannah: *OK.* *Yuri:* *For me to be able to understand* *Hannah:* *Cool! Fab! And then how do you feel now? After completing the path, after doing all of this, how do you feel?* *Yuri:*	
Yuri felt inspired from the PATH as it allowed her to think about what is possible in her life.	*I feel inspired*	**'inspired' *link to creativity? *big/ expressive word*
	Hannah: *yeah?* *Yuri:*	
The PATH helps you focus on the steps needed to achieve your dream, turning it into a practical plan rather than just the end goal.	*yeah I feel like it gives me a clear set of what I want to do and it doesn't feel like because sometimes when you think of when you think of what you want to do, to be an actress, or do skincare, or build my TikTok following, you kind of just think of this part yeah that's the big dream that's what I want to do but*	** the different steps/ the clear structure of the PATH visualizing a way forward*

you put like all the different steps next to it so that you can understand it (stop calling my phone) so I really liked it

Hannah:

Cool so yes that's sort of the step -by -step process and thinking that normally when you think about where you want to be you just think of the dream, but this was quite nice because you had the different points

Okay yeah nice I agree I feel like it's also quite fun maybe to start with this bit

Yuri:

yeah

interesting how much I am saying yeah, repeating YP language?

Hannah:

because you don't know if you're going to do, you're welcome to take it

Yuri:

(takes phone call outside the room and pauses recording)

interesting, wanted her cousin there but slept in. Felt cousin kept calling/ breaking the safety of the room/ boundaries

Hannah:

okay yeah thinking more errm the process of it as a whole of like maybe us talking together while XXX does the drawing, how did you find that?

the PATH is **your narraitve *feels like she is listened to less in other environments? *PATH is a time to talk about yourself *judged *wanting to listen to what I was saying *language*

Yuri:

entertaining

Hannah:

Yeah?

Yuri:

yeah it wasn't, it's not boring I am a person who likes talking about herself so this is a very great time to just like talk about yourself if you have to and just say what you need to say I didn't feel like I was being judged or anything it was kind of more like you guys were actually wanting to listen to what I was trying to like say yeah I just I liked it yeah I would do it again like if somebody asked me would you do this again I'd be like yeah definitely

The PATH creates a judgement free space where Yuri felt she could share her story.

Hannah:

Okay, cool. So it's thinking as well like about the not being judged, getting to talk about yourself, getting to share your life in that slightly more like chilled way.

Yuri:

Yeah

Hannah:

	Okay. Cool, so were there any parts of the path that you found easier? So out of like the different steps like the dream one year from now, now, actually.	
	Yuri:	
Yuri found the dream the easiest part as she already knew what her dream was.	the dream obviously, I already know what I wanted to do.	*spent time previously thinking about her dream/ future *knows what she wants of her future
	Hannah: so you think the dream was probably the easiest part for you.	
	Yuri: Yeah.	
	Hannah: What about the hardest part?	
	Yuri: Actions.	
	Hannah: Yeah?	
	Yuri:	
Yuri found the hardest part of the PATH the actions as she had to	Actually thinking of what you wanna do towards..	*holding herself accountable? *how to get to the dream

think about what she needed to reach her dreams.		
	Hannah: *i think that makes sense doesn't it, the dream, we think about the dream so much that it can be quite* *Yuri:*	
Yuri noted that people tend to focus on the positives often avoiding challenges. However, challenge was important for Yuri.	*We never think about the more bad aspects of this.*	**always thinking about positives, never negatives, realist in her thinking?*
	Hannah: *Yeah, and the bits that maybe we have to do together.* *Yuri:* *The bits we have to do yea, we have to get through.* *Hannah:* *Okay, are there bits that you've found more useful, things that you think you'll actually leave and take away with you?* *Yuri:*	**we have- strong word *resilient?*
Yuri found value in the PATH as a whole but also saw how each section added something to the overall process.	*Definitely, yeah, I would take the whole path with me yeah*	**the **whole** PATH- all the parts make the whole= seeing it as one*
	Hannah:	

	Yeah, okay cool. Yeah	
	Yuri:	
Each section offered something meaningful for Yuri- a lesson to learn, a memory to hold on to or a spark of motivation	*I think on each section there's a little thing, there's something that you can learn, there's something that you can remember, there's something that can give you like that sort of, I want to do this, let me follow this.*	**at each section there is something ot learn *'I want to do this' *inspire x2 *'continue'- although new for facilitators it is not for the YP*
	Hannah:	
	Yeah	
	Yuri:	
The PATH pushes you to keep going, to stay on track with what you want to achieve.	*Either way, it inspires you to continue with what you want to do. And if you were going to look, if you were looking to have that aspect on people, to inspire people to follow their dreams, I think this is a really good thing.*	
	Hannah:	
Yuri thought the PATH was a good tool to inspire others to persist in following their dreams.	*Amazing, yeah, thank you. So it's kind of like a little bit from each section is useful, but like*	
	Yuri:	
Yuri's PATH represents her.	*Everything comes from me. This is because this path is me*	**This PATH is me- identity? *Everything comes from me*
	Hannah:	
	Yeah!	

The PATH helped Yuri to take an outsiders perspective on her life, giving her a change to reflect on what had happened so far and be acknowledge traits that she would like to change such as laziness.	*Yuri:* *So is you seeing yourself from an outside perspective and I think it's really good for learning like maturing about who you are, like being able to tell yourself that you're lazy and actually write that down is a good thing because you're being honest with yourself.*	**learning who you are *benefits of writing down what you feel *honesty- feels somewhat negative?*
Recognising traits like laziness and writing them down allows you to be honest with yourself- becoming more self-aware.	*Hannah:* *I agree. I don't feel like when I heard you say that and you were trying to think of a word to use, you're like, oh, what word shall I use? I'll just say lazy. I was like, yeah, do it. Like, if that's how you feel, then yeah, that's it.*	
	Hannah: *And I think you're right. It was quite nice to hear you say that. That is where I am now. But I'd love to be able to do all of these bits and use these to do it. OK, was there anything you didn't find useful that you wish we hadn't done?* *Yuri:* *No, I think all the stages have its purpose.*	**'stages' *'purpose'- what does this mean for her? What is the purpose of the PATH?*
	Hannah: *Okay.* *Yuri:*	

Yuri thought there should be a section to write about past setbacks so she could remind herself to not repeat previous mistakes.	*yeah, i would say though like there's something i feel like there should be a section of like where you write down things that you have done that you wouldn't do it again you wouldn't repeat it yeah like mistakes that you have done but you don't want to like yeah you want to keep a reminder of yourself of like don't do this again maybe it's a good thing to think about it so*	**'reminder' *thinking about what has gone wrong and not repeating- interesting I took this out after pilot- works for some not others*

Hannah:

yeah that's a really cool idea where do you think we could put that, where would you want to put that?

Yuri:

Hmm, I don't want to, I want to put it here.

Hannah:

Yeah.

Yuri:

Wait there

Hannah:

I'm even thinking because we've done, I've done so much reading on this, it's so boring. Sometimes people put something like that in the staying strong section because it's keeping you strong because you've learnt from the mistake. So maybe it's just thinking about asking some questions in there.

Yuri:

Yeah, probably.

Hannah:

Is there anything that you wouldn't want to do again? And things like that, because I guess that in itself does.

Yuri:

Yuri felt that thinking about the areas of the PATH that she did not want to do helped her to stay strong.	*It does keep you strong. Yeah*	*is she strong now? *what does strong mean to her? *strong- doing things you don't always want to keep you strong * self-empowerment?*

Hannah:

Okay, yeah, thank you, that's a really cool point. Um, so yeah, we're gonna come to the pictures and things. What impact do you feel like the pictures and the colours had on your experience?

Yuri:

Yuri felt the PATH made her dreams feel real.	*It makes it more real*	*'real'*

Hannah:

Yeah.

The process of the PATH stimulated Yuri's imagination		

Yuri:

Yuri shared that the pictures on her PATH helped make her dreams feel more real.	*It brings them more into reality. If you have a good imagination, it's very good. Because you actually see yourself doing those things. And, yeah. I definitely... It's more entertaining, it's more funny.*	* 'reality' *what happens if you have a bad imagination? *'enetertaining' *funny?*

	Yuri:	
Seeing her dream in colour allowed Yuri to further think about what she wanted from her future, motivating her to dream big.	*You can actually look at the things and be like, you know, my dreams have color, my dreams have like... Like, sometimes people might not really think of their dreams as a big thing, or think of how they've never accomplished that.*	**accomplished *does the colour make the dream seem bigger? Brighter? Bring it to life?*
	Yuri:	
Yuri believes that sometimes people need a push, and the PATH feels like the right kind of push.	*But sometimes if you get a little bit of a push, I think this is kind of a push for people to like get the fuck.. get up.*	**push *not wanting to do it but needing to *the PATH gives you that push , not always wanting to do it but needing to *get up *the graphics bring it to life?*
	Hannah:	
	haha yeah? Okay cool. So it's thinking those kind of colours and the drawings and things are like bringing it to life for you, you're able to see it here and it's making you think, right let's go, it's time for me to start doing something.	
	Hannah:	
	Okay, cool. Is there anything that could have improved your experience and if so, what?	
	Yuri:	
	No, I was actually really fine. I don't think I've had any problems, except those jam donuts. I don't like jam donuts.	**'I've had problems'- quite matter of fact language *using humour seems comfortable for her*
	Hannah:	

Haha we were in the shop and I was like because last week we had normal donuts would they have been better

Yuri:

Yeah or custard i love custard

Hannah:

Good, right, okay, next time, I was going to say, do you want them but obviously not.

Yuri:

No, but you guys can take them, but apart from that, everything was fine, and I think you guys did a great job.

*power? *answering questions for facilitator? *interesting phrasing *importance of colour for her?

Hannah:

Thank you.

Yuri:

Yuri found the use of colour in her PATH really important.	*You guys want to hear that. I don't know. Um, yeah. Yeah? There could be more colour on the path.*

Hannah:

Okay, okay. We can colour that in.

Hannah:

After we finish this, we'll colour in the word path, and then you can have it. Okay, cool? My next question is, obviously, it was just the three of us, would you have enjoyed having more people that you knew here, or did you quite like it just being you?

	Yuri:	
Yuri enjoyed the opportunity to have a time dedicated to her, dedicating time to her thoughts and goals.	I like it just being about me.	*attention *a sense of ownership over the time *'being about me' *does she have space for this outside of the room? *systems not giving her space for this?
	Hannah:	
	yeah? hahaha	
	Yuri:	
	hahahahaha	
	Hannah:	
	I'm thinking so you know at one point your cousin might have come so the path would still be us talking about you but your cousin would be talking about you as well, would you like that?	
	Yuri:	
Yuri liked that she had the option of who was at her PATH	Yeah, that would have been nice. It's good that you give people options like that, you know, some people can find like meeting new people very nervous, you know, so it's a good, it's a good way to think.	*wanted her cousin there, why didn't she come if in the same house? *nice to have options about who is there *difficulties meeting new people/ facilitators
	Hannah:	
	I agree, So it's sort of having that support network with you if you'd like it, but also if you're feeling a little bit more comfortable in the situation It's quite nice to have it just you. Okay. Thank you. Did you feel like your views were heard? Do you feel like these are sort of your views and you felt listened to?	

	Yuri:	
From looking at the PATH, Yuri felt that she held the responsibility for her future.	Yea, this was on me.	*'on'- holding responsibility for her PATH- her future
	Hannah:	
	Yeah?	
	Yuri:	
	Yeah. I don't think, um, I don't think no comments that were bad were made. I think there was only like helpful comments like when you guys said, why don't you do like 10 jobs a week instead of, you know, it's good input, it's, it's, you know, so, no I don't, I don't have anything to complain about that.	* literal *'helpful' *some of the language links to power- 'bad' 'complain'
	Hannah:	
	Okay.	
	Yuri:	
	It's a good thing.	
	Hannah:	
	And what was it like having two of us? Having two facilitators?	
	Yuri:	
	Horrible	*relaxed *joking
	Hannah:	

	hahahahah	
	Yuri:	
	hahahaha	
	Yuri:	
Having two facilitators made the space feel bigger for Yuri. She thought with two people the space might have felt awkward but with three it reduced this tension and opened up more opportunities for conversation.	*Err, I think it was it was good if it feels like a bigger room you know sometimes when when you meet somebody else and it's just like two people it might get awkward but then if there's like a third person that third person can like break the awkwardness if they notice it you know there's more people's opinions so there's more things to talk about.*	**1:1 can be awkward. Having 2 facilitators allow for a more comfortable space*
	Hannah:	
	I like that, cool, i never thought about that actually. I think I agree I think it's that sort of more natural, maybe, with three people in the room than two.	
	Yuri:	
	its not like you're acting or anything you're just like kind of just actually speaking	**not acting BUT actually speaking *is she acting in other spaces?*
	Hannah:	
	okay fab, and has this meeting felt different to any other professional meetings that you've had?	
	Yuri:	
	yeah it was it was more honest	**honest*

	Hannah:	
	okay	
	Yuri:	
The facilitators made Yuri feel like they genuinely wanted to hear her dream. They listened and helped her to articulate her thoughts clearly, using pictures and words.	*it was more like as i said i did i did say this it felt more like you genuinely wanted to hear what was my dream and you actually put it down and you thought about it and you it's like you guys thought about it as if it was yours and what would you do in that situation and you put it and you helped me put it down into like words and everything*	**repeats I did *genuineness to the PATH *not getting that from other meetings *being able to put thoughts to paper *through sharing the PATH the weight and story is shared with facilitator- ownership?*
	Hannah:	
	okay, yeah, cool, so it's a bit more honest and that support to guide you through the different steps.	
	Yuri:	
	Yeah.	
	Hannah:	
	How do you feel about your next 12 months, seeing them now? How are you feeling?	
	Yuri:	
	Busy.	
	Hannah:	
	Busy?	

Yuri:

Yeah.

Hannah:

A good busy? I like it.

Yuri:

I like that, it's a good busy, it's a good busy. Actually, I'm not gonna like the busy from like, I don't think, I think my, obviously my favourite busyness will always be like me acting or something. It might not be like that for the first like six months, but it will be eventually, yeah.

Hannah:

It's because we've given you so much lucozade, isn't it?

Yuri:

It is.

Hannah:

Okay, and then finally, how likely do you think it is that you'll follow these steps and you'll do these actions?

Yuri:

How likely?

Hannah:

Yeah.

*'good busy' *feeling like the future is busy from seeing all plans infront of you *overwhelming? *I'm not going to like the busy*

	Yuri:	*feeling like she wants to do something after seeing this? motivated? *continuity due to the graphic- can keep going, keep dreaming
The PATH process motivated Yuri to start working towards her dream.	Quite likely. From what I'm feeling, I'm very like, now I actually want to do something. I would not mind looking at this and every day. I might even add things to it.	
I wouldn't mind looking at this every day and keep adding to it as my life changes and my dreams grow	Hannah:	
	Yeah, do it.	
	Yuri:	
	And just keep writing on it until I'm done.	
	Hannah:	
	I think that's a really good idea. I guess you've got to think like this is your path, it's your journey. And if things come along the way, it's quite cool to sort of add them in and see how that fits in into it.	
	Yuri:	
	So yeah!	
	Hannah:	
	Amazing, cool, thank you very much.	

Appendix N

Reflexive Diary Extracts

Figure N1

Diary extract December 2024

"Age was spoken about a lot in XXX PATH. We spoke about how we were similar ages and the steps XXX wanted to take to start doing a job in psychology. XXX also spoke about wanting to be a 'TikTok' influencer. They explained it was nice to share this with people who understood the job and did not judge them for this. They shared that when they explain this to "older people" they roll their eyes or make silly comments. I felt proud to have made XXX feel safe enough in the space that their narrative felt supported."

Figure N2

Diary extract from January 2025

"I did find myself feeling disheartened as I listened to XXX speak about their aspirations and the systemic barriers preventing them from achieving the goals they had. XXX shared throughout the PATH how much they wanted a full-time job and wanted to live in independent accommodation. However, they explained that taking on full-time work would lead to an increase in their rent, making their current living situation unaffordable. As a result, they had to either seek part-time employment or not work.

Reflecting on our conversation, I felt a deep sense of helplessness. While I truly value the power of person-centred work I thought about how helpful it truly is while these systemic barriers remain in place."

Figure N3

Diary extract from November 2024

"As the session began, I felt some anxiety in the room both from them and me. I wondered how much the young person would allow themselves to invest in the process. I also wondered whether they were engaging out of politeness, whether their key worker had told them they should engage or if the process felt genuinely meaningful to them?

As the session progressed, something shifted. When [graphic facilitator's name] had finished drawing the dream, if felt like their energy changed. This moment felt like they could really see their future as something possible, something worth investing in. Their excitement grew, and with it, I felt a deep sense of pride to be part of this journey. It was as if they were stepping into the process fully, allowing themselves to engage with hope rather than hesitation.

At the end of the session, they asked to take their PATH with them. That small request felt significant, more than just wanting a record of the session, it felt like a statement of ownership, a commitment to themselves and their dreams. Walking home afterward, I felt an unexpected wave of emotion. I was deeply moved by their vision for the future and their determination to reach it. I had never heard someone have such a selfless dream and be willing to receive any support to help them get there. I felt truly inspired. But alongside that inspiration, I also noticed a strong pull within myself, a desire to do more, to help them get there, to remove the barriers that might stand in their way. It was a moment of realisation

that, while my role was to facilitate and observe, the human connection in these interactions is impossible to ignore."