

Looked-After Children and Young People

[K] Barriers to, and facilitators for, supporting learning needs of looked-after children and young people

NICE guideline NG205

Evidence reviews underpinning recommendations 1.3.13, 1.3.18, 1.5.10, 1.6.4 to 1.6.6, 1.6.8 to 1.6.9, 1.6.12 to 1.6.14, and 1.6.20 to 1.6.22

October 2021

Final

These evidence reviews were developed by NICE Guideline Updates Team

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ISBN:978-1-4731-4291-6

Contents

Barriers to, and facilitators for, supporting learning needs of looked-after children and young people.....	6
Review question	6
Introduction	6
SPIDER table	6
Methods and process	7
Qualitative evidence	7
Summary of studies included in the qualitative synthesis	8
Quality assessment of clinical studies included in the evidence review	13
Summary of qualitative findings: barriers to, and facilitators for, supporting learning needs of looked-after children and young people	14
Economic evidence	28
Economic model.....	28
The committee’s discussion of the evidence.....	28
References – included studies.....	34
Appendices.....	36
Appendix A – Review protocols	36
Appendix B – Literature search strategies	47
Appendix C – Qualitative evidence study selection.....	92
Appendix D – Qualitative evidence	93
Berridge 2017.....	94
Brewin 2011	100
Carter 2011	106
Chase 2013.....	111
Evans 2016	117
Fargas-Malet 2018	124
Francis 2017	130
Franklin 2013	135
Gaskell 2010	141
Griffiths 2012.....	146
Groak 2011	151
Kirton 2011.....	158
Larkins 2021.....	166
Mannay 2017	170
Mantovani 2015.....	176
Medforth 2019	182
Oke 2013.....	189
O’Toole 2017.....	195

Pinkney 2020*	200
Quarmby 2014.....	205
Roberts 2017.....	209
Schofield 2015	214
Sidery 2019.....	218
Sugden 2013.....	225
Thomas 2012	229
Williams-Brown 2020*	236
Appendix E – Forest plots.....	240
Appendix F –CERQual tables.....	241
Experience of carers supporting looked after children moving out of care	241
Appendix G – Economic evidence study selection.....	250
Appendix H – Economic evidence tables.....	251
Appendix I – Health economic model	252
Appendix J – Excluded studies.....	253
Appendix K – Research recommendations – full details	265
Research recommendation	265
Appendix L – References	265
Other references	265
Appendix M – Other appendix	265

Barriers to, and facilitators for, supporting learning needs of looked-after children and young people

Review question

What are the barriers to, and facilitators for, supporting learning needs of looked-after children and young people?

Introduction

Looked-after children are at a greater risk of poor educational outcomes. In 2019, 55.9% of looked-after children had a special educational need, compared with 46.0% of children in need and 14.9% of all children. At key stage 2, 37% of looked-after children and young people reached the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (compared with 65% of those who were not looked after). In 2018, 0.05% of looked-after children were permanently excluded from school, compared to 0.10% of all children. Interventions that support learning needs for looked-after child during preschool, primary, or secondary education could help to improve educational outcomes while the child is at school,

Looked after children and young people are currently entitled to a pupil premium to support their education. In practice, local authorities may use a range of techniques to help support the education of looked after children. These may include: early learning and development programmes; paired reading; tutoring; skills coaching; and peer mentorship. In addition, statutory systems of care are designed to support the education of looked after children and include: virtual school headteachers and designated teachers; the pupil premium; a personal education plan; transition support; priority school admissions; and special educational needs provision. However, it is currently unclear what aspects of educational care are considered to be most supportive of the learning needs of looked after children and young people, from the point of view of the children and young people themselves, their carers, and educational practitioners.

The aim of this review is to explore the barriers to, and facilitators for, supporting learning needs of looked-after children and young people and to synthesise overarching themes that can highlight ways in which support for learning needs can be improved.

SPIDER table

Table 1: SPIDER table for barriers to, and facilitators for, supporting learning needs of looked-after children and young people

Type of review	Qualitative evidence synthesis
Sample (S)	Looked after children and young people and care leavers (wherever they are looked after) from birth to age 18.
Phenomenon of Interest (PI)	Any barriers to and facilitators for achieving learning needs in looked-after children and young people, and the success of support for achieving learning needs

Design (D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic reviews of included study designs • Qualitative studies: including focus groups, unstructured and semi-structured interview-based studies (mixed-methods studies will also be included provided they contain relevant qualitative data)
Evaluation (E)	<p>Evidence should relate to views concerning barriers and facilitators for achieving learning needs in looked after children, young people, and care leavers, among:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • looked after children, young people, and care leavers, themselves • carers of looked after children, young people, and care leavers • health and social care providers supporting learning and education in looked after children, young people, and care leavers <p>With a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • experience of support for achieving learning needs and accessing this support • unintended consequences
Research type	Qualitative or mixed methods where relevant qualitative data is presented
Search date	1990
Exclusion criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countries outside of the UK (unless not enough evidence, then progress to OECD countries) • Studies older than the year 2010 (unless not enough evidence, then progress to include studies between 1990 to current) • Studies including mixed populations (i.e. looked after and non-looked after children) without reporting results separately for LACYP • Mixed-methods studies reporting qualitative data that cannot be distinguished from quantitative data.

Methods and process

This evidence review was developed using the methods and process described in [Developing NICE guidelines: the manual](#). For further details of the methods used see Appendix N. Methods specific to this review question are described in this section and in the review protocol in Appendix A.

The search strategies for this review (and across the entire guideline) are detailed in Appendix B.

The full report for the original qualitative piece of work performed by the University of Central Lancashire can be found in Appendix O.

Declarations of interest were recorded according to [NICE's 2018 conflicts of interest policy](#).

Qualitative evidence

Included studies

A single search was conducted to inform all of the review questions that formed part of this guideline. After removing duplicates, a total of 36,866 studies were identified from the search. After screening these references based on their titles and abstracts, 97 studies were obtained and reviewed against the inclusion criteria as described in the review protocol for barriers and facilitators supporting learning needs of looked after children and young people (Appendix A). Overall, 26 studies were included (see Appendix D for full evidence tables).

Excluded studies

In total, 71 references were excluded because they did not meet the eligibility criteria. See Appendix J for a list of references for excluded studies, with reasons for exclusion.

Summary of studies included in the qualitative synthesis

The number of participants ranged from 4 to 258 across all studies. It was agreed that the number of included studies identified from the UK was sufficient to exclude those from social care systems outside of the UK, meaning that the review focussed on UK-based evidence alone. In addition, all included studies were published after 2010.

The means of data collection in 18 studies used semi-structured interviews, in addition, 5 studies used focus group methodology, one used unstructured interviewing. Two studies were less clear and simply referred to “in-depth interviews” with one additional study using an inductive “mosaic approach” with interview questions developed by participants.

Most studies were among children in care, broadly. However, two studies were among children in foster care and two among children in residential care, specifically. Four studies concerned unaccompanied asylum seekers, three studies considered those with criminal or behavioural problems, two studies considered sub-populations with mental health problems, one study considered trafficked children, and one study considered black and ethnic minority mothers in care. A broad age range was included in most studies, however four studies considered looked after children (<11 years old) and eleven studies considered looked after young people (>11 years old), specifically. Five studies did not report the age of the looked after children considered, often where the perspectives of carers or support staff alone had been canvassed.

No studies focused on looked after children who were babies and young children, who were placed out of area, with Special Educational Needs, were young parents in care, or who were LGBTQ.

Further study characteristics are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: characteristics of included studies

Study (country)	LACYP population (age)	Setting and context	Methods	Perspectives (n)
Berridge 2017 (UK)	Children in care between the end of Key Stage 2 to end of Key Stage 4 (11–16 years of age).	Secondary school in England	Semi-structured interview data was analysed using a thematic approach.	Adolescents (26), social workers (17), Foster carers (17), residential worker (1), Teachers (20)
Brewin 2011 (UK)	Children who are looked after in one borough in Wales, on roll at a school within the local authority and about to make, or have recently made, transition into	Looked after children in a semi-rural borough in Wales	Semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis using “framework analysis”	Child interviews (14), Foster carers (22), Teachers (19) Looked After Children Education Support Officers (3), and a social worker focus group

Study (country)	LACYP population (age)	Setting and context	Methods	Perspectives (n)
	secondary school (age 9 – 12 years)			
Carter 2011 (UK)	Looked after children in therapeutic residential care (age not reported)	Thornby Hall - a therapeutic residential care home (Childhood First)	Semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis.	Current residents (5) and previous residents (3)
Chase 2013 (UK)	Unaccompanied asylum seekers (aged 9 – 17 years)	Local authorities in London.	In-depth interviews and thematic analysis	Unaccompanied asylum seekers (54)
Evans 2016 (UK)	Looked after children and young people or those with prior experience of being in care and education (16 – 27 years old)	Wales. Participants were purposively sampled through The Fostering Network.	Focus groups with semi-structured interviewing and thematic analysis was conducted.	Looked after young people (26)
Fargas-Malet 2018 (UK)	Children and young people in care (age not reported)	Northern Ireland, foster, kinship, and residential care.	Focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews, and thematic analysis.	Carers (foster, kinship and residential) (233); interviews with young people (25); and multidisciplinary focus group interviews with professionals across the HSC Trusts.
Francis 2017 (UK)	Looked after children who would benefit from additional psychological support (5 to 11 years)	Looked after children referred from nine primary schools in an English local authority (Leicester)	Semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis.	Looked after children (20)
Franklin 2013 (UK)	Young people who were trafficked which children and became looked after (age 15 to 23 years)	Voluntary organisations supporting trafficked children	Semi-structured interviews with trafficked children and telephone interviews with stakeholders. Thematic analysis was used.	Looked after children (17), representatives from six local authorities (social care managers and front line social workers) (9), solicitors (welfare and immigration) (2) and voluntary sector staff (front-line workers with direct experience of supporting trafficked/suspected trafficked children) (7)

Study (country)	LACYP population (age)	Setting and context	Methods	Perspectives (n)
Gaskell 2010 (UK)	Looked after young people (age not reported)	Inner London Local Authority. All young people were also service users of a London-based children's charity.	Interviews and thematic analysis	Looked after young people (10)
Griffiths 2012 (UK)	Children in care (aged 7 to 11 years)	Three different UK local authorities. Participants took part in the Letterbox club intervention.	Semi-structured interviews. Unclear how data was analysed.	Children (4) and foster carers (4) for Letterbox Red and Blue in 2009, and with children (6) and their foster carers (6) for Letterbox Green in 2011
Groak 2011 (UK)	Unaccompanied asylum seekers (aged 16 to 18 years)	An inner-city borough in the UK	Semi-structured interviews and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) were used.	Unaccompanied asylum seekers (6)
Kirton 2011 (UK)	Looked after children involved with an evaluation of multidimensional treatment foster care (most were aged 13 or older)	Local evaluation of MTFC within one of the pilot local authorities.	Semi-structured interviews. Unclear how data was analysed).	Foster carers (8), children's social workers (6), supervising social workers (2), individual therapists, birth family therapists, skills workers (3), social work assistants, programme supervisor (1), programme manager (1), members of the management board (4)
Larkins 2021 (UK)	Looked after children and care leavers (aged 6 to 17)	Three local authorities in the UK.	Creative methods and thematic interview schedules were developed in consultation with a steering group of young researchers who were LAC. All fieldwork activities were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive thematic analysis with a framework analysis approach was used. Data was listened to, read, looked at and	Perspectives of looked after children and care leavers (47)

Study (country)	LACYP population (age)	Setting and context	Methods	Perspectives (n)
			reviewed by multiple researchers, young researchers and GUC members.	
Mannay 2017 (UK)	primary and secondary school-aged looked after children and young people (aged 6 to 27 years old)	Wales, invited to take part through the Fostering Network	Semi-structured interviews with integrated creative methods. Data were thematically analysed using an inductive and deductive approach	Looked after and previously looked after children and young people (67)
Mantovani 2015 (UK)	Mothers in care or having left care with black minority ethnicity (aged 16 to 19 years old)	Three London Local Authorities (LAs) selected for their geographical diversity, reported rates of teenage pregnancy and their high concentration of black minority groups.	In-depth unstructured interviews and thematic analysis.	Looked after mothers in care (15)
Medforth 2019 (UK)	Young people in care (aged 13 to 19)	Evaluation of the Hearty Lives Project in Liverpool, England.	Focus group, semi-structured interviews with thematic analysis.	Looked after young people (7) foster carers (2), Hearty Lives Project Manager (1), Hearty Lives champion (1).
Oke 2013 (UK)	Adolescents in care stable in a placement despite previous expectations (aged 12 to 17 years old)	One local authority in the UK	Semi-structured interviews with thematic analysis	Foster carers (7)
O'Toole 2017 (UK)	Previous unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors (aged between 18 and 28 years)	Participants were recruited from an organisation that provides therapeutic care to asylum seeking and refugee individuals.	Individual and group assessments using Personal Construct Theory followed by thematic analysis.	Unaccompanied asylum seekers (6)
Pinkney 2020 (UK)	Looked after young people prior to entering higher education (age 14 – 17 years)	One university and one metropolitan local authority in the north of England	Semi-structured interviews were analysed using thematic analysis.	Care experienced young people still attending school (6)
Quarmby 2014 (UK)	Looked after children in residential care (aged 12 to 17 years)	One residential home in England	A "mosaic approach": a participatory, multi-method approach whereby young people's own research artefacts (photographs, maps, drawings, etc.,) were	Looked after children in residential care (4)

Study (country)	LACYP population (age)	Setting and context	Methods	Perspectives (n)
			joined to interview responses and observations. Interview questions were developed in collaboration with the participants.	
Roberts 2017 (UK)	Children in foster care (aged 4 to 6 years)	Participants who took part in a randomised controlled trial of the letterbox intervention in Northern Ireland	Semi-structured interviews with thematic analysis	Foster children (20) foster carers (11)
Schofield 2015 (UK)	Looked after children in contact with the youth justice system; and looked after children without involvement in the justice system (aged 15 to 17 years)	Four UK local authorities	Semi-structured interviews with thematic analysis	Looked after children offenders (33), looked after children non-offenders (35)
Sidery 2019 (UK)	Unaccompanied asylum seekers (age not reported)	a semi-rural county in the South West of England with a considerably lower level of ethnic diversity than the national average	Semi-structured interviews with thematic analysis.	Foster carers (11)
Sugden 2013 (UK)	Primary school-aged looked after children (aged 7 to 9 years)	One British local authority	Semi structured interviews and triangulation with a notepad diary used while at school. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used to thematically analyse qualitative data.	Looked after children (6)
Thomas 2012 (UK)	Looked after young people involved in Children in Care Councils (age not reported)	Boroughs around the city of London involved with the development of Children in Care Councils	Semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Unclear how data was analysed.	Looked after young people (10), participation workers (4), managers (4) and elected members (3)
Williams-Brown 2020 (UK)	13 different early years settings in the same Local Authority (age not reported)	early years settings e.g. preschool or nurseries	Q-methodology from semi-structured interviews with interpretative analysis.	owners/managers of early years settings (20)

See Appendix D for full evidence tables

Quality assessment of clinical studies included in the evidence review

Studies were critically appraised using the CASP qualitative study checklist. See appendix D for appraisal of individual studies.

Summary of qualitative findings

Figure 1: Summary of the qualitative themes observed in this review

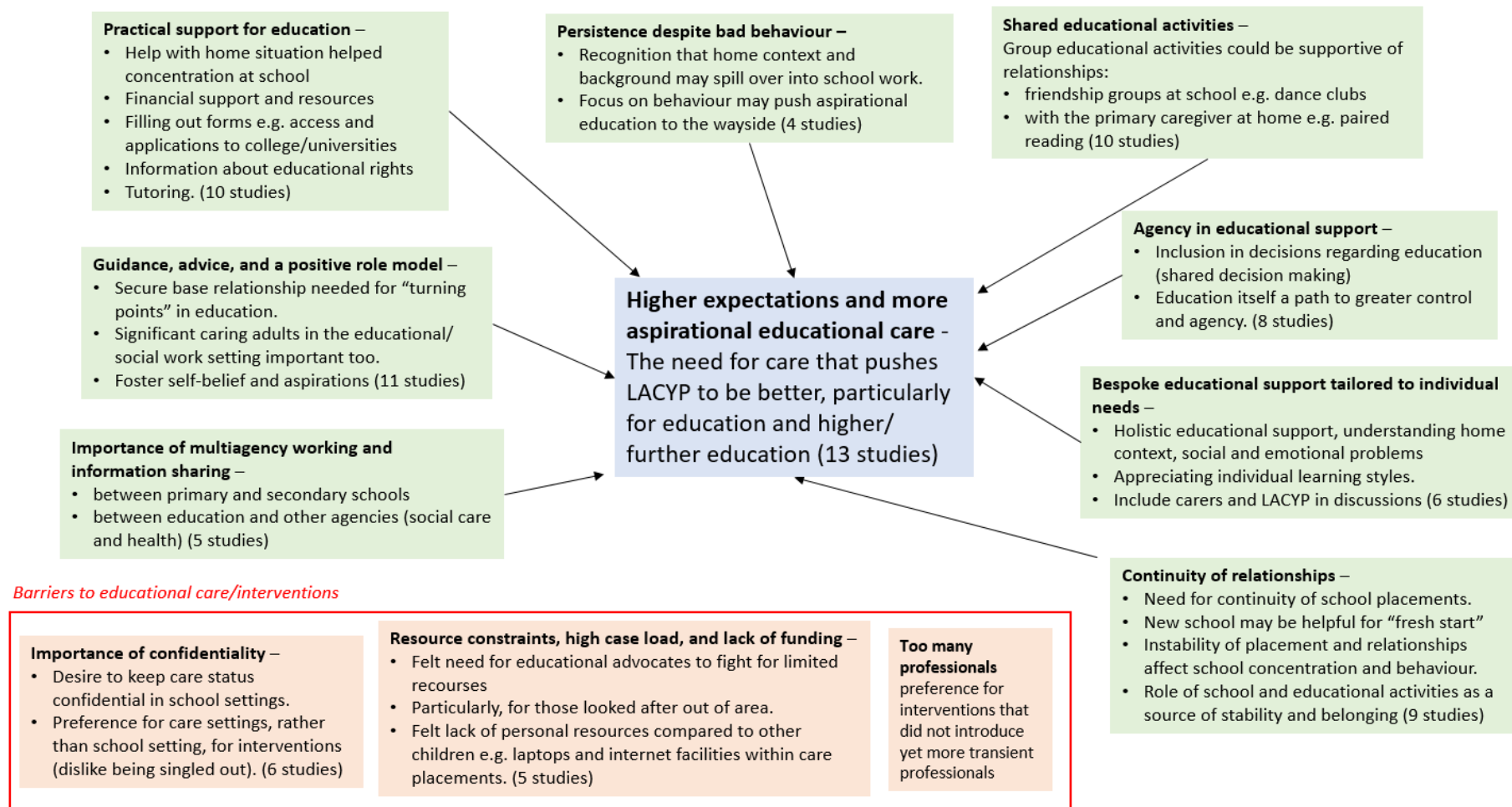
Facilitators for good educational care

Table 3: Summary of qualitative findings: barriers to, and facilitators for, supporting learning needs of looked-after children and young people

Themes	illustrative quotes	Studies	CERQual concerns	CERQual explanation
<p>Higher expectations and aspirations</p> <p>The need for higher expectations/more aspirational encouraging care that pushes LACYP to be better, particularly for education and higher/further education. Fears that focus on behaviour may mean education is pushed to the wayside. Educational aspirations was linked to hope for the future, particularly for unaccompanied asylum seekers.</p>	<p><i>"People tend to focus on behaviour instead of education, it's like we will fix their behaviour and then we'll give them an education. It doesn't work, it's got to go at the same time. Because what happens is youngsters lose chunks of their education because people are trying to fix their behaviour and then they know that type of thing, that doesn't really you don't get anywhere for the kid."</i> LACYP</p> <p><i>"They had expectations that basically I was going to become a thick shit. Some teachers were like openly against us. You know they were like 'oh there's no point like trying with them sort of thing'"</i> LACYP</p> <p><i>"The head teacher didn't exclude me in the end, he just kept saying, 'do you want to go home'? And I'd go home."</i> LACYP</p> <p><i>"It's about motivation. All you need is a good kick up the arse. And I think if somebody had given that to</i></p>	<p>15</p> <p>Berridge 2017 Chase 2013 Evans 2016 Franklin 2013 Gaskell 2010 Griffiths 2012 Groak 2011 Larkins 2021* Mannay 2017 Mantovani 2015 Oke 2013 O'Toole 2017 Pinkney 2020* Roberts 2017 Sugden 2013</p>	<p>ML: No concerns C: No concerns A: No concerns R: No concerns</p> <p>Overall quality: High</p>	<p>No concerns</p>

	<i>me when I was 16 or 17, I would probably have been like 'right, that's it I want to, I'm going to do something with my life.' LACYP</i>			
<p>Significant caring relationships and positive role models are pivotal for education</p> <p>The lack of positive role models and instability at home inhibited a child's engagement at school. Importance of close reliable genuine relationships with carers (a secure base) for turning points in education. In addition, significant caring adults in the educational and social care setting were also important. Positive relationships with individual members of staff (key adults) supported school stability and could help to foster self-belief and educational aspirations. Particularly in the case of unaccompanied asylum seekers. The need to feel that their lives mattered to someone else before it could matter to them. Someone to give a "kick up the backside", to take an interest in their education, and support their learning.</p>	<p><i>'I think that everyone has the ability actually to do well in education. It's just the support mechanism that you give to them...For me, I just needed someone to give me a kick up the backside and say to me "[name], you can do it" ...Because when someone does something for you, you don't want to let them down...It made me feel touched and it made me feel like, you know, maybe this is not just a placement...And it made me feel more warm' LACYP</i></p> <p><i>"When I'd come home crying because my teacher said I'm not going to be able to do it (my foster carer) used to say no you can, you can, she was really supportive . . . I was part of the Looked-After Care Council and we went to a conference thing and they were saying about students in care like not achieving what they should and whatever, and saying that only 1% like go to university and whatever. And my foster carer . . . she was like, 'you're going to be that 1%'.</i></p>	<p>13</p> <p>Berridge 2017 Brewin 2011 Evans 2016 Griffiths 2012 Groak 2011 Larkins 2021 Mannay 2017 Mantovani 2015 Oke 2013 Pinkney 2020 Schofield 2015 Sugden 2013 Thomas 2012</p>	<p>ML: No concerns C: No concerns A: No concerns R: No concerns</p> <p>Overall quality: High</p>	<p>No concerns</p>

	<i>And I don't know it kind of just put a little bit of more belief in me and it just made me want to do it that little bit more." LACYP</i>			
<p>Benefit of shared educational activities</p> <p>The important role of educational activities. Group activities were particularly considered helpful for supporting relationships in educational settings. Educational activities were also considered supportive of attachment relationships when shared with the primary carer. Some found school to be a place of acceptance and belonging, where pro-social activities could be performed and agency supported e.g. choice in sports/dance clubs. These activities could also be useful at times of transition e.g. between school placements. However, this needed to be balanced against not making LACYP feel "singled out". In one study, a barrier to educational opportunities, e.g. attending after school groups, was overly restrictive residential care scheduling. (10 studies).</p>	<p><i>"...it's challenging them [individuals in foster care] because they're learning how to bake, but they're also learning how to do numbers, and they're also learning like with the colouring stuff. It's like number games and counting games and stuff so you can help them with their maths and whatever else." LACYP</i></p> <p><i>"...it helps to learn how to interact with people because that helps your emotions a lot because it teaches you to talk to people and stuff. [Participant F10] ...it creates bonds like you'd be surprised how not many young people sit down and have a meal together you know...I didn't do that when I was in a children's home, never ate together. [Participant M09]"</i></p>	<p>10</p> <p>Brewin 2011 Chase 2013 Evans 2016 Griffiths 2012 Larkins 2021 Mannay 2017 Medforth 2019 Quarmby 2014 Roberts 2017 Schofield 2015 Sugden 2013</p>	<p>ML: No concerns C: Moderate A: No concerns R: No concerns</p> <p>Overall quality: Low</p>	<p>Themes spanned the role of school as a source of stability. The role of group activities in educational settings and one on one educational activities with carers.</p>
<p>Practical support for education</p> <p>Practical support is appreciated for education. For example, some wanted help with their home situation to be able to</p>	<p><i>"One said that at every Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting she attended, she reiterated that the best way that professionals could help her do well at school was to make sure that her mother was</i></p>	<p>11</p> <p>Berridge 2017 Chase 2013 Evans 2016 Griffiths 2012 Larkins 2021</p>	<p>ML: No concerns C: Moderate A: No concerns R: No concerns</p>	<p>Practical help could take many forms which led to some vagueness for this theme. Few studies considered each of the practical help examples mentioned.</p>

<p>concentrate better at school. More directly, financial support, help with forms, educational resources e.g. books, information about educational rights and access to college/university and apprenticeship opportunities. Tutors may be useful when carers are unable to help with education, although carer-delivered interventions were preferred. For unaccompanied asylum seekers, securing a school place was a challenge alongside language barriers which must be overcome before educational progress can be made.</p>	<p><i>taking her medication."</i></p>	<p>Mannay 2017 Mantovani 2015 Roberts 2017 Schofield 2015 Sidery 2019 Thomas 2012</p>	<p>Overall quality: Low</p>	
<p>Importance of continuity of relationships and the impact of placement moves and instability upon education</p> <p>Continuity of relationships impacted education in three major ways –frequent changes in social worker were felt to impede information sharing with schools. Continuity of school placements primarily was felt to be a priority for educational stability. As a result of the lack of continuity in their lives, looked after children and young people favoured educational interventions that did not introduce yet more transient figures e.g.</p>	<p><i>"I'd say that the most important thing is to make sure that there is stability in the young person's life because moving around a lot affects their education... I think there should be something in a young person's life that stays the same so whether that be the social worker, or the school, or the placement." LACYP</i></p> <p><i>"The dream would be that you only ever have two schools, like everybody else." LACYP</i></p> <p><i>"Yeah I found obviously moving around schools a lot, because I moved from Wales to England and</i></p>	<p>9</p> <p>Berridge 2017 Brewin 2011 Evans 2016 Francis 2017 Franklin 2013 Gaskell 2010 Griffiths 2012 Groak 2011 Quarmby 2014</p>	<p>ML: No concerns C: Moderate concerns A: No concerns R: No concerns</p> <p>Overall quality: Low</p>	<p>Some contradiction as school placement moves were detrimental in most cases but could be helpful where the previous school environment had become non-conducive to learning. Also, continuity of relationships impacted education in three ways. Included studies did not necessarily consider all three.</p>

<p>carer-delivered interventions were preferred. Detrimental impact of placement moves, negative events at home/in the past, or with birth family, upon educational stability and ability to learn or concentrate while at school. However, occasionally, a fresh start at a new school could be helpful, e.g. to escape stigma felt in the previous school where care status may be known, or previous unhelpful peers were present.</p>	<p><i>it was like during that transition of like for a year I was out of education so I was playing a catch-up game, always like right the way up through school until I left, I was always trying to catch up." LACYP</i></p> <p><i>"Participants further expressed caution about external intervention potentially contributing to the problem of transient relationships experienced by young people in care, especially where they are delivered for a fix duration: "Nine months is a long time for a child to have someone in their life and spending that much amount hours with them. And then just suddenly be like right that's it now, goodbye. It's going to be really hard for a child to accept after everything they've been through obviously. So it's going to be really hard that is...Because I still struggle with that now. My [social worker] has just left me and I broke my heart because she was with me 18months I think it was and I actually broke my heart, knowing that I will never see her again." LACYP</i></p>			
<p>Supporting agency in educational support</p>	<p><i>"Whilst many thought it important that schools offer additional support, they felt it should be</i></p>	<p>8 Berridge 2017 Evans 2016</p>	<p>ML: No concerns C: Minor</p>	<p>Themes regarding the need for greater agency and shared</p>

<p>Need for agency impacted on education in several ways. LACYP expressed a desire to be included in decisions regarding educational support (shared decision making). This would enable educational support tailored to their needs. Education itself was also seen as a path to greater control and agency – particularly for unaccompanied asylum seekers. Those who particularly preferred to be ‘private/self-reliant’ did not like to feel dependent on others.</p>	<p><i>developed in consultation with the individual, so that presumptions about their needs and experiences are not made.”</i></p> <p><i>“But if you get fed up because of your problems, you cannot focus, you will not get an education, you will not make a family. Daytime - my problem, night-time - my problem, daytime - my problem. There comes a time that your problem will never go, or even if you find a solution to let it go. It will go and come back again, because you have no way of getting rid of it. If you really work hard – you will get rid of it! Now we are finding it hard, but in the next five to ten years – there will be big changes. If we focus, if we work hard, if we are determined, trust me; we will see big changes in our lives.” UAS</i></p>	<p>Larkins 2021 Mannay 2017 Mantovani 2015 O’Toole 2017 Roberts 2017 Sugden 2013 Thomas 2012</p>	<p>A: No concerns R: No concerns</p> <p>Overall quality: Moderate</p>	<p>decision making for educational supported were linked to themes regarding education itself as the means to greater agency.</p>
<p>Educational support tailored to individual needs</p> <p>Bespoke educational support tailored to the specific needs of the child was desired. Carers and young people should be included in discussions about what is required. Educational support should be holistic, understanding home context,</p>	<p><i>“the importance of support needing to be tailored to the individual and that social workers and teachers need to ask carers and young people about what is required.” Berridge 2017</i></p> <p><i>“Whilst many thought it important that schools offer additional support, they felt it should be developed in consultation with the</i></p>	<p>7 Berridge 2017 Brewin 2011 Griffiths 2012 Kirton 2011 Larkins 2021 Mannay 2017 Roberts 2017 Sugden 2013</p>	<p>ML: No concerns C: No concerns A: No concerns R: No concerns</p> <p>Overall: High</p>	<p>No concerns</p>

<p>social and emotional problems, and individual learning styles. Not one size fits all– e.g. accessible options for those with learning disabilities.</p>	<p><i>individual, so that presumptions about their needs and experiences are not made.” Mannay 2017</i></p> <p><i>“Interviewer: So erm what do they do to help you Elliot? Elliot: Help me do my work?! Interviewer: Right and erm how do they do that? Elliot: Erm, uh, just – they write it down and then in the book and then I have to copy it into my book”</i></p>			
<p>Confidentiality of care status in educational settings</p> <p>LACYP often desired to keep their care status confidential in school settings. Preference for care settings, rather than school setting, for interventions. Dislike being singled out.</p>	<p><i>‘...but I didn't want them knowing my business’ LACYP</i></p> <p><i>‘I wasn't that type of person to be branded needing help’ LACYP</i></p> <p><i>“...you've got people making fun of you and stuff because you know they're giving you extra support for no need. [Participant F08] ...it's singling me out and its making me seem special when I'm not, I'm a normal person.” LACYP</i></p> <p><i>““This program is for everybody, which I think is good because it's not just focused around young people in care.”</i></p>	<p>6</p> <p>Berridge 2017 Brewin 2011 Chase 2010 Evans 2016 Fargas-Malet 2018 Larkins 2021 Mannay 2017</p>	<p>ML: No concerns C: No concerns A: No concerns R: No concerns</p> <p>Overall: High</p>	<p>No concerns</p>
<p>Resource constraints as a barrier to education</p>	<p><i>“I had to fight to get him into college and then I had to fight to get a taxi to take them. I then had to fight with</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p>Brewin 2011 Brown 2019</p>	<p>ML: No concerns C: Minor</p>	<p>Resource constraints impacted lack of funds for educational support and felt lack of</p>

<p>Resource constraints, high case load, lack of funding. This led to a sense that one needed to fight for limited resources. Felt need for educational advocates. Particularly for those looked after out of area. LACYP felt a lack of resources compared to other children e.g. laptops and internet facilities within care placements. "Something to call their own" was valued.</p>	<p><i>both the IRO [Independent Reviewing Officer] and the social worker because they weren't sure whether they wanted to fund another year of education for him.....[over] the last few years we have become more fighters and pests than foster carers" Foster Carer</i></p> <p><i>"sometimes it takes, literally sometimes it takes someone threatening legal action for people to pull their fingers out" Foster carer</i></p> <p><i>"I wasn't able to use my own [lap top] in the care home because obviously there was no Wi-Fi or anything like that." LACYP</i></p> <p><i>"If you are moved out of county then one county will argue with another county about who pays for transport, who pays for schooling, who pays for food, who pays for everything. That has something to do with your education. And they do, they can be, councils are just like no that's your problem, no that's your problem, palming young people off sort of thing and it's just really unpleasant." Carer</i></p>	<p>Evans 2016 Griffiths 2012 Roberts 2017</p>	<p>A: No concerns R: No concerns</p> <p>Overall: Moderate</p>	<p>resources by foster carers more broadly.</p>
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<p>Multiagency working and information sharing for educational support</p> <p>Improved, multiagency working and information sharing e.g. between primary and secondary schools and also between education and other agencies, was considered important to facilitate the support of LACYP in education. However, LACYP were also reluctant to have additional professionals in their lives. Specific training for trafficked children was suggested which could be provided across agencies.</p>	<p><i>"The importance of sharing information about the child and planning for the transition was a particularly strong theme, with nearly all adults making some reference to this." Brewin 2011</i></p> <p><i>"On the whole, given that we have got a bunch of quite disparate professions ... we've got a conjoined CAMHS, education and social care team, there's a lot less conflict than I thought there might be." MDTFC team worker</i></p> <p><i>"There is enough meetings and stuff that go on with kids...Don't want another person coming and telling you to say 'look you've got to do this, you've got to do that...[It is]what's wrong with him but it's just here we go again, another person in a suit, another bureaucrat" LACYP</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p>Brewin 2011 Evans 2016 Fragas-Malet 2018 Franklin 2013 Kirton 2011</p>	<p>ML: No concerns C: Minor A: No concerns R: No concerns</p> <p>Overall: Moderate</p>	<p>Most studies reported the benefits of increased multiagency working, however, this was balanced against the desire from LACYP themselves to reduce the amount of professionals they interact with on a day to day basis.</p>
<p>Sensitive education with persistence despite bad behaviour</p> <p>There was a need for schooling that persisted despite bad behaviour – with recognition that home context and background may spill over into school work.</p>	<p><i>"And they didn't understand if you told them, look I just [need] space, and they didn't understand, they didn't really care...They hadn't got a clue, they probably just didn't know" LACYP</i></p> <p><i>"One participant explained how difficult it had been to attend mainstream school because of</i></p>	<p>4</p> <p>Berridge 2017 Brewin 2011 Carter 2011 Mannay 2017</p>	<p>ML: No concerns C: No concerns A: No concerns R: No concerns</p> <p>Overall: High</p>	<p>No concerns</p>

	<p><i>being in care and feeling different; the fact that education was on site here and the teachers are 'more patient' meant that he was able to go to school and not worry about exclusion: 'I feel like I belong here more than I ever have. The kids here understand a bit more'"</i> LACYP</p> <p><i>"Participants acknowledged that they required additional support on occasion, and described the importance of being listened to or having someone understand their sometimes resistant or disruptive behaviours."</i> Mannay 2017</p>			
<p>Spending of the Early Years Pupil Premium</p> <p>Managers of early years settings found that the funding was limited and not needed for all. Managers struggled to decide how to spend it to meet needs. Some children can have a wide range of complex needs, which cannot be met easily in traditional settings with standard resources and training. For example, for a child who had speech and language difficulties and self-confidence issues age-appropriate dance lessons were provided for by an outside agency. Some</p>	<p><i>'the EYPP is very useful and allows practitioners to focus upon a child's next steps; funding provides PVI settings with the financial freedom to purchase resources otherwise out of remit.'</i></p> <p><i>'a child who is LAC is not always falling behind in their development. We have had some LAC who have met their age development bands'.</i></p> <p><i>'not all children who can claim need the money to improve their outcomes...it is difficult to spend money to "bridge the gap" that isn't</i></p>	<p>2 Larkins 2021 Williams-Brown 2020</p>	<p>ML: Minor concerns C: Minor A: Serious R: No concerns</p> <p>Overall: Very Low</p>	<p>Only one study contributed to this theme. Some sub-themes clashed, for example the funds were clearly used appropriately in some cases, and in others practitioners were not clear how to spend the funding.</p>

<p>practitioners mentioned training staff e.g. used for speech and language training for staff members, or in Makaton. Support went beyond targeting developmental delay especially if not present, examples included garden centres, dance classes and PE. Looked after children wished to be given clear information about Pupil Premium.</p>	<p><i>there'</i></p>			
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See appendix F for full CERQual tables.

FINAL

Barriers to, and facilitators for, supporting learning needs of looked-after children and young people

Economic evidence

Included studies

No existing economic studies were reviewed for this question given its focus on qualitative evidence.

Economic model

No economic modelling was undertaken for this review question.

The committee's discussion of the evidence

Interpreting the evidence

The outcomes that matter most

The committee heard qualitative evidence from an original piece of qualitative work commissioned for NICE (see Appendix O); and several UK-based qualitative studies. The committee noted that qualitative evidence could not provide strong evidence of the effectiveness of any particular intervention to support learning outcomes for looked after children and young people but rather could highlight the priorities, values, and perspectives of those involved in the care system as well as the perceived barriers and facilitators to successful care outcomes experienced by their carers and workers. Qualitative evidence could also help to answer the question of “how” interventions and statutory systems of care could be delivered, rather than “what” interventions or systems work best. The committee valued certain themes more highly if they had been derived from many studies or studies at lower risk of bias, if the meaning of the theme was unambiguous, and where themes had been drawn directly from looked after children and young people, or care leavers themselves (see below).

The quality of the evidence

The methodological quality of the studies included in this review were variable. Common reasons why qualitative evidence was marked down for quality included: unclear descriptions of the method of recruitment and selection of participants; unclear method of interview (for example, the topic guide used for semi-structured interview); unclear method of thematic analysis (for example, were multiple analysts used?); and whether methods to validate findings were employed (for example, triangulation and respondent analysis). Some themes were marked down for quality where data had primarily come from studies with moderate or high risk of bias. In addition, certain themes were marked down for quality where few studies contributed to a theme, themes had become overly disparate (covering several subthemes), or there were contradictions in the direction of the theme.

The committee valued qualitative evidence that was direct from the population to which the recommendations would apply, that was recent, and particularly that was from the perspective of looked after children and young people themselves. As such the qualitative evidence collected in this review was generally thought to be high quality since it was all UK-based, studies most commonly reported the perspective of looked after children and young people themselves, and all studies were published after 2010.

The qualitative work commissioned by NICE and performed by the University of Lancashire was considered the highest quality evidence since interview methods were tailored to address the review questions in this guideline, participants recruited into this study were also

selected to provide a good cross-section across vulnerable groups of interest, and data was gathered very recently. In addition, this piece of work was rated high quality when assessed using CASP criteria (see evidence table for Larkins 2021, Appendix D).

Benefits and harms

Qualitative evidence was presented from the University of Lancashire with a particular focus on the barriers and facilitators for promoting learning outcomes in looked after children and young people. In addition, evidence was presented from the qualitative evidence review bringing together studies looking at barriers to, and facilitators for, supporting learning needs of looked-after children, young people, and care leavers.

Themes from the qualitative evidence outlined the need for adults in the education system with higher expectations and aspirations for the education for children and young people in the care system, as well as the need for positive role models and tailored (individualised) support for education. The committee considered that these aspects of educational support would be particularly targeted by a more well-defined advocacy role in education, something that was also identified as an important need through the qualitative work – particularly where carers described having to fight for limited educational resources. Despite the structures being in place to make this happen, the committee noted that there was still an absence of a committed advocate on the young person’s behalf.

The committee considered that this need not require the addition of extra staff, but rather the designated teacher was already best placed to head up the role of a consistent advocate in the educational setting. To do this required acting in collaboration with those who have the best information to support and direct the looked after person’s educational path. The committee identified the following personnel as useful partners to collaborate with and provide information to the designated teacher: school staff with which the looked after person has the most comfortable relationship (which could be anyone from their teacher to a school receptionist); the primary carers of the looked after person; named care professionals in the Personal Education Plan; and health professionals (in looked after persons who have conditions affecting their education).

Once again, in order to promote the presence of a committed advocate for the looked after person in education, the committee sought to define the role of the designated teacher, as advocate, in more detail in order to help reduce the variability in the quality of this role across the country. In qualitative evidence from the University of Lancaster a case was related of a grandmother who identified an educational issue and got her child assessed for dyslexia. The committee considered that such assessments would be best organised in a timelier manner by the on-site educational advocate. This should begin with a timely assessment and ongoing monitoring of learning needs, particularly in times of transition (a period of greater educational and emotional challenges as described in qualitative evidence). After an assessment for need, this should be followed by referral to specialist support (for example, educational psychology) where necessary. Finally, even in the absence of any special educational needs the committee considered that one of the most important roles of the advocate was to “check-in” with the looked after person regularly. The committee were keen to state that this does not mean adding more stigmatising and formal meetings into the educational schedule of the looked after person. Qualitative evidence had stressed the importance of maintaining confidentiality about care status wherever possible. Rather it was recommended that the designated teacher should intentionally conduct regular one-to-one informal conversations with the looked after person in order to develop a supportive advocate relationship. One qualifier to this, however, was that the frequency of these conversations should be informed by the desires of the looked after person themselves, who may favour less intense supervision.

As well as the committed educational advocate on the school-site, the committee felt that educational advocacy must also come from the primary caregiver. Indeed, in much of the qualitative evidence, it was the primary caregiver who felt that they had to “fight” for educational resources required for their child. However, for some foster carers their role in their child’s education had not been sufficiently encouraged. For example, some may feel a responsibility for providing a home for their child but not take ownership of educational advocacy as an additional feature of their “role”. One foster carer in the committee stated that he was not aware of any training for foster carers on how to be an educational advocate, in his experience some carers are good at it naturally, but this is not consistent. The committee considered that such training is necessary as part of the package of mandatory training offered to foster carers. Training around education should be offered and delivered by the virtual school to foster carers, and the only extra costs involved should be those of the foster carers actually attending training, costs may be even lower if delivered virtually. Involving the primary carer was consistent with qualitative evidence suggesting that looked after children and young people preferred carer-delivered educational interventions, due to the fears of yet more transient professionals developing a relationship with them, and ultimately leaving.

Expert testimony from Patrick Ward and Deborah Johnson (see Appendix M)

The committee heard expert testimony from Patrick Ward – Head teacher of Lewisham Virtual School and Vice Chair of the National Association of Virtual School Heads. This expert delivered a presentation focused on the key problems of children missing from education, the role of the virtual school head, accountability with regard to the spending of pupil premium and the need for trauma-informed training for teachers. The committee also heard expert testimony from Deborah Johnson a previous SENCO worker and current Head of SEND Services in a London Borough. This expert’s presentation was focused on the linking up of special educational needs services with those of looked after children and young people’s services. Her presentation covered the need for close working between the virtual school head and the local Head of SEND services; school placement needs, that cannot be met by the efforts of a single service; accountability with regard to the spending of pupil premium; the need to share information; legislation to prevent school placement refusals; and that health service continuity should not be lost due to placement moves.

As a result of expert testimony, it was recognised that the role of the virtual school head had not been properly defined, utilised, and empowered in many cases. There was a need for the virtual school head to form the linchpin that could bring together services for looked after children and young people with educational needs, as well as to provide leadership in this area (e.g. challenging and scrutinising existing services and setting the agenda for measuring outcomes). However, the committee noted in some cases the Virtual School Head may be a peripheral figure, rather than a key leader enacting change in the Local Authority. Therefore, the committee recommended that Virtual School Heads should be considered the key leader and enabler for the collaboration of educational services around LACYP. It was noted that no consistent model of a virtual school was apparent across the country but that some common features should be defined. As part of this, there was a discussion surrounding the constituent members within a Virtual School and the external services that should be linked through the virtual school.

The committee discussed the inclusion of early years practitioners within the virtual school. Patrick Ward noted that provision for early years expertise was not statutory in virtual Schools. Smaller numbers of LACYP in the early years group resulted in small budgets applied for these children. For example, often funding is mostly given to schools, so the two ends of education age range (early years and post 16) are not well provisioned. The committee therefore considered that there was a need for early years expertise alongside the

Virtual School Head to support and champion educational services for children during the pivotal younger years. By consensus, the committee suggested that information to support this role should be brought in through collaboration with nurseries, health visitors, and routinely collected data (e.g. the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, early years Personal Education Plan, and Foundation Stage Profile).

The committee considered the expert testimony from Deborah Johnson regarding the need for closer working between the virtual school head and the Special Educational Needs Service. The Virtual School team have to have the width and depth of knowledge across social care, education and health and has a requirement to understand the legislation for each area. The only other team that requires the same breadth of knowledge is the SEND Service, but the two services are rarely placed together or communicate well. Very few social care colleagues have a working knowledge of the SEND Code of Practice or the legislation that underpins it, particularly in relation to the Belongings Regulations when a CYP is placed outside of their home borough. When the Virtual School and SEND Service work well together, a successful and productive bridge can be formed. As a result, the committee considered the need for someone with SEN experience to work within the virtual school, i.e. ideally a Special Educational Needs Coordinator or someone with SEN specialism or training.

The committee then considered the role of the Virtual School Head in bringing together other external services around the looked after person. The expert testimony from Deborah Johnson outlined the range of professionals that have a statutory remit to work with, and promote, the needs and wellbeing of children and young people in care and education. While these professionals are asked to work together, it was noted that this often does not happen sufficiently in practice. In the experience of the expert, a key bridge between the services needs to be absolutely clear and when this role has been taken up by the Virtual School, the links work much better. By consensus, the committee outlined a list of services for which the Virtual School head should act as a “bridge”; these included: social workers; Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO); school admissions services; and professionals within health services and CAMHS, designated or specialised in work with looked after children and young people.

The committee recognised that the expertise within the virtual school was likely to vary based on the demographics of the looked after population being served. Therefore, they recommended that the recruitment of expertise within the virtual school took into account the prevalence of groups of special interest in that particular local authority. The prevalence of the following groups of special interest was felt to vary quite significantly between local authorities i.e. unaccompanied asylum seekers, trafficked children, child with history of exploitation, and looked after children on remand or in secure settings.

By consensus, and based on information presented about the importance of encouraging teams to work together, the committee also discussed the importance of grouping cross-agency meetings wherever possible. For example, merging the annual review meeting and the personal education plan meetings could have the benefit of reducing the number of meetings required for LACYP to attend (which qualitative evidence suggested could be overly professional and daunting), reduce duplication of effort between agencies, and encourage multiagency communication and collaboration among the disciplines involved. Therefore, the committee recommended that Local authorities should review the meeting structures around LACYP, and meetings should be conjoined where possible.

Both expert testimonies stressed the importance of developing systems of accountability by gathering and sharing pertinent data which could help with monitoring and evaluating services around education for looked after children and young people. Particular focus was

on how the pupil premium was being spent, and how educational provision is being secured for LACYP. Patrick Ward noted that currently no data is being collected on the responsibility of local authorities to secure education provision. For example, many looked after children are not placed on a school roll (as defined by having a DofE number) by their corporate parent. In addition, there may be a culture of ignoring statutory responsibilities in this area due to lack of oversight, use of unregistered provision, and “ghost rolls”. The committee discussed how Children may be placed in unregistered schools which results in their data not being captured in national attainment figures – even more problematic, this creates a perverse incentive for local authorities not to secure appropriate provision in order to distort national attainment figures in a direction that flatters compared to the reality. In addition, the committee discussed the lack of accountability for how the pupil premium was being spent. The committee considered that no data is collected to demonstrate that education funding for CLA is being spent within the terms of the grant, which hampers the ability to evaluate the spending of pupil premium to improve outcomes or to ensure that the funds are used directly for the benefit of LACYP themselves. Patrick Ward noted that the Department for Education have acknowledged that they are not able to hold LAs accountable for either spending of pupil premiums or provision of educational placements, due to the lack of available data. As such, the committee recommended local authorities should collect and publish information on the educational provision for looked after children with a particular focus on children missing education (e.g. not in schools with a DofE number or on permanent or fixed term exclusions) as well as the strategy for reducing the number missing education. In addition, the committee recommended that the spending of the total Pupil Premium within Local Authorities should also be tracked to develop a mechanism of accountability. As an adjunctive recommendation to encourage accountability, the committee recommended that the rights of LACYP (e.g. the purpose of the pupil premium grant for education, and how it is distributed) should be communicated to LACYP to encourage transparency.

Testimony from Patrick Ward also stressed the importance of trauma-informed training needs for teachers (and all professionals) working with LACYP. The committee discussed the importance of this since regular behavioural policies in schools may not be adequate or even may be harmful for young people with a history of trauma. The committee defined trauma-informed training as promoting an understanding of: behaviour as a form of communication and response to trauma; avoiding triggers for trauma responses; attachment and loss. The committee also recommended that regulators should consider how behavioural management policies may impact students with experience of trauma.

Cost effectiveness and resource use

There were no published cost-effectiveness analyses addressing this review question. The committee made recommendations based on the qualitative evidence presented and, in discussing the evidence, the committee took into consideration the type of resource use that would be required to deliver any recommendations made.

The committee discussed advocacy in education, and recommended that the designated teacher, in collaboration with other relevant professionals named in the personal education plan (PEP), should be a consistent advocate for the looked after person’s educational success. The committee included details on monitoring learning needs, specialist support and regular informal conversations with the looked after person. This recommendation is not anticipated to be associated with additional resource implications, as the committee agreed that this is already part of the role of the designated teacher.

The committee also recommended that foster carers be trained in how to be an educational advocate. This training would be delivered by the virtual school and the committee agreed it

would be very low cost as it could be delivered virtually or in person and would be incorporated into the existing foster carer training calendar.

Expert testimony from Patrick Ward and Deborah Johnson

The committee heard expert testimony from Patrick Ward – Head teacher of Lewisham Virtual School and Vice Chair of the National Association of Virtual School Heads, and from Deborah Johnson a previous special education needs coordinator (SENCO) worker and current Head of SEND Services in a London borough. The committee made recommendations based on these testimonies and, in the absence of economic evidence, used their knowledge of current practice and proposed activities to estimate the potential resource impact of the recommendations made.

The committee discussed behavioural management policies in schools, and recommended that these policies reflect trauma-informed practice and attachment issues. The committee felt it was important to consider the effects of these policies on students with experience of trauma. Information on trauma awareness and trauma-informed practice could be incorporated into the existing behavioural management training as well as could make use of freely available materials, therefore the recommendation is unlikely to have a substantial resource impact.

The committee discussed Virtual Schools and which professionals should be in a Virtual School team. They recommended that both an early-years practitioner and a SENCO should be a part of the team. Every school in the UK has an obligation to employ a SENCO, so this would not incur additional resource use, however some Virtual Schools may not have an existing early-years practitioner. The committee agreed that this would not necessarily be an additional staff member but could be an existing member of staff with experience and/or an interest in undergoing training in early-years care provision.

Similarly, the committee recommended that the expertise in the virtual school should reflect the needs and profile of the school-aged population it serves, for example the population could include unaccompanied asylum seekers, trafficked children, children with a history of exploitation, and looked-after children on remand or in secure settings. The committee agreed that this expertise could be provided by an existing member of staff with experience and/or an interest in undergoing training in the issues relevant to the population served by the virtual school.

The committee recommended that local authorities collect and publish information on the educational provision for LACYP, particularly around children missing education and a strategy for reducing the number of these children. This is unlikely to have a significant resource impact as although this data is not consistently collected across local authorities there are mechanisms for it to be routinely collected. Additionally, the committee recommended the development of a checking mechanism for the spending of the pupil premium grant. Given there are existing mechanisms for checking local authority spending, an additional process for checking educational spending for LACYP could be incorporated into existing spending checks with minimal impacts on resources.

The committee discussed the current number of different meetings held with LACYP and recommended that the meeting structures be reviewed by local authorities and condensed into fewer meetings where possible (e.g. LACYP annual reviews and personal education plan meetings could occur together). This would not require additional resources, as it would be reducing the number of meetings being organised and held.

The committee recommended that Virtual School Heads should enable the collaboration of services and form a key bridge between named specialists including social workers, independent reviewing officers, school admissions and designated professionals in health and CAMHS for LACYP. This recommendation is not anticipated to have a significant resource impact as no additional staff are required, but only greater collaboration between named specialists, led and facilitated by Virtual School Heads.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Review protocols

Review protocol for RQ4.4: Barriers to, and facilitators for, supporting learning needs of looked-after children and young people

ID	Field	Content
1.	Review title	Barriers to, and facilitators for, supporting learning needs of looked-after children and young people
2.	Review question	What are the barriers to, and facilitators for, supporting learning needs of looked-after children and young people?
3.	Objective	To determine if there are certain points, events, or other triggers that impact the learning of looked-after children and young people, and the success of support for their learning needs.
4.	Searches	<p>Sources to be searched</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PsycINFO (Ovid) • Embase (Ovid) • MEDLINE (Ovid) • MEDLINE In-Process (Ovid) • MEDLINE Epubs Ahead of Print • PsycINFO (Ovid) • Social policy and practice (Ovid) • Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (CENTRAL) • Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (CDSR) • Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effect (DARE)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EconLit (Ovid) – economic searches only • NHSEED (CRD) - economic searches only <p>Supplementary search techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies published from 1st January 1990 to present day. • A supplementary search of ERIC database was performed using terms relating to looked after children and education. <p>Limits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies reported in English • No study design filters will be applied • Animal studies will be excluded • Conference abstracts/proceedings will be excluded. • For economic searches, the Cost Utility, Economic Evaluations and Quality of Life filters will be applied. <p>The full search strategies for MEDLINE database will be published in the final review. For each search the Information Services team at NICE will quality assure the principal database search strategy and peer review the strategies for the other databases using an adaptation of the PRESS 2015 Guideline Evidence-Based Checklist.</p>
5.	Condition or domain being studied	This review is for part of an updated NICE guideline for looked-after children and young people and concerns barriers and facilitators for learning and education in looked-after children and young people.
6.	Population	Looked after children and young people and care leavers (wherever they are looked after) from birth to age 18.

		<p>Also including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people who are looked after on a planned, temporary basis for short breaks or respite care purposes, only if the Children Act 1989 (section 20) applies and the child or young person is temporarily classed as looked after. • Children and young people living at home with birth parents but under a full or interim local authority care order and are subject to looked-after children and young people processes and statutory duties. • Children and young people in a prospective adoptive placement. • Looked-after children and young people on remand, detained in secure youth custody and those serving community orders.
7.	Phenomena of interest	Any barriers to and facilitators for achieving learning needs in looked-after children and young people, and the success of support for achieving learning needs
8.	Comparator	Not applicable
9.	Types of study to be included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic reviews of included study designs • Qualitative studies: including focus groups, unstructured and semi-structured interview-based studies (mixed-methods studies will also be included provided they contain relevant qualitative data)
10.	Other exclusion criteria	<p>Exclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countries outside of the UK (unless not enough evidence, then progress to OECD countries) • Studies older than the year 2010 (unless not enough evidence, then progress to include studies between 1990 to current) • Studies including mixed populations (i.e. looked after and non-looked after children) without reporting results separately for LACYP

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed-methods studies reporting qualitative data that cannot be distinguished from quantitative data. <p>Views and experiences relating to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving placement stability (covered in review questions 1.1 and 1.2) • Promoting positive relationships (covered in review question 2.1 and 2.2) • Improving health and wellbeing (covered in review questions 3.2 and 3.3) • Improving permanency of placements out of care (covered in review questions 5.1 and 5.2) • Developing independence on leaving care (covered in review questions 6.1 and 6.2) • Specific interventions and programmes (covered in review questions 4.1 to 4.3).
11.	Context	<p>In 2017, 56.3% of looked-after children had a special educational need, compared with 45.9% of children in need and 14.4% of all children. At key stage 2, 32% of looked-after children and young people reached the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (compared with 61% of those who were not looked after). In 2016, 0.10% of looked-after children were permanently excluded from school, compared to 0.08% of all children. Looked-after children are 5 times more likely to offend than the general population. Local authorities have a duty to support looked-after children and young people. This includes providing individual care plans covering for educational needs.</p>

12.	Phenomena of interest - themes	<p>Evidence should relate to views concerning barriers and facilitators for achieving learning needs in looked after children, young people, and care leavers, among:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • looked after children, young people, and care leavers, themselves • carers of looked after children, young people, and care leavers • health and social care providers supporting learning and education in looked after children, young people, and care leavers <p>With a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • experience of support for achieving learning needs and accessing this support • unintended consequences
13.	Secondary outcomes (important outcomes)	None
14.	Data extraction (selection and coding)	<p>All references identified by the searches and from other sources will be uploaded into EPPI reviewer and de-duplicated. 10% of the abstracts will be reviewed by two reviewers, with any disagreements resolved by discussion or, if necessary, a third independent reviewer.</p> <p>The full text of potentially eligible studies will be retrieved and will be assessed in line with the criteria outlined above. A standardised form will be used to extract data from studies (see Developing NICE guidelines: the manual section 6.4). Study investigators may be contacted for missing data where time and resources allow.</p>

15.	Risk of bias (quality) assessment	<p>Individual qualitative studies will be quality assessed using the CASP qualitative checklist and classified into one of the following three groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low risk of bias – The findings and themes identified in the study are likely to accurately capture the true picture. • Moderate risk of bias – There is a possibility the findings and themes identified in the study are not a complete representation of the true picture. • High risk of bias – It is likely the findings and themes identified in the study are not a complete representation of the true picture
16.	Strategy for data synthesis	<p>Where multiple qualitative studies are identified for a single question, information from the studies will be combined using a thematic synthesis. By examining the findings of each included study, descriptive themes will be independently identified and coded in NVivo v.11. Once all of the included studies have been examined and coded, the resulting themes and sub-themes will be evaluated to examine their relevance to the review question, the importance given to each theme, and the extent to which each theme recurs across the different studies. The qualitative synthesis will use these ‘descriptive themes’ to develop ‘analytical themes’, which will be interpreted by the reviewer in light of the overarching review questions.</p> <p>CERQual will be used to assess the confidence we have in the summary findings of each of the identified themes. Evidence from all qualitative study designs (interviews, focus groups etc.) is initially</p>

		rated as high confidence and the confidence in the evidence for each theme will be downgraded from this initial point.
17.	Analysis of sub-groups	<p>If different barriers or facilitators are observed between subgroups of interest, these will be drawn out under descriptive themes, which will then be used to develop analytical themes. The following constitute subgroups of interest:</p> <p>Age of LACYP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LACYP in early years education • LACYP in primary education • LACYP in secondary education and further education until age 18 <p>Other subgroups, of specific consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looked-after children looked after under a care order (section 20 (voluntary) or 31 (full care order)) • Looked-after children on remand • Looked-after children in secure settings • LACYP who are outside of mainstream education (e.g. off-roll or in pupil referral units) • Looked-after children and young people with mental health and emotional wellbeing needs • Looked-after children and young people who are babies and young children • Looked-after children and young people who are unaccompanied children seeking asylum, or refugees

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looked-after children and young people who are at risk or victims of exploitation (including female genital mutilation) and trafficking • Looked-after children and young people who are teenage and young parents in care • Looked-after children and young people with disabilities; speech, language and communication needs; special education needs or behaviour that challenges. • Looked-after children and young people who are placed out of area • Looked-after children and young people who are LGBTQ 		
18.	Type and method of review	<input type="checkbox"/> Intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Diagnostic <input type="checkbox"/> Prognostic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Qualitative <input type="checkbox"/> Epidemiologic <input type="checkbox"/> Service Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)		
19.	Language	English		
20.	Country	England		
21.	Anticipated or actual start date	June 2019		
22.	Anticipated completion date	September 2021		
23.	Stage of review at time of this submission	Review stage	Started	Completed
		Preliminary searches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		Piloting of the study selection process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Formal screening of search results against eligibility criteria	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Data extraction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Risk of bias (quality) assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Data analysis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24.	Named contact	<p>5a. Named contact Guideline Updates Team</p> <p>5b Named contact e-mail LACYPupdate@nice.org.uk</p> <p>5c Organisational affiliation of the review National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)</p>		
25.	Review team members	<p>From the Guideline Updates Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caroline Mulhivill • Stephen Duffield • Bernadette Li • Rui Martins 		
26.	Funding sources/sponsor	This systematic review is being completed by the Guideline Updates Team, which is part of NICE.		
27.	Conflicts of interest	All guideline committee members and anyone who has direct input into NICE guidelines (including the evidence review team and expert witnesses) must declare any potential conflicts of interest in line with NICE's code of practice for declaring and dealing with conflicts of interest. Any relevant interests, or changes to interests, will also be declared publicly at the start of each		

		guideline committee meeting. Before each meeting, any potential conflicts of interest will be considered by the guideline committee Chair and a senior member of the development team. Any decisions to exclude a person from all or part of a meeting will be documented. Any changes to a member's declaration of interests will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Declarations of interests will be published with the final guideline.
28.	Collaborators	Development of this systematic review will be overseen by an advisory committee who will use the review to inform the development of evidence-based recommendations in line with section 3 of Developing NICE guidelines: the manual. Members of the guideline committee are available on the NICE website: https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/indevelopment/gid-ng10121
29.	Other registration details	N/ A
30.	Reference/URL for published protocol	
31.	Dissemination plans	NICE may use a range of different methods to raise awareness of the guideline. These include standard approaches such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notifying registered stakeholders of publication • publicising the guideline through NICE's newsletter and alerts • issuing a press release or briefing as appropriate, posting news articles on the NICE website, using social media channels, and publicising the guideline within NICE
32.	Keywords	Looked after children, looked after young people, learning outcomes, education, qualitative, systematic review
33.	Details of existing review of same topic by same authors	N/ A

34.	Current review status	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing <input type="checkbox"/> Completed but not published <input type="checkbox"/> Completed and published <input type="checkbox"/> Completed, published and being updated <input type="checkbox"/> Discontinued
35..	Additional information	
36.	Details of final publication	www.nice.org.uk

Appendix B – Literature search strategies

Effectiveness searches

Bibliographic databases searched for the guideline:

- Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews – CDSR (Wiley)
- Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials – CENTRAL (Wiley)
- Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects – DARE (CDSR)
- PsycINFO (Ovid)
- EMBASE (Ovid)
- MEDLINE (Ovid)
- MEDLINE Epub Ahead of Print (Ovid)
- MEDLINE In-Process (Ovid)
- Social policy and practice (Ovid)
- ERIC (ProQuest)

A NICE information specialist conducted the literature searches for the evidence review. The searches were originally run in June 2019 with an additional search of the ERIC database in October 2019.

Searches were run on population only and the results were sifted for each review question (RQ). The searches were rerun on all databases reported above in July 2020 and again in October 2020.

The principal search strategy was developed in MEDLINE (Ovid interface) and adapted, as appropriate, for use in the other sources listed in the protocol, taking into account their size, search functionality and subject coverage.

The MEDLINE strategy below was quality assured (QA) by trained NICE information specialist. All translated search strategies were peer reviewed to ensure their accuracy. Both procedures were adapted from the [2016 PRESS Checklist](#). The translated search strategies are available in the evidence reviews for the guideline.

The search results were managed in EPPI-Reviewer v5. Duplicates were removed in EPPI-R5 using a two-step process. First, automated deduplication is performed using a high-value algorithm. Second, manual deduplication is used to assess 'low-probability' matches. All decisions made for the review can be accessed via the deduplication history.

English language limits were applied in adherence to standard NICE practice and the review protocol.

A date limit of 1990 was applied to align with the approximate advent of the Children Act 1989.

The limit to remove animal studies in the searches was the standard NICE practice, which has been adapted from: Dickersin, K., Scherer, R., & Lefebvre, C. (1994). [Systematic Reviews: Identifying relevant studies for systematic reviews](#). *BMJ*, 309(6964), 1286.

No study design filters were applied, in adherence to the review protocol.

Table 1: search strategy

Medline Strategy, searched 10th June 2019

Database: Ovid MEDLINE(R) 1946 to June 10, 2019

Search Strategy:

- 1 child, orphaned/ (659)
- 2 child, foster/ (71)
- 3 child, adopted/ (46)
- 4 adolescent, institutionalized/ (126)

Medline Strategy, searched 10th June 2019**Database: Ovid MEDLINE(R) 1946 to June 10, 2019****Search Strategy:**

- 5 ("looked after" adj2 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*)).tw. (123)
- 6 ("care leaver*" or "leaving care").tw. (31)
- 7 (("in care" or "care experience*") adj1 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*)).tw. (236)
- 8 ((nonparent* or non-parent* or parentless* or parent-less) adj3 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*)).tw. (111)
- 9 ((relinquish* or estrange*) adj2 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*)).tw. (74)
- 10 ((child* or infancy or adolescen* or juvenile* or toddler* or infant* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby or babies or twin* or sibling* or youth*) adj2 (orphan* or foster* or adopt* or abandon* or unwanted or unaccompanied or homeless or asylum* or refugee*)).ti. (2973)
- 11 "ward of court*".tw. (12)
- 12 or/1-11 (4225)
- 13 residential facilities/ (5286)

Medline Strategy, searched 10th June 2019**Database: Ovid MEDLINE(R) 1946 to June 10, 2019****Search Strategy:**

- 14 group homes/ (948)
- 15 halfway houses/ (1051)
- 16 (("out of home" or " out-of-home" or placement* or "semi independent" or "semi-independent") adj2 care*).tw. (1131)
- 17 ((residential or supported or remand* or secure or correctional) adj1 (accommodation* or institut* or care or lodging or home* or centre* or center* or facilit*).tw. (6595)
- 18 or/13-17 (13612)
- 19 orphanages/ (435)
- 20 adoption/ (4727)
- 21 foster home care/ (3503)
- 22 (special adj1 guardian*).tw. (7)
- 23 ((placement* or foster*) adj2 (care* or family or families)).tw. (3144)
- 24 ((kinship or nonkinship or non kinship or connected or substitute*) adj1 care*).tw. (279)
- 25 or/19-24 (9589)

Medline Strategy, searched 10th June 2019**Database: Ovid MEDLINE(R) 1946 to June 10, 2019****Search Strategy:**

- 26 exp Infant/ or Infant Health/ or Infant Welfare/ (1098738)
- 27 (prematu* or pre-matur* or preterm* or pre-term* or infan* or newborn* or new-born* or perinat* or peri-nat* or neonat* or neo-nat* or baby* or babies or toddler*).ti,ab,in,jn. (811620)
- 28 exp Child/ or exp Child Behavior/ or Child Health/ or Child Welfare/ (1838706)
- 29 Minors/ (2505)
- 30 (child* or minor or minors or boy* or girl* or kid or kids or young*).ti,ab,in,jn. (2212038)
- 31 exp pediatrics/ (55350)
- 32 (pediatric* or paediatric* or peadiatric*).ti,ab,in,jn. (768069)
- 33 Adolescent/ or Adolescent Behavior/ or Adolescent Health/ (1937435)
- 34 Puberty/ (12990)
- 35 (adolescen* or pubescen* or prepubescen* or pre-pubescen* or pubert* or prepubert* or pre-pubert* or teen* or preteen* or pre-teen* or juvenil* or youth* or under*age*).ti,ab,in,jn. (393509)
- 36 Schools/ (35128)

Medline Strategy, searched 10th June 2019**Database: Ovid MEDLINE(R) 1946 to June 10, 2019****Search Strategy:**

- 37 Child Day Care Centers/ or exp Nurseries/ or Schools, Nursery/ (8591)
- 38 (pre-school* or preschool* or kindergar* or daycare or day-care or nurser* or school* or pupil* or student*).ti,ab,jn. (440583)
- 39 ("under 18*" or "under eighteen*" or "under 25*" or "under twenty five*").ti,ab. (3651)
- 40 or/26-39 (4935665)
- 41 18 and 40 (4519)
- 42 12 or 25 or 41 (15912)
- 43 animals/ not humans/ (4554892)
- 44 42 not 43 (15801)
- 45 limit 44 to english language (14199)
- 46 limit 45 to ed=19900101-20190606 (11059)

No study design filters were used for the search strategy

Cost-effectiveness searches

Sources searched:

- Econlit (Ovid)
- Embase (Ovid)
- MEDLINE (Ovid)
- MEDLINE In-Process (Ovid)
- PsycINFO (Ovid)
- NHS EED (Wiley)

Search filters to retrieve cost utility, economic evaluations and quality of life papers were appended to the MEDLINE, Embase and PsycINFO searches reported above. The searches were conducted in July 2019. The searches were re-run in October 2020.

Databases	Date searched	Version/files	No. retrieved with CU filter	No retrieved with Econ Eval and QoL filters	No. retrieved with Econ Eval and QoL filters and NOT out CU results
EconLit (Ovid)	09/07/2019	1886 to June 27, 2019	176 (no filter)	Not run again	Not run again
NHS Economic Evaluation Database (NHS EED) (legacy database)	09/07/2019	09/07/2019	105 (no filter)	Not run again	Not run again
Embase (Ovid)	09/07/2019 15/07/2019	1946 to July 08, 2019 1988 to 2019 Week 28	307	2228	1908

MEDLINE (Ovid)	09/07/2019 15/07/2019	1946 to July 08, 2019 1946 to July 12, 2019	269	1136	1135
MEDLINE In-Process (Ovid)	09/07/2019 15/07/2019	1946 to July 08, 2019 1946 to July 12, 2019	6	122	93
MEDLINE Epub Ahead of Print	09/07/2019 15/07/2019	July 08, 2019 July 12, 2019	12	38	29
PsycINFO (Ovid)	09/07/2019 15/07/2019	1987 to July Week 1 2019 1987 to July Week 2 2019	265	Not searched for econ eval and QoL results	Not searched for econ eval and QoL results

Search strategies: Cost Utility filter

Database: PsycINFO <1987 to July Week 1 2019>

Search Strategy:

-
- 1 Foster children/ (1566)
 - 2 Adopted children/ (1578)
 - 3 ("looked after" adj2 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (433)
 - 4 ("care leaver*" or "leaving care").tw. (282)

- 5 ("in care" or "care experience*") adj1 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (772)
- 6 ((nonparent* or non-parent* or parentless* or parent-less) adj3 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (309)
- 7 ((relinquish* or estrange*) adj2 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (142)
- 8 "ward of court*.tw. (0)
- 9 ((child* or infancy or adolescen* or juvenile* or toddler* or infant* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby or babies or twin* or sibling* or youth*) adj2 (abandon* or unwanted or unaccompanied or homeless or asylum* or refugee*).ti. (1638)
- 10 or/1-9 (6348)
- 11 group homes/ (884)
- 12 halfway houses/ (114)
- 13 (("out of home" or " out-of-home" or placement* or "semi independent" or "semi-independent") adj2 care*).tw. (1917)
- 14 ((residential or supported or remand* or secure or correctional) adj1 (accommodation* or institut* or care or lodging or home* or centre* or center* or facilit*).tw. (8380)
- 15 or/11-14 (10954)
- 16 orphanages/ (301)
- 17 adoption/ (2693)
- 18 foster home care/ (0)
- 19 (special adj1 guardian*).tw. (5)
- 20 ((placement* or foster*) adj2 (care* or family or families)).tw. (7275)

- 21 ((kinship or nonkinship or non kinship or connected or substitute*) adj1 care*).tw. (790)
- 22 or/16-21 (10189)
- 23 exp Infant/ or Infant Health/ or Infant Welfare/ (0)
- 24 (prematu* or pre-matur* or preterm* or pre-term* or infan* or newborn* or new-born* or perinat* or peri-nat* or neonat* or neo-nat* or baby* or babies or toddler*).ti,ab,in,jn. (119577)
- 25 exp Child/ or exp Child Behavior/ or Child Health/ or Child Welfare/ (8166)
- 26 Minors/ (0)
- 27 (child* or minor or minors or boy* or girl* or kid or kids or young*).ti,ab,in,jn. (762095)
- 28 exp pediatrics/ (26284)
- 29 (pediatric* or paediatric* or peadiatric*).ti,ab,in,jn. (71640)
- 30 Adolescent/ or Adolescent Behavior/ or Adolescent Health/ (1874)
- 31 Puberty/ (2287)
- 32 (adolescen* or pubescen* or prepubescen* or pre-pubescen* or pubert* or prepubert* or pre-pubert* or teen* or preteen* or pre-teen* or juvenil* or youth* or under*age*).ti,ab,in,jn. (291098)
- 33 Schools/ (25726)
- 34 Child Day Care Centers/ or exp Nurseries/ or Schools, Nursery/ (0)
- 35 (pre-school* or preschool* or kindergar* or daycare or day-care or nurser* or school* or pupil* or student*).ti,ab,jn. (578348)
- 36 ("under 18*" or "under eighteen*" or "under 25*" or "under twenty five*").ti,ab. (811)
- 37 or/23-36 (1281612)
- 38 15 and 37 (5647)

- 39 10 or 22 or 38 (18267)
- 40 animals/ not humans/ (4267)
- 41 39 not 40 (18266)
- 42 limit 41 to english language (17063)
- 43 (1990* or 1991* or 1992* or 1993* or 1994* 1995* or 1996* or 1997* or 1998* or 1999* or 2000* or 2001* or 2002* or 2003* or 2004* or 2005* or 2006* or 2007* or 2008* or 2009* or 2010* or 2011* or 2012* or 2013* or 2014* or 2015* or 2016* or 2017* or 2018* or 2019*).up. (3398945)
- 44 42 and 43 (16072)
- 45 Markov chains/ (1336)
- 46 ((qualit* adj2 adjust* adj2 life*) or qaly*).tw. (1638)
- 47 (EQ5D* or EQ-5D* or ((euroqol or euro-qol or euroquol or euro-quol or eurocol or euro-col) adj3 ("5" or five)) or (european* adj2 quality adj3 ("5" or five))).tw. (1711)
- 48 "Costs and Cost Analysis"/ (14750)
- 49 cost.ti. (7067)
- 50 (cost* adj2 utilit*).tw. (745)
- 51 (cost* adj2 (effective* or assess* or evaluat* or analys* or model* or benefit* or threshold* or quality or expens* or saving* or reduc*)).tw. (29345)
- 52 (economic* adj2 (evaluat* or assess* or analys* or model* or outcome* or benefit* or threshold* or expens* or saving* or reduc*)).tw. (7025)
- 53 ((incremental* adj2 cost*) or ICER).tw. (1058)
- 54 utilities.tw. (1742)
- 55 markov*.tw. (3797)
- 56 (dollar* or USD or cents or pound or pounds or GBP or sterling* or pence or euro or euros or yen or JPY).tw. (8371)

- 57 ((utility or effective*) adj2 analys*).tw. (2844)
58 (willing* adj2 pay*).tw. (2253)
59 45 or 46 or 47 or 48 or 49 or 50 or 51 or 52 or 53 or 54 or 55 or 56 or 57 or 58 (60767)
60 44 and 59 (265)

Database: Ovid MEDLINE(R) <1946 to July 08, 2019>

(line 65)

Search Strategy:

-
- 1 child, orphaned/ (661)
2 child, foster/ (74)
3 child, adopted/ (48)
4 adolescent, institutionalized/ (126)
5 ("looked after" adj2 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (123)
6 ("care leaver*" or "leaving care").tw. (32)
7 ("in care" or "care experience*") adj1 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (240)
8 ((nonparent* or non-parent* or parentless* or parent-less) adj3 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (111)

- 9 ((relinquish* or estrange*) adj2 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*)).tw. (74)
- 10 ((child* or infancy or adolescen* or juvenile* or toddler* or infant* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby or babies or twin* or sibling* or youth*) adj2 (orphan* or foster* or adopt* or abandon* or unwanted or unaccompanied or homeless or asylum* or refugee*)).ti. (2986)
- 11 "ward of court*".tw. (12)
- 12 or/1-11 (4244)
- 13 residential facilities/ (5299)
- 14 group homes/ (950)
- 15 halfway houses/ (1052)
- 16 ("out of home" or " out-of-home" or placement* or "semi independent" or "semi-independent") adj2 care*).tw. (1136)
- 17 ((residential or supported or remand* or secure or correctional) adj1 (accommodation* or institut* or care or lodging or home* or centre* or center* or facilit*)).tw. (6631)
- 18 or/13-17 (13661)
- 19 orphanages/ (436)
- 20 adoption/ (4728)
- 21 foster home care/ (3508)
- 22 (special adj1 guardian*).tw. (7)
- 23 ((placement* or foster*) adj2 (care* or family or families)).tw. (3156)
- 24 ((kinship or nonkinship or non kinship or connected or substitute*) adj1 care*).tw. (282)
- 25 or/19-24 (9605)
- 26 exp Infant/ or Infant Health/ or Infant Welfare/ (1101046)

- 27 (premat* or pre-matur* or preterm* or pre-term* or infan* or newborn* or new-born* or perinat* or peri-nat* or neonat* or neo-nat* or baby* or babies or toddler*).ti,ab,in,jn. (813997)
- 28 exp Child/ or exp Child Behavior/ or Child Health/ or Child Welfare/ (1843400)
- 29 Minors/ (2509)
- 30 (child* or minor or minors or boy* or girl* or kid or kids or young*).ti,ab,in,jn. (2221342)
- 31 exp pediatrics/ (55492)
- 32 (pediatric* or paediatric* or peadiatric*).ti,ab,in,jn. (771944)
- 33 Adolescent/ or Adolescent Behavior/ or Adolescent Health/ (1942946)
- 34 Puberty/ (13005)
- 35 (adolescen* or pubescen* or prepubescen* or pre-pubescen* or pubert* or prepubert* or pre-pubert* or teen* or preteen* or pre-teen* or juvenil* or youth* or under*age*).ti,ab,in,jn. (395382)
- 36 Schools/ (35299)
- 37 Child Day Care Centers/ or exp Nurseries/ or Schools, Nursery/ (8611)
- 38 (pre-school* or preschool* or kindergar* or daycare or day-care or nurser* or school* or pupil* or student*).ti,ab,jn. (442260)
- 39 ("under 18*" or "under eighteen*" or "under 25*" or "under twenty five*").ti,ab. (3665)
- 40 or/26-39 (4951548)
- 41 18 and 40 (4537)
- 42 12 or 25 or 41 (15959)
- 43 animals/ not humans/ (4563292)
- 44 42 not 43 (15848)

45 limit 44 to english language (14243)

46 limit 45 to ed=19900101-20190606 (11059)

47 limit 45 to dt=19900101-20190611 (10685)

48 Markov Chains/ (13500)

49 Quality-Adjusted Life Years/ or (qualit* adj2 adjust* adj2 life*).tw. or qaly*.tw. (15718)

50 (EQ5D* or EQ-5D* or ((euroqol or euro-qol or euroquol or euro-quol or eurocol or euro-col) adj3 ("5" or five)) or (european* adj2 quality adj3 ("5" or five))).tw. (6545)

51 Cost-Benefit Analysis/ (77012)

52 exp Models, Economic/ (14227)

53 cost.ti. (60952)

54 (cost* adj2 utilit*).tw. (4392)

55 (cost* adj2 (effective* or assess* or evaluat* or analys* or model* or benefit* or threshold* or quality or expens* or saving* or reduc*).tw. (162969)

56 (economic* adj2 (evaluat* or assess* or analys* or model* or outcome* or benefit* or threshold* or expens* or saving* or reduc*).tw. (26515)

57 ((incremental* adj2 cost*) or ICER).tw. (10100)

58 utilities.tw. (5428)

59 markov*.tw. (16739)

60 (dollar* or USD or cents or pound or pounds or GBP or sterling* or pence or euro or euros or yen or JPY).tw. (36613)

61 ((utility or effective*) adj2 analys*).tw. (14480)

62 (willing* adj2 pay*).tw. (4632)

63 or/48-62 (287270)

64 45 and 63 (311)

65 46 and 63 (269)

Database: Ovid MEDLINE(R) In-Process & Other Non-Indexed Citations <1946 to July 08, 2019>

(Line 66)

Search Strategy:

1 child, orphaned/ (0)

2 child, foster/ (0)

3 child, adopted/ (0)

4 adolescent, institutionalized/ (0)

5 ("looked after" adj2 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (17)

6 ("care leaver*" or "leaving care").tw. (6)

7 ("in care" or "care experience*") adj1 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (45)

8 ((nonparent* or non-parent* or parentless* or parent-less) adj3 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (18)

9 ((relinquish* or estrange*) adj2 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (4)

- 10 ((child* or infancy or adolescen* or juvenile* or toddler* or infant* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby or babies or twin* or sibling* or youth*) adj2 (orphan* or foster* or adopt* or abandon* or unwanted or unaccompanied or homeless or asylum* or refugee*)).ti. (361)
- 11 "ward of court*".tw. (0)
- 12 or/1-11 (443)
- 13 residential facilities/ (0)
- 14 group homes/ (0)
- 15 halfway houses/ (0)
- 16 ("out of home" or " out-of-home" or placement* or "semi independent" or "semi-independent") adj2 care*).tw. (122)
- 17 ((residential or supported or remand* or secure or correctional) adj1 (accommodation* or institut* or care or lodging or home* or centre* or center* or facilit*)).tw. (785)
- 18 or/13-17 (897)
- 19 orphanages/ (0)
- 20 adoption/ (0)
- 21 foster home care/ (0)
- 22 (special adj1 guardian*).tw. (0)
- 23 ((placement* or foster*) adj2 (care* or family or families)).tw. (367)
- 24 ((kinship or nonkinship or non kinship or connected or substitute*) adj1 care*).tw. (31)
- 25 or/20-24 (391)
- 26 exp Infant/ or Infant Health/ or Infant Welfare/ (0)
- 27 (prematu* or pre-matur* or preterm* or pre-term* or infan* or newborn* or new-born* or perinat* or peri-nat* or neonat* or neo-nat* or baby* or babies or toddler*).ti,ab,in,jn. (71122)

- 28 exp Child/ or exp Child Behavior/ or Child Health/ or Child Welfare/ (0)
- 29 Minors/ (0)
- 30 (child* or minor or minors or boy* or girl* or kid or kids or young*).ti,ab,in,jn. (282655)
- 31 exp pediatrics/ (0)
- 32 (pediatric* or paediatric* or peadiatric*).ti,ab,in,jn. (105594)
- 33 Adolescent/ or Adolescent Behavior/ or Adolescent Health/ (0)
- 34 Puberty/ (0)
- 35 (adolescen* or pubescen* or prepubescen* or pre-pubescen* or pubert* or prepubert* or pre-pubert* or teen* or preteen* or pre-teen* or juvenil* or youth* or under*age*).ti,ab,in,jn. (52576)
- 36 Schools/ (0)
- 37 Child Day Care Centers/ or exp Nurseries/ or Schools, Nursery/ (0)
- 38 (pre-school* or preschool* or kindergar* or daycare or day-care or nurser* or school* or pupil* or student*).ti,ab,jn. (61256)
- 39 ("under 18*" or "under eighteen*" or "under 25*" or "under twenty five*").ti,ab. (516)
- 40 or/26-39 (410151)
- 41 18 and 40 (260)
- 42 12 or 25 or 41 (962)
- 43 animals/ not humans/ (0)
- 44 42 not 43 (962)
- 45 limit 44 to english language (945)
- 46 limit 45 to ed=19900101-20190606 (256)

- 47 limit 45 to dt=19900101-20190611 (916)
- 48 Markov Chains/ (0)
- 49 Quality-Adjusted Life Years/ or (qualit* adj2 adjust* adj2 life*).tw. or qaly*.tw. (1713)
- 50 (EQ5D* or EQ-5D* or ((euroqol or euro-qol or euroquol or euro-quol or eurocol or euro-col) adj3 ("5" or five)) or (european* adj2 quality adj3 ("5" or five))).tw. (1364)
- 51 Cost-Benefit Analysis/ (0)
- 52 exp Models, Economic/ (0)
- 53 cost.ti. (9867)
- 54 (cost* adj2 utilit*).tw. (767)
- 55 (cost* adj2 (effective* or assess* or evaluat* or analys* or model* or benefit* or threshold* or quality or expens* or saving* or reduc*).tw. (29070)
- 56 (economic* adj2 (evaluat* or assess* or analys* or model* or outcome* or benefit* or threshold* or expens* or saving* or reduc*).tw. (4431)
- 57 ((incremental* adj2 cost*) or ICER).tw. (1607)
- 58 utilities.tw. (947)
- 59 markov*.tw. (4984)
- 60 (dollar* or USD or cents or pound or pounds or GBP or sterling* or pence or euro or euros or yen or JPY).tw. (4280)
- 61 ((utility or effective*) adj2 analys*).tw. (2504)
- 62 (willing* adj2 pay*).tw. (911)
- 63 or/48-62 (45705)
- 64 45 and 63 (28)
- 65 46 and 63 (6)

66 47 and 63 (27)

Database: Ovid MEDLINE(R) Epub Ahead of Print <July 08, 2019>

(Line 64)

Search Strategy:

-
- 1 child, orphaned/ (0)
 - 2 child, foster/ (0)
 - 3 child, adopted/ (0)
 - 4 adolescent, institutionalized/ (0)
 - 5 ("looked after" adj2 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (8)
 - 6 ("care leaver*" or "leaving care").tw. (5)
 - 7 (("in care" or "care experience*") adj1 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (13)
 - 8 ((nonparent* or non-parent* or parentless* or parent-less) adj3 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (8)
 - 9 ((relinquish* or estrange*) adj2 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (3)
 - 10 ((child* or infancy or adolescen* or juvenile* or toddler* or infant* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby or babies or twin* or sibling* or youth*) adj2 (orphan* or foster* or adopt* or abandon* or unwanted or unaccompanied or homeless or asylum* or refugee*).ti. (170)

- 11 "ward of court*".tw. (0)
- 12 or/1-11 (198)
- 13 residential facilities/ (0)
- 14 group homes/ (0)
- 15 halfway houses/ (0)
- 16 (("out of home" or " out-of-home" or placement* or "semi independent" or "semi-independent") adj2 care*).tw. (60)
- 17 ((residential or supported or remand* or secure or correctional) adj1 (accommodation* or institut* or care or lodging or home* or centre* or center* or facilit*)).tw. (232)
- 18 or/13-17 (288)
- 19 orphanages/ (0)
- 20 adoption/ (0)
- 21 foster home care/ (0)
- 22 (special adj1 guardian*).tw. (0)
- 23 ((placement* or foster*) adj2 (care* or family or families)).tw. (185)
- 24 ((kinship or nonkinship or non kinship or connected or substitute*) adj1 care*).tw. (11)
- 25 or/20-24 (191)
- 26 exp Infant/ or Infant Health/ or Infant Welfare/ (0)
- 27 (prematu* or pre-matur* or preterm* or pre-term* or infan* or newborn* or new-born* or perinat* or peri-nat* or neonat* or neo-nat* or baby* or babies or toddler*).ti,ab,in,jn. (14304)
- 28 exp Child/ or exp Child Behavior/ or Child Health/ or Child Welfare/ (0)

- 29 Minors/ (0)
- 30 (child* or minor or minors or boy* or girl* or kid or kids or young*).ti,ab,in,jn. (49388)
- 31 exp pediatrics/ (0)
- 32 (pediatric* or paediatric* or peadiatric*).ti,ab,in,jn. (19442)
- 33 Adolescent/ or Adolescent Behavior/ or Adolescent Health/ (0)
- 34 Puberty/ (0)
- 35 (adolescen* or pubescen* or prepubescen* or pre-pubescen* or pubert* or prepubert* or pre-pubert* or teen* or preteen* or pre-teen* or juvenil* or youth* or under*age*).ti,ab,in,jn. (12671)
- 36 Schools/ (0)
- 37 Child Day Care Centers/ or exp Nurseries/ or Schools, Nursery/ (0)
- 38 (pre-school* or preschool* or kindergar* or daycare or day-care or nurser* or school* or pupil* or student*).ti,ab,jn. (11661)
- 39 ("under 18*" or "under eighteen*" or "under 25*" or "under twenty five*").ti,ab. (95)
- 40 or/26-39 (72744)
- 41 18 and 40 (102)
- 42 12 or 25 or 41 (409)
- 43 animals/ not humans/ (0)
- 44 42 not 43 (409)
- 45 limit 44 to english language (407)
- 46 limit 45 to ed=19900101-20190606 (0)
- 47 limit 45 to dt=19900101-20190611 (382)

- 48 Markov Chains/ (0)
- 49 Quality-Adjusted Life Years/ or (qualit* adj2 adjust* adj2 life*).tw. or qaly*.tw. (419)
- 50 (EQ5D* or EQ-5D* or ((euroqol or euro-qol or euroquol or euro-quol or eurocol or euro-col) adj3 ("5" or five)) or (european* adj2 quality adj3 ("5" or five))).tw. (316)
- 51 Cost-Benefit Analysis/ (0)
- 52 exp Models, Economic/ (0)
- 53 cost.ti. (1350)
- 54 (cost* adj2 utilit*).tw. (162)
- 55 (cost* adj2 (effective* or assess* or evaluat* or analys* or model* or benefit* or threshold* or quality or expens* or saving* or reduc*).tw. (4696)
- 56 (economic* adj2 (evaluat* or assess* or analys* or model* or outcome* or benefit* or threshold* or expens* or saving* or reduc*).tw. (838)
- 57 ((incremental* adj2 cost*) or ICER).tw. (342)
- 58 utilities.tw. (155)
- 59 markov*.tw. (807)
- 60 (dollar* or USD or cents or pound or pounds or GBP or sterling* or pence or euro or euros or yen or JPY).tw. (712)
- 61 ((utility or effective*) adj2 analys*).tw. (482)
- 62 (willing* adj2 pay*).tw. (178)
- 63 or/48-62 (7346)
- 64 45 and 63 (12)

Database: Embase <1988 to 2019 Week 27>

Search Strategy:

-
- 1 orphaned child/ (606)
 - 2 foster child/ (72)
 - 3 adopted child/ (507)
 - 4 institutionalized adolescent/ (16)
 - 5 ("looked after" adj2 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (239)
 - 6 ("care leaver*" or "leaving care").tw. (60)
 - 7 (("in care" or "care experience*") adj1 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (328)
 - 8 ((nonparent* or non-parent* or parentless* or parent-less) adj3 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (137)
 - 9 ((relinquish* or estrange*) adj2 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (66)
 - 10 ((child* or infancy or adolescen* or juvenile* or toddler* or infant* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby or babies or twin* or sibling* or youth*) adj2 (orphan* or foster* or adopt* or abandon* or unwanted or unaccompanied or homeless or asylum* or refugee*).ti. (3301)
 - 11 "ward of court".tw. (13)
 - 12 or/1-11 (4918)
 - 13 residential home/ (5797)
 - 14 halfway house/ (616)

- 15 ("out of home" or " out-of-home" or placement* or "semi independent" or "semi-independent") adj2 care*).tw. (1546)
- 16 ((residential or supported or remand* or secure or correctional) adj1 (accommodation* or institut* or care or lodging or home* or centre* or center* or facilit*)),tw. (8776)
- 17 or/13-16 (15272)
- 18 orphanage/ (851)
- 19 foster care/ (3851)
- 20 (special adj1 guardian*).tw. (7)
- 21 ((placement* or foster*) adj2 (care* or family or families)).tw. (4024)
- 22 ((kinship or nonkinship or non kinship or connected or substitute*) adj1 care*).tw. (359)
- 23 *adoption/ (2710)
- 24 or/18-23 (6865)
- 25 exp juvenile/ or Child Behavior/ or Child Welfare/ or Child Health/ or infant welfare/ or "minor (person)"/ or elementary student/ (2784798)
- 26 (premur* or pre-matur* or preterm* or pre-term* or infan* or newborn* or new-born* or perinat* or peri-nat* or neonat* or neo-nat* or baby* or babies or toddler*).ti,ab,in,ad,jw. (990094)
- 27 (child* or minor or minors or boy* or girl* or kid or kids or young*).ti,ab,in,ad,jw. (3070275)
- 28 exp pediatrics/ (89360)
- 29 (pediatric* or paediatric* or peadiatric*).ti,ab,in,ad,jw. (1438284)
- 30 exp adolescence/ or exp adolescent behavior/ or adolescent health/ or high school student/ or middle school student/ (88098)
- 31 (adolescen* or pubescen* or prepubescen* or pre-pubescen* or pubert* or prepubert* or pre-pubert* or teen* or preteen* or pre-teen* or juvenil* or youth* or under*age*).ti,ab,in,ad,jw. (568613)
- 32 school/ or high school/ or kindergarten/ or middle school/ or primary school/ or nursery school/ or day care/ (91653)

- 33 (pre-school* or preschool* or kindergar* or daycare or day-care or nurser* or school* or pupil* or student*).ti,ab,jw. (588621)
- 34 ("under 18*" or "under eighteen*" or "under 25*" or "under twenty five*").ti,ab. (6349)
- 35 or/25-34 (5334085)
- 36 17 and 35 (5115)
- 37 24 and 35 (5358)
- 38 12 or 24 or 36 or 37 (14911)
- 39 nonhuman/ not human/ (3937063)
- 40 38 not 39 (14760)
- 41 (letter or editorial).pt. (1540594)
- 42 (conference abstract or conference paper or conference proceeding or "conference review").pt. (4222564)
- 43 41 or 42 (5763158)
- 44 40 not 43 (12196)
- 45 limit 44 to dc=19900101-20190606 (11884)
- 46 limit 45 to english language (11023)
- 47 Markov chain/ (4090)
- 48 quality adjusted life year/ or (qualit* adj2 adjust* adj2 life*).tw. or qaly*.tw. (30409)
- 49 (EQ5D* or EQ-5D* or ((euroqol or euro-qol or euroquol or euro-quol or eurocol or euro-col) adj3 ("5" or five)) or (european* adj2 quality adj3 ("5" or five))).tw. (15875)
- 50 "cost benefit analysis"/ (76518)
- 51 exp economic model/ (1504)

- 52 cost.ti. (88995)
- 53 (cost* adj2 utilit*).tw. (8688)
- 54 (cost* adj2 (effective* or assess* or evaluat* or analys* or model* or benefit* or threshold* or quality or expens* or saving* or reduc*)).tw. (264435)
- 55 (economic* adj2 (evaluat* or assess* or analys* or model* or outcome* or benefit* or threshold* or expens* or saving* or reduc*)).tw. (44462)
- 56 ((incremental* adj2 cost*) or ICER).tw. (20797)
- 57 utilities.tw. (10291)
- 58 markov*.tw. (26990)
- 59 (dollar* or USD or cents or pound or pounds or GBP or sterling* or pence or euro or euros or yen or JPY).tw. (49359)
- 60 ((utility or effective*) adj2 analys*).tw. (25580)
- 61 (willing* adj2 pay*).tw. (8767)
- 62 47 or 48 or 49 or 50 or 51 or 52 or 53 or 54 or 55 or 56 or 57 or 58 or 59 or 60 or 61 (437018)
- 63 46 and 62 (307)
- 64 (conference abstract or conference paper or conference proceeding or "conference review" or letter or editorial).pt. (5763158)
- 65 63 not 64 (307)

Database: Econlit <1886 to June 27, 2019>

Search Strategy:

1 [child, orphaned/] (0)

- 2 [child, foster/] (0)
- 3 [child, adopted/] (0)
- 4 [adolescent, institutionalized/] (0)
- 5 ("looked after" adj2 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*)).tw. (3)
- 6 ("care leaver*" or "leaving care").tw. (2)
- 7 (("in care" or "care experience*") adj1 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*)).tw. (15)
- 8 ((nonparent* or non-parent* or parentless* or parent-less) adj3 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*)).tw. (34)
- 9 ((relinquish* or estrange*) adj2 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*)).tw. (6)
- 10 ((child* or infancy or adolescen* or juvenile* or toddler* or infant* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby or babies or twin* or sibling* or youth*) adj2 (orphan* or foster* or adopt* or abandon* or unwanted or unaccompanied or homeless or asylum* or refugee*)).ti. (111)
- 11 "ward of court*".tw. (0)
- 12 or/1-11 (163)
- 13 [residential facilities/] (0)
- 14 [group homes/] (0)
- 15 [halfway houses/] (0)
- 16 ("out of home" or " out-of-home" or placement* or "semi independent" or "semi-independent") adj2 care*).tw. (42)
- 17 ((residential or supported or remand* or secure or correctional) adj1 (accommodation* or institut* or care or lodging or home* or centre* or center* or facilit*)).tw. (208)

- 18 or/13-17 (250)
- 19 [orphanages/] (0)
- 20 [adoption/] (0)
- 21 [foster home care/] (0)
- 22 (special adj1 guardian*).tw. (0)
- 23 ((placement* or foster*) adj2 (care* or family or families)).tw. (154)
- 24 ((kinship or nonkinship or non kinship or connected or substitute*) adj1 care*).tw. (23)
- 25 or/20-24 (172)
- 26 [exp Infant/ or Infant Health/ or Infant Welfare/] (0)
- 27 (premat* or pre-matur* or preterm* or pre-term* or infan* or newborn* or new-born* or perinat* or peri-nat* or neonat* or neo-nat* or baby* or babies or toddler*).ti,ab,in,jn. (5404)
- 28 [exp Child/ or exp Child Behavior/ or Child Health/ or Child Welfare/] (0)
- 29 [Minors/] (0)
- 30 (child* or minor or minors or boy* or girl* or kid or kids or young*).ti,ab,in,jn. (45263)
- 31 [exp pediatrics/] (0)
- 32 (pediatric* or paediatric* or peadiatric*).ti,ab,in,jn. (168)
- 33 [Adolescent/ or Adolescent Behavior/ or Adolescent Health/] (0)
- 34 [Puberty/] (0)
- 35 (adolescen* or pubescen* or prepubescen* or pre-pubescen* or pubert* or prepubert* or pre-pubert* or teen* or preteen* or pre-teen* or juvenil* or youth* or under*age*).ti,ab,in,jn. (8812)

- 36 [Schools/] (0)
- 37 [Child Day Care Centers/ or exp Nurseries/ or Schools, Nursery/] (0)
- 38 (pre-school* or preschool* or kindergar* or daycare or day-care or nurser* or school* or pupil* or student*).ti,ab,jn. (47608)
- 39 ("under 18*" or "under eighteen*" or "under 25*" or "under twenty five*").ti,ab. (56)
- 40 or/26-39 (91121)
- 41 18 and 40 (71)
- 42 12 or 25 or 41 (359)
- 43 limit 42 to yr="2009 -Current" (176)

Database: NHSEED (CRD)

- 1 MeSH DESCRIPTOR Child, Orphaned EXPLODE ALL TREES IN NHSEED 0
- 2 MeSH DESCRIPTOR Adoption EXPLODE ALL TREES IN NHSEED 3
- 3 (("looked after" NEAR2 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*))) IN NHSEED 0
- 4 ("care leaver*" or "leaving care") IN NHSEED 0
- 5 ("in care") IN NHSEED 40
- 6 ("care experience") IN NHSEED 1
- 7 (nonparent* or non-parent* or parentless* or parent-less) IN NHSEED 0
- 8 (relinquish* or estrange*) IN NHSEED 0

9 (orphan* or foster* or adopt* or abandon* or unwanted or unaccompanied or homeless or asylum* or refugee*):TI IN NHSEED 22

10 ("ward of court*") IN NHSEED 0

11 #1 OR #2 OR #3 OR #4 OR #5 OR #6 OR #7 OR #8 OR #9 OR #10 64

12 (((residential or supported or remand* or secure or correctional) NEAR1 (accommodation* or institut* or care or lodging or home* or centre* or center* or facilit*))) IN NHSEED 88

13 MeSH DESCRIPTOR orphanages EXPLODE ALL TREES IN NHSEED 0

14 (guardian) IN NHSEED 13

15 (((placement* or foster*) NEAR2 (care* or family or families))) IN NHSEED 7

16 (((kinship or nonkinship or non kinship or connected or substitute*) NEAR1 care*)) IN NHSEED 1

17 #13 OR #14 OR #15 OR #16 21

18 (infan* or newborn* or new-born* or perinat* or peri-nat* or neonat* or neo-nat* or baby* or babies or toddler* or child* or minor or minors or boy* or girl* or kid or kids or young* or adolescen* or pubescen* or prepubescen* or pre-pubescen* or pubert* or prepubert* or pre-pubert* or teen* or preteen* or pre-teen* or juvenil* or youth* or under*age*) IN NHSEED 5275

19 #12 AND #18 23

20 #11 OR #17 OR #19 105

Search strategies: Economic Evaluation and Quality of Life filters

Database: Ovid MEDLINE(R) <1946 to July 12, 2019>

Search Strategy:

-
- 1 child, orphaned/ (664)
 - 2 child, foster/ (74)
 - 3 child, adopted/ (48)
 - 4 adolescent, institutionalized/ (126)
 - 5 ("looked after" adj2 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*)).tw. (123)
 - 6 ("care leaver*" or "leaving care").tw. (32)
 - 7 (("in care" or "care experience*") adj1 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*)).tw. (240)
 - 8 ((nonparent* or non-parent* or parentless* or parent-less) adj3 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*)).tw. (111)
 - 9 ((relinquish* or estrange*) adj2 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*)).tw. (74)
 - 10 ((child* or infancy or adolescen* or juvenile* or toddler* or infant* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby or babies or twin* or sibling* or youth*) adj2 (orphan* or foster* or adopt* or abandon* or unwanted or unaccompanied or homeless or asylum* or refugee*)).ti. (2989)
 - 11 "ward of court*".tw. (12)
 - 12 or/1-11 (4249)
 - 13 residential facilities/ (5301)

- 14 group homes/ (951)
- 15 halfway houses/ (1052)
- 16 ("out of home" or " out-of-home" or placement* or "semi independent" or "semi-independent") adj2 care*).tw. (1136)
- 17 ((residential or supported or remand* or secure or correctional) adj1 (accommodation* or institut* or care or lodging or home* or centre* or center* or facilit*)).tw. (6640)
- 18 or/13-17 (13672)
- 19 orphanages/ (438)
- 20 adoption/ (4729)
- 21 foster home care/ (3508)
- 22 (special adj1 guardian*).tw. (7)
- 23 ((placement* or foster*) adj2 (care* or family or families)).tw. (3156)
- 24 ((kinship or nonkinship or non kinship or connected or substitute*) adj1 care*).tw. (282)
- 25 or/19-24 (9924)
- 26 exp Infant/ or Infant Health/ or Infant Welfare/ (1101512)
- 27 (premat* or pre-matur* or preterm* or pre-term* or infan* or newborn* or new-born* or perinat* or peri-nat* or neonat* or neo-nat* or baby* or babies or toddler*).ti,ab,in,jn. (814530)
- 28 exp Child/ or exp Child Behavior/ or Child Health/ or Child Welfare/ (1844269)
- 29 Minors/ (2509)
- 30 (child* or minor or minors or boy* or girl* or kid or kids or young*).ti,ab,in,jn. (2223285)
- 31 exp pediatrics/ (55515)

- 32 (pediatric* or paediatric* or peadiatric*).ti,ab,in,jn. (772838)
- 33 Adolescent/ or Adolescent Behavior/ or Adolescent Health/ (1944098)
- 34 Puberty/ (13005)
- 35 (adolescen* or pubescen* or prepubescen* or pre-pubescen* or pubert* or prepubert* or pre-pubert* or teen* or preteen* or pre-teen* or juvenil* or youth* or under*age*).ti,ab,in,jn. (395763)
- 36 Schools/ (35334)
- 37 Child Day Care Centers/ or exp Nurseries/ or Schools, Nursery/ (8611)
- 38 (pre-school* or preschool* or kindergar* or daycare or day-care or nurser* or school* or pupil* or student*).ti,ab,jn. (442578)
- 39 ("under 18*" or "under eighteen*" or "under 25*" or "under twenty five*").ti,ab. (3674)
- 40 or/26-39 (4954893)
- 41 18 and 40 (4538)
- 42 12 or 25 or 41 (16193)
- 43 animals/ not humans/ (4565244)
- 44 42 not 43 (16082)
- 45 limit 44 to english language (14416)
- 46 limit 45 to ed=19900101-20190714 (11278)
- 47 limit 45 to dt=19900101-20190715 (10852)
- 48 Markov Chains/ (13507)
- 49 Quality-Adjusted Life Years/ or (qualit* adj2 adjust* adj2 life*).tw. or qaly*.tw. (15740)

- 50 (EQ5D* or EQ-5D* or ((euroqol or euro-qol or euroquol or euro-quol or eurocol or euro-col) adj3 ("5" or five)) or (european* adj2 quality adj3 ("5" or five))).tw. (6562)
- 51 Cost-Benefit Analysis/ (77068)
- 52 exp Models, Economic/ (14240)
- 53 cost.ti. (61003)
- 54 (cost* adj2 utilit*).tw. (4395)
- 55 (cost* adj2 (effective* or assess* or evaluat* or analys* or model* or benefit* or threshold* or quality or expens* or saving* or reduc*)).tw. (163128)
- 56 (economic* adj2 (evaluat* or assess* or analys* or model* or outcome* or benefit* or threshold* or expens* or saving* or reduc*)).tw. (26542)
- 57 ((incremental* adj2 cost*) or ICER).tw. (10113)
- 58 utilities.tw. (5434)
- 59 markov*.tw. (16747)
- 60 (dollar* or USD or cents or pound or pounds or GBP or sterling* or pence or euro or euros or yen or JPY).tw. (36633)
- 61 ((utility or effective*) adj2 analys*).tw. (14500)
- 62 (willing* adj2 pay*).tw. (4638)
- 63 or/48-62 (287514)
- 64 45 and 63 (314)
- 65 46 and 63 (272)
- 66 47 and 63 (267)
- 67 Economics/ (27059)
- 68 exp "Costs and Cost Analysis"/ (226218)

-
- 69 Economics, Dental/ (1906)
 - 70 exp Economics, Hospital/ (23683)
 - 71 exp Economics, Medical/ (14107)
 - 72 Economics, Nursing/ (3986)
 - 73 Economics, Pharmaceutical/ (2868)
 - 74 Budgets/ (11138)
 - 75 exp Models, Economic/ (14240)
 - 76 Markov Chains/ (13507)
 - 77 Monte Carlo Method/ (26889)
 - 78 Decision Trees/ (10615)
 - 79 econom\$.tw. (220798)
 - 80 cba.tw. (9569)
 - 81 cea.tw. (19685)
 - 82 cua.tw. (941)
 - 83 markov\$.tw. (16747)
 - 84 (monte adj carlo).tw. (28270)
 - 85 (decision adj3 (tree\$ or analys\$)).tw. (12136)
 - 86 (cost or costs or costing\$ or costly or costed).tw. (428019)
 - 87 (price\$ or pricing\$).tw. (31251)

- 88 budget\$.tw. (22462)
- 89 expenditure\$.tw. (46305)
- 90 (value adj3 (money or monetary)).tw. (1946)
- 91 (pharmacoeconomic\$ or (pharmaco adj economic\$)).tw. (3350)
- 92 or/67-91 (869079)
- 93 "Quality of Life"/ (178315)
- 94 quality of life.tw. (210147)
- 95 "Value of Life"/ (5653)
- 96 Quality-Adjusted Life Years/ (11173)
- 97 quality adjusted life.tw. (9768)
- 98 (qaly\$ or qald\$ or qale\$ or qtime\$).tw. (8028)
- 99 disability adjusted life.tw. (2374)
- 100 daly\$.tw. (2184)
- 101 Health Status Indicators/ (22927)
- 102 (sf36 or sf 36 or short form 36 or shortform 36 or sf thirtysix or sf thirty six or shortform thirtysix or shortform thirty six or short form thirtysix or short form thirty six).tw. (21132)
- 103 (sf6 or sf 6 or short form 6 or shortform 6 or sf six or sfsix or shortform six or short form six).tw. (1258)
- 104 (sf12 or sf 12 or short form 12 or shortform 12 or sf twelve or sftwelve or shortform twelve or short form twelve).tw. (4470)
- 105 (sf16 or sf 16 or short form 16 or shortform 16 or sf sixteen or sfsixteen or shortform sixteen or short form sixteen).tw. (28)
- 106 (sf20 or sf 20 or short form 20 or shortform 20 or sf twenty or sftwenty or shortform twenty or short form twenty).tw. (370)

- 107 (euroqol or euro qol or eq5d or eq 5d).tw. (7790)
- 108 (qol or hql or hqol or hrqol).tw. (39934)
- 109 (hye or hyes).tw. (58)
- 110 health\$ year\$ equivalent\$.tw. (38)
- 111 utilit\$.tw. (158839)
- 112 (hui or hui1 or hui2 or hui3).tw. (1208)
- 113 disutili\$.tw. (351)
- 114 rosser.tw. (82)
- 115 quality of wellbeing.tw. (11)
- 116 quality of well-being.tw. (367)
- 117 qwb.tw. (186)
- 118 willingness to pay.tw. (3952)
- 119 standard gamble\$.tw. (763)
- 120 time trade off.tw. (981)
- 121 time tradeoff.tw. (223)
- 122 tto.tw. (848)
- 123 or/93-122 (455927)
- 124 92 or 123 (1261859)
- 125 45 and 124 (1599)

126 46 and 124 (1395)

127 47 and 124 (1345)

128 125 not 64 (1300)

129 126 not 65 (1136)

130 127 not 66 (1090)

Database: Embase <1988 to 2019 Week 28>

Search Strategy:

1 orphaned child/ (608)

2 foster child/ (73)

3 adopted child/ (510)

4 institutionalized adolescent/ (16)

5 ("looked after" adj2 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (239)

6 ("care leaver*" or "leaving care").tw. (60)

7 (("in care" or "care experience*") adj1 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (328)

8 ((nonparent* or non-parent* or parentless* or parent-less) adj3 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*).tw. (137)

- 9 ((relinquish* or estrange*) adj2 (juvenile* or child* or adolescen* or toddler* or infant* or infancy* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby* or babies* or twin* or sibling* or youth*)).tw. (66)
- 10 ((child* or infancy or adolescen* or juvenile* or toddler* or infant* or teen* or tween* or young* or baby or babies or twin* or sibling* or youth*) adj2 (orphan* or foster* or adopt* or abandon* or unwanted or unaccompanied or homeless or asylum* or refugee*)).ti. (3308)
- 11 "ward of court*".tw. (13)
- 12 or/1-11 (4928)
- 13 residential home/ (5806)
- 14 halfway house/ (618)
- 15 (("out of home" or " out-of-home" or placement* or "semi independent" or "semi-independent") adj2 care*).tw. (1548)
- 16 ((residential or supported or remand* or secure or correctional) adj1 (accommodation* or institut* or care or lodging or home* or centre* or center* or facilit*)).tw. (8794)
- 17 or/13-16 (15298)
- 18 orphanage/ (851)
- 19 foster care/ (3854)
- 20 (special adj1 guardian*).tw. (7)
- 21 ((placement* or foster*) adj2 (care* or family or families)).tw. (4029)
- 22 ((kinship or nonkinship or non kinship or connected or substitute*) adj1 care*).tw. (360)
- 23 *adoption/ (2704)
- 24 or/18-23 (9315)
- 25 exp juvenile/ or Child Behavior/ or Child Welfare/ or Child Health/ or infant welfare/ or "minor (person)"/ or elementary student/ (2788952)

- 26 (premat* or pre-matur* or preterm* or pre-term* or infan* or newborn* or new-born* or perinat* or peri-nat* or neonat* or neo-nat* or baby* or babies or toddler*).ti,ab,in,ad,jw. (991635)
- 27 (child* or minor or minors or boy* or girl* or kid or kids or young*).ti,ab,in,ad,jw. (3075545)
- 28 exp pediatrics/ (89475)
- 29 (pediatric* or paediatric* or peadiatric*).ti,ab,in,ad,jw. (1440596)
- 30 exp adolescence/ or exp adolescent behavior/ or adolescent health/ or high school student/ or middle school student/ (88253)
- 31 (adolescen* or pubescen* or prepubescen* or pre-pubescen* or pubert* or prepubert* or pre-pubert* or teen* or preteen* or pre-teen* or juvenil* or youth* or under*age*).ti,ab,in,ad,jw. (569652)
- 32 school/ or high school/ or kindergarten/ or middle school/ or primary school/ or nursery school/ or day care/ (91782)
- 33 (pre-school* or preschool* or kindergar* or daycare or day-care or nurser* or school* or pupil* or student*).ti,ab,jw. (589614)
- 34 ("under 18*" or "under eighteen*" or "under 25*" or "under twenty five*").ti,ab. (6369)
- 35 or/25-34 (5342804)
- 36 17 and 35 (5123)
- 37 24 and 35 (6834)
- 38 12 or 24 or 36 or 37 (16935)
- 39 nonhuman/ not human/ (3943285)
- 40 38 not 39 (16745)
- 41 (letter or editorial).pt. (1542836)
- 42 (conference abstract or conference paper or conference proceeding or "conference review").pt. (4231963)
- 43 41 or 42 (5774799)

44 40 not 43 (13711)

45 limit 44 to dc=19900101-20190606 (13274)

46 limit 45 to english language (12254)

47 Markov chain/ (4122)

48 quality adjusted life year/ or (qualit* adj2 adjust* adj2 life*).tw. or qaly*.tw. (30497)

49 (EQ5D* or EQ-5D* or ((euroqol or euro-qol or euroqol or euro-quol or eurocol or euro-col) adj3 ("5" or five)) or (european* adj2 quality adj3 ("5" or five))).tw. (15926)

50 "cost benefit analysis"/ (76622)

51 exp economic model/ (1511)

52 cost.ti. (89185)

53 (cost* adj2 utilit*).tw. (8710)

54 (cost* adj2 (effective* or assess* or evaluat* or analys* or model* or benefit* or threshold* or quality or expens* or saving* or reduc*).tw. (264961)

55 (economic* adj2 (evaluat* or assess* or analys* or model* or outcome* or benefit* or threshold* or expens* or saving* or reduc*).tw. (44536)

56 ((incremental* adj2 cost*) or ICER).tw. (20854)

57 utilities.tw. (10311)

58 markov*.tw. (27064)

59 (dollar* or USD or cents or pound or pounds or GBP or sterling* or pence or euro or euros or yen or JPY).tw. (49454)

60 ((utility or effective*) adj2 analys*).tw. (25652)

61 (willing* adj2 pay*).tw. (8797)

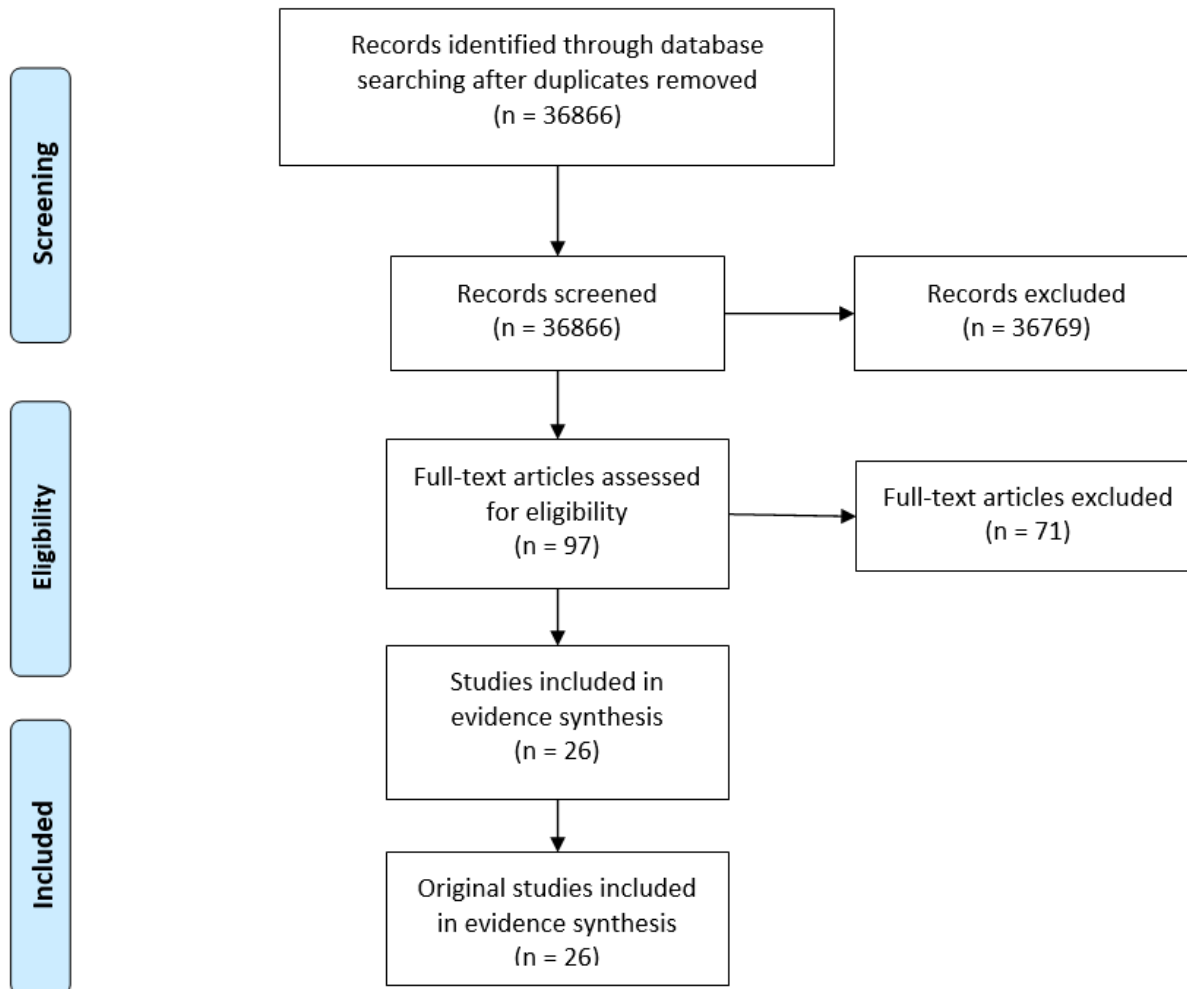
62 47 or 48 or 49 or 50 or 51 or 52 or 53 or 54 or 55 or 56 or 57 or 58 or 59 or 60 or 61 (437885)

63 46 and 62 (336)
64 exp Health Economics/ (754904)
65 exp "Health Care Cost"/ (271264)
66 exp Pharmacoeconomics/ (183070)
67 Monte Carlo Method/ (36411)
68 Decision Tree/ (11234)
69 econom\$.tw. (313756)
70 cba.tw. (8890)
71 cea.tw. (29221)
72 cua.tw. (1304)
73 markov\$.tw. (27064)
74 (monte adj carlo).tw. (42778)
75 (decision adj3 (tree\$ or analys\$)).tw. (20246)
76 (cost or costs or costing\$ or costly or costed).tw. (667335)
77 (price\$ or pricing\$).tw. (48966)
78 budget\$.tw. (32761)
79 expenditure\$.tw. (65082)
80 (value adj3 (money or monetary)).tw. (3103)
81 (pharmacoeconomic\$ or (pharmaco adj economic\$)).tw. (8274)

- 82 or/64-81 (1524839)
- 83 "Quality of Life"/ (429148)
- 84 Quality Adjusted Life Year/ (24150)
- 85 Quality of Life Index/ (2640)
- 86 Short Form 36/ (26202)
- 87 Health Status/ (117486)
- 88 quality of life.tw. (394895)
- 89 quality adjusted life.tw. (17693)
- 90 (qaly\$ or qald\$ or qale\$ or qtime\$).tw. (18129)
- 91 disability adjusted life.tw. (3574)
- 92 daly\$.tw. (3505)
- 93 (sf36 or sf 36 or short form 36 or shortform 36 or sf thirtysix or sf thirty six or shortform thirtysix or shortform thirty six or short form thirtysix or short form thirty six).tw. (38927)
- 94 (sf6 or sf 6 or short form 6 or shortform 6 or sf six or sfsix or shortform six or short form six).tw. (1902)
- 95 (sf12 or sf 12 or short form 12 or shortform 12 or sf twelve or sftwelve or shortform twelve or short form twelve).tw. (8636)
- 96 (sf16 or sf 16 or short form 16 or shortform 16 or sf sixteen or sfsixteen or shortform sixteen or short form sixteen).tw. (51)
- 97 (sf20 or sf 20 or short form 20 or shortform 20 or sf twenty or sftwenty or shortform twenty or short form twenty).tw. (403)
- 98 (euroqol or euro qol or eq5d or eq 5d).tw. (18036)
- 99 (qol or hqol or hqol or hrqol).tw. (87193)
- 100 (hye or hyes).tw. (123)

-
- | | |
|-----|--|
| 101 | health\$ year\$ equivalent\$.tw. (41) |
| 102 | utilit\$.tw. (256882) |
| 103 | (hui or hui1 or hui2 or hui3).tw. (2074) |
| 104 | disutili\$.tw. (837) |
| 105 | rosser.tw. (116) |
| 106 | quality of wellbeing.tw. (38) |
| 107 | quality of well-being.tw. (464) |
| 108 | qwb.tw. (234) |
| 109 | willingness to pay.tw. (7664) |
| 110 | standard gamble\$.tw. (1054) |
| 111 | time trade off.tw. (1611) |
| 112 | time tradeoff.tw. (279) |
| 113 | tto.tw. (1529) |
| 114 | or/83-113 (891635) |
| 115 | 82 or 114 (2273922) |
| 116 | 46 and 115 (2228) |
| 117 | 116 not 63 (1908) |

Appendix C – Qualitative evidence study selection



Appendix D – Qualitative evidence

Berridge 2017

Study type	Semi structured interviews
Aim of study	to identify care and educational factors associated with the progress and attainment of children in care between the end of Key Stage 2 to end of Key Stage 4 (11–16 years of age). to hold semi-structured interviews with young people, carers, social workers and (designated) teachers in order to explore and contrast factors associated with high- and lower-progress.
Study location	UK
Study setting	Secondary schooling in England
Study methods	Semi-structured interview data was analysed sequentially by two researchers using a thematic approach. This incorporated elements of both an inductive and deductive approach, taking into account pre-formulated theory and ideas as well as concepts formed from the data. Following an initial reading of all interviews, NVivo software was then used to organise and code the data.
Population	Children in care between the end of Key Stage 2 to end of Key Stage 4 (11–16 years of age). In addition, social workers, foster carers, residential worker, teachers
Study dates	2013
Sources of funding	the Nuffield Foundation

Inclusion Criteria	None reported
Exclusion criteria	None reported
Sample characteristics	<p>Sample size 26 adolescents, 17 social workers, 17 foster carers, 1 residential worker, 20 teachers</p> <p>Time in care Entry to care varied between 3 and 16 years of age with most separations occurring during secondary schooling</p> <p>Mental health problems "Children's mental health problems were reported with at least one, possibly two, attempting suicide."</p> <p>non-white ethnicity About a quarter were from minority ethnic groups and one young man had been an asylum seeker.</p> <p>Unaccompanied asylum seekers one participant</p> <p>Gender 15 females and 11 males</p>
Relevant themes	<p>Theme 1 Trouble at home spilled over into schooling: Young people reported an inability to concentrate in class and problems spilling over into conflict and aggression with teachers or peers. Many lacked confidence.</p> <p>Theme 2 Entry into care was felt to lead to educational improvement: there was an overwhelming view from young people that entry to care had led to an improvement in their lives: one young woman put it starkly when she said the biggest difference was that she was no longer being shouted at. Another explained: 'When I got into care, that's what basically saved me'. Entry to care was also generally felt to have benefited schooling. Half had made good educational progress, which was how they were sampled, and most overall had become regular attenders</p> <p>Theme 3 Expressions of individual agency were used to help authors understand variability in attitude to schooling and engagement with learning, which is linked with children's resilience. Four broad groups can be identified from our interviews. These are termed: 1. 'stressed/unresolved'; 2. 'committed/ trusted support'; 3. 'private/self-reliant'; and 4. 'disengaged'. Not all young people fit neatly under these headings and there is some overlap between groups. Furthermore, high- and lower-progress young people were included in each of the first three categories.</p>

Theme 4

(stressed/unresolved group) Influence of birth family on education: for most of the sample, birth family continued to influence their lives and education. Children do not cease to belong to a family simply because they no longer live with one. Social media brings a further dimension to this, permitting children to keep in contact with birth parents and others in different ways. Birth family could have positive benefits but was often a source of conflict. At the time of her GCSEs a young woman had been experiencing a complex and very stressful court case in which her loyalties were torn. Another young woman was troubled by the continuing violence in her birth family home, especially as 'My poor old brother still lives there'. She explained how she could become aggressive in class as a consequence but teachers were unsympathetic: 'And they didn't understand if you told them, look I just [need] space, and they didn't understand, they didn't really care...They hadn't got a clue, they probably just didn't know'.

Theme 5

(stressed/unresolved group) importance of close relationships with carers for turning point in education: She also stated that she would have done better at school if her foster carers and social worker had shown more interest in her education and given her more encouragement. She took an overdose before her examinations but subsequently formed a close bond with her foster carers who did not reject her. She described this as something of a turning point in her life: a key stage in her resilience.

Theme 6

(stressed/unresolved group) Impact of shocking events on ability to concentrate: a young woman had entered care early in her secondary schooling. As she explained it, her mother had a new 'boyfriend', who said that she had to choose either him or the children. Shortly after, the girl was hit with a succession of shocks: two bereavements of close foster relatives and her foster mother was diagnosed with cancer. She stated that she had too many social workers and not all teachers were as supportive as they could have been. 'Obviously, when you're going through things, you can't really ignore it completely...And although I tried my best to get on with what I could do, and do the best I could, it wasn't always that easy, and it wasn't easy just to block everything out, but I did the best I could when it came to school'.

Theme 7

(stressed/unresolved group) No body to talk to/to listen: One young woman had entered care at 15. She stated that she had no stability in her life and felt that she had no one whom she could talk to. If there had been someone who understood her, she felt that she could have done better.

Theme 8

(stressed/unresolved group) supports of varying quality: the 'Stressed/unresolved' group had accessed different forms of support, including school mentors, counselling, CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and a maths tutor. However, supports were of a varying quality and had not (yet) managed to help young people to contain their problems and engage fully at school. In terms of resilience, the negative influences from the past had not yet been successfully managed. Reliable social relationships, particularly with carers, still needed to be established to help provide a secure base for the future.

Theme 9

(Committed/trusted support group): Most were planning university careers and at least three are at leading UK universities pursuing careers in medicine, engineering and English Literature. There were several distinguishing features of this group. They had strong support, which young people engaged with. They lived with highly caring, sometimes quite remarkable foster families. Young people felt genuinely cared for, that their lives mattered and that it was, therefore, worth making an effort. They said that they needed to feel that their lives matter to someone else before it could matter to them.

Theme 10

(Committed/trusted support group) Wider support beyond family: Grandparents also emerged as important in two cases. There were accounts of good teachers, who were also supportive. These positive social relationships facilitated young people's resilience.

Theme 11

(Committed/trusted support group) foster carers believed strongly in the benefits of a good education and pushed young people to do well.

Theme 12

(Committed/trusted support group) genuine care, one of the family: There were six other birth and foster children in total and he had never felt treated differently to any of the others. He commented that he always had good social workers; he meets his birth mother every weekend; and teachers have respected his wish to keep his family background confidential in the school. If he needs anything for his education or more generally, the foster carers buy it first then claim it back later if they can. He comments: 'I was treated like one of their own children, so you become part of the family and when that happens it's easier for you to excel'. 'I think that everyone has the ability actually to do well in education. It's just the support mechanism that you give to them...For me, I just needed someone to give me a kick up the backside and say to me "[name], you can do it" ...Because when someone does something for you, you don't want to let them down...It made me feel touched and it made me feel like, you know, maybe this is not just a placement...And it made me feel more warm'.

Theme 13

(Committed/trusted support group) the importance of support needing to be tailored to the individual and that social workers and teachers need to ask carers and young people about what is required.

Theme 14

(Private/ self-reliant group) autonomy/independence/no preferential treatment: These young people explained that they preferred to remain independent and autonomous. Some were very clear that they did not like to be treated differently to others and they could be very stubborn. Some were very determined to succeed educationally and were doing well. It could entail a high level of support but this 'Private/self-reliant' group did not like to feel dependent on others. As a group, they tended to enter care slightly older than other interviewees. They were divided between the high- and lower achieving groups, so independence and self-reliance are not necessarily linked with educational failure. 'I don't think anyone can help you get on in school, it's just yourself, it's if you want to get on yourself...Wasn't focused on the future. I didn't think it was going to end, to be honest...I was living in the moment if you know what I mean'. Some individuals (young women) in the 'Private/self-reliant' group described undertaking caring roles for their mothers with substance misuse and mental health problems, which may be linked to their autonomy and exercise of control.

Theme 15

(Private/ self-reliant group) importance of privacy/not being labelled: She did not feel that her placement moves affected her achievements ('...I was used to changing. It was a normal thing'). She received support from others '...but I didn't want them knowing my business'. 'I wasn't that type of person to be branded needing help'.

Theme 16

(Private/ self-reliant group) impact of home context on education: One said that at every Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting she attended, she reiterated that the best way that professionals could help her do well at school was to make sure that her mother was taking her medication. The young woman felt that, in effect, she was having to undertake the social worker's role, who was unhelpful: 'Oh, I'm very outspoken. It's just been part of my character...And I was quite articulate in what I wanted. So I was just like, "This is what I want, and this is what I'm asking". And you can see I was a bit of a gutsy person, so I wasn't going to take no for an answer. And plus, my IRO [Independent Reviewing Officer] was quite nice... if my social worker wasn't going to do anything, I'd just literally go to my IRO and say, "Look, my social worker and her manager are not helping me out here. So can you help me out, please? Like, I don't know, nag them or do something to them, but just get them to do something". I wanted to ask my social worker about helping my mum, because she's not been taking medication for a year now, and they've been like...they literally will say, "Oh, we'll look into it, we'll look into it, we'll look into it." But they never look into it. So in the end, I'm just like... and I literally, review after review after review, I'm telling them I need someone to look at that'.

Theme 17

(Private/ self-reliant group) criticism of services. One theme of this 'Private/self-reliant' group was the criticism of services, particularly foster carers but also some teachers. Services were not sufficiently reliable to genuinely support young people. Their high level of independence could be seen as a demonstration of 'hidden resilience': an attempted protective mechanism against further harm. One described her first carers as 'nasty'. Two others described their carers as uninterested in their education; one of whom never attended any parents' evenings or school functions. Another said her foster carers were too strict, laid down too many rules and so she felt very soon she should leave, which she did.

	<p>Theme 18 (Private/ self-reliant group) impact of independence/agency on health: One young person, struggling to deal with depression and anxiety, explained how ‘...I keep it to myself’ rather than discuss problems with others. He felt that none of his schools had helped him, spending most of his time in the library having been excluded from classes (‘No...I don’t think any school did’).</p> <p>Theme 19 (Disengaged group) These young men felt that they could have done better in their exams and that the reason for this was down to them. Their explanations were that they disregarded advice and that they did not pay attention. They were often offered support at school, such as counselling for example, but chose not to take advantage. In their own words: (Interviewer - ‘Is there anyone that’s stopped you from doing well?’) ‘Yeah my mates really...and mainly myself.’ ‘I think it was mainly down to me...if I’d focused more than I did on my coursework, I probably would have done a lot better.’</p> <p>Theme 20 (Disengaged group). Disengagement from school associated with school discipline problems: There was more evidence of school discipline problems for this group than others, including disobedience of teachers and rule-breaking. There were accounts of fighting at school, smoking and setting-off fire alarms. One young man was selling drugs at school.</p> <p>Theme 21 (disengaged group) impact of home situation: One young man was said not to cope well with exam pressure and missed a GCSE exam: he said that ‘Things were going on at home’. The mother of one young man had died and another had never met his father, nor had a reliable male adult in his life. The father of one was in prison for drug convictions.</p> <p>Theme 22 (disengaged group) Importance of being in care in benefiting education: Despite feeling that they had under-achieved, nevertheless, all of this group felt that entry to care had helped them and benefited their education. When interviewed, three were still living in the same, stable placements. Two were at college and one on an apprenticeship. They had become regular school attenders, unlike previously.</p> <p>Theme 23 Importance of relationships as preconditions of engaging with education: Stable, fulfilling relationships provided the foundation for children’s resilience. The second precondition for many was that birth family issues need to be managed. Birth parents required support and boundaries need be placed around contact. As far as possible, young people need to be protected from family stress, or helped to deal with it, in order to get on with their own lives and create new opportunities.</p> <p>Theme 24 Importance of tailored support in school once stable and secure: once these structures were in place, young people said that they could then engage with schooling and it was individual teachers who could make the difference. They did this by understanding pupils’ social and emotional problems; exercising confidentiality and sensitivity in the classroom; and taking into account individual learning styles with flexibility. Additional tuition was often welcomed. There is no guarantee that this would work: some young people had these supports in place but did not make good progress (yet). A few others did very well despite their difficulties remaining unresolved.</p>		
Risk of Bias	Section	Question	Answer
	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes

Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes <i>(This study was looking to explore factors associated with high- and lower-progress, which, it could be argued, is better answered using quantitative methods. However, the study was mixed methods.)</i>
Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Can't tell <i>(It is not clear that the researchers justified the research design and discussed how they decided which method to use)</i>
Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Can't tell <i>(It was not clear how participants were selected; it was not clear why the participants they selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study; it was not clear why some people chose not to take part)</i>
Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes <i>(no justification of setting for data collection; no discussion of data saturation)</i>
Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't tell <i>(unclear that researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location)</i>
Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes
Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes <i>(However, unclear if researchers ritically examine their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation)</i>

	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Can't tell <i>(More than one researcher performed thematic analysis, however, no other discussion of triangulation, or respondent validation. Credibility of findings were not discussed at length)</i>
	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research has some value <i>(Authors considered models of agency in secondary school aged children, which did not always have clear applications for policy or practice.)</i>
	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	Moderate
		Directness	Directly applicable

Brewin 2011

Study type	Focus Groups social work managers Semi structured interviews Looked after children RQ4 transition from primary school to secondary school for children
Aim of study	to elicit factors that stakeholders perceive as supporting or hindering the transition from primary to secondary school for Looked After children
Study location	UK

Study setting	a semi-rural borough in Wales
Study methods	Semi-structured interviews. Different types of questions were included in the interview. These included questions to elicit factual information; “descriptive” questions that prompt participants to provide accounts of what happened; “evaluative” questions to explore the participants’ feelings towards someone or something; and questions designed to encourage participants to think hypothetically about the future and possible alternative events. Data from the interviews were analysed using themes and principles derived from “framework analysis”: familiarisation, identifying initial themes and concepts, indexing, charting and finally synthesising. These stages were applied to the data collected from the present study.
Population	Children who are looked after in one borough in Wales, on roll at a school within the local authority and about to make, or have recently made, transition into secondary school Child interviews, foster carer interviews, teacher interviews, interviews with Looked After Children Education Support Officers, and a social worker focus group took place
Study dates	Not reported
Sources of funding	Not reported
Inclusion Criteria	Care Situation “Looked After” by one borough in Wales Education On roll at a school within the local authority; in Year 6 and about to make a transition to secondary school from primary school, or they were in Year 7 and had recently moved from primary to secondary school
Exclusion criteria	None reported

Sample characteristics	<p>Sample size 14 child interviews took place, 22 foster carer interviews, 19 teacher interviews, three interviews with Looked After Children Education Support Officers, and a social worker focus group</p> <p>Mean age (SD) Six Year 6 children (age 9-10) and 13 Year 7 children (age 11-12) were identified</p>
Relevant themes	<p>Theme 1 Need for holistic/individualised care - complexity of factors that impact transition from primary to secondary care: no single factor, or single set of factors, was perceived as supporting Looked After children when moving from primary to secondary school. Instead, interacting factors, at many levels, appeared to play an important role when supporting children through transition.</p> <p>Theme 2 difficulties in transition due to social skills and behaviour: Around half of teachers and carers indicated that the “Looked After” child in question had difficulties making and maintaining friendships, with most attributing these difficulties to the child’s inadequate social skills. Many adult respondents indicated that the children presented behaviours which caused, or would cause, difficulties around the time of transition. while adults often attributed difficult-to-manage behaviours to within-child factors, children tended to attribute such behaviour to external factors, such as being triggered by other children or school staff.</p> <p>Theme 3 Fears and anxiety before transition: Many children indicated that they felt fearful or anxious before transition. Some of this fear related to the work being hard, getting lost or having strict teachers, although the most commonly cited fear was that of bullying.</p> <p>Theme 4 Minimising differences: All participants made reference to the immediate systems children interacted with as having an influence on their transition. Within these systems it was considered important to minimise children’s differences so as to not make the child feel different or stand out.</p> <p>Theme 5 Importance of maintaining peer relationships during transition: The influence of peer relationships was mentioned in some form by almost all participants and across all groups, making this a very strong theme to emerge. Carers, teachers, and children in particular, indicated that friendships were an important factor in choosing a secondary school. Participants reflecting on transition considered that making the move with friends had helped, and conversely an absence of friends was sometimes associated with difficulties following transition. As well as being accompanied by existing friends, making new friends was considered to be a positive aspect of moving to a new school for most children.</p> <p>Theme 6 Importance of maintaining wider local social networks of support: This theme appeared to be very pertinent to carers, who indicated that extended networks of people, relating to their locality and forged over time, were important for the child they fostered. Most carers emphasised this, other than the small minority who fostered children attending school outside their immediate locality.</p> <p>Theme 7 Importance of children building up positive relationships with individual members of staff: Teachers and Looked After Children Education Support Officers talked about the importance of children building up positive relationships with individual adults at school. Most school staff indicated that they, or another member of staff, had built up a positive relationship with the young person, or were in the process of doing so.</p>

Theme 8

Usefulness of transition "activities": A range of general transition activities for all of Year 6 was cited as supporting children's transitions. Primary school staff, children and carers were more likely to identify transition in terms of specific activities that children were involved with. Secondary school staff were more likely to describe transition in terms of processes. This may reflect their experiences: information from participants indicated that secondary schools organised transition activities, so subsequently those on the receiving end of these may have perceived them as separate activities, while the organisers perceived activities as fitting into an overall process. Most participants indicated that Looked After children as a group did not experience different transition activities to other children. It was felt unnecessary, and important that children were not singled out.

Theme 9

Usefulness of sport as a transition activity: Sport emerged as a factor that was perceived to engage and support children. In particular it was mentioned by carers, with over half indicating that sport was enjoyed by their child. Some participants indicated that sport enabled success to be experienced in a way that was not easy in other areas of the curriculum, others indicated that sport supported children more generally.

Theme 10

Difficulties adapting to the environment: All groups of participants mentioned difficulties triggered by the new secondary school setting. Getting lost was most commonly cited by carers and children; many indicated that children had got lost or felt overwhelmed following arrival at the school. However, in all cases it was indicated that these difficulties were soon resolved.

Theme 11

Information sharing and relationships between stakeholders: The importance of sharing information about the child and planning for the transition was a particularly strong theme, with nearly all adults making some reference to this. It was thought important that information was shared between primary and secondary schools, and also between different agencies, and that this went on over time. Many adult participants also talked about the value of building and maintaining relationships between themselves and other adult stakeholders, to facilitate information sharing and support children.

Theme 12

Allocation of secondary school places: The children in the study transferred to either their local school in their home placement catchment area, or transferred to the secondary school of which their primary school was a feeder school. Social workers and Looked After Children Education Support Officers in particular talked about the different systems and circumstances that impacted on a child's transfer. Respondents talked about how catchment areas could be restrictive, and one suggested that the rules should perhaps be more flexible for Looked After children.

Theme 13

Turnover of social workers and lack of involvement: Adult participants indicated that frequent changes of social worker impeded information sharing, which subsequently had a negative effect on children. School staff also expressed the view that social workers were not as involved or pro-active as they should be. Some teachers felt that they were forced to perform duties that they considered should be the role of a social worker, such as preparing paperwork for review meetings, and ensuring contact between Social Services and the school.

Theme 14

Importance of minimising differences between LACYP and peers: All adult participants made explicit reference to the importance of not singling out children and making them appear or feel different due to their Looked After status, particularly in front of their peer group. Some teachers indicated that it was unlikely that any pupils other than the child's close friends knew they were Looked After, indicating that children did not want to single themselves out amongst their peers. No child made reference to feeling different or the same as other children, or wanting to be treated differently.

Theme 15

	<p>Change as a way of life for children: As well as the transition itself, many participants talked of additional change in the child's life. Children tended to mention change far less than adults, perhaps because change was so much part of their lives anyway, or it was too difficult or confusing a topic. Some children were unclear about their own personal history, indicating difficulties remembering previous changes</p> <p>Theme 16 Impact of placement stability on school attendance and ability to cope at school: Many children were reported to have experienced numerous changes of care placements, which were in turn associated with having attended many different schools. Some adult participants indicated that lack of stability had a negative impact on children's ability to cope with changing school. Adults talked of the value of providing stability and routine for children who had experienced change.</p> <p>Theme 17 Missing relationships that were left behind: When children talked about change, it tended to be about people they had "left behind". Many children indicated that they missed the relationships they had with their families or friends from previous schools or neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Theme 18 New peers bringing back issues from the past: Some participants talked about transition creating difficulties by bringing the child back into contact with people or memories from their past, especially when moving to a secondary school that had a large number of feeder primary schools. This could bring children back into contact with peers who knew them in a previous context and their association with being bullied, coming to school in a dirty state or behaving differently. Some participants reported that this resulted in children reverting to the kind of negative behaviours displayed in a previous setting.</p> <p>Theme 19 New school as a fresh start for looked after children: For some participants the move was an opportunity to get away from associations with the past. Many participants talked about the child having "a fresh start" and having an opportunity to create a new image for themselves.</p> <p>Theme 20 Biological change as well as other transitions: In addition to all the changes related directly to school, some adult participants recognised that primary-to-secondary transition comes at the same time as children are having to manage other changes such as the biological and hormonal changes of puberty, and changes in cognitive capacity, emotional development and personal identity</p> <p>Theme 21 Pre-care experiences impacting on current ability to form relationships: Some adults made reference to children's pre-care experiences, or their experiences in care, as affecting their current emotional well-being, behaviour and ability to form and maintain relationships.</p>		
Risk of Bias	Section	Question	Answer
	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes

	Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes
	Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes <i>(no discussion about why certain participants chose not to take part. Sample was well defined to answer the research question otherwise)</i>
	Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Can't tell <i>(No discussion of setting for interview or saturation of data. Unclear the form of the data analysed (e.g. tape recordings, video material, notes))</i>
	Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't tell <i>(Unclear if researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location)</i>
	Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes
	Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes <i>(However, unclear that researchers critically examine their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation)</i>
	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Can't tell <i>(Unclear that the researcher has considered the credibility of their findings (e.g. triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst). In addition, it is often unclear which source (population) the themes have been drawn from most strongly)</i>
	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research is valuable

	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	Moderate
		Directness	Directly applicable

Carter 2011

Intervention	<p>Childhood First large-group Residential care community (N = 3) Childhood First implements its understanding of the crucial factors needed in a therapeutic community in a methodology called Integrated Systemic Therapy, IST. The approach emphasises emotional life and relationships with a clear theoretical framework for thinking about individuals and group dynamics using psychoanalytic and systemic thinking. IST outlines the network of inter-related groups necessary to realise the positive potential of the staff and peer group dynamics. Each group has a specific task, with a constant manager or consultant and many are designed to examine in detail and understand inter-group and interpersonal dynamics. The implications of the approach, and the structure needed to realise it, is that the emotional life of the staff and their relationships needs as much attention as those of the children. Staff are thus helped to process the difficult emotions they feel so they can continue to work with optimism. Such an approach also provides a framework for using the staff’s emotional responses to understand the children’s deep communications. Additionally these structures provide the function of constantly reflecting on and evaluating the staff’s emotional input into situations—this ensures among other things.</p>
Study type	<p>Semi structured interviews</p> <p>Subgroup of interest Residential care</p> <p>Evaluation of an intervention Residential therapeutic care home (Childhood First). Integrated Systemic Therapy, IST</p>

Aim of study	The aim of the research was to: explore current and past residents' experiences of living in a large group therapeutic community and any differences they feel it has made to them; inform the organisation, referrers, donors, the professional field about what it feels like to be placed and live in Thornby Hall; and contribute to the wider social care discourse which is still searching for effective means of treating early life trauma.
Study location	UK
Study setting	Thornby Hall - a therapeutic residential care home. Childhood First's largest and oldest community which caters for 15–25 adolescents.
Study methods	Semi-structured interviews. Transcriptions of the individual interviews, and notes from the group interview, were organised into recurring themes.
Population	Residents of a therapeutic children's residential care home
Study dates	not reported
Sources of funding	the Children's Workforce Development Council
Inclusion Criteria	Care Situation Previous stay in Thornby Hall residential care home
Exclusion criteria	None reported
Sample characteristics	Sample size 8 interviews with five current residents and three previous residents Reason for stopping recruitment not reported

Relevant themes	<p>Theme 1 Thornby Hall was felt to create a sense of belonging: "awesome" "remarkable" "Safe: the staff are going to keep you safe no matter what and then you realise it is safe to talk about your feelings and no-one will trample on them. It is safe to express yourself and know they are still going to be there and want to know you and still give you the love that you need. It is safe knowing you are part of this family and you know you are not going to be pushed out or turned into the black sheep. Safe."</p>
	<p>Theme 2 Environment of Thornby Hall: Thornby hall was a large country home. Many commented positively on first impressions; two mentioned the 'wow' factor; other descriptors included 'grandeur' and 'magical'. The boys in particular were impressed with the grounds and activities available. They felt the rural setting helped them to avoid getting into trouble, and they felt more able to be themselves, especially to express anger: "The good thing about Thornby Hall is that it is secluded which stops me getting into trouble and if it was a smaller house you'd need it to be in town else you wouldn't meet many people."</p>
	<p>Theme 3 Ownership of the home: They appreciated the welcome they were given, and some used the terms 'home' and 'my Thornby family'. Current residents were keen to tell us exactly where they sat, 'their place'. Ex-residents seemed moved by re-experiencing the fabric of the place. One described knowing 'every tree, every stone, and every step'. This sense of ownership, and fond familiarity was in contrast to other placements they described.</p>
	<p>Theme 4 Importance of relationships that do not feel contractual: Everybody commented or agreed with others' comments that at Thornby, in contrast to other places, they did not get a sense of staff 'clocking in and out', staff 'not caring' or being 'in it for the money'. When they had encountered this before in places which they described as 'cold', 'strict', 'regimented', 'quite militarily run', they described feeling lonely and isolated. Some of the residential homes they were describing were small, with three or four staff but had not felt homely. It seems that for these residents the feeling of homeliness had more to do with the relationships with staff than with the size of the setting. The only comments about the large staff group at Thornby Hall were positive ones, several people agreed that 'there are more people to help when you struggle' and 'you can get little bits from each person'. "When they were here they allowed themselves to be absorbed. I just thought they were there to look after us. You don't get a sense of that from any of the other kids homes I've been to because they come in, they clock in, they do their shift, they clock out. But here it was much more a sense of 'I do this because I really want to and I do this because it's what I've chosen to do'."</p>
	<p>Theme 5 Genuine caring relationship: The main topic of conversation, and what the participants wanted to talk about most, was the staff themselves. These comments were about feeling wanted, cared for, loved; the staff forgiving and returning 'no matter what you threw at them'. "I hadn't had hugs before. The staff here want to talk to you, unlike most people in my life. I feel loved, cared for."</p>
	<p>Theme 6 Persistence of relationship: A recurring theme was the 'patience' of the staff group, the fact that residents felt forgiven and that they were still wanted if they had misbehaved. "Even when you were naughty; even when you were being silly and you knew you were, and you were told. The next day 'that's gone, we've talked about it, we've dealt with it' and they would put their arm round you again today. Hugs are important. And you don't get that physical bond and affection in other places, not that I've experienced. It's a very warm loving place and every member of staff is like that without fail."</p>
	<p>Theme 7 Listening and understanding: describing a prior experience one participant said 'you couldn't go to them and say I have got a problem because that wasn't what they were there for'. Participants felt that their difficulties were part of them and appreciated staff's efforts to understand what the difficulties meant for them.</p>
	<p>Theme 8 Unconditional: young people were acutely aware of how difficult they were to relate to when they were struggling and most of all appreciated that staff accepted them 'warts and all'.</p>

	<p>Theme 9 Peer relationships: It was clear from everybody that one of the most positive aspects of living in the community was living alongside 'kids (who) have had the same experience as you and you can understand them and they can understand you'. This was particularly acutely expressed by current residents: "You can relate to them because they have had the same experiences as you. If you say something they know exactly what you mean."</p> <p>Theme 10 Education on site in residential care: One participant explained how difficult it had been to attend mainstream school because of being in care and feeling different; the fact that education was on site here and the teachers are 'more patient' meant that he was able to go to school and not worry about exclusion: 'I feel like I belong here more than I ever have. The kids here understand a bit more'.</p> <p>Theme 11 Thornby care home leading to improved social skills: Everyone thought that being at Thornby Hall had changed them for the better. Nearly every comment was framed in terms of their improved ability to relate to others. Ex-residents, in particular, were asked what they were like at the beginning and the end of their stay. They were eloquent about their upset, confusion and anger at the beginning, and were clear that this manifested itself in their behaviour, including a lack of ability to trust others and form relationships. Descriptions of how they had changed were almost universally framed in terms of becoming better able to relate with others. Several people said they were better at communicating (including with their parents and in meetings) and were more patient: "I don't fly off the handle at everything. I don't get so angry because I am better at listening. [When I left] I felt confident in my own ability as a human being to be able to operate on my own."</p> <p>Theme 12 Thornby Hall impacting future career and life choices: Each described their journey to this point in a reflective thoughtful manner. They didn't describe learning skills but rather ways of thinking and interacting. "I try to look after people and try and guide them in the right way so they don't commit crime but if they do I have to deal with them. I am very proud of getting that job and that is in a huge part down to being here and being able to have the time to develop." Three participants had attended college after Thornby Hall. One was a policeman.</p>		
Risk of Bias	Section	Question	Answer
	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes
	Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes

	Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	No <i>("The sample does not claim to be representative of the whole Thornby Hall population; in fact it self-selects for success. For ex-residents, the mere facts of being available and willing to take part in a fundraising film, and judged to be able to process the impact of this experience selects automatically for successful people with a positive perspective. Current residents who chose to take part (five out of 14 current residents) also probably did so because they felt they had something positive to say.")</i>
	Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes <i>(However, no discussion of saturation of data)</i>
	Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	No <i>("The method was to try to help the participants to think about the differences therapeutic community living had made to them" questions seemed to be framed in a leading manner which may lead participants to talk only about positive aspects of care.)</i>
	Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes
	Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Can't tell <i>(The method by which thematic analysis was performed was not clear. Unclear that contradictory data had been taken into account. Unclear that researchers ritically examine their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation)</i>
	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	No <i>(There didn't appear to be a discussion of evidence both for and against the researchers arguments, rather the study seemed to focus only on the positive aspects of living in this residential care home. There was no real discussion of the limitations of this research or credibility (e.g. triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst))</i>

	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research has some value <i>(There may be some generalisability issues in sample selection and in the type of care home these participants lived in.)</i>
	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	High
		Directness	Partially applicable <i>(Research was conducted in a specific Charity Run (Childhood First) residential care home with some quite unique features, likely to be unlike what is on offer in other residential home premises.)</i>

Chase 2013

Study type	Subgroup of interest UAS Interviews (unclear) "in-depth interviews"
Aim of study	to consider how young people seeking asylum alone in the UK conceptualised wellbeing.
Study location	UK
Study setting	Unaccompanied children and young people seeking asylum and accommodated (or previously accommodated) by local authorities in London.
Study methods	In-depth "qualitative" interviews were carried out. An inductive methodology based on the grounded theory approach (Corbin and Strauss 2008, Glaser and Strauss 1967) was adopted. Young people were encouraged to talk openly about their lives and wellbeing in an integrated way, focusing on the life events and circumstances they considered most relevant. They were asked to think about two broad questions: (i) the things that had made them feel happy since arriving in the UK and (ii)

	the things that had made them feel sad or created difficulties for them. A topic guide was used to draw out key aspects of young people's lives and experiences. Once all interviews had been transcribed, an inductive thematic analysis was conducted. Emerging themes were then tested for negative instances, or examples that contradicted the themes, prior to their inclusion in the findings.
Population	Children and young people seeking asylum on their own in the UK
Study dates	Between January and July 2007
Sources of funding	UK Department of Health
Inclusion Criteria	Care Situation unaccompanied children and young people seeking asylum accommodated (or previously accommodated) by local authorities in London.
Exclusion criteria	None reported
Sample characteristics	<p>Sample size 54 unaccompanied children and young people seeking asylum and accommodated (or previously accommodated) by local authorities in London.</p> <p>Mean age (SD) The age range at the time of interview was 11–23 years</p> <p>non-white ethnicity seeking asylum from 18 different countries</p> <p>Gender 9 girls and young women and 25 boys and young men.</p>
Relevant themes	<p>Theme 1 The destabilising impact of previous trauma on self: Each story was different; in total 54 girls and boys, young men and women from 18 different countries each having experienced a unique trail of events that had irreversibly transformed their worlds, shaken their identities and launched them into the unknown. At global, national, local and family levels, events conspired to set them on trajectories over which they had no control. Others made decisions for them; others took control over what happened to them; others treated them with kindness or not, in what they believed was in their best interests, or as cargo for which they received a price. This lack of control combined with varying degrees of loss, trauma and upheaval all worked to fundamentally undermine these young people's sense of self and evoke fear about what become of them: "And what happened one day...I was taking a</p>

shower outside. Some gun machines [sic] just start... 'cos where I was living gun machine you can hear it everywhere, every time. And I didn't know it was happening in my house and I just hide. When it finished, it cool down and everything quiet. I could hear people running up and down. I came inside the room and I find my sister dead, my mum dead and my younger brother was crying there ... and I bite my tongue and I thought I was dreaming. And I catch him [brother] and shake him and say, 'what happened... what happened?' ... he couldn't talk." These events turned William's life upside down and things, as he indicated later, would never be the same again. He described being constantly haunted by what happened, chose a vocational training course rather than a more academic one which, he said, would stop him from 'thinking too much'; experienced a chronic sense of detachment from family or community and feared the prospects of being returned to the DRC, having been threatened by his mother's assailants.

Theme 2

Importance of immigration status: Irrespective of the degree of trauma they had experienced, when they were asked about the factors that had made them sad or created difficulties for them, most young people in their late teens identified their immigration status and the consequent uncertainty about the future as their overriding concern. They spoke of being restricted by their lack of status, not receiving any response to their asylum applications for extensive periods of time and having to communicate with the Home Office through their own, third-party, legal representatives. Many had been told that they might have to wait up to five years for a decision from the UK Border Agency with respect to their applications for further leave to remain in the UK. The temporary immigration status of most of these respondents placed them in limbo. Many said they had a persistent sense of uncertainty about what lay ahead, an inability to envisage a future and feelings of having fundamentally no importance in the world. Mesaret aged 18 from Ethiopia, commented: "Last August I had to apply for exceptional leave as I got two years when I first came. I met my solicitor but the Home Office has still not given me an answer. To be honest, I don't see a future. If I had to go home it'd be horrible. To be here – I can't hope for too much... I am like a beginner in this country. I need to know if they accept me in this country. I have been here for three years but I'm down here [gesturing to the floor]."

Theme 3

Impact of language and unfamiliarity causing disorientation: they felt frightened, they had no idea what might happen to them, they were unable to read signals in an alien language or express themselves independently without the intervention of an interpreter.

Theme 4

The impact of asylum seeker label: They recognised early on how being branded 'asylum seekers' fundamentally determined how they were treated. Within the system this label subjected them to continued surveillance and control. Outside of the system it served to differentiate them from citizens and meant that they suffered the pervasive stigma directed at the asylum seeker. Many young people described how this generalised stigma meant they could not be open about who they were, or mention the fact that they were seeking asylum or their past experiences. His inability to sustain a biographical narrative was inextricably linked to the perceptions that others had of them. Hence, their own identities were subsumed by the institutional labels given to them and society's responses to them as the categorised 'other'.

Theme 5

A range of mental health problems experienced by asylum seekers linked to both previous trauma and immigration status: Young people talked of experiencing a wide spectrum of emotional health difficulties ranging from problems with sleeping and generalised anxiety to acute and chronic depression, attempted suicide and, in some cases, periodic mental illness requiring them to spend time in hospital psychiatric units. While the roots of such difficulties lay in earlier trauma and upheaval, there was little doubt from the analysis of young people's accounts that other uncertainties, most crucially with respect to their immigration status, exacerbated these mental health problems.

Theme 6

Impact of change in immigration status on deterioration in mental health: Innocent, aged 20 had arrived from Nigeria at the age of 16 and, at the time of interview, reported having persistent mental health difficulties. He had, he said, made several attempts at suicide, had repeated nightmares and managed to sleep barely four hours a night even though he had doubled the recommended dose of his prescription sleeping tablets. He was under the care of a psychiatric team and saw a counsellor on a weekly basis. Innocent drew an unquestionable link between changes in his immigration status and the deterioration in his mental health. On arrival in the UK he was awarded discretionary leave for two years. During that time he described himself doing really well, working under an apprenticeship scheme with a large supermarket chain which taught him new skills, kept him busy and helped him maintain his mental health. At the end of his discretionary leave, however, Innocent entered a period of extended limbo as he waited for the Home Office to consider his application for further leave to remain. He spoke of how, during this time, his mental health took a turn for the worse and reached a crisis point when he was asked to appear in court to defend his application. He was subsequently sectioned under the Mental Health Act (Department of Health 1983) and taken into hospital: "But last year January, it was too much

for me, with the Home Office as well. I was doing well, but when the papers ran out and I started going to the Home Office, I didn't know what to do...my plans collapsed. I don't have the heart to carry lots of things more. You don't know when you're going to have your freedom [status]. I don't believe in anything now, 'cos tomorrow they can say you go back."

Theme 7

Ability to cope with what happened in the past depending largely on how they feel about the future (contingent on immigration status), however their ability to grasp onto opportunities impeded as they moved into the adult immigration and asylum system: young people were highly sceptical of clinical and therapeutic interventions to address past trauma, feeling instead that a sense of coping and wellbeing was better derived from bracketing the past and looking towards the future. Yet while they sought to grasp onto the things that gave them hope and helped them consider prospects and opportunities, they found themselves subjected to tighter restrictions on what they could and could not do. This was particularly the case as they made the transition from child to adult within the immigration and asylum system.

Theme 8

learning English as a starting point to order, routine and security: the young people typically described a process through which they began to re-establish order and comprehension in their lives. For many, the starting point was learning English which, they recognised, not only facilitated communication with others but also gave them access to other important social spheres. They described making enormous efforts to learn English, often with no or limited support. "Nasir (from Somalia) had arrived only one year prior to participating in the research. Unable at first to communicate with others around him, he talked of how he set himself a target of learning five new English words every day, diligently attended all his English for Speakers of Other Language classes and practised his new language skills whenever he could with friends. He commented, 'I don't want to waste my time, so I try to improve my English and try to study hard'. Within a year Nasir's English was good enough to enable him to begin a course in business studies at a local further education college."

Theme 9

Other benefits of knowing English: On a practical level, a command of English afforded young people more control over issues such as selecting solicitors who they knew would provide a good service, accessing services such as doctors and pharmacists and expanding social networks and developing a social identity. English also provided an entry point to other educational opportunities.

Theme 10

The importance of college, school, and learning for order routine and security: Importantly, in response to the wider question over what helped them feel well and happy, 'college', 'school', 'learning' were repeatedly named as being among the most positive dimensions of their current lives. Juxtaposed against earlier sporadic and inconsistent educational experiences (see also Hek 2005, Rutter 2006, Sporton et al. 2006), the regularity and predictability of school were fundamental to re-establishing order and routine.

Theme 11

Importance of college, school, and learning for overcoming past difficulties (as well as other structured activities): when asked how they managed to cope with past difficulties as well as the ongoing stresses in their lives, the respondents frequently cited the importance of education alongside other routines such as attending church, the mosque or the temple or attending weekly youth groups, choirs or volunteer programmes. Over and above providing them with new opportunities, therefore, education and other regular activities provided structure, security and solace. The day to day routinisation (Giddens 1984) of going to school or college, building trust in the professionals and others that they came into contact with and the sense of predictability it afforded helped strengthen the feeling of basic trust that was essential to their ontological security. "College was like a haven for me, you know? A safe haven where I could go and hide. I'd be in the college morning to evening every day. Education provided a smokescreen in a way – that's how I sort of coped with it...until I stood on my feet. That's my way of looking at it...that's my analysis." "For me, the better things that helped me is that I go to college...that help me a lot. I used to concentrate on my study and forget everything. I just want to be someone for me and my son...I don't want to live this life every year. I want to change something in my life. ...When I stay at home, all the thing I think about is family, myself and what I have been through with these problems. But now I have college I think, 'what am I going to do next year? What is my progress now?'"

Theme 12

Importance of college, school, and learning, for being able to picture a future for themselves, for aspirations, and hope: Education and learning and the multiple pathways they generated also became central to how the young people described their futures. Once engaged in education, they were able to structure the possible trajectory of their prospects. Ali was 13 when he first arrived from Afghanistan. At the age of 15 he was about to complete his GCSEs and go on to a Sixth Form College to study science and maths. From there, he

said, he planned to go on to university to study medicine. He was very clear about the meaning that education afforded to his life: "You want to become something in your life. You don't want your life to be like meaningless. That's why you have to get your education...to become something."

Theme 13

Re-emergence of insecurity as a result of aging in the immigration system (education): On reaching the age of majority in the immigration system, young people's rights to education become less clear and they face difficulties on a number of levels with respect to accessing and sustaining educational opportunities. Maryam, despite doing well in her university studies, described her constant anxiety about whether she would be able to complete her course and the destabilising impact of her uncertain immigration status: "It's really, really stressful. I ask, 'what I am doing this for?' Two months before I graduate, they might ask me to leave the country. You just don't know. It's really horrible. You don't know if you'll be able to live here the day after tomorrow. I don't enjoy thinking about the future at the moment. I just want to take it step by step. Not knowing doesn't make me feel more motivated – it actually puts me off. You think, 'they don't even have to kick me out of the country: it's enough to get an interview just before my finals'."

Theme 14

Re-emergence of insecurity as a result of aging in the immigration system (mental health): the prospect of deportation to their countries of origin, a real threat for many young people, provoked extreme anxiety. Ibrahim had been obliged to report every month to the Home Office for over three years. Each time he went he faced the possibility of immediate removal. He commented: "They don't know if they're going to deport me or what. I don't know. I don't understand and I have been here for three years. Every month I am going there and the last time I asked, 'please help me about this, can you please give me information about how long I have to come more? I am coming three years every month'. And they said they don't know."

Theme 15

Lack of social ties and connections a prominent concern about returning to country of origin: For those forced to contemplate being returned to their countries of origin, anxieties about not belonging and no longer having social and family ties and connections in their country of origin emerged as a prominent concern. Nadine, aged 18, had left Rwanda at the age of six, having spent many years in refugee camps outside her country of birth before finally arriving in the UK. She recounted a discussion with her solicitor of how she would respond if she were told to return to Rwanda: "I said to him [solicitor], 'if they tell that to me, I will just tell them, I will just hold a gun and I will say, 'you know what, you can either shoot me right now or, I don't know, go and put me somewhere in a hole rather than take me to Rwanda. OK?'' Because I have got nothing to go there for'. If they tell me, 'we have found your parents living safely there, they have gone back to their normal way' ...oh my God, I will say, 'please take me tomorrow morning'. But telling me they are going to give me money to start a new life...I don't know...do anything you want but taking me there, no chance'."

Theme 16

Improvement in wellbeing after secure immigration status: "For those few young people granted asylum in the UK, the end of the wait had come. They could make plans, had security and could carve out a future for themselves. Azyeb was 12 when she arrived from Eritrea. At the time of the research, six years later, she was applying for permanent citizenship, having passed the citizenship exam. Similarly Asif, 15 and having arrived aged 10 from Afghanistan, had just been granted indefinite leave to remain status and contemplated the fact that within a year 'I can be British basically'. These young people had lost the label and the associated stigma of 'asylum seeker'; they no longer experienced the persistent intrusion of the asylum and immigration system into every aspect of their lives and they were able, with some confidence, to carve out a future for themselves, knowing that they had every chance of accessing the necessary resources to devise and execute a life plan."

	Section	Question	Answer
Risk of Bias	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	No <i>(Researchers did not state a clear aim of the study)</i>

Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes
Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Can't tell <i>(There is no clear discussion about why researchers chose to use the research design outlined in the methods)</i>
Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Can't tell <i>(unclear how participants were selected and no discussion about why the selected participants were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study, no discussion about why some participants chose not to take part.)</i>
Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes <i>(Data were collected by what looks like a semi-structured interview; however methods are not justified. No discussion of saturation of data.)</i>
Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't tell <i>(No indication that researchers considered heir own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location)</i>
Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes
Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes <i>(thematic analysis was used however, the researcher did not appear to critically examine their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation)</i>

	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Can't tell <i>(No discussion of credibility of findings e.g. triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst. Evidence both for and against the researchers arguments were considered)</i>
	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research has some value <i>(Lack of consideration regarding the contribution the study makes to existing knowledge or understanding (e.g. do they consider the findings in relation to current practice or policy, or relevant research-based literature.)</i>
	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	High
		Directness	Partially applicable <i>(data collection occurred prior to 2010)</i>

Evans 2016

Study type	Focus Groups Semi structured interviews Evaluation of an intervention a range of interventions highlighted in the Evans review
Aim of study	to explore the acceptability of the theory of change and delivery mechanisms associated with educational interventions already subjected to evaluation and potentially in routine practice
Study location	UK

Study setting	Wales. Participants were purposively sampled through The Fostering Network, a non-governmental organization that aims to promote and support the participation of care-experienced children and young people in social care policy and practice.
Study methods	The sample size allowed for theoretical saturation to be reached. Focus groups were used with semi-structured interviewing. Focus group centered on brief vignettes depicting the hypothetical participation of a care-experienced child or young person in one of the interventions. Each vignette outlined: participant demographics; the context of the participant's recruitment; delivery mechanisms, including delivery agent, setting and point of intervention; postulated outcomes. Creative methods were integrated into the groups in order to facilitate discussion by making interventions less abstract for participants by providing some concrete visual stimuli. These included examples of intervention activities (e.g. behaviour charts and book parcels) and a range of drawing and writing materials. Focus groups were recorded with use of a digital audio recording device and transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis was conducted. A subset of the data was indexed and coded by two members of the research team. Discrepancies in coding were resolved through discussion. Themes were developed through the process of constant comparison. Two researchers independently constructed themes. The research team read the data, agreed on the interpretation and refined the themes.
Population	Looked after children and young people or those with prior experience of being in care and education
Study dates	June and July 2015
Sources of funding	Welsh Government
Inclusion Criteria	Care Situation currently living in local authority care or prior experience of being in care Education involvement in mainstream or nonmainstream, alternative educational placements (e.g. Pupil Referral Units);
Exclusion criteria	None reported

<p>Sample characteristics</p>	<p>Sample size Twenty-six young people</p> <p>Type of care Participants had resided in foster care (n = 25), kinship care (n = 4), and residential care (n = 13).</p> <p>Gender Fifteen participants were male and 11 were female.</p> <p>Number of previous placements Twenty-five of the participants had experienced multiple placement moves across the range of care types, with the number of placements ranging from four to 24.</p> <p>Age Participants were aged 16–27 years old. The median age was 18, and 22 of the participants were aged 21 or younger.</p> <p>Education All participants had lived in local authority care and attended mainstream school.</p>
<p>Relevant themes</p>	<p>Theme 1 Attachment problems and dearth of meaningful relationships at the root of educational disadvantage for children and young people in care: They spoke of the importance of relationships with primary care givers in supporting educational development, with some individuals noting how the absence of such relationships had inhibited their social, emotional and educational progress: "...because of my learning difficulties and I always used to have books and Where's Wally? And my carers used to read them, let me read them, and then I had to summarize the whole book, and then that helped me with English... We had. A drama piece, like a drama book and we did... act it. [Participant M01] ...at 16 I am, I was, and probably my emotional and behavioural level or social, the social side of it was below, was below that level anyway. [Participant M02]"</p> <p>Theme 2 Relational learning could be aided through a "properly applied" letterbox-type intervention: From such discussions arose a notable preference for the Letterbox Club, with the reported aspects of acceptability reiterating the reasons offered by Mooney et al. (2016) for the intervention's lack of effect. Evaluation concluded that for book-gifting programs to have impact they need to focus on encouraging direct involvement by foster carers in shared literacy activities with children and young people. Participants in the present study felt the key underpinning mechanism of change for the Letterbox Club was the facilitation of better relationships between foster carers and children, which would provide support for learning: "Its bonding, you know, it shows the foster carer what your weaknesses are so maybe they can give you a bit more help. [Participant F01]"</p> <p>Theme 3 Inclusion of games and interactive activities to consolidate relationships in younger children: Inclusion of games and other interactive activities were considered to be particularly important in consolidating relationships with younger children, as 'a child is going to want to sit there and play and color with his [foster] mum and stuff' (Participant F02)</p> <p>Theme 4 Letterbox - receipt of parcels would make them feel special or worthy within a system where they often felt to be a burden. This led to suggestion of inclusion of other significant items, such as memory boxes or teddy bears, which would serve to develop additional positive attachments.</p>

Theme 5

Ongoing intervention to support development of social and emotional competencies to remove a key barrier to educational engagement and achievement: Ongoing intervention to support development of social and emotional competences were considered to be vital to participants, with the home-based counselling offered by Fostering Individualized Assistance Program (FIAP) being cited as an exemplar (Clark et al., 1998). Possession of these competencies were seen to remove a vital barrier to educational engagement and achievement: "...they're encouraging educational, social and emotional development of the children, that's what it says that they're doing. I mean if the kid is struggling socially in school their schoolwork is suffering, that's pretty much a fact isn't it? [Participant M03]" HOWEVER Despite preference for interventions focusing on social and emotional competencies and relationship development, a number of participants did warn against approaches privileging these outcomes at the expense of educational attainment, thus suggesting academic measures should serve as the primary outcome: "People tend to focus on behaviour instead of education, it's like we will fix their behaviour and then we'll give them an education. It doesn't work, it's got to go at the same time. Because what happens is youngsters lose chunks of their education because people are trying to fix their behaviour and then they know that type of thing, that doesn't really you don't get anywhere for the kid. [Participant M02]"

Theme 6

Concerns about being overly focused on behaviour change: participants rejected approaches that constructed them as a problem in need of solving, indicating a desire to move beyond medicalized models that utilized clinical sounding vernacular, such as Fostering Individualized Assistance Program (Clark et al., 1998) and Multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care (Leve & Chamberlain, 2007; Green et al., 2014). One young person maintained that the names of these interventions made them feel as though they were 'suffering from a disability' (Participant F03). With particular regard to the latter program, which employed a points system to monitor good and bad behaviours, one participant claimed 'I'm not a dog, it sounds like they are training a dog' (Participant F04).

Theme 7

Inadequate focus in many of the interventions on the major issue of care and school placement instability: Beyond discussion of the strengths and weaknesses associated with interventions' underpinning theory of change, participants' explored elements that the interventions had largely failed to address. They felt that the interventions considered did not sufficiently address the structural determinants of educational disadvantage. Firstly, was an inadequate focus on instability in care and school placements: "I'd say that the most important thing is to make sure that there is stability in the young person's life because moving around a lot affects their education... I think there should be something in a young person's life that stays the same so whether that be the social worker, or the school, or the placement. [Participant M04] Yeah I found obviously moving around schools a lot, because I moved from Wales to England and it was like during that transition of like for a year I was out of education so I was playing a catch-up game, always like right the way up through school until I left, I was always trying to catch up. [Participant F05] The dream would be that you only ever have two schools, like everybody else. [Participant F06]" Therefore, whilst interventions to enhance the relationships between carers or care system professionals and children and young people were deemed necessary, there also needs to be a focus on improving the stability of these relationships.

Theme 8

Interventions had too low aspirations for looked after children: participants noted the failure of interventions to address entrenched discourses around the educational capacities and aspirations of children and young people in care, namely a dominant expectation that care-experienced individuals had lower academic ability: "They had expectations that basically I was going to become a thick shit. [Participant F07] Some teachers were like openly against us. You know they were like 'oh there's no point like trying with them sort of thing'... I think sometimes young people in care do get a bad rep. You know the teachers are told this young person is in foster care or residential, 'ooh care kid, trouble maker'. [Participant F05] I think if you're not challenged enough as a person just because of you being in care... you go to school and you know and everyone will pull you to the side and say are you ok and blah blah blah. [Participant F08]"

Theme 9

High degree of acceptability for educational specialists to act as advocates for educational rights of individuals in care: was a notably high degree of acceptability for education specialists, who advocate for the educational rights of individuals in care when social workers are unable to resolve difficulties (Zetlin et al., 2004). Participants felt that an independent authority figure would be extremely beneficial in ensuring that a young person was enrolled in school, received the necessary resources to complete their education, and that the educational environment was conducive to their learning needs. As one participant commented, 'sometimes it takes, literally sometimes it takes someone threatening legal action for people to pull their fingers out' (Participant M03).

Theme 10

A lack of resources, particularly in the care placement: participants acknowledged the lack of financial resources afforded to children and young people in care, which may not only restrict the funding of interventions but would prevent sufficient investment in their education, thus ensuring their continued disadvantage. Although not a universal statement, a number of young people commented on their inability to achieve in line with peers due to their limited access to computers, lap-tops, and internet facilities within their care placement: "I wasn't able to use my own [lap top] in the care home because obviously there was no Wi-Fi or anything like that. [Participant M05]".

Theme 11

Lack of resources more broadly: Others noted an awareness of the cost implications of resources in times of austerity 'when we're supposed to be spending less' (Participant F09). Participants shared anecdotes of witnessing arguments over the funding of educational resources, particularly when they had moved across local educational boundaries: "If you are moved out of county then one county will argue with another county about who pays for transport, who pays for schooling, who pays for food, who pays for everything. That has something to do with your education. And they do, they can be, councils are just like no that's your problem, no that's your problem, palming young people off sort of thing and it's just really unpleasant. [Participant M06]"

Theme 12

Importance of intervention delivery agent (not adding more!): Participants reported the delivery agent as being the most important criteria against which intervention acceptability was assessed. In general young people were disinclined to partake in interventions involving the introduction of additional care system professionals. Indeed, professionals were already thought to be omnipresent, and as a result, programs such as the Fostering Individual Assistance Program, which provided clinical program specialists in the development of tailored wraparound services (Clark et al., 1998), were seen as excessively increasing the number of professionals in young people's lives: "There is enough meetings and stuff that go on with kids...Don't want another person coming and telling you to say 'look you've got to do this, you've got to do that...[It is]what's wrong with him but it's just here we go again, another person in a suit, another bureaucrat. [Participant, M02]"

Theme 13

The problem with introducing yet another transient relationship: "Participants further expressed caution about external intervention potentially contributing to the problem of transient relationships experienced by young people in care, especially where they are delivered for a fixed duration: "Nine months is a long time for a child to have someone in their life and spending that much amount hours with them. And then just suddenly be like right that's it now, good bye. It's going to be really hard for a child to accept after everything they've been through obviously. So it's going to be really hard that is...Because I still struggle with that now. My [social worker] has just left me and I broke my heart because she was with me 18 months I think it was and I actually broke my heart, knowing that I will never see her again. [Participant F10]" In response to these concerns, participants highlighted the necessity of stipulating the duration of an intervention in advance and ensuring young people know the relationship is time limited, whilst ensuring that this does not compromise its authenticity or meaningfulness.

Theme 14

Need for educational advocates: There was nuance within young people's perceptions of professionals however, with delineation of those whose practices were informed by principles of transparency and co-production and those whose were not. In particular, participants indicated support for the intervention that provided educational specialists charged with advocating for children's rights within the educational system (Zetlin et al., 2004). These individuals were considered to prioritize the views and perspectives of those in care, rather than making decisions on their behalf. Thus the intervention was valued for respecting children's rights and privileging their voice.

Theme 15

Preference for carer-delivered interventions: Participants preferred interventions delivered by their carer. The reasons for this were threefold. Firstly, intervention could serve to improve the relationship between the carer and the young person, thus facilitating the 'normal' parent-child relationship that those not in care may enjoy. This was considered to increase parity between care-experienced and non-care-experienced individuals: "It's being a normal parent really isn't it? It's what they basically are. If you had children you would sit down with them and help them with their homework so why can't foster carers?"

Theme 16

Preference for carer delivered interventions: Secondly, intervention delivery by carers was thought to provide an opportunity to form positive attachments. In particular, engagement in informal activities within these healthy relationships could offer a supportive and safe environment where more formalized educational learning can then be effectively delivered: "...it's challenging them [individuals in foster care] because they're learning how to bake, but they're also learning how to do numbers, and they're also learning like with the colouring stuff. It's like number games and counting games and stuff so you can help them with their maths and whatever else. [Participant F10]"

Theme 17

Preference for carer delivered interventions: Thirdly, the provision of specialist training to foster carers, as in Teach Your Children Well (Flynn et al., 2011; Flynn et al., 2012; Marquis, 2013), was considered to address instances where carers were too busy or unwilling to support education within the home, or lacked the necessary skills to do so: "Yeah they did sit there and they did like give me time and they did like try and help me but they, I knew that they couldn't. RE [religious education] they had even less clue about. [Participant F09]"

Theme 18

Preference for care rather than school setting for interventions: Intersecting with discussions pertaining to delivery agents were concerns regarding the delivery setting. Interventions were predominantly provided within the school or care setting, with discussion indicating preference for the latter. A number of participants expressed their reticence to receive interventions within the school context. Their status as being in care had already served to demarcate them as different, and enrolment in educational interventions or engagement with professionals only served to further exacerbate this sense of difference: "...you've got people making fun of you and stuff because you know they're giving you extra support for no need. [Participant F08] ...it's singling me out and its making me seem special when I'm not, I'm a normal person. [Participant M07]"

Theme 19

Don't like being singled out: As an extension of these concerns about being constructed as different, many participants indicated a preference for universal rather than indicated intervention approaches: "We don't like being singled out as individuals, as care leavers, we always make that big point that we want to be treated the same as others, so this is where we need to be treated the same as others, do you get that? ... It should be for like all kids, not just looked after children. [Participant F03] This education liaison officer and the rules should be apply to any young person, or any child rather than just looked after kids. [Participant F03]"

Theme 20

Fears that transition in to school programs such as Kids in Transition to School would be stigmatizing, wraparound services better: in resonance with the broader literature on the unintended harms of targeted interventions (Evans et al., 2014), participants felt that programs such as in Kids in Transition to School, which delivers skills training to children in care as they enter into kindergarten (Pears et al., 2013), would be stigmatizing. There was concern that conferral of the label of 'at risk' of educational failure at commencement of a child's educational journey could lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby it diminished children's expectations for their future educational attainment. In contrast to interventions exclusively targeted at those in care, many participants found the Head Start program, which is a wraparound set of services intended to support disadvantaged pre-school aged children (Lipscomb et al., 2013), to be highly acceptable: "This program is for everybody, which I think is good because it's not just focused around young people in care. [Participant F11]"

Theme 21

Appreciation of interventions which afforded the opportunity to spend time with peers: Yet despite wanting to avoid overt targeting of individuals in care, participants appreciated interventions that afforded the opportunity to spend time with other young people who were care-experienced as these peers could offer support in ways that professionals or individuals not in care could not. Indeed, one participant cited the study's focus group as potentially being a beneficial intervention composition due to the opportunities to discuss the structural factors associated with the educational disadvantage they experience, which allowed them to avoid any deficit-modelling and understand their position as being someone in care: "I'd say it's more the idea that you get to see other people in the same position. Because that's what's valuable, this is the reason why I came here because I thought you know it would be nice to see other people that are in the same position. [Participant M08]"

Theme 22

	Preference for group level interventions which allow for relationship building: Regardless of the composition of interventions, and whether they comprised peers who are or are not in care, participants were keen to emphasize the importance of group-level rather than individual-level interventions. This was primarily due to opportunities for relational development, which they saw as being important due to citing the enhancement of social and emotional competencies as a key theory of change for interventions. Foster Healthy Futures, which a group-based approach informed by the evidence-based PATHS curriculum and Second Step approach (Taussig & Culhane, 2010; Taussig, Culhane, & Hettelman, 2007; Taussig, Culhane, Garrido, Knudtson, & Petrenko, 2012), was particularly popular due the opportunities to forge new healthy relationships: "...it helps to learn how to interact with people because that helps your emotions a lot because it teaches you to talk to people and stuff. [Participant F10] ...it creates bonds like you'd be surprised how not many young people sit down and have a meal together you know...I didn't do that when I was in a children's home, never ate together. [Participant M09]"		
Risk of Bias	Section	Question	Answer
	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes
	Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes
	Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes <i>(However, no discussion about why some chose not to take part)</i>
	Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes
	Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Yes
	Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes
	Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes
	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes

	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research is valuable
	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	Low
		Directness	Directly applicable

Fargas-Malet 2018

Study type	Focus Groups Semi structured interviews RQ3 mental health services
Aim of study	To outline the health problems of children and young people in care in Northern Ireland, and to explore how their health needs were being addressed.
Study location	UK
Study setting	Northern Ireland
Study methods	Authors asked the HSC Trusts to identify social work managers, senior practitioners and senior social workers for looked after children, fostering and residential services who would have particular experience in relation to meeting the health needs of looked after children. The focus group interview was designed to ascertain participants' views on how the HSC Trusts were meeting the health needs of children and young people in care, what facilitated or obstructed implementation, gaps in service provision and suggestions on how to make things better. Carers of 10 per cent of all 2,500 children and

	<p>young people in care in Northern Ireland were also interviewed over the phone. This interview involved the collection of quantitative and qualitative data. It lasted approximately forty-five minutes and included questions regarding: (i) the medical information they received when the child/young person was placed with them (including historical health information); (ii) their perception of the child/young person's health needs; (iii) the impact of past and current assessments to attend these needs; and (iv) any other health services they were given. Authors interviewed twenty-five young people, who agreed to be interviewed. Two researchers went to their homes to carry out the face-to-face interview. They asked the young people about their understanding of their health and their experience of help-seeking and supports. All interviews (with practitioners, carers and young people) were digitally recorded, transcribed and analysed using content analysis. Authors scrutinised the transcriptions for recurring themes, and identified and developed detailed codes, which were input in Excel sheets.</p>
Population	social work managers, senior practitioners and senior social workers for looked after children, foster carers, and looked after children
Study dates	August 2013
Sources of funding	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in Northern Ireland
Inclusion Criteria	Care Situation children and young people in care
Exclusion criteria	None reported
Sample characteristics	Sample size 233 telephone interviews with carers (foster, kinship and residential); twenty-five semistructured interviews with young people; and multidisciplinary focus group interviews with professionals across the HSC Trusts.
Relevant themes	Theme 1

prevalence of mental health problems: Participants highlighted the prevalence of mental health difficulties, in addition to alcohol and drug abuse, for children and young people in care, especially for those in residential care, but also for those in the older age groups, who were about to leave care.

Theme 2

Attribution of improved mental health to relationships: Half of the young people recalled a time when they were feeling not as well as in the present, some of whom had experienced serious mental health problems (e.g. suicidal feelings, depression, selfharming, etc.). Young people attributed these positive changes in their mental health to their new situations and their supportive relationships, having grown up or the support offered by particular formal services. Four young people were still struggling with their mental health. For instance, Nina had taken two overdoes recently and described her mental health as 'not good'; and Anna was deeply affected by guilt because of the way she entered care, and had a difficult relationship with her mother and grandmother. She had also overdosed and had been self-harming, but felt she was working through her issues and was on the path to recovery.

Theme 3

Difficulty engaging young people in addiction and mental health services: Professionals, carers and the young people themselves highlighted the difficulties in engaging young people in mental health and addiction services. Social work practitioners emphasised young people's lack of engagement with services as one of the factors or challenges hindering their capacity to meet the health needs of children and young people in care: "I think there are services out there but it's just the young people are not engaging because of the culture that they're in, but once they do start engaging you know it's working for them, so . . . there are a lot of good services . . . a lot of it is down to their involvement and engagement (Focus Group—FG1)."

Theme 4

Lack of willingness or ability to "open up": Some carers drew attention to young people finding it difficult to talk to somebody about their mental health. Sometimes, they stated that children and young people found it hard to talk about their feelings and their past, and they believed in the need for these young people to 'open up' to somebody they felt comfortable with. Some carers were also concerned that the young people, whom they cared for and had been 'emotionally damaged', refused professional help. They also felt there was a lack of effort made to encourage young people to engage with these services.

Theme 5

Opening up about mental health problems (young people perspective): the majority were able to seek help and talk to significant others (especially their families and carers) when they were not feeling mentally well, one-third did not feel capable of talking about mental health difficulties with others, largely due to the stigma associated with that. These young people spoke of feelings of embarrassment, insecurity or guilt. Some understated the importance of feeling mentally unwell, arguing that it was something that eventually goes away. Two believed they never felt mentally unwell: "I usually wouldn't tell anyone about mental health issues because it's triggered by a lot of guilt, . . . if I knew something was up and something was bad then yeah I would definitely tell them, but usually I just kind of deal with it myself because it passes, so usually I just keep on top of it (Anna). You don't feel mentally unwell for that long, well I haven't. I just get over it. Bottle it up for a couple of days and it will go away . . . What stops me telling people? It's just not knowing what other people would think (Connor)."

Theme 6

Barriers to help seeking, embarrassment, and stigma: Young people's feelings of embarrassment, stigma, guilt and fear of opening up were identified by the young people themselves and their carers as obstacles for seeking help. In addition, Bridget also talked about her fear of the process of seeking help and the service itself, and the unknown ('What are they going to try and get out of me?').

Theme 7

Barriers to help seeking - effort of services: some carers claimed that services were not making sufficient effort to engage the young people. Carers in children's homes stressed the fact that involving CAMHS was not always the appropriate response. They stressed the mental health difficulties that young people living in residential care faced and that not enough was being done to help them: "It seems to be that young people who don't readily engage with CAMHS or find it difficult to engage with CAMHS can be quite quickly discharged, whereas these are the young people with the most complex difficulties, most in need of the service and there should be greater effort maybe in trying to engage them, if you miss three appointments, forget about it (Residential Carer 1)."

Theme 8

Barriers to help seeking - professionals do not spend enough time to build positive relationships: Young people and carers also talked about professionals, in particular social workers, not spending enough time with them in order to build positive strong relationships. Although some had good experiences with professionals, others recalled damaging ones that they had with practitioners that did not take the time to know them or put pressure on them: ". . . they don't take enough time and effort to actually see what's wrong, they don't get to know, they assume too much sometimes I think, maybe that's just personal experience but they assume like she or he is the same as him, so we'll keep them that way, nobody is the same . . . I think they need to try and meet the individual needs of the young people (Bridget)."

Theme 9

Barriers to help seeking - timeliness of help: research participants talked about a range of difficulties in accessing the services needed at the right time. These difficulties related to timing issues (e.g. long waiting lists, difficulties in getting a referral, etc.), geographical/locality issues (no local services available in rural areas, having to travel, etc.), appropriateness of services, and a lack of information provided in relation to the services that are available and where to ask for help. long waiting lists for mental health services was a regular issue, reported by practitioners, carers and young people. Professionals explained that young people could be waiting fourteen to fifteen weeks to have an appointment with CAMHS and carers revealed how sometimes they never received the service at all. That could be a deterrent to seeking help in the first instance. The importance of receiving the right service at the right time was highlighted by social work and health professionals, carers and young people. If the service is not provided when needed, it may be too late for it to work when it is finally provided (as the level of need may have multiplied), the young person might have had to look for immediate short-term help elsewhere and/or the young person might not be ready to avail of the service (at the time it is finally offered): "Takes a long time to wait for referrals. In my experience of this one time, there was too long a gap from knowing [child] was ready to talk about it, to getting an appointment. The notion would nearly leave [child] . . . If I had to say that these services are fabulous, yes, they might well be, but I do think they have to have a quicker turnaround to be of benefit. Waiting list is too long (Foster Carer 1)."

Theme 10

Barriers to help seeking, slow referral to mental health teams in the first place: For some, it was also difficult to get a referral in the first place. Sometimes, this could be due to staff turnover (which slowed down the time to put actions in place to meet young person's needs), the lack of efficiency of the young person's social worker or social work team or the young people not fitting the restricted criteria needed to be referred.

Theme 11

Geographical barriers to help-seeking: professionals identified difficulties regarding the shortage of local provision and the consequent travelling times needed to avail of specific services. This was a specific problem for LACYP that were not living in the Belfast HSC Trust, and especially those in rural areas, as well as for those that had moved jurisdictions. These young people were forced to travel long distances to access a service. This has implications for the effectiveness and responsiveness of the service, as well as for the young person's engagement: "On occasions, when a child is placed outside of the Trust area, it can be difficult accessing available resources for the young person, travelling can also take up a lot of time and impact on the amount of times you get to review the young person (FG2)."

Theme 12

Lack of training, clear indicators, and information leading to inappropriate referrals: Regarding the appropriateness of services, professionals talked about difficulties in providing the young people with the appropriate service. They believed this was because of the challenges in assessing the youth's mental and emotional well-being (e.g. lack of appropriate indicators and training for social workers in doing so), as well as gaps in service provision (e.g. lack of therapeutic services for children under the age of eleven, lack of services for young people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), lack of a regional secure mental health facility and assessment centre for children with high risk-taking behaviour and severe mental health issues, etc.). Finally, carers, especially kinship carers new to fostering, and some young people described a lack of information provided on the services available to them.

Theme 13

Need to make services more engaging: Carers talked about services needing to be more 'proactive in how they seek to support young people'. A suggestion from one young person was to create more outreach mental health support: "I would like to find a way that they could come into the house or do something that they can analyse maybe more and see exactly what you can do maybe without necessarily going to a place like that [i.e. CAMHS], because I think sometimes you don't need it, you just need somebody to talk

to . . . , and you don't really want to tell people that's where you're going, whereas you can say 'I have a friend coming over', that's a lot easier to say than 'oh, I have to go to an appointment', because I didn't tell anybody in school (Bridget)."

Theme 14

Need for services to be more locally accessible: Carers also argued about services being more locally accessible, while young people highlighted the need for more local drop-in centres: "I think if we could bring those services in an informal way into the local area, I mean where [child] has to go to access some of them services is 15 miles away, which means [child] has to commit to being here for us to take them over and commit to being away from friends for three hours, which [child] doesn't want to do, so access, if they were local in your GP surgery, [child] might go (Residential Carer 1)."

Theme 15

Greater multiagency working (communication): Another key recommendation by young people and carers was more communication between health professionals. Young people commented on the frustration they felt having to retell their stories and problems over and over, which in itself discouraged them from seeking help: ". . . the social worker ended up sending me to three different counsellors and I keep explaining things, I couldn't keep doing that and it upset me more, . . . I would be panicking, not trusting people like that. I ended up in a worse state crying and stuff, because they made me change, and I just ended up refusing to go anywhere (Nicole). . . . really the lack of communication is dreadful between each department . . . it's the main problem and children have a tendency to get lost in the system . . . there's not a consistent member in this child's life, one member or even two members of a staff team that would be there to see a child through and support them through it, it's not there (Foster Carer 2)."

"It has to be a multi-agency response, it can't be in isolation, can it? . . . there are other things impacting and sometimes you have to stop the other things to do the mental health issues or the emotional support, and then you have to swap to something else, so it needs timing and agreement and a proper plan, these ad hoc services coming in, it doesn't really work, does it? (FG2)"

Theme 16

Possibility of a one stop shop for all children in care: Another suggestion was to set up a multidisciplinary mental health team (occupational therapy (OT) specialist, clinical psychologists, specialist nurse and educational psychologists) working in a 'one-stop shop' for all children in care.

Theme 17

Information needed on the services available and knowing where to find them: Having been provided with information on the services available and knowing where to seek help was also considered crucial by young people and carers. Some highlighted the need to give the appropriate information to young people and parents/carers, so they could seek and obtain the support they required: "There's help available but a lot of us don't know that it is there . . . because nobody tells us, I mean if social services can get away with not doing something for us, they'll not do it, . . . you really have to push the Trust for something that you want, instead of them actually telling you what's available (Anna)."

	Section	Question	Answer
Risk of Bias	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes

	Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Can't tell <i>(researchers did not justify their methods in great detail)</i>
	Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes <i>(however no discussions about why some participants chose not to take part)</i>
	Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes <i>(Researchers broadly covered the topics that were covered, although a range of different techniques were used. Researcher did not discuss saturation of data.)</i>
	Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't tell <i>(Unclear that researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location)</i>
	Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes
	Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Can't tell <i>(No in-depth discussion of analysis process. Unclear how themes were derived from the data. Unclear if sufficient data was presented to support the findings (e.g. saturation). Unclear if researchers critically examine their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation)</i>
	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Can't tell <i>(Unclear that researchers have discussed the credibility of their findings (e.g. triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst))</i>
	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research is valuable

	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	Moderate
		Directness	Directly applicable

Francis 2017

Intervention	<p>Theraplay (N = 20)</p> <p>Each child received weekly Theraplay sessions lasting for 30 minutes. The number and content of sessions varied depending on the needs of the child, determined at initial assessment. Some individual sessions took place at home. Group and individual sessions with the children were based on the Theraplay framework suggested by Booth and Jernberg (2010). A typical session would have the following core elements: welcome song, check-ups; Theraplay activities based on the dimensions of structure, nurture, challenge and engagement; snack and goodbye song. Consultation sessions with the significant adult were offered throughout the intervention.</p>
Study type	<p>RQ2</p> <p>RQ3</p> <p>RQ4</p> <p>Evaluation of an intervention Theraplay</p>
Aim of study	<p>This study aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the impact of Theraplay® group or individual interventions on the child's relationship with a key adult in school; • Explore whether there are changes in the child's engagement with education, such as their self- confidence, attention and concentration skills.

Study location	UK
Study setting	Looked after children referred from nine primary schools in an English local authority (Leicester)
Study methods	Post-intervention qualitative data were collected from the child's significant adult in school, using semi-structured interviews involving open and closed questions. A small number of semi-structured interviews with carers and a social worker were completed. The data were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data extracts were colour coded and categorised into themes. The themes were then analysed using a Realist Evaluation approach (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, 2004).
Population	Looked after children who would benefit from additional psychology service support
Study dates	Not reported
Sources of funding	supported by the Leicester City Virtual School Team.
Inclusion Criteria	Age Primary school Mental health Looked after children were identified in consultation with the Virtual School Team as children who would benefit from additional psychology service support
Exclusion criteria	None reported
Sample characteristics	Sample size 20 looked after children Special educational needs or learning disability Four children had a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education and Health and Care plan and a further nine children had identified SEN and received SEN support in school.

	<p>Mental health problems Looked after children were identified in consultation with the Virtual School Team as children who would benefit from additional psychology service support</p> <p>non-white ethnicity 60% White, 20% Asian and 20% Black/African/Caribbean/Black British</p> <p>Gender girls 55% and boys 45%.</p> <p>Number of previous placements The number of care placement changes the children had experienced ranged from one to six.</p> <p>Age The age of the LAC ranged from five to 11 years</p> <p>Education 70% of the children were in Key Stage One and 30% in Key Stage Two; 0% of the children had had two or more school moves. Three children had had one or more fixed term exclusions from school. Two children attended a pupil referral unit.</p>
Relevant themes	<p>Theme 1 Context: Care setting – carers and school staff felt that the child's early life experiences and placement instabilities impacted on the child's learning.</p> <p>Theme 2 Context: School systems – staff felt the work was constrained by limited time for sessions, support for teachers and the intervention not being embedded in the school.</p> <p>Theme 3 Mechanisms of intervention: Relationship with significant adult – staff appreciated opportunities to build relationships with the child/children.</p> <p>Theme 4 Mechanisms of intervention: Theraplay® activities – staff felt the individualised nature of Theraplay® activities matched the child/children's needs.</p> <p>Theme 5 Mechanisms of intervention: Consultation with staff – staff valued the additional sessions and having protected time for their own well-being and learning.</p> <p>Theme 6 Outcomes: Increase in positive relationships with peers and key adults.</p> <p>Theme 7 Outcomes: Increase in engagement with education – school staff noticed improvements in attendance, the children following adults' requests, and their attention and concentration.</p>

	<p>Theme 8 Outcomes: Increase in confidence and self-esteem.</p> <p>Theme 9 Outcomes: Increase in positive behaviours.</p> <p>Theme 10 Outcomes: Increase in enjoyment and engagement – children reported enjoying the group, making friends and feeling happy; some children shared the activities with their carers at home.</p>		
Risk of Bias	Section	Question	Answer
	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Can't tell <i>(The main focus of this mixed methods study seemed to be the effectiveness of the intervention, which is best answered using a quantitative approach.)</i>
	Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes
	Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes <i>(However, unclear if/why some participants chose not to take part)</i>
	Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Can't tell <i>(Setting not justified; unclear in what form the data took; unclear if data saturation was considered.)</i>

	Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't tell <i>(Unclear that researchers examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location)</i>
	Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes
	Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Can't tell <i>(No in-depth description of thematic analysis. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings; unclear if contradictory data was taken into account; unclear if researchers critically examine their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation)</i>
	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	No <i>(There was no adequate discussion of the evidence both for and against the researchers arguments, or the credibility of the qualitative findings e.g. triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst)</i>
	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research has some value <i>(Findings were very much related to the intervention only, generalisability not discussed.)</i>
	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	High
		Directness	Directly applicable

Franklin 2013

Study type	Semi structured interviews Subgroup of interest Human trafficking RQ3
Aim of study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the experiences of children identified as trafficked or suspected trafficked and accommodated in local authority care. Assess mechanisms in place to support trafficked or suspected trafficked children and the role of social workers, Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) and other professionals mapped as having had contact with the child in providing and accessing care appropriate for them Assess the multi-agency response in the context of best practice in child protection and safeguarding as set out in the Home Office/Department for Education – Safeguarding Children who may have been Trafficked Guidance (2007) Identify good practice and areas for improvements.
Study location	UK
Study setting	Voluntary organisations supporting trafficked children
Study methods	Face-to-face interviews were undertaken with 17 young people who were trafficked when they were children. The interviews explored the practical care and safeguarding arrangements for trafficked, or suspected trafficked children, from their perspective. Interviews gathered information about the types of services they had received and how professionals supported them, their understanding of care processes, and transition at 18. Interviews were conducted using a themed template to guide the interviewer through exploring the experiences of the child. Interviews lasted a maximum of an hour and were digitally recorded and transcribed. In order to gather more in depth information, 18 telephone interviews were undertaken with a sample of key stakeholders. These were professionals who had direct (or indirect) experience of working with trafficked children, either in local authority, voluntary sector, or legal roles. Data collected from the telephone interviews and face-to-face qualitative interviews with children were fully transcribed and then thematically coded and analysed.

Population	17 young people who were trafficked when they were children, nine representatives from six local authorities (social care managers and front line social workers), two solicitors (welfare and immigration) and seven voluntary sector staff (six of these were front-line workers with direct experience of supporting trafficked/suspected trafficked children)
Study dates	between January and May 2013.
Sources of funding	UK Home Office
Inclusion Criteria	None reported
Exclusion criteria	None reported
Sample characteristics	<p>Sample size 17 young people who were trafficked when they were children, nine representatives from six local authorities (social care managers and front line social workers), two solicitors (welfare and immigration) and seven voluntary sector staff (six of these were front-line workers with direct experience of supporting trafficked/suspected trafficked children)</p> <p>Type of care the young people lived in at least eight different local authority areas in London, the South East and West Midlands</p> <p>non-white ethnicity The children in the sample were from nine different countries of origin: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Vietnam and a South American country</p> <p>History of trafficking The reasons they had been trafficked included for domestic servitude (seven people), forced labour and criminal activity including cannabis cultivation and selling drugs (three people) and sexual exploitation (nine people).</p> <p>Gender 15 girls and two boys</p> <p>Age At the time of the interviews, they were aged between 15 and 23 years</p>

Relevant themes	<p>Theme 1 Key findings regarding discovery and identification of trafficked children: Following discovery or escape, the period immediately after is an extremely confusing and frightening time for children; Being kept locked up or threatened or controlled prevented children from escaping, as did threats made against their family; Children may disclose unintentionally, or may wait until they feel safe, or until they have a trusting relationship, or they may reach a point of desperation; Children may not know that they have been trafficked or see their situation in these terms; Trafficked children will often not have any understanding of where they are, will not know their rights and will not know how they can be protected. Not speaking English and possibly not even knowing which country they are in is also a major barrier; A lack of awareness, understanding and training can lead to some practitioners and the police not identifying trafficked children even in situations where children have sought help;</p>
	<p>Theme 2 Criminalisation of trafficked children: Some trafficked children were criminalised for activities such as documentation offences and criminal acts which they were forced to engage in while being exploited; Some trafficked children were treated as adults when discovered and were subsequently wrongly placed within the adult criminal justice system or immigration detention facilities;</p>
	<p>Theme 3 Concerns were raised about private fostering arrangements and potentially trafficked children remaining hidden from view in these situations.</p>
	<p>Theme 4 Trafficked children going missing: Trafficked children going missing are a major concern for practitioners; Interviewees reported that a lack of awareness of trafficking meant some children were not properly protected, supervised, accommodated and supported, and went missing; A lack of safe accommodation or specialist trained foster carers was reported to be leading to children being placed in inappropriate placements;</p>
	<p>Theme 5 Reducing the risk of missingness: There was agreement about what can help to minimise the risk. This included quick action based on suspicion, a multi-agency safety plan, safe accommodation, trained and supported foster carers and one-to-one intensive support for the child and the forming of a trusting relationship with an independent adult; Some respondents felt that tackling this issue was beyond the scope of local level provision and there needed to be a regional/national response such as reciprocal arrangements, new funding models or a national specialist foster care programme; Respondents saw the value in the training of specialist foster carers funded by the Department for Education and wanted this to be rolled out nationally; Respondents reported that a higher priority needed to be given to trafficked children who go missing;</p>
	<p>Theme 6 Recommendations for missing and trafficked children: Recommendations included the need for: Improved multi-agency responses to trafficked children going missing; Trafficked children who go missing to be treated as cases of abduction; The introduction of a national database to record missing trafficked children; Trafficked children are known to have used written information given to them by professionals before they went missing. They have subsequently used this information to facilitate a return to the local authority.</p>
	<p>Theme 7 Current guidance and multiagency working: Child trafficking toolkits and NRM guidance containing indicators of trafficking were considered helpful; Some respondents, however highlighted that there was little understanding of how the indicators should be incorporated into the assessment process, used to predict risk or to determine the most appropriate services; It was reported that good social care for trafficked children should be about a duty to protect these children, rather than focusing on them as being trafficked; Multi-agency working was identified to be highly dependent on the importance placed on the issue by local authorities; Few local authorities had developed multi-agency strategic or operational groups focusing on trafficking. Even fewer had developed local joint strategies on trafficking or undertaken local needs assessments. Thus very few local authorities were implementing current guidance; Multi-agency joint training was seen as helpful. However, multi-agency working depended on a shared understanding and proper training across agencies, otherwise it could fail; Some respondents expressed frustration with the National Referral Mechanism process and did not see it providing support to trafficked children; Respondents recommended that gathering information from children should be compliant with Achieving Best Evidence guidance;</p>

Theme 8

Repetition of story causing distress: Trafficked children had to repeat their story multiple times to multiple agencies, often causing them distress.

Theme 9

Only a minority of the sample of trafficked children were happy with the care and support provided by their social workers. Although some individual social workers were seen as supportive, practice varied widely

Theme 10

Trafficked children often had multiple social workers or key workers and so lacked continuity of care, and had to frequently repeat their story

Theme 11

Trafficked children's criticism of social care support centred around a lack of contact and support, not being listened to and social workers not doing things that they should do. This was reported to lead to a lack of trust.

Theme 12

Trafficked children reported turning to welfare solicitors and/or support workers from voluntary organisations to get the services and support they needed

Theme 13

Stakeholder respondents repeatedly highlighted the need to see what has happened to the child as a child protection issue and respond accordingly

Theme 14

Concerns were raised that social work teams specialising in one area (e.g. asylum or looked after children) might not have the full range of knowledge or skills required to manage the often complex situations

Theme 15

Concerns were raised that child protection support could be compromised by some trafficked children's uncertain immigration status especially during transition from children's services to adult services/independence

Theme 16

Many trafficked children undergo (multiple) age assessments, which some practitioners thought were highly problematic for this group of children; Age assessments were often taking place in police stations and in some cases it was reported that they were being undertaken by social workers who were making pre-judgements; Children reported that following age assessments and the questioning of them (and often disbelief about their age) they found it difficult to have good relationships with their social worker; Some children within the sample interviewed had their age wrongly identified and had been sent to adult prisons, detention centres or been placed in adult accommodation, placing them in a very vulnerable position;

Theme 17

Access to good quality immigration advice was highlighted by stakeholders to be a concern

Theme 18

Local authorities reported barriers to supporting trafficked children including insufficient accommodation, a lack of understanding amongst social workers of the immigration system and pressures relating to the immigration process

Theme 19

Continuity: There were reported barriers to providing an allocated permanent social worker to trafficked children

Theme 20

Local authorities reported that they had faced some difficulties in accessing appropriate education, mental health services and leisure opportunities for trafficked children

Theme 21

Education for trafficked children was seen as vitally important, although provision was varied. Some trafficked children received incorrect advice about their education, and/or did not receive their right to an education

Theme 22

A lack of appropriate accommodation was highlighted as posing potential risks to trafficked children as well as having detrimental effect on children's access to leisure, education and/or cultural opportunities

Theme 23

Trafficked children reported multiple accommodation moves and sometimes living in inappropriate placements where they reported living in fear.

Theme 24

Transition to adulthood was identified by all participants in this review to be problematic; Transition for trafficked children is especially problematic as it is often linked to the immigration decision making process; Many stakeholders raised concerns about the increased vulnerability of these young people, and the severe drop in support and services following transition; Although most local authorities reported undertaking Pathway Planning with trafficked children, the quality of this was questioned and in some cases reported to be very poor; Trafficked young people reported not understanding the Pathway Planning process, being left unsupported and without the life skills to cope with their situation; Trafficked children may require particular additional support around skills for independent living; Some respondents felt that the Home Office should prioritise the immigration decision making process for this group of young people.

Theme 25

Across all respondents it was identified that trafficked children find the care process confusing; Stakeholders reported that if a child did not understand what was happening to them and did not have trust in an adult then there was a risk that they may return to their traffickers; Although most local authorities provided interpreters there were concerns about the quality of the service provided; Although all local authorities stated that trafficked children were invited to their LAC reviews, there were repeated concerns from stakeholders that the children did not understand what was going on. Trafficked children confirmed this; A consistent theme throughout the research was a need for trafficked children to have a trusted adult, independent from statutory service delivery to support young people to navigate the care process (and legal processes) and to challenge possible care arrangements which were not meeting their entitlements. A guardianship model was identified as a way to address this challenge.

Theme 26

Across the research respondents identified a gap in training and awareness of trafficking issues: More public awareness and information specifically for young people was considered necessary so that people could identify trafficking; Across all agencies working with children and young people it was felt that they needed to be more aware of trafficking and know what to do if they had suspicion; Specifically the police, immigration, youth offending, criminal justice system, health and education were identified as needing specific training; Social workers and social work managers across all teams were seen as needing a better understanding of child trafficking.

	Section	Question	Answer
Risk of Bias	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes
	Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes
	Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Can't tell <i>(Researchers did not explain why he participants they selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study, or why some participants chose not to take part)</i>
	Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes <i>(However no discussion of data saturation)</i>
	Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't tell <i>(Can't tell if researchers critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location)</i>
	Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes
	Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Can't tell <i>(No in-depth description of the analysis process. Unclear that researcher critically examine their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation)</i>

	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes
	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research is valuable
	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	Moderate
		Directness	Directly applicable

Gaskell 2010

Study type	Interviews (unclear)
Aim of study	to explore young care leavers' experiences of care.
Study location	UK
Study setting	inner London area
Study methods	All interviews took place in cafe's. No interviews were recorded, notes were written up instead. Young people fed back into the write up and final analysis. Interviews were written up in full and coded thematically.
Population	Young people each with experiences of the care system within the inner London area. All young people were also service users of a London-based children's charity
Study dates	not reported

Sources of funding	not reported
Inclusion Criteria	None reported
Exclusion criteria	None reported
Sample characteristics	<p>Sample size 10 young people</p> <p>Time in care all participants had entered the care system for the first time before the age of 11 years.</p> <p>Type of care Eight of the group had experienced both residential and foster care placements</p> <p>non-white ethnicity Five of the group were from Black British backgrounds, three were from mixed Black British and White British backgrounds and two young people described their ethnicity as White British.</p> <p>Gender seven young women and three young men</p> <p>Number of previous placements All of the young people interviewed had multiple experiences of care placements.</p>
Relevant themes	<p>Theme 1 (inclusion in decision making) Some may have preference for residential care: Entering the care system after a breakdown of care within their own familial system, some young people felt strongly that foster family care was not the most suitable option for them. Many expressed the desire that their own, dysfunctional family, should not be replaced by a foster family. Ruby2, a 19-year-old young woman explained that she favoured a children's home environment, rather than the increased stigma and further alienation of living as what felt like an 'add on' to another family: "I didn't like foster care. I just didn't like the feeling of being in someone else's family, in someone else's home, you get me? In a children's home everyone has something in common and it's like 'oh why are you here then, what's your story' you know."</p> <p>Theme 2 Need to listen and include in decision making: When young people hold these strong views of their own care needs and of how they might be met, the failure to listen can be interpreted as a failure to 'care'. All of the young people interviewed described being confused by decisions made on their behalf. Twenty-one-yearold Crystal explained how she had attempted to include herself in the decision making process. After requests to be placed in a children's home could not be met, she took influencing her care into her own hands: "You know, I told social services 'I don't like God people' and they sent me to live with a pastor and his wife! I mean what were they thinking?! So I just ended up running away</p>

again." A common theme emerged amongst the young participants in this research, that after unsuccessful attempts to influence the nature of the care they received, many young people became disillusioned. A common conclusion was that the type of care they needed and wanted was simply unavailable.

Theme 3

(inclusion in decision making) preference for foster families: Unlike the above examples and reflecting the individual needs, children within the care system, nineteen-year-old Jodie found the children's home environment unpleasant, preferring instead to be cared for through foster families: "At least in a foster family I felt loved man, in the children's home I felt hated by all the staff, it was just their job, they didn't care.... It was stupid though, he [pointing to a friend also taking part in the interview] just wanted to be in a children's home and they kept putting him in foster care. I wanted to be in foster care and they kept putting me in a children's home!"

Theme 4

The need to explain decision making: Clearly, there are many considerations to be taken into account when placing a vulnerable young person in appropriate care. However, when the constraints on services were rarely explained in an accessible form, the actions of the local authority can be internalised by looked after children as a failing in their role as carer. Young people entering local authority care have already experienced failures in their care needs during their childhood. This rejection and the failure to have their care needs met is a dominant attachment pattern and framework of understanding for many looked after children. For this reason, the young people who took part in this research commonly internalised and interpreted a whole range of actions played out within the care system through their previous experiences of a lack of care.

Theme 5

Shared decision making: regardless of government moves towards 'choice' in service provision, these young research participants did not say they wanted a greater choice of services. Rather than a choice of services, the young people simply wanted the services that were being delivered to be good enough services that took into account some aspects of their background, context and need. The hierarchical nature of service delivery often does not allow for the background, context and need of the service user being acknowledged or incorporated into the services provided. As Jodie explained of an experience of violence within a children's home: "If they'd [the children's home staff] sat down and talked to me, asked me how I wanted to deal with it, it would have shown.... I don't know, it would have shown caring, I suppose." This experience fuelled feelings of a lack of care, but it also reconfirmed a hierarchical framework of adult knowledge in the context of child welfare. This young woman increasingly felt that her input into her own welfare was neither valued nor requested.

Theme 6

Support through disclosure of information process (being listened to): Disclosing family and personal difficulties is a challenging and often traumatic process. It has personal and emotional implications for the individual and can have significant ramifications within the family. If young people are not supported through their complex disclosures (for example of sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect and so on) young people can withdraw from further disclosures and thus the support services they require. A number of the young people said that they had struggled to express their personal difficulties to service providers throughout the care system. Their main concern was that they were being ignored, or worse, disbelieved: "I was being abused by my mum's boyfriend, but everyone thought I was making it up (nineteen-year-old Derek)"

Theme 7

impact of resource constraints on listening: This feeling of not being believed also tied into the concern that service providers, stretched and under resourced, often failed to understand the complexity and severity of young people's problems. Nineteen-year-old Natasha explained her feelings when she was accessing local authority care: "They don't listen yeah, but even when they do, they have these little tricks. They twist what you're saying. They turn it all round. They make out you're lying, that you're making things up. They do it so well it even makes you think you're making it up! You get me?" "Social Services didn't try to understand where you were coming from. They just didn't listen to what you wanted. (twenty-one-year-old Crystal)"

Theme 8

continuity of care: In order for social care provision to have successful outcomes, trust in both institutions and individuals is necessary. Some young people made these links between the perceived lack of care and young people's difficulties in building trusting relationships: "As soon as you were beginning to trust them [social workers] they moved on. Just as you were putting trust in them, if you did put trust in them, they were gone. (twenty-one-year-old Crystal)" Because this young woman came to expect the sequence of being let down, by

her own admission, she blocked the access of care from her social workers and from other care providers. Through time, she stopped placing any trust in her social workers, thus building what she considered to be a reciprocal relationship of mistrust.

Theme 9

Lack of a trusted adult figure impacting on educational results: "People need to have higher expectations for kids in care. If I'd had a really strong person behind me pushing, pushing, I wouldn't be where I am now."

Theme 10

Lack of aspirations for looked after children within the educational system: the lack of aspirations for looked after children was felt by many of the young people to be endemic within both the education system and the care system itself: "The head teacher didn't exclude me in the end, he just kept saying, 'do you want to go home'? And I'd go home. (twenty-year-old Tyrone)" "I was in a children's home, there were ten of us, and only two actually went to school. Kids in care just don't go to school. They [the staff in the children's home] woke you up, but that was it. They woke you up if you had a school to go to. If you didn't you were just left to wake up when you wanted."

Theme 11

Impact of placement moves on educational performance: For looked after children, frequent moves between care placements can be very destabilising both practically and emotionally. As twenty-year-old Tyrone explained of the practical implications of unstable care placements: "One week you'd be in one place, come Monday you'd be trying to get to school from a different place."

Theme 12

Constant moves impacting a child's ability to form attachments and enter crucial relationships with carers, social workers and peers alike. Stability of placement is a crucial aspect of the emotional repairing necessary after early childhood trauma. "I was lucky, I didn't move that much. It's the moving that messes kids up. My brothers and sister have been in the same place the whole time. They were even luckier, they got a foster mum who really wanted them, and they've stayed. (nineteen-year-old Jodie)"

Theme 13

lack of continuity in care workers: Many of the young participants expressed their concern that the turnover of social workers was very high and that this impacted upon the effectiveness of the care they received. These feelings were mostly based upon the difficulties they faced in contacting and accessing their social worker when they needed help. This was expressed through their feelings that they required more time in direct contact with their social workers, if care was to be effective. As sixteen-year-old Lucy explained, her attempts to contact her social worker in times of need were restricted: "I kept phoning, writing, leaving my number asking her to call, but she still hasn't. Social workers should call every child one–two times a week. It shouldn't be down to the child to contact the social worker." "I had about six or seven [social workers]. I can't remember all their names, some I only had for a few weeks." "It was no fault of mine that they changed so much. You don't get an explanation. Sometimes you don't even see them and you get a letter saying 'I'm sorry I'm not going to be your social worker anymore', and you think hang on, I've never even seen you!"

Theme 14

Positive care by social workers (above and beyond): nearly all the young people who contributed to this research were able to describe at least one social worker or care provider with whom they developed a positive and trusting relationship. These care providers were talked about very positively and were clearly central to young people's experiences of support and personal development. Nineteen-year-old Jodie explained the importance of her positive experiences with service providers: "One of my social workers was great. She took me shopping, she did things she didn't really have to. She looked at me like a daughter. She cried at me, pleading with me to stop with the crack ... so they're not all bad!"

	Section	Question	Answer
Risk of Bias	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes
	Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	No <i>(no in-depth discussion about methodology)</i>
	Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	No <i>(unclear why the participants selected were most appropriate, or why/if some participants chose not to take part)</i>
	Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	No <i>(Setting is justified however it is not clear how data were collected (e.g. focus group, semi-structured interview etc.). Methods are not explicit for interview technique, in addition the researcher did not discuss saturation of data.)</i>
	Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't tell <i>(unclear that the researchers critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location? How did the researcher respond to events during the study)</i>
	Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes

	Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	No <i>(no in-depth description of the thematic analysis used. Sufficient data was not always presented to support the findings. Unclear that contradictory data was taken into account. Unclear that researchers critically examine their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation)</i>
	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	No <i>(Researcher did not critically examine the credibility of their findings: .g. triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst)</i>
	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research is valuable <i>(however, generalisability not discussed)</i>
	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	High
		Directness	Partially applicable <i>(Very likely that data were collected prior to 2010)</i>

Griffiths 2012

	<p>Letterbox (N = 14)</p> <p>The “Letterbox Club” is an intervention that provides reading, writing and mathematics materials to children in public care with the aim of improving their educational attainment. Materials are sent addressed to the child at their place of residence, for children to use on their own or to share with other family members. In response to concerns expressed by carers that materials addressed to them implied an expectation of them offering educational support, the decision was made to send materials directly to the child. The child would be told they were a member of a club, the “Letterbox Club”, to reduce any feeling that they were being given compulsory homework; The materials would be provided in installments, to avoid the child feeling overwhelmed, and to provide an element of novelty and</p>
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	excitement each time the child received a parcel; The parcels would be sent through the post, making distribution relatively simple, including for children whose placements were outside each local authority area.
Study type	Semi structured interviews RQ2 RQ4 Evaluation of an intervention Letterbox
Aim of study	To explore participants' views about each aspect of the Letterbox Club in greater detail, including whether the children continued to use any of the items they had received.
Study location	UK
Study setting	Three different UK local authorities
Study methods	Semi-structured interviews six months after the children had received their last parcel. parcel, with a sample of four children and four foster carers for Letterbox Red and Blue in 2009, and with six children and their foster carers for Letterbox Green in 2011, selected from three different local authorities. These explored participants' views about each aspect of the Letterbox Club in greater detail, including whether the children continued to use any of the items they had received. Unclear how thematic analysis was performed.
Population	Children in care aged 7 to 11
Study dates	2009-2011
Sources of funding	not reported

Inclusion Criteria	<p>Age aged 7 to 13</p> <p>Care Situation in foster care</p>
Exclusion criteria	None reported
Sample characteristics	<p>Sample size four children and four foster carers for Letterbox Red and Blue in 2009, and with six children and their foster carers for Letterbox Green in 2011</p>
Relevant themes	<p>Theme 1 Encouragement to learn: "many carers and children did feel that receiving the materials had provided important additional support and encouragement to learn. For example, the carer of a boy aged 8 wrote, "The parcels have played a big part in Hamza becoming more enthusiastic about reading. Even made him keen to bring home school books". "Mr Quinn [my teacher] done a test on us today and I got twenty out of twenty on it. Because I answered all twenty of them right, because I've been playing the maths games and it's helped me with my adding up".</p> <p>Theme 2 Receiving personalised packages created the sense of being important and that someone was interested in them: "It may not seem a lot, but when you've not had much attention in your life, it is." Children clearly felt they could make decisions themselves about what to do with the materials, and were usually keen to share them: "Jake felt rather special as he loved the postman delivering the parcel for himself each month. He enjoyed getting everyone together and playing with his games and reading his books". The bright envelope was important to many: "Brandon watches the post and can immediately identify 'his' package." Many children told us they kept each envelope, "because it has my name on".</p> <p>Theme 3 Enthusiasm maintained for the parcels: Children who had been in Letterbox Club before were still very enthusiastic when they were members again. One carer said that her foster daughter had had the Red parcels eighteen months before, and when her first Green parcel came she "just ripped it straight open. Excited and straight into it!" Her foster daughter said, "It's a great thing and it makes you feel a bit happier ... To get the parcels, it'll take a lot of money to put together for people, but it makes people happy".</p> <p>Theme 4 Source of continuity: The fact that the parcels followed placements was important: The fact that the parcel is delivered to the child's home address was particularly important to children who had moved recently or frequently. One boy (aged 9) in the earlier pilot had expressed this very poignantly: "So somebody knows where I live?" The foster mother of a girl aged 10 who had moved three times in a year, said, "The Letterbox Club was the continuity, something that stayed the same when she moved from A to B. She'd had so many ups and downs and I think something like that, that stays the same, is quite important to children and it was very important to Kelly." A carer with two foster daughters aged 11 confirmed this: "They love just getting the parcels and that was important to them, especially when they hadn't been here very long, it was like 'somebody from the outside knows I'm here'."</p> <p>Theme 5 Useful for under resourced foster homes: Some foster homes had comparatively few books suitable for the children they cared for, so the Letterbox Club parcels were a valuable resource.</p>

Theme 6

Something to call their own: Even where foster families were already well-provided, many carers commented that a critical element in gaining children's interest was that the Letterbox books were their own. For example, the carer of a boy aged 9 said, "We've got a cupboard absolutely full of books, but he never paid them any attention at all, so it was nice that these came just for him." Similarly, Katie's foster mother wrote: "The books she has received we've often got already, being a 'bookish' house, but none the less she enjoys the parcels and it gets her to read old favourites again".

Theme 7

Being part of a club: Lewis, aged 8, told us: "It was good fun because I've never been in a club before". The aspect of being a member of a club seemed to have encouraged many children to tell their teacher at school about the books and games they had received. Perhaps "I'm a member of a club" provides a simpler, less problematic explanation than the more emotional "I'm getting books and games because I'm in care". Elements in the parcels that emphasised 'being in a club' (all marked with a Letterbox Club logo) were consistently popular, including personalised sticky labels with "This book belongs to..." and the child's name printed on them.

Theme 8

Children liked the element of surprise, not knowing what books they might get, and carers, too, commented that this broadened the range of books their children used. Many foster carers said that they looked forward to the parcels arriving as much as the children. For example, the foster mother of Janie, aged 8, wrote, "Everything in the parcels was excellent, but the Diary of a Killer Cat was superb and the CD is used in the car all the time – I love it, too!! Hope we can have more parcels one day."

Theme 9

Relationship building aspect of Letterbox: Children enjoyed Where's Wally? (published as Where's Waldo? in North America) for its social qualities – one carer of a girl aged 8 wrote, "We all had a go at Where's Wally? – even the teenagers wanted to have a go." There were many reports of children reading to each other, and asking others (both adults and children) to read to them. For example, Kyle, aged 12, told us he read excerpts from the Guinness Book of World Records to his younger brother: "I'd show him stuff that was a bit weird and stuff. Like the dog with the longest tongue". The majority of carers (over 80%) indicated that the parcels had helped them do more with the child. Many foster carers commented on the value of the materials in helping them make better attachments with their children. The carer of Marley, aged 10, wrote, "Found it a great way to bond with my daughter", and the carer of Danny, aged 9, said, "He has had fun, and we have spent a lot of time together because of Letterbox Club." Cadey was 11, and his foster carer wrote, "He is still a reluctant reader, but the books give us an opportunity to spend time together". The carer of another 11 year old said, "It's nice to have something to do with Jamie, where he doesn't feel I'm forcing my attentions on him. He finds it very hard to be close to anyone, but he's been keen to be read to and to play the games he's made. It's made me feel more comfortable with him".

Theme 10

New ways of reading (audio): At least one parcel in each age range included a story on CD with its accompanying book. Many carers commented that they had not previously thought of using audio stories with their foster child, but said they were often used at bedtime or on car journeys. The carer of Damon (aged 11) said, "He's of an age where he wouldn't appreciate a bedtime story from me, but he listened to the CD at bedtime" and another, with a foster son aged 8, wrote, "Best gift ever... He never seems to get enough of it".

Theme 11

Variety in the packages was helpful: Foster carers commented favourably on every genre of books in the parcels – one foster father said, "Poetry, I'd never have thought of that, but it's great!" Non-fiction was similarly praised by foster carers: "I've learnt such a lot". Classic books, where many foster carers would already know the story, were welcomed: for example, when Danny, aged 10, received The Silver Sword, he said, "my [foster] dad knows this story, he read it when he was at school".

Theme 12

Encouraging education in a non-threatening way: providing educational support in a nonthreatening and enjoyable way could contribute to improving the stability of foster care placements. Certainly, the parcels raised the profile of educational activity amongst children and adults in many of the participating families, and for some children it seemed to have

<p>begun a 'virtuous circle' of improved engagement at school and improved feelings of well-being in the child, with consequent feelings of relief and positive engagement for the foster carer. As Kezia (aged 12) said, "When you come home [from school], you're not expected to read or write, are you! Cause it's sort of your spare time. But because I got the Letterbox Club, I did sometimes read or write at home, and it helped me at school because I was prepared to do it at school." Her foster mother's pleasure at the improvement in Kezia's attitude to school was evident when she was interviewed.</p>			
Risk of bias	Section	Question	Answer
	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes
	Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	No <i>(Authors do not clearly justify the qualitative research design)</i>
	Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	No <i>(Unclear how participants were selected for the qualitative aspect of this mixed methods study, or why these were the most appropriate. Unclear why some participants chose not to take part.)</i>
	Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	No <i>(Semi-structured interviews were conducted, however it is not explicit what the methods were. Form of data is not clear and the researchers did not discuss saturation of data.)</i>
	Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't tell <i>(unclear that researchers ritically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location)</i>

	Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Can't tell
	Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	No <i>(there was no description of how/if thematic analysis was performed. Unclear that researchers critically examine their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation)</i>
	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Can't tell <i>(Often unclear what portions of the data were retrieved from the qualitative interviews and which from comments on the questionnaires. No discussion of credibility of their findings (e.g. triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst))</i>
	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research has some value <i>(The research focuses on an intervention of interest. No discussion of generalisability of findings.)</i>
	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	High
		Directness	Partially applicable <i>(It is likely that some of the data was collected prior to 2010)</i>

Groak 2011

Study type	Semi structured interviews
	Subgroup of interest UAS

	RQ3
Aim of study	<p>To gain an in-depth understanding of the experience of being a young person who is unaccompanied and seeking asylum in the UK.</p> <p>To gain an understanding of how past and present life experiences impact on these young people’s psychological well-being.</p> <p>To explore the psychological processes these young people use to manage or cope with the difficulties they experience.</p>
Study location	UK
Study setting	an inner city borough
Study methods	<p>Semi-structured interviews. Open-ended questions were used in the interview to elicit a wide range of experiences. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers, & Osborn, 1997), a qualitative methodology that aims to capture the quality of an individual’s experience and gain some understanding of the meanings held by the participant, was used. The Spence’s Children’s Anxiety Scale (SCAS), the Child Impact of Events Scale (IES) and the Birleson Depression Scale were completed by each participant in order to evaluate mental health and to triangulate the data. Taped interviews were transcribed verbatim. One transcript was transcribed and translated by an interpreting agency. The transcripts were then analysed individually and then across participants using the IPA coding framework. The emergent themes were examined and arranged into meaningful clusters and a list of main themes and the corresponding sub-themes was developed that aimed to reflect the experience of all the participants. Emerging themes that were not well supported across the participants were either re-conceptualized under other existing themes or excluded in the process of determining the final sub-themes. Respondent validation was carried out with one participant and incorporated into the process of developing the analysis.</p>
Population	Unaccompanied asylum-seeking adolescents aged 16–18 years
Study dates	Not reported

Sources of funding	Not reported
Inclusion Criteria	<p>Care Situation cared for under sections 17 or 20 of the Children Act and had resided in the UK for at least six months</p> <p>Mental health not currently involved with CAMHS</p>
Exclusion criteria	None reported
Sample characteristics	<p>Sample size 6 unaccompanied asylum seekers</p> <p>Time in care Participants had been in the UK between six months and one year (mean length of stay 9 months).</p> <p>Type of care Four lived in shared accommodation; three sharing a room with another person. Two participants lived in their own flats. Five participants were single and one had a partner and a young child. Four participants had been granted leave to remain for a set time period. One participant was waiting to hear about a Home Office asylum appeal. One participant's asylum status was unknown.</p> <p>non-white ethnicity Five participants came from countries in Africa and one came from Asia.</p> <p>Gender four male and two female participants</p> <p>Age aged 16–18 years old</p> <p>Education All participants reported having attended school prior to coming to the UK although this had been disrupted. Five of the six participants attended college at the time of the interview.</p> <p>Language Two participants used an interpreter.</p>
Relevant themes	Theme 1

Loss of family and friends: All participants talked about multiple losses they had experienced. This loss was both tangible and emotional. They spoke about loss in relation to their time prior to and following arrival in the UK. These losses were painful and often sudden losses of family and friends: "I lost my mum again in that kind of confusion, everyone was just running in all directions, people running all over the place. Either you stay down or you try to run out, so I stayed down, and didn't go with my dad. That was the last time I saw them. P5 8 17–20"

Theme 2

Loss of identity: the sense of loss also extended to loss of community, homes, way of life, freedom, trust, security, wealth, cultural identity and even feeling as though they had lost "themselves": "I really don't know, I've lost myself. I know I have. P1 15 1"

Theme 3

Loneliness and isolation: Losses left participants feeling a sense of loneliness and isolation. One participant reflected on the loss of help and support that was provided by his friends and family: "You are all alone, you have to go through it and come out of it by yourself. P1 16 12–14"

Theme 4

Loss of control, certainty, and safety (home country): "So they [rebel fighters] are unpredictable and that was the way of life. Sometimes it would be safe sometimes it would not. P5 2 14–15" "First I do not know where my parents are and how they are doing. P3 7 22 It was difficult because they [parents] disappeared mysteriously. P5 6 22" "They would come and threaten us and like say if you don't give us food we will take you or kill you. P5 2 10–12"

Theme 5

Loss of control, certainty, and safety (UK): The fear of being returned to their home country dominated all the participants' worries. Four participants expressed a sense of vulnerability and a need for protection. All six participants spoke about living under the threat of being returned: "My biggest worry is that if I return to my country, you understand, then I will be fighting for my life. P4 14 13–14" "The Home Office hasn't answered yet if I could stay in the country or not. I'm still waiting for them. I went for an appeal, but they haven't written to me. P6 22 332"

Theme 6

Loss of control and powerlessness: All the participants spoke about the loss of control that they had over their lives. Again this spanned the two aspects, prior to and since arriving in the UK. There was a sense of having no personal agency in the past or for their future. All participants talked about feeling helpless at times when their circumstances became really difficult. They described feeling powerless to stop or change what was happening: "When something like this [rape] happens, there's nothing you can do about it you know. P6 27 378". The sense of a loss of control continued once living in the UK. All six participants identified striking experiences of being under the control of and to some extent "at the mercy of" the asylum system. "You become the lassie [dog] of the system. P1 18 16–17 There it [the asylum system] is knocking at your door coming to get you, I'm the system, I'm coming to get you. P1 11 4–5"

Theme 7

High value of education: Participants placed a high value on education and trying to "better themselves". This seemed to stem from familial beliefs and expectations. However it also seemed to be about education as a "way out", and a way to better their life. This might be more important given they had experienced powerlessness or loss. "I remember that when I study I will get a good job and do something for myself. P5 18"

Theme 8

Impact of evaluation by others: All participants talked about their experiences of interacting with other people in the UK and how they felt they were evaluated by others. The group expressed mixed experiences of this evaluation: "Well some will look at you in a negative way. Some will look at you in a positive way. P4 11 13–14" "Oh they just, no, they just see me normal. P6 18 273" "Now when you are out there and you are known as an asylum seeker the first thought that comes into mind is oh he's bumming. All he came here to do was sit down and take benefits and do absolutely nothing. P1 13 15–18"

Theme 9

Labelled as an asylum seeker: Three participants spoke about the identity they acquired as an asylum seeker. For one this seemed to be a positive experience as it had made them feel helped and acknowledged. However for the two other participants being "labelled" an asylum seeker had had a powerful impact on their identities: "Because you know you are an asylum seeker, you've gone inside [your head], you've branded yourself. P1 12 13–14" "Like me I can't go to a pub and say who are you, what you are, to make friends. I know who am I, and the conditions, I'm just a refugee. P2 11 28–32"

Theme 10

Asylum seeker label impacts ability to make trusting relationships: Negative experiences of how people in the UK perceived the participants were likely to have impacted on self-esteem and on transitional processes involved in living in a new country and culture. For this group in particular it may have impacted on the extent to which they made new trusting relationships and asked for help. This meant that the world remained an uncertain and threatening place.

Theme 11

Experience of distress: All six participants identified difficult life experiences having impacted on them. This consisted of descriptions of feelings, perceived changes in ability to do things and "becoming sick". Two participants talked about "becoming sick" as a result of worries and stresses related to loss of family or being returned. The researcher took this either to be a way to describe physical sensations that were closely linked to mental distress, or to describe distress in terms of a complete bodily experience: "Sometimes like last time when I, when you call me when I said I am sick, the previous day I was just thinking about it [being returned to country of origin], till it make my mind become so I was sick. P4 14 23–25" "I just think I just feel negative of my entire being. P4 15 24" "It is so like your mind is being paralysed. P5 21 1–3"

Theme 12

Sleeping and eating problems: All six mentioned worries and anxiety linked to the uncertainties they were experiencing and three talked about feelings of anger and frustration. Three participants said their thoughts and feelings were impacting on their sleep and eating patterns: "Once I start thinking about people back there they don't have anything to eat, I just can't eat. P3 8 6–7"

Theme 13

Trouble with concentration impacting education: This sense of the mind being frozen prevented participants from completing tasks and interrupted their lives. This disconnection with the world could be interpreted as a type of dissociation, a way of distancing themselves from painful memories or thoughts. Interestingly the same three participants also spoke about their experiences of intrusive thoughts or memories of past life experiences "popping" into their head without their control. These findings also linked to elevated scores on the Impact of Events Scale for these participants. Their descriptions gave these thoughts an intrusive nature that interrupted their daily activities at times. "Because sometimes if I am getting study or even if I am in class and I just think, it just come in my mind about something that may come to me. PS 13 17–18"

Theme 14

Trying to gain control through education: Trying to gain control was a strong theme for five of the participants. It seemed to be a direct reaction to the experience of lacking control in their lives as discussed previously. Three participants in particular acknowledged the need to change their "status", in terms of being allowed to stay in the UK and in terms of being successful and respected by others: " For me I want to be a success, respected, a success. P2 4 43–47" Education and gaining knowledge was seen as the primary way of gaining control in their lives for the five participants. There was a sense of intense determination to succeed in education. It was seen as a "way out" of their current lives and "disempowered" position: "Because if you know something then you can do something for yourself. P5 18 22" Fear of failure was expressed by two of the participants and highlighted the importance of education for this group and ultimately their success and survival in the UK. "And college, college work stresses me everyday, you know. Because my work is hard, it's really hard, if you want to make it to the top it's not easy you know. P6 23 332"

Theme 15

The wish to help others in a similar situation: The wish to have control and power to bring about change was extended to others' lives as well for three of the participants. There was a need in them to help others in a similar situation, to make changes in their home country or to help young people in the UK: "would like to go back when I am someone who can

speak and you know when I am someone who they can listen to. I will then try to bring about change. P5 25 21–22" Participants were passionate when they spoke about being able to bring about change in their lives and the lives of others. This looking to the future and working towards a position of being in control seemed to be their way of coping with experiences over which they were lacking control. This helped them maintain a belief in themselves.

Theme 16

Coping by avoiding distressing thoughts and feelings: Avoidance of distressing thoughts and feelings was a striking theme throughout all the interviews. All participants explained how this was the best way for them to cope. They outlined a number of different ways they avoided bad feelings: seeing friends, reading, music, walking and schoolwork. This ability to block out thoughts and feelings was discussed at length by them in the interviews: "Well there's not really a best medicine for it, so I just avoid it, you know? P6 30 401"

Theme 17

Acceptance as a coping strategy: Acceptance seemed to be an important way of managing difficulties for four participants. They talked about how they were unable to make changes so they had to accept what was happening and let it just become "part of their lives": "I've embraced it. It has become part of me. P1 19 8"

Theme 18

Utilizing support networks (lack of trust - secretive): The role of friends in managing difficulties and the capacity to trust was a dominant theme for all six participants. The group described the importance as well as the uncertainty they felt about having friends. Two participants avoided having friends completely due to fears of being found out or deceived by others and as a result remained isolated in order to protect themselves. Trust was an issue even for those who did report having friends: "I mean, I do have friends, but that don't mean I have to trust them 100%. P6 12 200"

Theme 19

living in limbo affecting ability to make close friends: Although four participants described having friends, only one described them as close. A number of factors may have impacted on the participants' ability to make friends such as "living in limbo", the threat of being returned, being secretive about being an asylum seeker or the inability to mourn and process previous losses. Not having safe, secure and trusting relationships was likely to impact negatively on the participants' ability to manage distress about the past and future and in terms of initial transitions in the UK: "Because if you don't have someone to talk to you keep on thinking about your problems here and back home. P3 9 21–22"

Theme 20

Benefits on having friends for distress and assimilation: Being with friends was a way of avoiding difficult thoughts and feelings. Friends helped distract participants and helped engage them in the "here and now" and to forget about their experiences of loss and uncertainty about the future: "Sometimes when something and some difficulties come into my mind, I just went to my friend, yeah, spend time talking a lot and do things in common. I just like to get myself to forget about what I am thinking. P4 17 16–18" For two participants, friends were a source of advice and acted as a guide to how to "fit in". Participants spoke about this in terms of what clothes to wear to fit in and what courses were good to take. Friends were likely to play an important role in helping participants learn about life in the UK and begin to adjust to differences that they came across.

Theme 21

Utilizing support networks: professionals - Four participants experienced receiving help from their social worker, with two participants experiencing their relationship with their social worker as that of a "father" figure, who in some respects was "trusted" and who they felt was meeting their needs in terms of advice, reassurance and financial support: "I must point it out that [the social worker] has done so much for me, he is like a father here. P5 24 11–12". Two participants experienced help from school tutors in terms of their learning about UK culture. Three experienced help from church in terms of the relationships they made and in terms of church as a safe place where he could be near others. "Two participants experienced help from school tutors in terms of their learning about UK culture.

Theme 22

Other support networks: Three experienced help from church in terms of the relationships they made and in terms of church as a safe place where he could be near others. "I just feel lonely and alone so go into a church which is better as there are many people there. P2 16 35–36"

Theme 23 The need for a guidance figure: Three participants highlighted their need for more guidance and reassurance in their lives. There was a sense that they felt lost without guidance and suggestions from “someone who knows”. The need for a close and trusting relationship was also important to three of the participants and having someone you could rely on and trust to tell things to. There seemed to be a mixed response to the need for emotional or mental health help. Three participants spoke about the importance of having some form of “counselling”. By “counselling” they seemed to mean someone they could go to for advice and who would help them problem-solve rather than share deeper emotional distress: “Help is maybe give me information to deal with and to cope with the difficulties P2 17 10–11”			
	Section	Question	Answer
Risk of bias	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes
	Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes
	Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Can't tell <i>(No discussion RE why participants were the most appropriate to access knowledge sought by the study, no discussion about why/if some participants chose not to take part.)</i>
	Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes <i>(No justification of setting for data collection or data saturation)</i>
	Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't tell <i>(unclear that researchers critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location)</i>

	Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes
	Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes <i>(unclear that researchers critically examine their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation)</i>
	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes <i>(respondent validation and triangulation was used)</i>
	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research is valuable
	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	Moderate
		Directness	Partially applicable <i>(Data was likely collected prior to 2010)</i>

Kirton 2011

	Multidimensional treatment foster care (N = 31)		
Intervention	<p>Multidimensional treatment foster care, in its UK incarnation, reflected New Labour's concerns for joined up working between social care, education, and health agencies. There were important differences between the context and operation of MTFC in the UK compared to the USA. These included the location of MTFC within the care system rather than in a criminal justice setting. Another difference was that planned returns to birth families were relatively rare. Instead, the focus was on improved contact and relationships rather than training birth parents to pick up the model of care taught by Oregon Social Learning Centre. Government guidance suggested initially concentrating on those who were likely to progress in the programme, to build confidence, before moving on to harder cases. In evaluating the workings of the OSLC model it is useful to highlight two distinct but related challenges. The first is the</p>		

	different profile of UK participants compared with the US counterparts, and the greater emphasis on voluntary participation. Second, the highly prescriptive nature of the model can be seen as giving rise to tensions between the need for creative adaptation to the UK welfare system and the benefits of strict adherence to the programme.
Study type	Semi structured interviews Evaluation of an intervention Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care
Aim of study	to explore the experiences of multidimensional treatment foster care
Study location	UK
Study setting	local evaluation of MTFC within one of the pilot local authorities.
Study methods	Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore respondents experiences of working within and perceptions of the MTFC model. No further information was provided about thematic analysis.
Population	Foster carers (8), children's social workers (6), supervising social workers (2), individual therapists, birth family therapists, skills workers (3), social work assistants, programme supervisor (1), programme manager (1), members of the management board (4)
Study dates	Not reported
Sources of funding	Not reported
Inclusion Criteria	None reported
Exclusion criteria	None reported

Sample characteristics	<p>Sample size 31 interviews were conducted: Foster carers (8), children's social workers (6), supervising social workers (2), individual therapists, birth family therapists, skills workers (3), social work assistants, programme supervisor (1), programme manager (1), members of the management board (4)</p> <p>Number of previous placements half of the children had had ten or more placements</p> <p>Age roughly three quarters of the children were aged 13 or over.</p>
Relevant themes	<p>Theme 1 A common language and focus: One of the main strengths offered by the OSLC model was a degree of focus or 'common language' (seen as crucial in a multi-disciplinary team) and clarity of expectations for young people: "We're all very clear about what we're working towards and it helps in not splitting that group around the child. (Team member)"</p> <p>Theme 2 The emphasis on rewards and punishments was generally regarded as crucial, both for its transparency and potential for setting and maintaining boundaries: "If they don't earn it, they can see it, there's something there that they can see, you can hold up in front of them and show them. (Foster carer)"</p> <p>Theme 3 Taking the emotion out of the situation: Another strength was the perceived capacity for the model, with its relatively neutral and technical language, to 'take the emotion out of the situation' and to avoid escalation in the face of anger and outbursts: "In a way it stops people really feeling too criticised because it's like ... if someone says to you 'off model' that's like, 'Oh well, I can get back on the model.' (Team member)" "You need to be quite calm and not easily fired up, to be able to just walk away when they're ranting and raving and they're in your face and they're shouting at you, and just walk away and let them calm down. (Foster carer)"</p> <p>Theme 4 Limitation 1: certain aspects of it needed to be 'Anglicised': Where they occurred, flexibilities tended to reflect either cultural differences or acquired practice wisdom. Within its UK context, some team members saw the programme being more holistic and less focused on 'breaking the cycle of offending', an emphasis sometimes couched in the language of 'leniency': "Helping that child develop ... in whatever way they need and meeting their needs to enable them to move to independence or whatever goes next to it. (Team member)"</p> <p>Theme 5 Limitation 2: , it would work for some young people but not others;</p> <p>Theme 6 Limitation 3: the longer-term benefits of the programme were uncertain</p> <p>Theme 7 Sticking to the model as a team: A clear majority of interviewees saw themselves and the programme sticking closely to what they understood as 'the model', while often disclaiming any detailed knowledge of it. This partly reflected the routinisation of practice and perhaps the strength of team ethos: I know ... as a team we work towards the model and it's the Oregon model that we follow but it feels much more like we're working to our team model. (Team member) Broad adherence reflected a number of factors. First, the model appeared to 'make sense' to most of those involved, with several foster carers claiming (though with perhaps some oversimplification) that this had been the basis of their own childrearing: It's</p>

basically the way I brought my own children up, which is good children get lots of nice things and naughty children get nothing, but I do it with points. Second, the consensus was that, albeit with some flexibility (see below), the model 'worked' but that this required fairly strict adherence: We're very close to the model on most things and whenever we stray I have to say that it kicks us in the teeth. (Team member) A third factor was that of external monitoring and reporting mechanisms, whether from the NIT or OSLC itself. While this sometimes involved elements of 'presentation' to outside audiences that differed from day-to-day realities, it also served to reinforce the programme's logic and philosophy.

Theme 8

Followed in spirit rather than to the letter: Much of course, depended on how far the model and its weighty manuals were to be followed 'in spirit' or 'to the letter'. For example, one team member argued that expectations of young people in terms of healthy eating and eschewing of hip hop or rap music were unnecessarily restrictive and perhaps 'unrealistic'. While most foster carers came to find the award and deduction of points reasonably straightforward, the challenges, such as balancing consistency and individualisation and handling value judgements, should not be underestimated: "My lifestyle to somebody else's might be totally different and what I accept in my house is different to what somebody else accepts in theirs. (Foster carer)"

Theme 9

What constitutes normal teenage behaviour? - Additional challenges included what constituted 'normal teenage behaviour' and how far the focus for change should rest with 'large' and 'small' behavioural problems respectively. These issues were, however, usually resolved fairly easily, with foster carers happy with their degree of discretion. Parental Daily Reports were sometimes seen as 'a chore' (Westermarck et al, 2007), but almost universally valued for their capacity to concentrate minds on behaviours, to ensure daily contact between foster carers and the programme and help 'nip problems in the bud'. "It makes me think about if things have happened, how I can do them better or how we can both do it better. So it's reflection for me. (Foster carer)"

Theme 10

parental daily report - The data yielded were seen as useful for identifying trends and one-off or recurrent 'spikes' that might reveal behavioural triggers, such as contact visits or school events and as having a potential 'predictive' value for disruptions and optimal transition timing (Chamberlain et al, 2006). There were concerns that the prescribed list of behaviours was in places too 'Americanised' (eg 'mean talk') and that selfharm (not infrequent within the programme) was not listed separately but under destructiveness, requiring annotation to distinguish it from instances of 'kicking the door in'. Similarly, there was no reference to eating disorders other than 'skipping meals'. The question of whether behaviours were 'stressful' was clearly dependent to a degree on foster carers' tolerance and time of completion: "The next morning or the night time everything's died down and it probably isn't such a big deal ... [do] you give yourself that time just to calm down before you put it in the behaviour or should you do it when it happens? (Foster carer)" Concern was also expressed that the Parental Daily Report's focus on negative behaviours was not entirely congruent with the programme's aims of accentuating the positives (see below), a situation that was seen as having a cultural dimension, with one team member commenting, albeit as a generalisation, on how US counterparts in MTFC tended to be 'more upbeat about things' and hence less likely to dwell on negative behaviours.

Theme 11

Engagement was crucial to outcomes but highly variable and prone to change over time: "She couldn't give a monkey's. It didn't matter what I'd say she was not gonna . . . And she stayed with me for three months and then she decided she'd had enough and went. (Foster carer)" More generally, however, engagement levels were thought to be high, with some respondents indicating surprise at the apparent willingness to accept a restrictive regime with its initial 'boot camp' withdrawal of privileges: "I find it bizarre that they engage with it really quite well ... I kind of think if I was a 13-year-old lad ... would I really want to be negotiating buying my free time, my time out with points? But they do ... and they stick to it. (Team member)"

Theme 12

Need for persistence: Situations were described where young people would rail against restrictions and thwarted demands but ultimately comply. While the motivational value of an identifiable goal (such as return home) was recognised, sustaining interest day-to-day was equally important and required delicate judgements from foster carers as the following contrasting approaches indicate: "My young man likes to look at his points on a daily basis so we go through them with him and then we sit down and work out how he's gonna use his rewards and what he's aiming for next. I have to say that I don't sit down and discuss points with [young person] every night because she will just rip it up and throw it at me and tell me what a load of bollocks it is"

Theme 13

finding and tailoring the right rewards - Equally important, however, was finding the right rewards and appropriate means of earning them (although one young person was said to 'just like getting points'), something that might entail individual tailoring: "She needs to score points really, really highly, so whereas one foster carer might give one of the lads ten points for doing what she did, she may need to earn 50 for it to mean something. (Team member)" If this raises questions of 'inconsistency', it was justified in terms of motivation, individual pathways and progression through the programme (Dore and Mullin, 2006). Similar logic had meant 'massaging' points to prevent a drop in levels, where this might provoke running away or placement breakdown: "I think with some young people they ... just wouldn't manage being on level one and therefore it is slightly adapted to sort of manage that. (Team member)"

Theme 14

are normal activities privileges? - Transfer of placements into the programme also raised questions of how far previously 'normal' activities could be recast as privileges to be earned. Over time, this had reportedly given rise to some variations or changes of practice, for example, on televisions in bedrooms or consumption of fizzy drinks.

Theme 15

Need for redemption and engagement with point and level system - A key element of the OSLC philosophy is 'turning it around', allowing loss of points to be redeemed by subsequent good behaviour or positive reaction to the deduction. Although (some) foster carers felt this approach potentially made light of misdemeanours, the overall working of the programme was supportive of it: "Instead of giving her five points that she'd normally have I'll say, 'Well, you did that really well. I'll give you 15 for that today.' (Foster carer) You hear them talking about 'I really turned it around today' ... [or] 'I'm working towards my points.' You actually hear the children saying, 'I know I need to be on this programme'. . . they ... have that insight. (Team member)" One young person had reportedly asked his foster carer not to let him out in case he got into trouble and forfeited a much desired holiday, something that was seen as a significant shift in thinking and timescales.

Theme 16

A behavioural model or an attachment model? Behavioural programmes are sometimes criticised for lacking depth or concentrating on 'symptoms rather than causes', a debate we explored in interviews. Foster carers tended to focus on their own specific role in dealing with behaviours and saw the addressing of any 'underlying' problems as being the responsibility of others, especially the individual therapist, as in 'I'm just trying to break a pattern but it's not actually solving why they do it.' Also emphasised strongly was the temporal focus on present and future, by comparison with attachment models 'looking backwards'. If in some senses, practice remained firmly within a behavioural framework, this was not seen as precluding consideration of attachment issues, whether at the level of understanding – 'I find it quite hard not to think about things in terms of attachment' – or in outcomes: "I think what's been helpful is people have sort of said, 'Oh, it's not an attachment model' and I just have been able to say to them, 'What do you think actually putting a containing and caring environment around a child does?' ... It's not the kind of ... Pavlov's dogs type thing that everyone thinks about when they think about behavioural models. (Team member)"

Theme 17

Importance of appropriate matching: While in principle, behavioural approaches tend to de-emphasise the importance of relationship, the crucial importance of matching (which tended to involve consideration of several young people for one (or two) foster carer vacancies) was widely recognised and seen as a key area of learning within the programme: "I think we're getting it right more often than not and I think that's reflected in the ... reduction of disruptions. When we do get it wrong we get it wrong very spectacularly! (Team member)"

Theme 18

Move on placements: Marrying MTFC's twin aims of providing time-limited 'move on' placements while effecting sustainable behavioural change required complex judgements as to the optimal timing of transitions (Cross et al, 2004). Opinion was divided on this (national guidance had suggested a shortening of placements from around 18 to nine months) between those emphasising the time needed to deal with 'long-term damage' or the dangers of 'relapse' and those worried about stagnation, disengagement or young people 'outgrowing the programme'. While practice wisdom and programme data were seen as aiding decision-making, follow-on placements remained a significant problem. In some instances, this had been resolved by the young person remaining with their MTFC (respite) carers, although this usually entailed the latter's loss to the programme. Consideration

had also been given to the establishment of 'step-down' placements to provide a more gradual reduction in structure and support (NIT, 2008). However, such provision is challenging in terms of recruitment. Several young people who had left MTFC had subsequently kept in contact, and interestingly this included some early and late leavers as well as graduates.

Theme 19

Foster carers satisfaction with the level of support and out of hours service - Foster carers were extremely positive about levels of support in MTFC – 'Just absolutely amazing', 'I have to say brilliant. 100 per cent brilliant' – and some commented on how this had prevented disruptions that might otherwise have occurred. 'Enhanced' (relative to 'mainstream' fostering) features included higher levels of contact with supervising (and assistant) social workers and a structured pattern of short breaks or 'respite care'. In addition to their primary role of granting some relief from pressures, these arrangements sometimes evolved into follow-on placements after disruptions, helping to provide important elements of continuity. Another crucial 'enhanced' feature was a dedicated out-of-hours service staffed by members of the team, which, though used fairly modestly (typically one or two calls per day), was highly valued for its provision of a crucial safety net: "There's nothing more reassuring ... that you can ring someone up and actually hear that person on the end of the phone, it's not some call centre or someone you've never met before. (Foster carer)" Use of the out-of-hours service ranged from serious incidents involving offending, (alleged) sexual assaults, suicide concerns and violence or damage in the foster home, to reassurance on medical issues and dealing with difficult behaviours.

Theme 20

While the roles of therapists and skills workers sometimes raised issues of co-ordination with foster carers, their capacity to ease pressures at times of difficulty was valued by carers.

Theme 21

the foster carers' weekly meetings. These served both to ensure fairly prompt attention to issues, but also afforded the opportunity for mutual support and problem-solving

Theme 22

Success of co-ordinated working - There has been little research on the operation of teamwork within MTFC or its external relations. Despite significant staff turnover and some reworking of roles, the programme had also benefited from continuity in some key positions and a capacity to fill vacancies relatively quickly. From interviews and observation, internal roles appeared to be fairly clear and well co-ordinated, although the team's relatively small size had inevitably given rise on occasion to questions of flexibility, with tensions between willingness to help out and the maintenance of role boundaries (eg on provision of transport or supervision of contact): "On the whole, given that we have got a bunch of quite disparate professions ... we've got a conjoined CAMHS, education and social care team, there's a lot less conflict than I thought there might be. (Team member)" The workings of MTFC both facilitate and require high levels of communication, combining multifarious opportunities for contact with a need to pass on information regarding 'eventful' lives and high levels of activity on the programme. With occasional, and usually fairly specific exceptions, team members regarded communication as very effective, while foster carers were generally positive about their participation: 'They do value your input and they value your knowledge and your sort of past experience.'

Theme 23

Leadership of programme supervisors - The role of Programme Supervisor (PS) as key decision-maker – variously referred to as 'Programme God' or 'the final word' – was crucial within the team. While some team members reported taking time to adapt to this, it was widely acknowledged that the PS and indeed 'the programme' could act as a lightning rod to defuse conflicts involving young people and their foster carers: "Always it's[PS], says' ... in answer, so my [young person] wishes that [PS] would drop dead at any moment. But that takes a huge amount off of me because it's not me who's saying it. That's absolutely been brilliant. (Foster carer)"

Theme 24

Clash with the children's social worker - Like any specialist programme, MTFC has faced challenges in its relationships with CSWs (often exacerbated by turnover among them) regarding the balance between a necessary transfer of responsibility on the part of CSWs while they continue to hold case accountability (Wells and D'Angelo, 1994). Despite routinely sent information and discussions with the PS, almost all CSWs interviewed expressed some concerns, usually involving either not knowing of specific incidents (eg entry to hospital) or more ongoing matters, such as the content of counselling. For some, the concern was simply about being 'out of the loop', while for others it was the potential for exclusion from decisionmaking and conflict with statutory duties: "It seemed to me that the treatment fostering team pretty much took on responsibility for the case, which is fine, but if anything goes wrong then don't make me accountable." From a programme perspective, there were occasional references to CSWs who 'found it hard to let go', or whose misunderstanding caused confusion. As one foster carer put it, 'they start telling these kids all sorts of things and you're thinking "no actually, they can't"', although it should be noted that some CSWs were viewed very positively. A more common concern, however, was that some CSWs 'opted out' once the young person entered MTFC, although this was often

acknowledged (on both sides) as understandable given the workload pressures facing children's social workers: "[. . .] was the sort of child I used to literally wake up worrying about and I don't now because somebody else is doing that worrying. (CSW)" Encouragingly, CSWs also referred to improving communication, with some plaudits for MTFC being approachable and responsive. The programme had attempted to improve liaison by visiting teams and by inviting children's social workers to attend meetings, although these offers had not been taken up, with CSWs reporting diary clashes and imprecise timings to discuss 'their' charges. It was also noted that the very specific workings and language of MTFC were not always well-integrated into Looked After Children (LAC) review processes.

Theme 25

Social workers were positive about the programme - "He was a really, really difficult young man and they've really supported him and provided him with a stable home environment, really, really firm boundaries which he's really needed . . . I think the placement's been fantastic. She would have met the criteria [for secure accommodation] in terms of running off . . . self-harming . . . And now the self-harming is very . . . very limited. It changed his life around to be perfectly honest. Yeah, I'd go that far." This is not, of course, to say that time in MTFC represents any form of panacea, but recognition of its impact in often difficult circumstances: "He's only absconded three times in six months or so and it's only ever been running off from school and he's back by nine o'clock . . . whereas before he was missing for days on end. (Team member) There are obviously still concerns about her emotional welfare and there will be, but she was a very, very damaged girl for lots and lots of reasons, but there was a time where I thought she just might . . . not survive. (CSW)" The idea that even 'failed' placements might nonetheless carry some residual benefit for young people – particularly those in 'multiple disruption mode' was also expressed by some.

	Section	Question	Answer
Risk of Bias	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes
	Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes
	Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Can't tell <i>(Researchers did not discuss how the participants were selected or why these were the most appropriate to access the type of knowledge sought by the study)</i>
	Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Can't tell <i>(Setting was not justified. Methods were not made explicit or justified. Unclear the form of the data and saturation of data is not discussed.)</i>

	Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't tell <i>(No evidence that the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location)</i>
	Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes
	Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Can't tell <i>(No in-depth description of the analysis process. Unclear if thematic analysis was used. Unclear how the categories/themes were derived from the data. Unclear how the data presented were selected from the original sample to demonstrate the analysis process. Unclear if sufficient data presented to support the findings. Unclear if researcher critically examine their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation)</i>
	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Can't tell <i>(No adequate discussion of the evidence both for and against the researcher's arguments or the credibility of their findings (e.g. triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst))</i>
	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research has some value <i>(Qualitative findings relate to one specific intervention of interest. Findings are discussed in relation to current policy and practice.)</i>
	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	High
		Directness	Partially applicable <i>(Data was likely collected prior to 2010)</i>

Larkins 2021

Study type	Focus Groups Semi structured interviews
Aim of study	<p>1. To adopt a participatory approach, enabling looked after children and young people (LACYP) to guide and shape research that could inform the work of the NICE LAC Guideline Update Committee.</p> <p>2. To understand LACYP's perspectives on the themes and questions identified by the NICE committee and to allow understanding of these themes to arise from LACYP's perspectives</p> <p>3. To promote rights, safety and inclusion - ensuring that looked after children and young people could exercise choice in how they express their views, that a diversity of perspectives are sought, valued and represented.</p>
Study location	UK
Study setting	looked after children from three UK local authorities
Study methods	<p>Creative methods and thematic interview schedules were developed in consultation with a steering group of young researchers who were LAC. The cocreated research activities eventually used included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual interviews (sometimes involving theme card prompts, prioritisation of cards or drawing/collage) • Visual arts-based activities (using paint, fabrics and drawing materials to create representations of wellbeing, and one-to-one discussions about these) • Music-based activities (choosing or writing songs that evoke feelings of wellbeing, and individual and group discussions of these) • Group discussions (usually centred around an undulating line on a 5m length of paper, which represented the progression of a movie script and the ups and downs of life). <p>All fieldwork activities were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive thematic analysis with a framework analysis approach was used to ensure that analysis is driven by participants' perspectives. data was listened to, read, looked at and reviewed by multiple researchers, young researchers and GUC members.</p>

Population	Looked after children and young people from 3 areas (10 South, 17 Midlands, 20 North).
Study dates	2020 to 2021
Sources of funding	The National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE)
Inclusion Criteria	Looked after children and young people - The nature of interventions and outcomes for LACYP vary according to geographical and associated differences. Three sites (local authorities or boroughs) were identified for inclusion in the study in order to obtain a spread of experience, according to the factors listed: geography; placement stability; local authority performance; innovation of practice; educational success; socio-economic conditions; numbers of missing children; and ethnicity.
Exclusion criteria	None reported
Sample characteristics	<p>Sample size 47 LACYP aged 6-17 from 3 areas (10 South, 17 Midlands, 20 North).</p> <p>Ethnicity Of these 47 participants, 8 were Black, 3 South Asian, 2 Dual Heritage and 34 were white.</p> <p>Type of care 19 in foster care, 6 in kinship care, 5 in residential care, 3 in specialist non-secure care, 4 in semi-supported/semi-independent living, 55 in independent house/flat, 4 not known</p> <p>Education 10 reported SEND labels and 3 were in special schools and 3 were home tutored</p> <p>Mental and emotional health 4 had EBD; 17 had pronounced mental health or wellbeing concerns,</p> <p>Risk of Exploitation 14 were at risk of exploitation; 11 had a history of going missing,</p> <p>Parents 11 were young parents,</p>

	<p>Placed out of county 6 were placed out of county,</p> <p>LGBTQ 2 identified as LGBTQ,</p>
Relevant themes	<p><u>Education</u></p> <p>Theme 1 Teachers, education workers, foster carers and social work staff can support looked after children and young people's education by being understanding and accepting, being available, adapting and responding to needs and interests, enabling and advising them, by being caring and showing mutual trust.</p> <p>Theme 2 Attainment is facilitated (SEND, HWC, CSEM and parent) by teachers, mentors and tutors who have caring attitudes and regularly make time for young people and by flexible systems. These support children and young people to make and follow choices and pursue relevant learning. This could involve encouraging children to achieve to their best or diversifying the subjects offered and the transition speeds expected. It also involved young people leading the decision-making about their own education.</p> <p>Theme 3 Stigma about being in care and other aspects of bullying (LGBTQI, BAME, HWC, CSE, SEND and parent) is effectively addressed when prejudice is consistently challenged, buddying with looked after peers, peer mentoring and safe spaces in schools are provided and understanding about care experience increases. A supportive friendship group can enable attendance and attainment.</p> <p>Theme 4 Carers and birth parents can be facilitators to learning by accessing resources on behalf of the young person including funding for trips, tutors, extra-curricular experiences and diagnosis.</p> <p>Theme 5 Learning was related to health and wellbeing for many young people (with HWC, SEND, BAME, CSE). Facilitators of wellbeing in learning include supportive school environments; funding to regularly access gyms, physical activities, clubs or other interest groups linked to virtual schools; mental health initiatives informed by pupils; accessible safeguarding officers and mentoring, and whole school programmes. there's like the, .. Safeguarding Officer, she's just like, if anyone's like at home alright for you, just does that, but you've got pastoral supports in every year, so I just go to my pastoral support and they'll do whatever they need to do.</p> <p>Theme 6 Supportive and comfortable travel to school promoted access and feelings of security (young and CSEM). These facilitative conditions were provided by foster carers, consistent taxi and transport drivers, who demonstrated care and individual understanding and reaching out to non-attending teenagers through provision of transport.</p> <p>Theme 7 Clear information about pupil premium facilitates access to additional activities and potentially lifechanging opportunities.</p>

	<p>Theme 8 For young parents, attending education is facilitated by recognition of their caring responsibilities, adequate payment of childcare costs and understanding that the cheapest options may not be feasible, finance for college costs, flexibility in benefits thresholds, and non-discriminatory attitudes from educational establishments.</p> <p>Theme 9 Mentor, careers service, social work staff, carer and birth family support to enable young people (CSEM, OOA, BAME and parent) to follow their self-determined goals was key as young people started to think about careers and entry to higher education. Support involved encouragement, understanding and provision of finance, and was sometimes forthcoming from families. More consistent encouragement and finance from social workers and leaving care workers is needed.</p>		
Risk of bias	Section	Question	Answer
	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes
	Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes
	Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes
	Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes
	Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't tell
	Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes
	Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes
	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes
	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research is valuable

	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	Low
		Directness	Directly applicable

Mannay 2017

Study type	Focus Groups Semi structured interviews
Aim of study	To explore the educational experiences, attainment and aspirations of LACYP in Wales
Study location	UK
Study setting	Wales, invited to take part through the fostering network
Study methods	Semi-structured interviews with integrated creative methods. The visual and creative methods employed included sandboxing and emotion sticker activities. The visual activities were followed by individual elicitation interviews with a member of the research team, where children described what they had made. This was supplemented by an interview schedule about educational experiences and aspirations, which was used to discuss any areas that were not covered in the conversations around the visual activities. Research with post-compulsory education participants involved focus groups, which were conducted in South and North Wales. Focus groups were conducted by care-experienced peer researchers with the support of the research team. Semi-structured telephone interviews were undertaken with care-experienced participants in higher education; these interviews were led by a member of the research team. Interview and focus group data were transcribed verbatim and analysed concurrently throughout data production, allowing codes, categories and themes to emerge from the empirical data produced with LACYP. Data were analysed using an inductive and deductive approach, creating overarching thematic categories and analytical themes arising from coding and categories across the data sets. Analysis was undertaken

	by three members of the research team, and was accompanied by an iterative process of reviewing and cross-checking these emerging themes and interpretations with relevant literature, concepts and theory.
Population	primary and secondary school-aged LACYP
Study dates	2015
Sources of funding	Joint funding from the British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK, Economic and Social Research Council, Medical Research Council, the Welsh Government and the Wellcome Trust, under the auspices of the UK Clinical Research Collaboration
Inclusion Criteria	Care Situation looked after person Education Primary and secondary school-aged
Exclusion criteria	None reported
Sample characteristics	Sample size 67 looked after children Type of care All participants had attended mainstream schools and experienced a range of care placements: foster care (n = 52); foster, residential and kinship care (n = 4); foster and residential care (n = 7); foster and kinship care (n = 1); foster care and semi-independent (n = 1); residential care only (n = 1); and unspecified (n = 1). Gender 40% were female, 60% were male Number of previous placements The number of care placements ranged from 1 to 24. The mean average of placements for primary school children was 1.95, for secondary school children 2.92 and for the aged 16–27 group, 10.83. Age

	<p>22 aged 6 - 11 years, 17 aged 11 - 16 years, 26 aged 16 - 27 years</p> <p>Education 22 in primary school; 17 in secondary school; 26 who had completed compulsory education with mixed engagement in further education; 2 in higher education; all participants had attended mainstream school</p>
Relevant themes	<p>Theme 1 Children in the study did not delineate themselves as being different, and the label of 'looked-after' did not form a central aspect of their identity. They voiced aspirations for their future with enthusiasm and confidence, expressing career ambitions similar to those desired by non-LACYP, including the professional roles of vets, doctors, teachers and architects: "I think be a doctor and have a car. (Jessica,6 aged 9) I want to be an architect . . . because I like art and most of my family are builders. (Hulk, aged 12) I want to go to college. Once I've finished college I'll go to university to learn about geography. (Roxy, aged 12) I want to be a teacher. When I've finished university, I'm going to find a school and ask the headmistress if I can join. (Imogen, aged 11)"</p> <p>Theme 2 Children's desire to use education to create and maintain a family: despite a lack of overt acknowledgement of their identity of being in care, some children hinted at the importance of education and career for creating and maintaining a family, with emphasis on keeping everyone together: "I wouldn't mind making a lot of money, just in case I have a family so we're actually able to look after them and to keep them safe. (Bishop, aged 11)"</p> <p>Theme 3 Difference - In juxtaposition to the primary school-aged children, young people displayed an acute awareness of their status as being 'looked-after' and how this label invariably demarcated them as being different by both professionals and peers. Through the introduction of this difference a hierarchical schema of identities inevitably took hold, with the LACYP subject position being imbued with negative connotations that were often synonymous with the notions of 'troubled', 'scroungers' and 'of concern'. Even where participants expressed hope and optimism for their future, they remained aware of the identity that society had inscribed for them, and were continually struggling with the assumption that they were failures and problems in the making. The majority of young people expressed frustration at being viewed and understood through the lens of being 'looked-after' (see also Hallett, 2015). Thus, they were keen to reject this notion of difference, which was grounded in the restrictive and homogenised marker of LACYP, whilst simultaneously being invested in defining themselves as unique and complex characters: "We don't want people to be 'looked-after', you want to be a normal kid too you know because it's only one, its only label of you. (Female participant, focus group7) I hate people feeling pity for me. I'm just a normal child, like . . . I'm in foster care, it doesn't mean you're just like some pity child. (Male participant, focus group)"</p> <p>Theme 4 Incidents of exposure and demarcation - Inscription of such indices of difference also manifested within the school context, with the label 'looked-after' assuming a prominent role in their educational experiences. Young people described incidents of attending local authority care (LAC) reviews and meetings with social workers conducted at school, in rooms where they were visible to passing peers. On occasion, social workers would call them out of class to attend meetings, or support workers would sit with them during lessons. These events were seen as exposing their personal lives, whilst making their differences from other students visible: "I don't know bad bit was like the LAC reviews and whatever because the teachers kind of knew that you were in care and whatever and that, they all were, people would be like, 'oh why are you going with Miss So-and-so? (Nadine, aged 21) I just didn't want it, I was like I don't need that, it's singling me out and its making me seem special when I'm not, I'm a normal person. (Female participant, focus group) Any meetings, if they are necessary, should be held outside of school time, not just at a time that is convenient for the professionals. (Female participant, focus group)"</p> <p>Theme 5 Harmfulness of meetings in school time: Meetings in school time were not only detrimental in terms of being seen as different, they also impacted on LACYP's emotional health and the routines of the school day. Many of the participants missed out on education because of these meetings and reviews, which made them fall behind with work and disrupted their school days. Being removed from lessons also created stress and anxiety, as meetings were often emotive and returning to the class meant facing questions from peers about the</p>

nature of the absence. Consequently, a meeting of 45 minutes might lead to disruptions in the days leading up to the review and those following the meeting. Hence, through these routine practices and performances, the differences attributed to LACYP become reified and even amplified.

Theme 6

Children's views on school - Whilst young people became increasingly aware of their construction of being different, they also considered how such entrenched notions of difference led to their positioning outside dominant discourses of success within schools. Such sentiments were not evident amongst the primary school-aged children, whose assessment of school was descriptive and evaluative. They spoke of friends and school staff, with each identifying teachers who were nice to class, and those who were mean to everyone. Some students spoke of school as an enjoyable experience, such as Caitlin (aged 10) who claimed it was 'great, super, supercalifragilisticexpialidocious'. Meanwhile Musa (aged 8) maintained that it was 'Work, work and work. School is a bit boring'.

Theme 7

Young people's experience of low expectations during secondary school - In contrast, young people reflected at length on their educational experiences, and how this was informed by their positioning outside discourses of academic attainment due to their looked-after status. Some participants did provide best-practice case examples, where teachers had supported and encouraged their aspirations, but most documented professionals' low expectations for their achievement and career trajectories (Jackson & Sachdev, 2001; Fletcher-Campbell & Archer, 2003; Berridge, 2012): "Various foster carers and people to do with the care system were like 'oh people in care don't go to into higher education'. I wish social services would focus less on that because a lot of them have social work degrees so who are they to be telling anyone else that they're not worthy of university? It's like they don't believe that children in care will do anything. And so if they don't believe it, then how is anyone going to believe it about themselves? (Female participant, focus group) I remember telling the head of sixth form that I wanted to be a teacher and whatever, and she said you should look at college courses and stuff, and I was just like no I want to go to university. (Female participant, focus group) Some teachers were like openly against us, you know, they were like 'oh there's no point in trying with them' sort of thing. (Female participant, focus group)"

Theme 8

Professionals assumptions that being looked after was linked to lower intellectual capabilities - Participants perceived these expectations to be grounded in professionals' assumptions that being looked after was linked to lower intellectual capabilities, combined with an awareness of the intimate and complex aspects of their home life. Young people felt that the dominant response to such knowledge and assumptions was pity and (sometimes false) sympathy. This informed their exceptional treatment, where they were routinely afforded numerous allowances, negating them being academically challenged, due to already being exposed to such complex and difficult life circumstances: "As soon as I went into care, then went back to school and my teachers majority of them treated me completely different, because I was in care they moved me down sets, they put me in special help, they gave me – put me in support groups. And I was just like I don't need all this shit, I've only moved house, that's it I was like yeah I might be in care but the only difference to me is I've moved house, that's it . . . they looked at all my papers and where I was in my levels and that and they was like you're more than capable of being in top set but we don't think you're going to be able to cope. (Female participant, focus group) If we was a child that wasn't in care we'd be made to sit there and get on with our work or something, like if we wasn't having family problems if we were just in a mood. Then some children that are in care could go into school and just go, 'I ain't doing this today', and then they'd just be left to the side because they think it's just family problems, but it might not be, it might just be them being a normal child. (Female participant, focus group)"

Theme 9

The need to be "pushed" academically - Solutions for schools' policies and practice were proffered. Participants acknowledged that they required additional support on occasion, and described the importance of being listened to or having someone understand their sometimes resistant or disruptive behaviours. However, they predominantly felt that the most constructive approach was for schools to draw LACYP into the prevailing discourses of academic success by encouraging them to participate in lessons or schooling, and push them academically: "It's about motivation. All you need is a good kick up the arse. And I think if somebody had given that to me when I was 16 or 17, I would probably have been like 'right, that's it I want to, I'm going to do something with my life. (Male participant, focus group)"

Theme 10

Additional support developed in consultation with the individual - Whilst many thought it important that schools offer additional support, they felt it should be developed in consultation with the individual, so that presumptions about their needs and experiences are not made.

	<p>Theme 11 Participants also indicated the need to offer universally available resources, such as a designated person or safe room, to all students in order to avoid the label of 'looked-after' being interpreted as an indicator that an individual is of concern or problematic.</p> <p>Theme 12 lack of belief in self - Despite Nadine's apparent determination and resilience to the responses of others, her positioning outside academic success was emotionally difficult and could undermine her belief in her own educational abilities: "When I'd come home crying because my teacher said I'm not going to be able to do it (my foster carer) used to say no you can, you can, she was really supportive . . . I was part of the Looked-After Care Council and we went to a conference thing and they were saying about students in care like not achieving what they should and whatever, and saying that only 1% like go to university and whatever. And my foster carer . . . she was like, 'you're going to be that 1%'. And I don't know it kind of just put a little bit of more belief in me and it just made me want to do it that little bit more. (Nadine)"</p> <p>Theme 13 Support and belief of other salient adults to resist the positioning of educational failure - Nadine centralises the importance of her own agency, her relationship with her foster carer and her involvement with the Looked-After Care Council, which combined to enable a rejection of the educational stigma associated with being 'looked-after'. Despite evidence of young people's capacity to circumvent the subject position of academic failure, it is important to consider the social and cultural capital afforded to Nadine, whilst acknowledging that not all LACYP have the same foundational base of support, experience or knowledge: "Without my foster carer I wouldn't be where I am today . . . her children went to university as well so she was, she was all for it whereas I know other foster carers maybe who had not had the same experiences as my foster carer so it is important definitely. (Nadine)"</p> <p>Theme 14 Difficulty negotiating educational terrain without networks of support- although LACYP can actively resist academic failure, it is more difficult to successfully negotiate the educational terrain without these networks of support, as illustrated by Megan's account: "I'd always wanted to go. Just when college and school messed up like the first time, I kind of just thought that I'd wait until I was a mature student and figure out what I actually wanted to do. Like mainly because everyone always told me that I couldn't. So it was just a kind of thing of I wanted to go just because I could. (Megan)"</p> <p>Theme 15 Seeking out an aspirational supportive institution - drawing on her own agency, Megan actively sought out an institution that communicates a commitment to, and belief in, care leavers in their online promotional materials: "That was one of the main reasons that I applied to [this] university is because they're one of the only universities that mentions anything about care leavers on their website. Like they've got a whole video about it and yeah I just kind of like emailed [support staff] before I came and she was just kind of really friendly and helpful and was just basically like if you ever need anything, just stop by. I emailed her as soon as I knew that I was coming here . . . she supported me the whole way through these two years. (Megan)"</p> <p>Theme 16 Invisibility of available support for care leavers in university - whilst Megan demonstrates clear successes, she equally acknowledges the invisibility of much support and resources within higher education, which can inhibit LACYP transgression of the failing label "They need to like advertise it more, the support that is actually there, particularly the financial which they keep very well hidden. (Megan)"</p>		
Risk of Bias	Section	Question	Answer
	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes

	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes
	Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes
	Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes <i>(However, As the primary and secondary participants were recruited via foster carers invited by The Fostering Network, the foster carers who brought their children were already voluntarily involved in an organisation that supports and trains foster carers. Consequently, the foster carers who responded were what might be termed 'engaged foster carers'. This suggests potential bias within the sample, and that engagement with LACYP whose foster carers were not involved might have generated a more differentiated data set. No discussion around recruitment and why/if participants chose not to take part)</i>
	Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes <i>(Setting for data collection not justified, no discussion of saturation of data)</i>
	Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Yes
	Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes
	Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes

	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes (<i>more than one analyst was used</i>)
	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research is valuable
	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	Low
		Directness	Directly applicable

Mantovani 2015

Study type	Unstructured interviews Subgroup of interest BAME mothers in care RQ1 RQ2 RQ3 RQ4
Aim of study	The research addressed two questions: what are the experiences of teenage mothers of State care and how do young mothers experience State parenting?
Study location	UK

Study setting	Three London Local Authorities (LAs) selected for their geographical diversity, reported rates of teenage pregnancy and their high concentration of black minority groups.
Study methods	In-depth unstructured interviews. Informants were interviewed in their own homes and interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data were analysed using a modified grounded theory approach. Transcripts were read a number of times to allow the identification of themes and categories to emerge. The provisional themes were subsequently examined against findings from other transcripts for further verification or rejection.
Population	Mothers in care or left care with black minority ethnicity
Study dates	between 2005 and 2007
Sources of funding	Not reported
Inclusion Criteria	<p>Age age 16 to 19 years old</p> <p>Care Situation currently in care or left care</p> <p>Time in care in care for a minimum of 1 year</p> <p>Ethnicity from black minority — Black African, Black British, Black Caribbean, Mixed-Heritage</p> <p>Parent a mother or currently pregnant</p>
Exclusion criteria	None reported

<p>Sample characteristics</p>	<p>Sample size 15 participants were interviewed</p> <p>Time in care in care for an average of 2 years (range 1–4 years). Two of the mothers entered care aged 14, five aged 15, six aged 16 and two aged 17.</p> <p>Type of care The range of State parenting arrangements included foster parent (n = 10), residential children's home (n = 2), residential temporary accommodation (n = 2) and one was temporarily placed with her boyfriend's family.</p> <p>Gender All female</p> <p>Number of previous placements 11 had experienced one placement and four had experienced multiple placements (foster care, children's home, and mother and baby unit).</p> <p>Age At the time of interview, three young mothers were aged 19; five were aged 18; five were aged 17; and two were aged 16.</p> <p>Ethnicity Of the 15 participants, two were British nationals and 13 were from the African continent (three from South West Africa, five from West Africa and five from East Africa). Of the 13, two had migrated at a young age with their families, and 11 were unaccompanied minors when they arrived in Britain. Of these 11, two were educational migrants and nine were asylum seekers.</p>
<p>Relevant themes</p>	<p>Theme 1 UAS experienced a bewildering and traumatic journey to UK and through the immigration and care system - The 11 unaccompanied minors mentioned political, economic, persecution and violence as key reasons for leaving their countries. Although informants were not asked to discuss such emotive issues, some chose to share their stories about being brought to safety to Britain and then abandoned. In search of settlement, they navigated through the immigration maze of solicitors, Home Office officials, Refugee Council agents, asylum-seeking support teams, and health and social care professionals. As a result of past and present stressors — a lost sense of being in charge of their lives and memories of disintegration following war — four informants received therapeutic sessions (psychiatrists or psychologists).</p> <p>Theme 2 Lack of continuity, multiple social workers, too many people - Overall, informants reported mixed experiences of corporate parenting: four recounted supportive care-giving practices (last section), three mixed experiences, and eight disclosed being parented at a distance and via the 'revolving doors' of multiple social workers with whom they had intermittent contacts with long gaps between each contact (see also Driscoll, 2011; Knight and others, 2006). They had different social workers coming in and out of their lives during their care experience, viewing the succession of strangers entering their lives as invasive. The unremitting scrutiny the young women felt under is clearly articulated by Cherie's account: "When I was in care I had a lot of social workers...and it was all new to me. And I just felt that having so many social workers coming and going all these people that know about you, which is really strange. (Cherie)" Frequent changes undermined the quality of care and services informants received, and impacted the consistency of care as informants could not access support when they needed it. This impacted the stability of the relationships with their care-givers, as informants lacked the security they needed to thrive. Twain's excerpt highlights problematic case management when she transitioned from one social worker to another. "The first social worker I had she really did support me very much. Then I got</p>

another one and that one she was horrible, she was totally different from the one we I had before. Then after that I got another one, and then I got another one. She was...you could tell her your problems, but you don't seem to get anywhere, but the first I had when I just had my baby I got good support from her eventually. (Twain)"

Theme 3

Feeling of the absent corporate parent, lack of taking initiative - Intermittent and fragmented contacts with social workers were a common experience among the young women interviewed. Although the informants found it hard to establish contact with their corporate parent, this did not deter them from trying. This 'absent parent' figure generated a feeling of being unsupported and signalled a lack of interest in their welfare. This is encapsulated in Limber's description of how she felt as a result of her social worker's approach to care-giving: "I felt they were pushing me back. If, I don't call, she doesn't know how I am, she doesn't know how I feel, she doesn't know how my son is. She doesn't seem to care about us. It's like she has completely forgotten us. (Limber)" "Social workers should always listen to a social child, because when you don't encourage a young person... you leave her just to get pissed-off. From my own experience I wasn't having any encouragement from my social worker... All the time she is not there for me, I feel like: 'I'm nothing, there is no-one there for me'. It is frustrating because sometime you feel rejected there is no one. And without social services' help you just mess yourself up, again and again and again. (Namuly)"

Theme 4

Longing for a personal relationship - The nature of these relationships was inconsistent, unstable and unreliable. What informants longed for was a personal relationship with their social worker, someone who invested care and time in them. Indeed, informants saw financial help as important, but knowing someone cared for their well-being was imperative. Raziya said: "You may be giving money, but when you talk to me I'll be fine. (Raziya)"

Theme 5

Previous experiences of adversity while in care - Being in foster care is often a defining experience in the children's/young adults' lives, and foster care has a major role in community care services for children. Of the 10 fostered young women, six experienced some form of adversity whilst in foster care and four did not. The former experienced financial exploitation, material deprivation and opportunistic attempts to claim more money out of a newly discovered pregnancy, unattended emotional needs and abusive practices. Cherie and Shidah talked about the financial exploitation they experienced while in foster care. The former 'didn't get the money (she) was entitled to, like a personal allowance or coat allowance', while the latter's 'carer used to give (her) less money (she) was entitled to'. These practices 'could destroy a relationship' Shidah commented. "She wasn't good to me...she didn't do anything, really. I couldn't cope. She didn't give me money for bus fares, she didn't give me my pocket money. But the social services do pay her! For my bus fares I had to go to 'X' House to get the money, the amount of travel I did! She did disconnect everything...the gas and she gave me an electric heater. Then she disconnected the phone...disconnected everything! There was nothing in the house! And I was alone. (Raziya)" Pemba spoke of the foster family's attempt to claim more money from the social services once her pregnancy was discovered, and their denial to meet her needs as a result: "I was doing everything; I'm cooking for myself, washing for myself. And they say: 'Oh, we can't give this, we can't give this'. Because my pregnancy became something so big! They wanted more money they're saying I have a baby, but this baby is not born...nobody is looking after him. (Pemba)"

Theme 6

Loneliness and isolation while in foster care: Twain and Isoke spoke of their sense of isolation and loneliness while in foster care. Isoke, for instance, felt excluded as a result of inadequate and inappropriate interpersonal and environmental interaction with the foster family, which displayed contempt because she was a 'looked after' black African expectant mother: "Emotionally she was terrible. Sometimes I will be in my room and she hasn't seen me for 2 days, and she won't even come to my room and ask if I've eaten. And she knows I'm pregnant... And her children they don't say 'hi' to people, they look down on you. (Isoke)" Another mother spoke of the overt racial abuse when her foster mothers accused her of living off State hand-outs: "Sometimes she would make these ridiculous comments: 'Oh god this government is funny giving you people money, you should be working'. Making comments like that! 'Using the taxpayers money and you...' She made me feel horrible, like making you feel guilty. You're not working, you're eating people's money free money. She really made me feel bad. (Shidah)"

Theme 7

UAS and parents in care more vulnerable and more susceptible to abuse: The above extracts highlight the multiple disadvantages that the women in this study faced. The discrimination, hardships and poor living conditions they described underline the racial inequalities they experienced as uprooted individuals. The fact that many of them were seeking asylum made them particularly vulnerable to experiencing life as fragile, insecure and exposed to stereotypical remarks.

Theme 8

Help from key social workers, for both general support and encouragement in education (relationships that go above and beyond) - Four informants identified key social workers who had provided support and encouragement in their education or more widely. In some cases, this relationship was perceived to reach beyond the boundaries of professional duty. Those who spoke positively of their corporate parents felt that they had provided practical assistance when needed. Social workers were seen as helpful when they sorted things out and made a difference, being enablers, advocates and negotiators: "She cooked for me, we would go out for the baby shopping. She helped me with my college, 'cos I couldn't go to college for some weeks... because of the pregnancy. She helped me to phone the college to let them know about it. We went there together before I was about to start back in college... to get my course.. We went together to see,...we spoke to the course management and they said I should come back. She took the form for the child care, so I will have the child care for the baby, you know, there will be child care for the baby in that college. (Raziya)"

Theme 9

Corporate parents who came across as friends - Informants responded better to corporate parents who came across to them as friends. Three informants referred to their social worker as 'my friend whom I contact even up to now' for advice or to talk, or as someone to go out 'shopping for food and clothes, and go to the restaurant together'. Having a trusted confidant in their social worker was important as this combined elements of sociability, emotional support and a secure base. The idea that details of what corporate parents do with young people count, emerged from the data: the daily routines, the talents they nurture, the interests they stimulate, make a difference. Having 'somebody there who cares' made Nakato 'feel good'. These little things may foster in a young person the vital sense of belonging, of mattering, of counting. Developing positive and stable relationships with their social workers is vital to promote good outcomes for young people in the care system (McLeod, 2010; McMurray and others, 2011).

Theme 10

Success dependent on a positive relationship with the foster parents, and after leaving care - The narratives linked with life in a foster family showed that the foster mother's attentive practices promoted the respondents' positive identity. The type of relationship with the foster mother determined the bond between them and whether the informants felt that they could seek support and advice even after moving on to independent living: "I was like part of the family, up until now she's like to a mum to me. Whatever she had she gave it to me. She cares about my relationships and asks: 'Where are your friends? You can bring your friends here'. I'm happy because she introduced me to a very good life. Like, sometimes in the morning she comes to my room and asks: 'You're not coming down to have breakfast, what's wrong with you? Are you having something bad about your home?' She always wants to know. And then, she really teach me how to take care of the house, do some cooking, using washing machine...she showed me how to manage my money. (Namuly)" Being placed in a specialist mother and baby foster placement provided effective support to Namuly. Biehal and others (1995) have noted that this form of support can improve outcomes for young people in care such as maintaining their homes and developing life skills.

Theme 11

Resiliency and self-reliance as a result of unsupportive relationships with the care-giver - Unsupportive relationships with their care-givers presented an occasion to exert their resilient identity — they had the qualities that affected their sense of personal agency, but also they invoked their religious identity which supported them when facing difficult times; when deciding about motherhood over abortion and/or adoption. "... anyway in a way she (foster carer) made me like...you have to go out there and study and get your qualifications and get your money. In a way...in a harsh way I've learned. (Shidah) The only friend I had was God...I was giving my life to God... to tell God to help me with the situation I was (pregnant). Because I was crying every day. (Abeo)"

Theme 12

Self-worth being based on being seen as independent/with agency (importance of education) - It was vital for most informants to be seen as independent with some control over their lives as this added to their sense of self-worth. In the face of the many uncertainties that in varying degrees many of the informants experienced, they had all exerted their agency within the context of being women returning to education. They overcame the odds demonstrated by their choice to return to education after childbirth; except for two respondents, all had obtained or were in the process of gaining GCSEs or GNVQs, and many had plans for university education. Informants adjusted successfully to the negative life events underscored by their focus on educational achievement: "I had the 'Young Learner Award' in college, I was the best student in college. (Shidah) I was the best student in my class and got very high grades. (Limber)" These extracts show how important the question of self-worth was for these mothers, not only for themselves but for their children too. Self-worth was derived from both reaching a high level of education and having a professional occupation.

Theme 13 Education as a path to secure, economically safe, and independent future: Continuing with education after pregnancy was important to mothers, who were 'determined to continue with education' — believing they could 'cope with both education and the baby'. Respondents viewed education as a durable investment that would be their entry to a secure, economically safe and independent future. Informants aspired to being recognised as moral self-reliant individuals: "I want to do something with my life...and I thought I could be capable of doing it (midwifery) and help people. I just want to go to school to get a good sound education so he could be proud of me. (Isoke) I decided to go to school and learn because that is the way to cope. When I came here I said: 'The best I can offer myself and my son is to go to school and learn something, so I can be good to myself. (Namuly)"			
	Section	Question	Answer
Risk of Bias	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes
	Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes
	Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes
	Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Can't tell <i>(No justification of study setting, unstructured interviews were used but unclear how the interview was conducted (explicitly); no discussion of data saturation)</i>
	Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't tell <i>(Unclear that the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location)</i>

	Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes
	Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes <i>(However, unclear if the researcher critically examine their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation)</i>
	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Can't tell <i>(No discussion of the credibility of findings in terms of triangulation, respondent validation, or the use of more than one analyst)</i>
	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research is valuable
	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	Moderate
		Directness	Partially applicable <i>(Data collection took place earlier than 2010)</i>

Medforth 2019

	Hearty Lives Project (Liverpool) (N = 7)		
Intervention	Activities offered through the Hearty Lives (Liverpool) project Two-hundred-and-ten young people and carers participated in the activities and events provided during the three-year project. These included: • cook and taste courses for kinship groups, carers and staff in residential settings; • food growing workshops for families and carers; • one-to-one cooking workshops for young people and their foster carers; • sports sessions and gym activities; • walk leader and bike leader courses; • family fun days and taster sessions; • a 'love your heart' walk and other walking groups; • active ability and 'make a move' training and events and workshops at a local		

	professional football club; • nutrition champions and ‘train the trainer’ courses to enable experienced carers to become champions of the project. The most popular activities, attracting 10 or more participants, included cook and taste courses, active ability and make a move training, the nutrition champions and food growing courses. Cycling Sundays and bike leader courses were less well attended.
Study type	<p>Focus Groups</p> <p>Semi structured interviews</p> <p>RQ3 some broad views about healthy eating were also collected from a focus group of participants not involved in the project</p> <p>Evaluation of an intervention Hearty Lives (Liverpool) project</p>
Aim of study	<p>The evaluation of the Hearty Lives (Liverpool) project had the following aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to understand looked after young people’s views and experiences surrounding food, including healthy eating and food in the context of social relationships; • to gain greater insight into carers’ views and experiences surrounding food, in terms of both providing healthy eating opportunities for children and young people in their care and the challenges associated with doing this; • to explore how key stakeholders experienced the project’s aim to increase their understanding of impact and outcomes in terms of changes to young people’s diets, physical activity levels and well-being; • to inform potential future work and interventions to promote healthy eating and nutrition in looked after children and young people.
Study location	UK
Study setting	Liverpool
Study methods	A focus group involving young people from the Liverpool Children in Care Council was convened to establish a baseline understanding of the level of knowledge and healthy lifestyle challenges of looked after young people in Liverpool who had not been involved in the Hearty Lives project. Seven (three female and four male aged between 13 and 19) attended. Four

	face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with the Hearty Lives (Liverpool) project manager, a Hearty Lives champion (who was also a foster carer), one foster carer (interviewed alone) who had been involved in project activities and a foster carer and the 15-year-old boy in her care (interviewed together). Face-to-face interviews were audio-recorded and responses were summarised. The participants had the opportunity to make any corrections they felt were necessary and confirmed accurate representation. Interpretation of the data involved a process of thematic analysis (no further details given).
Population	Hearty Lives (Liverpool) project manager, a Hearty Lives champion (who was also a foster carer), foster carers, young people in care
Study dates	the summer of 2016
Sources of funding	None reported
Inclusion Criteria	None reported
Exclusion criteria	None reported
Sample characteristics	Gender three female and four male Age aged between 13 and 19
Relevant themes	Theme 1 (focus group) Enjoyment of food and knowledge of a healthy diet - The participants expressed embedded concepts of keeping fit, exercise and eating a balanced diet and rated their knowledge of healthy eating between seven and one on a scale of one to 10, acknowledging that food was 'important' to them. They described enjoying cooking and preparing foods and trying out new recipes such as spaghetti bolognese, mac and cheese, chicken korma, Fanta chicken and Sunday roast. Theme 2 (focus group) Sources of information - Their ideas came from a range of sources: campaigns on television and social media ('everybody is talking about dieting, healthy foods such as smoothies and looking good') and magazine images and library books. Some had experienced theoretical and practical sessions on nutrition and cooking in school or when

healthy lifestyles were part of a healthy eating week. One young man had developed an interest through undertaking a food hygiene course while in custody. This influenced his current eating and shopping habits and generated aspirations to become a chef. But most significantly, the young people stressed that a key influence on their eating and lifestyle was parenting and family.

Theme 3

(focus group) Exercise - Most of the young people engaged in physical activities, such as trampolining at a local park, performance and dance at school or college.

Theme 4

(focus group) Finance as a barrier to health activities - The focus group participants said they had limited finances to spend on healthy activities. They tended to get exercise by 'walking around town with friends' as 'City Bikes' are too expensive to hire (they would use them if they were accessible at an affordable cost). Things that made healthy eating and lifestyles difficult included the comparatively high cost of healthy foods compared to convenience alternatives and having to shop more often as weekly allowances mean budgeting constraints. They said that frozen fruit and vegetables did not taste as nice and healthy options in school and college were 'unimaginative' and 'unappetising'.

Theme 5

(focus group) Willingness to learn more, especially through group activities - The young people demonstrated their enthusiasm to learn more. They said they would value activities that enable them to learn more about nutrition and healthy lifestyles, food preparation, trying out a wider range of appetising healthy recipes, exposure to a variety of exercise including adventure sports and outdoor activities, dance and performing arts, Zumba and fitness classes, and team games such as basketball, netball and volleyball. Free swimming and access to bikes would be especially popular.

Theme 6

(project manager) Many professionals a barrier to hearty lives - need time to build the relationship - The project manager reflected that building rapport with children and young people can be challenging, particularly when they are likely to have many professionals in their lives and may not always find it easy to trust others. Taking time and providing opportunities to have fun and meet others before focusing on health and nutrition can be a helpful motivator.

Theme 7

(project manager) Food to support autonomy - Food may represent power and control to looked after children and young people with a consequent impact on their behaviour.

Theme 8

(project manager) Training gap for carers - Foster carers are passionate about providing the best possible support for the children and young people in their care, but face daily challenges as there is a gap in their training when it comes to nutrition and healthy lifestyles.

Theme 9

(project manager) Work pro-actively, especially in the first care placement - There is an important opportunity to work pro-actively with the first carer or residential placements that looked after children experience to promote healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle.

Theme 10

Foster carer (1) had been involved in the first day of the 'cook and taste' course provided by the project. She had really enjoyed the experience. The foster carer had always tried to provide a 'healthy plate' for her family and was keen to introduce the young person to ingredients she had not even heard of before such as fresh tuna, sea bass, spinach and barley soup. They enjoyed the course and together followed up their shared interest at home. During the course, foster carers and young people participated in the preparation and cooking of meals, with the young people encouraged to take the lead. They kept hold of all of the recipes in a folder so that they were able to use them later on. Some of the most memorable recipes included familiar meals, but substituted healthier ingredients for those previously used, such as using sweet potato to make a healthy cottage pie and using cauliflower and broccoli to compliment curries instead of rice – a 'big success' and now a weekly favourite. The course also 'Gave you food for thought when out shopping' (taking a list and checking food labels). This has taught her to check salt and sugar content and not to assume that 'dearest is always the best'.

Theme 11

(foster carer) Helpfulness of learning practical skills for a foster carer - The foster carer recognised the value of focusing on practical skills, complementing other mandatory courses such as safeguarding and record-keeping. Change has been very positive as a result: the young person she looked after is now studying at university and has a parttime job in the food industry.

Theme 12

(foster carer) Peer support for foster carers - What the foster carer valued most was meeting other foster carers, having the opportunity to talk and benefit from peer support and sharing experiences in confidence.

Theme 13

(foster youth) increased confidence in activities - Local foster carer (2) and the 15-year-old young man in her care chose to share their experiences together. They became involved in Hearty Lives (Liverpool) when offered the opportunity to do some cooking and fitness training. The young man was particularly interested in football, baseball, swimming and a range of other activities on offer through the charity wing of the football club (Everton in the Community). He chose football skills training sessions which increased his confidence and led to him playing in a local team. Since being involved in the project, he has been inspired to join a kickboxing club nearer to home and he now takes a younger child placed with the same family to play football in a local Sunday league.

Theme 14

The young man (15 year old in foster care) attended a six-week cooking course at the project with his foster carer. The most memorable recipes for them were a meat-free curry, kedgeree using healthy alternatives to haddock and making garlic bread avoiding the use of butter. The young people and carers on the course were encouraged to be actively involved and there were different alternatives each week so that there was an opportunity for everyone to participate. Learning about portion size and what constitutes a 'healthy plate' encouraged them to cut down a lot at home and they now have a more balanced range of food groups such as vegetables, meat and potatoes and have reduced salt intake. Getting to sample food they had cooked was an important motivator, as was having a choice; for example, choosing a main meal and a pudding and then making a healthier version. The young man has lost over six kilograms in weight since attending the course and is enthusiastic about taking more exercise. He confirms that it has made him feel 'good' and he now has more self-confidence and is becoming generally more active.

Theme 15

(foster youth perspective) Food as culture - As his family's cultural heritage is African, food is not just important from a nutritional perspective. He is visited once a month by his aunt and together they enjoy cooking traditional food from their own country. This enables him to maintain his cultural heritage and connect with his early upbringing.

Theme 16

The Hearty Lives (Liverpool) champion was a foster carer who wanted to learn more to complement her background and qualifications in sport, health and well-being education. She found the course to be 'one of the best I have done'. Positive elements for her included: • opportunity to share experiences and 'network' with other foster carers; • learning new things that she had not previously considered; • re-igniting her passion for health and well-being; • researching more herself; • thinking more holistically; • recognising that in addition to diet, a range of factors such as lifestyle, genetics, psychology and gender affects nutrition.

Theme 17

Hearty lives champion - Food for building relationships - Becoming a foster carer made her more aware of the relationship between food and the experiences and behaviours of the young people in her care, for example, why a child was 'rummaging for food'. She feels that more should be done to raise awareness of how food can be central to building up trust with looked after children. Food may represent the only consistency they have as well as being a trigger for particular behaviours. She would recommend that awareness of these issues becomes part of mandatory training for foster carers: 'I feel that there is so much more that can and should be done.'

Theme 18

<p>Hearty lives champion - Food for contact with birth parents - She also feels strongly that children attending contact centres for supervised meetings with parents should have access to a kitchen where parents and children can be encouraged to prepare food together in a realistic setting instead of being treated to sweets or burgers.</p> <p>Theme 19 Hearty lives champion - Improved knowledge of nutritional recommendations - She says that she is now more aware of daily nutritional recommendations, has bought books and a blender/juicer machine and invested in a bigger fridge to house more fresh fruit and vegetables with frozen alternatives as a standby.</p> <p>Theme 20 Hearty lives champion - A holistic look at lifestyle - During the summer holidays, she and the children in her care joined a gym and took a more structured approach to exercise, incorporating bike rides and daily dog walks: "have just looked holistically at our lifestyle and made changes where I can. . . in the summer I bought a t-shirt and it said, 'Make things happen'. . . I honestly think Hearty Lives (Liverpool) makes things happen by looking more holistically at health."</p>			
Risk of Bias	Section	Question	Answer
	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes
	Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes
	Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	No <i>(Unclear how participants were selected, or why those selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study. "The authors acknowledge that the perspectives on the benefits of being involved in the Hearty Lives (Liverpool) project are limited to the views and experiences of two foster carers and one young person who had engaged in the activities offered despite the fact that over 200 people took part in the project. In addition, those involved in the evaluation were recruited by the project manager. Therefore the views expressed cannot be assumed to represent everyone who was a beneficiary, as those with negative experiences may no longer be in contact with the project or may have been less likely to volunteer to be interviewed.")</i>

Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Can't tell <i>(Setting not justified, no discussion of saturation of data. Methods for semi-structured interviews were not made explicit.)</i>
Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't tell <i>(Unclear that researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location)</i>
Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes
Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Can't tell <i>(Unclear how thematic analysis was performed, if contradictory data was taken into account or whether the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation)</i>
Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Can't tell <i>(Findings were not displayed clearly but rather covered a focus group and then a series of case studies. Respondent validation was used, however there was not a clear discussion of the evidence both for and against the researcher's arguments)</i>
Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research has some value <i>(Research has some generalisability issues)</i>
Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	High
	Directness	Directly applicable

Oke 2013

Study type	Semi structured interviews
Aim of study	To explore Foster carers' perceptions of family, commitment and belonging in successful placements
Study location	UK
Study setting	Foster carers from a single local authority
Study methods	The interview was divided into five main sections as follows: 1. Reflections on the experience of being a foster carer: motivations, rewards and challenges. 2. How childhood experiences might have affected the respondent, as a foster carer now. 3. Reflections on the meanings of 'family' and an examination of the degree to which the fostered child is experienced as 'belonging' in their family. 4. The carer's experience of their relationship with the target child/young person. 5. Reflections on the carer's ideas about the young person's future, and what the carer has learned in retrospect about 'family' through looking after the target child/young person. The interviews were digitally recorded and subsequently transcribed. The interviews were undertaken at the carer's convenience at a venue of their choice and were of between an hour and a half and two hours in duration. The carers' transcribed accounts were analysed in line with IPA practice, moving from individual descriptive detail to interpretive general pattern (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). The first author made detailed initial codings of the seven transcripts; themes were subsequently developed by the three authors together.
Population	Foster carers looking after a young person in the age range 12 to 17 years old
Study dates	2007
Sources of funding	Not reported
Inclusion Criteria	Care Situation

	<p>Scrutiny of the Looked After Child (LAC) Statutory Review forms for each child showed social worker appraisal of the placement as 'stable'. The target group of foster carers consisted of those who appeared to be offering a setting that was functioning effectively for the child, despite previous expectations,</p> <p>Time in care The 'Looked After' child in question had been in placement with the carer for at least two years, and had been 'looked after' for four or more years.</p> <p>Education The LAC Review form showed evidence from educational professionals of current satisfactory educational attendance and progress relative to the child's abilities and needs.</p> <p>Carer situation foster carers in a single Local Authority, looking after a young person in the age range 12 to 17 years old. The research endeavour focused on the person defined as the present main foster carer, the status of 'principal carer' being agreed upon by the couple, where there were two foster carers in the household.</p> <p>Number of previous placements The history of the child's previous placement/s showed at least one disruption, and difficulties in at least one of the following areas: education; mental health; offending behaviour; relationships with peers.</p> <p>Contact There was evidence of ongoing satisfactory contact between the child and members of his or her original family, as rated by the LAC Review group (which may have included the child and parent/s themselves).</p>
Exclusion criteria	None reported
Sample characteristics	<p>Sample size seven foster carers</p> <p>Number of previous placements range 3 to 7 years</p> <p>Time in current placement range 2 to 5 years</p> <p>Age 14 - 17 years</p> <p>Ethnicity All the carers were white and British, as were the seven young people cared for.</p>
Relevant themes	Theme 1

'My' child—'clicking', belonging in the family and parental regard. What emerges from all respondents is a sense of parental commitment to the children they cared for. This was claimed as particularly strong in relation to the target child of the investigation and was manifest in the carers' accounts of viewing themselves going beyond the call of duty and reasonable foster care for these children. There is a common feature of the respondents having 'fallen for' the child at an early stage in the placement. This is presented as a special liking or love for the child, who appears to have called forth a parental dedication or selflessness in the carer. The quote below from Jess is included in its entirety as it usefully sets the tone for all the findings, across the themes. "We had a placement for a young teen. Karl was the 'bad boy' of the choice we were offered. We met him and we really liked him and he moved in here. For Karl this really is his home now. I think that does impact a lot really umm [pause] you do feel a lot more sort of responsible for him and umm you just know that umm [pause] it's funny with Karl because I think he has sort of touched us more than what a lot of children have. With Karl it's almost as if I don't think even / I could let go of him if you know what I mean. I think he would always be part of this family. I suppose it / it's [pause] he's made me aware that you can actually have quite powerful feelings for somebody like Karl that has come into the family quite late but has this / umm power over you to say that he's changed your feelings and that you can actually feel that strongly for somebody that isn't part of your own flesh and blood. I suppose because I must admit / I suppose we've liked lots of children but I don't / I don't think any of them have had the impact that Karl has had on us [pause] how you think about that umm somebody else if you see what I mean. Umm / I don't know whether it's his vulnerability or whether it's what he gives back to the family I don't know but it / it is quite a powerful thing with him ..."

Theme 2

A compelling and instantaneous connection - As Jess made a quick preference for Karl, so each respondent indicated a compelling and sometimes almost instantaneous connection with the target young person. Their descriptions were imbued with a sense of inevitability and even passivity, in a process of what seemed to be experienced as a particular kind of 'falling in love'. This appeared to sustain setbacks and challenges presented by the child as the placement proceeded: "It is very difficult when they first come in because you don't know them and they don't know you / the whole house not just the child. It's the foster carer as well / it's a whole different routine because we don't know the person and they don't know us. But the click thing is a special liking for them I think, taking to them as soon as they come in [pause] like the one we're thinking about today. Umm I love Sim to bits and he drives me crackers."

Theme 3

Clicking that carries the carer over the initial adaption period - Thus the 'click thing' appears to carry the carer through the initial adaption period in the household. At the same time the participants reported their perception of the development of a reciprocal sense of commitment to the carer and foster family from the young person, which also appeared to be linked with an emotional distancing from birth parents, or a definite decision on the child's part to put all, or most, of their eggs in the foster care basket for the time being. Children were reported as wanting to 'belong' and the carers wanted to offer that. What Yvonne reports is a good example: "Well Ricky said it / he said it to us: he is perfectly happy / he sees us as his mum and dad. He doesn't want anybody to know otherwise / it is nobody else's business umm [pause] and that's it. What more can he say / he sees us as his mum and dad and he says he belongs here."

Theme 4

Understanding that the commitment may not be forever - These carers also gave evidence of understanding that the commitment from the child may not be forever. They appeared to be able to accommodate a 'provisional' arrangement and hold on to uncertainty about future relations, including the young person revisiting their relationship with birth family. This is illustrated well in this quote from Natalie: "Um well Louise quite often says 'this is my life and this is my home and this is my family'. She says she doesn't want to keep being reminded of her history / I think at some time in her life she probably will want to go back over that. Perhaps it won't come till she has children of her own / I don't know but right now she seems to have committed herself to being here in this family."

Theme 5

Claiming of the child - Given the growth of the emotional bond, all respondents referred to the target children as 'theirs'. This claiming of the child was also described as an illicit process that created tensions with social workers, who, from the carers' perspective, were presented as uneasy about the use of the possessive pronoun in this way. The following is typical: "We love them unconditionally. I think that is the thing isn't it? My only / my only hope for anybody but particularly for the kids I bring up is that they will be reasonably happy [pause] whatever they do and I think that's what most parents who care about their kids will say. I do see them as my kids and social workers sometimes pull a bit of a face when I say 'my kids' but they are."

Theme 6

Stepping into the parent role - A corollary of this parental 'claiming' was that the fostered children were construed as 'family' while in the household. Each respondent made claims eliding differences between genetic and fostering relationships. This was particularly so in connection with the young people targeted in this research. Again, the child being part of the foster family was an idea that carers experienced as subversive in relation to what they imagined social workers might want from them in looking after other people's children. These strands are combined well in this quote from Aileen: "The fact is that [pause] we don't think about ourselves a lot of the time as foster carers. Social Services would probably die if we said that because you have to be aware of this, have to be aware of that for the Department, but day-to-day I don't feel aware of being a carer. I feel like we are parents. We are a family aren't we / a big family? The family is everyone in the household we are looking after, our own and fostered."

Theme 7

Claiming a grandparental role - This inclusive sense of family also appeared to apply to future projections of relationship. All seven respondents, in thinking forward to a time when the young person might have children of their own, claimed an expected grandparental position. Diane's comment is to the point and typical: "My foster children related to my mother as nanny / she was nanny to all of my kids. They all still call her nanny. Becky's children would be my grandchildren."

Theme 8

Consideration to the birth family - At the same time, the participants were equally emphatic about promoting and maintaining the target child's links with birth family members. Helen, in the following excerpt gives an account that encapsulates a theme presented across the study by all the carers: "We try very hard not / to let them forget that they do have family and that we are substitutes. We talk about their family and we listen to what they have to say but we don't accept absolute criticism / of their family because all children are placed in care for whatever reason and it may well be that their family are good people but they just can't deal with that person at that stage in life and therefore you shouldn't / be / tunnel-visioned." Helen was as insistent as the other carers about the foster children being 'hers'. At the same time she speaks for all participants in claiming the necessity of accepting the whole child, their history and birth family included. As carers they appeared to be able to tolerate the ambiguity of the child belonging in two families at once, without this diminishing their own sense of emotional commitment to the child.

Theme 9

Foster carers are independent practitioners, paid an allowance by the Local Authority to care for children who 'belong' in another family and whose birth family members may be unsupportive or suspicious. The Local Authority sets guidelines and limits to a carer's involvement and shares the legal responsibility for the child with birth parents. A major set of themes reflected the 'compromised' situation of foster carers in relation to their own judgments and decisions about children, which Helen described as being like 'the jam in the sandwich'. In the case of the targeted young people in this study, it was clear that part of the carers' commitment involved them in advocacy for the child over aspects like education and schooling, friendships, limits and rewards. All respondents spoke of acting on behalf of the child as an autonomous parent would. In this respect, they saw their success with a difficult child in placement as requiring some 'disobedience' towards Social Services. This appears to have applied as a generality over the course of their fostering history but especially so in connection with the young people who were the focus of our study.

Theme 10

Critical empathy for the birth parents - In their relations with birth parents and family members, carers' accounts were marked by what could be described as 'critical empathy'. Here for example is Diane, who can identify with Becky's mother's emotional pain, while having previously indicated that she is well aware of her lapses of parental responsibility for her daughter: "I would imagine she [birth mother] felt very, very rejected umm because her children didn't want her and they openly told her so / that you know she / they told her they were going to a family that did want them. Imagining how Becky's mum feels helps me understand what Becky goes through when she sees her mother." The carers had managed to hold on to positive attitudes about the young person's birth family, or had established a working relationship with birth parent/s that was largely independent of Social Services' brokerage. The carers indicated that if necessary they were willing to put the young person's well-being to the fore, at the expense of their own needs. While this was not expressed in any of their accounts as a complaint—it appeared to be a task voluntarily undertaken for the sake of the child—there were nevertheless indications of the extra burden, unacknowledged by the professional network, which this entailed.

Theme 11

Independent working from social workers - The trust of social workers in allowing carers to 'get on with the job' was claimed as very important. Social workers who were perceived by carers to be 'solid' emotionally, knowledgeable in practical terms, and veteran in the sense of being 'an old hand', were highly valued: "We had [name of social worker] for years and when she left it wasn't the same and Chris had known her for 10 years. There was something about the fact that she kept going for him / with him that was important. I think when

she went / and Chris's mum especially when [social worker] went, mum couldn't cope because / [name of social worker] was a bit like me / one of the old school. She would really put herself out for mum / would go and fetch her to bring her to meetings which the newer ones don't seem to / because the relationship had grown up I think over the years, you get that you know. Chris's mum couldn't get used to it when she left and Chris himself really felt the loss."

Theme 12

Support and peer support - Given the intensity and complexity of the fostering task, support and practical help and guidance were understandably claimed as vital. The contributions of partners and spouses as well as the support provided by birth children and other, older, foster children were experienced as at least as important as input from social workers. Five of the seven respondents cited another carer with whom the foster carer had a personal friendship as a valued buttress and source of routine and emergency emotional sustenance. At the same time, the descriptions of asking for help were nuanced by a claim of self-sufficiency, which may reflect these carers' idea of themselves as principal welfare providers.

Theme 13

Rebuilding and repair - A striking feature of the carers' accounts was their interest in communicating how they do the job. This was presented through the metaphor of 'rebuilding' and 'repair'. There was a common theme of 'starting where the child is', with a recognition of the damage that the children's previous care experiences had brought about. Natalie described this as 'having open eyes' in terms of the level of expectation of the child's 'recovery'. There was an understanding of starting a job with compromised materials or of repairing a building with shaky foundations: "But you have to think that they are quite damaged children and if they weren't they wouldn't be here with you [pause] and the longer times go on you think / you can forget about the problems that they've got until / they have an up or down in their life and you have to keep remembering that they do find it difficult to cope with certain situations. Sometimes / some of the basic building blocks are just not there."

Theme 14

High aspirations - The rebuilding metaphor seems to suggest that their task as they experienced it was quite different from ordinary parenting. In the light of their accounts it would be better described as 're-parenting'. They seemed to be able to use the 'possessive' stance ('my child') as a position for undertaking their craft, which they understood as salvage and reconstruction, while they have the chance. As part of this, the carers identified the fact that they maintained high educational and social aspirations for the young person in the 'rebuilding' process. In the next excerpt, Yvonne exemplifies this in relation to educational opportunity for Ricky: Yes I've really encouraged them even though it means them going beyond what they might have done if they'd stayed with their family, which is hard for them. Ricky wants to go and do a degree. At least he is thinking about it which is great because I don't think / you know, certainly in the natural family, he would never have got as far as he has now / so he is happy that he's got that option there." As in Yvonne's interview, the carers seemed mindful that in applying their own blueprint for the young person's development, they were also promoting potential access to opportunities that the young person would not have gained had they remained within their original family. This was presented as making the best of a compromised start and, while remembering and respecting the child's origins, their attitude was of not letting a child's earlier life circumstances hold them back.

Theme 15

Proactive skills - In terms of the work of looking after and parenting the young person, the foster carers identified and described 'proactive skills' like limit setting, rewarding, and teaching children new ways of behaving and responding. Natalie's comments about Louise's behaviour are a good example of the recognition shared across the seven respondents of how the children in their care seek to reproduce old established patterns of parent—child relationships: "When Louise came to us we were told she would try and break the placement down because / they explained that she had been let down by so many people she would want to try and be in control of things and she would expect it to break down. She went to great lengths to break it down. So that was a real challenge for us / we had to respond to her positively and firmly and differently to how she wanted us to. It was saying to ourselves 'right lets start again as we do / keep sticking with it'."

Theme 16

Listening - While the 'proactive' aspects of parenting were claimed as important, they were in fact less often mentioned than the 'receptive skills' of listening and understanding, observing and tolerating behaviour, and accepting the sometimes unpleasant aspects of the child or their experiences. Yvonne speaks for all the respondents in noting this aspect of their job, which sometimes entails hearing about things that are almost unbearable: "Some of the things that Ricky could tell you, things that he's told us about his abuse, would make your blood curdle but you have to listen to that and take it for them, no matter how uncomfortable it makes you feel." Diane emphasizes a common theme expressed across the carers' interviews of their crucial role in facilitating a young person's trust in them. In this context, Diane emphasizes the need to think before saying or doing anything in response to what is communicated: "She tells me everything [pause] good and bad. We sit and we talk / again I've learnt through Becky not to be judgmental umm in some cases but just to listen

and rather than umm sparking up when you think something needs correcting oh you know umm [pause] to sit and listen and take it on board and then analyze what you are going to say rather than getting in there with two feet."

Theme 17

Perseverance - All respondents spoke of stubbornness, determination, or of a strong desire not to be beaten, in a way that conveyed the foster care task as a struggle, a battle or a long and arduous journey that had to be completed to the satisfaction of the carer for each target child: "We stick at things don't we? We stick at things and see them through. We don't like to give up either of us and I think I'm a little bit worse than Frank (partner) because I don't want to give up on Chris. I don't like [pause] I don't like giving up; I don't like being beaten. I like to keep going and yeh in a way it's sort of big-headedness perhaps it / you think that you will get there eventually / you will. You know 'I can do this; it will work' [pause] Obviously it doesn't always but you don't give up." "Yeh the challenges is I think just living day to day and remaining in place even if you can't do anything about changing / changing their lives too much. We see it's important to just keep going for children. That's one of the best things you can do for them." "Yes no matter how muddled their lives are, if you look at them long and hard you will see there are / there's this specific goodness / and that is what you latch into and when you feel like going in your bedroom and screaming to the top of your lungs because yet again they've done something really bad / you latch on to that one bit left and it brings you back to sanity [pause] it's like a circle isn't it?"

	Section	Question	Answer
Risk of Bias	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes
	Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes
	Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes <i>(However no discussion regarding why some participants chose not to take part)</i>
	Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes <i>(However, no discussion of saturation of data)</i>
	Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't tell <i>(Unclear that researchers critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location)</i>

	Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes
	Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Can't tell <i>(Unclear if sufficient data was presented to support the findings, unclear if contradictory data was taken into account.)</i>
	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes <i>(Credibility was taken into account)</i>
	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research has some value <i>(limitations were not discussed in great detail. Population is well defined.)</i>
	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	Low
		Directness	Partially applicable <i>(Participant data was likely collected prior to 2010)</i>

O'Toole 2017

Study type	Subgroup of interest Unaccompanied asylum seekers
Aim of study	to determine ways in which positive postmigration development and integration could be achieved for this group
Study location	UK

Study setting	Unaccompanied asylum seekers arriving in England
Study methods	The working tool chosen to explore participants' experiences of their social world was based on George Kelly's Personal Construct Theory. In phase one, participants took part in an individual assessment involving the PCT method. In phase two, all of the individuals participated in group sessions with a qualified therapist over four consecutive days. These sessions, each 2 h long, were aimed at discussing individual challenges and providing peer support. Having completed these group sessions, the participants took part in a final individual PCT assessment (phase three). One researcher carried out all of the PCT assessments and took part in the four group sessions. Two additional researchers were involved in the data analysis process, to increase the trustworthiness of the findings and for triangulation purposes, as well in preparation of the manuscript. In order to assess participants' personal constructs, relating to their meaning-making about their social world, the individual assessments and group sessions were audio-recorded in full with participants' consent and agreement. The audio-recordings were later transcribed verbatim and analysed by conducting a thematic analysis. The three authors discussed themes in the data set as part of an investigator triangulation process.
Population	Asylum-seeking and refugee individuals from sub-Saharan Africa, who had arrived in England as unaccompanied minors
Study dates	Not reported
Sources of funding	City, University of London
Inclusion Criteria	Care Situation Asylum-seeking and refugee individuals from sub-Saharan Africa, who had arrived in England as unaccompanied minors
Exclusion criteria	None reported
Sample characteristics	Sample size six unaccompanied asylum seekers Mental health problems Participants were recruited from an organisation that provides therapeutic care to asylumseeking and refugee individuals.

	<p>Unaccompanied asylum seekers</p> <p>Age Current age: aged between eighteen and 28 years</p>
Relevant themes	<p>Theme 1 Super-ordinate theme: social support as a means for hope</p> <p>Theme 2 Sub-ordinate theme - relationships that resemble family bonds P1 (male): I trust her as well. Yes, I've known her since I was 15, as a young refugee in the country, so she's been like a mother. Oh, she, she's done a lot. When you are new in the country, and you can't find your way - she kind of - that's why I call her like a mother - because she kind of showed me the way. And she tried to make it happen, you know. If it wasn't for people like her, maybe I wouldn't go to University, or maybe I was just going to forget about my dreams and forget about my goals and - cause I've been through a lot - that's why I call her like a mother. P5 (male): If I think about my partner, I would say that even though we are encountering some kind of problems now, she has also played a very significant role in my life, because she gave a son to me, who I love very much, and whenever I'm with my son I feel very comfortable, I feel good about myself, and that has helped me to be able to put my past aside, and to put my past away, and that gives me courage; that gives me more courage for the future. And because of that, my partner is really a very important person to me. This makes her a very, very important person to me. P6 (female): They make me feel safe and welcome all the time and I get to understand like, if I had had a mum, what it would have felt like. Because I just see her, like, what she does for my friend and how she is with my friend and I just feel like maybe that would be what I would have, if I had my mum as well... and it's good for me to understand what it would feel like to have a family. So when I see them, I know it makes me sad but then I learn...</p> <p>Theme 3 In addition to relationships that either resembled bonds to lost family members or new families in the asylum-country, such as partners and children, the participants spoke about the importance of friends, and how friends provided a positive distraction from their difficulties: Sub-ordinate theme - friendships as an escape from distress P2 (male): This friend is like, we do something together; do something – happy and whatever - he doesn't get angry or upset. He likes to play with young people, and to make them happy, you know, and to do something different with them and to try to help them. You can laugh, you can tickle him or whatever – it doesn't mind – he doesn't get angry or something like that. These two people are more about help; family, mum, dad, brother, sister... and this one is more like doing something, playing football or doing something – and it makes me remember when I was back home, and I would normally do something with my friends, like we would be riding bicycles or playing football or playing together or doing something together, you know... that was nice. P1 (male): Yes, someone who understands you and you understand him as well, because a friendship is about you two people helping each other, you know, nobody is selfish – so that's why we're friends. Because before choosing a friend, we need to go through somehow, then I can learn if that's a good friend or not – because you can't just take anyone in your life and say "that's my friend" because you need to know if you're in need, if that friend will be there. A friendship always needs to go through a road; a long road, a long road that we have been through and that's why I can call him a friend.</p> <p>Theme 4 In addition to extracts that illustrate social support, there were also examples of lack of social support and of feeling labelled and stigmatised. These extracts illustrate the importance of facilitating social relationships to develop, as unaccompanied minors may feel marginalised and stigmatised. P3 (male): Like people on the street, people who are going to work, youngsters or people who form friendships. You see them in bars, the park or in even in the cafe. We cannot associate with them. They even try to justify it, to behave differently - to behave like that. Even the way they speak to us or when they're talking about us, it will not be friendship. (...) So if you have asylum issues, or you only have a part-time job instead of full-time, or you're not achieving your goal because you're looking after your siblings. They look at you like – people don't have time for you. P1 (male): I think it's a part of you, it's a part of you all the way. A part of you that people outside don't like, that society doesn't like. Society doesn't like that part of you, they think different about that part of you. It doesn't matter how much you explain yourself, it will always be there. Like the Somali runner Mo Farah. You're different when you're a refugee. Even when you win a medal in the Olympics. They'll say he came when he was 2 or 3. How old is he now? And it's still coming to him! They will not mention it directly to you...As soon as he won the medal they said he was a refugee.</p>

Theme 5

Living a double life; social vulnerability and fear of rejection. "P1 (male): Like at college, after hearing everything what they've been saying about asylum-seekers, "they are here to get our jobs", blah, blah, blah, and then you're just like, "oh yes, and I'm one of them"... Yes, like, because I have been in relationships with British girls and sometimes you can't... sometimes they just want to know so much about you, and in my head I'm just like, maybe after telling them my problem they might switch – they might change - our relationship might change and stuff like that. So you're just trying to keep everything in you, it's not easy; it's not an easy situation. P6 (female): Like me, at college, when I started, I don't want them to do me any favours. I don't want them to give me a course because I come from wherever, I want them to take me because of me. I don't want anyone to write above, like a reference - Oh, she has been in this country for three years. I don't want it. I want them to take me for me. They will categorise you and put you in that frame or thing, like your name will be in bold letters. I don't want that, I want me, take me for me."; "P5 (male): At this moment I prefer to leave it like that because I don't want to face another obstacle again. Now the relationship has reached a point that if I lose her then it might affect me, if I bring it back again maybe just to square one. Because now I would say I have no family here but they are my family now, right, so if I happen to lose them again - I lost my family once and I found another family again. So I cannot afford to lose this family again. If I happen to lose again this family for the second time then I don't know what my situation will be." "P1 (male): (...) I even feel scared when I go for a job interview and I take my refugee passport to present. And I'm just thinking; the manager will already put me in another group. And then they always see, oh, he has a background of coming from war; he is from a dangerous country. Why do you have to mention that? It's just your background. You want to establish yourself but I don't think it's possible. Even in 100 years, you will never escape it. Are you going to pretend for the rest of your life? It's like the theatre. While you are at the theatre, you know there is a real world outside, there is something else there, like a door at the back of the theatre: which is just normal for us. In the theatre, they just play a role, but at the back there is someone else as well, the real me. There is a real world. In the theatre I play something else, that's how I feel. I feel like an actor. I'm playing this movie but there is also a real me. People just see the actor, but there is also a real me. P4 (male): Some people expect you to just trust them straight away, like they are your mum or dad or your blood – they expect you to trust them right away. It's not possible."

Theme 6

Looking ahead – hope versus despair. Despite the adversities faced by participants at young ages, they expressed a strong desire to develop, to create a better future and to make the most of their lives. Creating a new family was a priority for several participants, and perhaps this was seen as a way to create stability in their lives, and a sign that they had integrated in the asylum country. Participants also focused on education, and as the extracts below illustrate, there was a remarkable amount of hope in the expressions of some, though not all, participants. "P5 (male): I want to be able to look after my family and look after myself and achieve my goals. I can live like anyone; I can do this or that. Yes, you can't automatically say that everything will be fine, but you will find a way of minimising it, you will find a solution for how to get rid of it. Find a way of living a better way. Because there will be a barrier between you and your monster, a big barrier. And there will be a point when your children grow up, that you can sit them down and explain yourself to them, it's another way of getting rid of it. You'll feel good about yourself, you will feel like you have achieved. Yes, you will feel like a man. Yes, you came from a long way, I was there and I thought I couldn't make it. But I made it. P4 (male): I learnt from the situation with the person from the group and his partner and their baby, about arguing and listening to each other. I learnt a lot from that – and from that explanation. Because I could be in that situation as well, and now, already before I'm in that situation, I know how I have to handle it, and what I have to do. Because I know I'm going to be in that situation one day." "P5 (male): But if you get fed up because of your problems, you cannot focus, you will not get an education, you will not make a family. Daytime - my problem, night-time - my problem, daytime - my problem. There comes a time that your problem will never go, or even if you find a solution to let it go. It will go and come back again, because you have no way of getting rid of it. If you really work hard – you will get rid of it! Now we are finding it hard, but in the next five to ten years – there will be big changes. If we focus, if we work hard, if we are determined, trust me; we will see big changes in our lives."

	Section	Question	Answer
Risk of Bias	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes

	Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes
	Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Can't tell <i>(unclear why the participants selected were the most appropriate to the study. No discussions around why/if some participants chose not to take part)</i>
	Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes <i>(However setting not justified and saturation of data not discussed)</i>
	Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't tell <i>(Unclear that researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location)</i>
	Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes
	Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes
	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes
	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research is valuable <i>(However: "One of the limitations of this study is the fact that the participants were recruited from an organisation where they had been offered therapy, which may have influenced their perception of the social world. Participants, therefore, may not be representative of other young asylum-seeking individuals in England in different contexts, or those who have not been offered such support. A related matter is the possibility that</i>

			<i>refugee individuals who suffer the most may be less likely to participate in research, thereby leaving the distress of the most vulnerable individuals undocumented")</i>
	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	Low
		Directness	Directly applicable

Pinkney 2020

Study Characteristics

Aim of study	To explore the views and experiences of young people prior to, upon entering and during higher education
Study location	UK
Study setting	one university and one metropolitan local authority in the north of England
Study methods	Within the university, individual semi-structured interviews took place. Within the local authority, two focus groups were conducted. Questions asked of the focus group participants sought to gather information on who or what keeps them focussed on educational aspiration and wanting to achieve; on how their care experience has helped them with their aspirations; on what advice they would give other young people on how to stay positive; and on the barriers they have faced to having positive educational aspirations. For the individual interviews with university students, questions sought information on their course and year of study; their journey from being in care to university; the main factors influencing their decision to apply for university; who supported and encouraged them; the personal characteristics they think helped them apply for university; the particular issues that they needed help and support with at university; and the kinds of support

	and advice they found helpful during their studies. For the two central university staff member interviews, the questions focused on gaining their views about the main factors in care experienced students' decisions to attend university; the main issues with which care experienced students need support; the main areas of support that are offered by the university; and key elements of the role of university Personal Tutors in supporting care experienced students. Once all the data collection was completed, they were transcribed verbatim. The research questions were used to frame the themes chosen through which to analyse the data.
Population	Undergraduate or postgraduate students with care experience, are experienced young people still attending school, care experienced young people who had left school
Study dates	between May and August 2017
Sources of funding	Not reported
Inclusion Criteria	Education undergraduate or postgraduate students with care experience; care experienced young people still attending school; care experienced young people who had left school; two members of university staff involved in supporting care experienced students
Exclusion criteria	None reported
Sample characteristics	Sample size - 8 undergraduate or postgraduate students with care experience; 6 care experienced young people still attending school; care experienced young people who had left school; 2 members of university staff involved in supporting care experienced students. Special educational needs or learning disability - Students: 8 non-disabled; LACYP in school: 5 non-disabled, 1 physically disabled; Care leavers left school: 8 non-disabled, 1 learning disabled

	<p>Gender - Students: 7 females, 1 male; LACYP in school: 4 females, 2 males; Care leavers left school: 1 female, 8 male</p> <p>Age - Students: age range 18 – 30; LACYP in school: aged 14 – 17; Care leavers left school: aged 17 - 24</p> <p>Ethnicity - Students: 6 White British, 1 Asian British, 1 Afghanistani; LACYP in school: 6 White British; Care leavers left school: 9 White British</p>
<p>Relevant themes</p>	<p>Theme 1 The importance of internal factors - The first significant theme was the importance of internal factors which included self-determination to succeed and escape their background, wanting to prove people wrong, resilience, having an end goal, keeping focused and being stubborn to succeed against the odds. One participant in focus group one summed this up by saying ‘Look into the future, not into the past’ while student Maria, studying early years teaching, reflected: "I'm very determined... there's never been a time that I can remember that I didn't want to be a teacher. I knew that I wanted it, and I was going to do it." "I was ambitious, I wanted to be the best that I could in order to get away from everything I'd seen and I'd been through." A further element of this internal drive was that of proving people wrong, ‘showing the world’ and a keenness to escape their backgrounds. This was strongly linked to agency, determination and strength of these young people which are all qualities helping them overcome earlier adversity. Tracy, studying Psychology, talked at length about her experience of being abused by her mother who suffered from mental health issues. She described being from a poor working class background but wishing to leave that behind and overcome the obstacles. She had high expectations for herself despite the extreme difficulties: "...in backgrounds like mine it is very normal to kind of just fall pregnant or go into a life of crime...drug addiction or gambling...Yeah I don't want to be like them."</p> <p>Theme 2 A second major theme emerged in relation to external factors, including having someone who believes in them and is positive, thereby instilling self-belief, being in a settled and long-term placement, and understanding that Higher Education attendance will lead to better prospects. Khaled, studying Social Work, summed up the first point well: "You can only be motivated if somebody's motivating you...it was me, but it was them that helped me." The value of a settled placement and forming deep relationships with carers was exemplified by Paula, who studied Criminology. She described the impact of this stability by stating: "It's benefited my life...I never wanted to disappoint them or upset them." Significant external people who helped with educational aspirational identified by the participants included carers, teachers, personal advisors (for care leavers), social workers, family members, and a school counsellor. This wide range of people provided encouragement, instilled self-belief and gave practical help and support to the young people in care. Khaled, who lived in residential home after arriving in England as a refugee from Afghanistan remembered a particular key worker at the home who: "helped me so much. He used to sit down with me and he used to study with me. And that encouraged me to learn more and more. Karen recalled an English teacher at school who spotted her talent in English, and who consequently: "was just literally helping me throughout the process, because my application for uni and college was so hard."</p> <p>Theme 3 a third related theme that emerged from this study is the link between care experience and course choice. Six of our eight student participants chose courses which could be said to be related to their early and care experiences (two psychology, one social work, one youth and community, one criminology, one early years teaching). This strong relationship between care experiences and course choice was articulated by four interview participants and several of the focus group members. Aiden, a member of the university staff involved in supporting care experienced students and himself care experienced reflected: "I often find that care leavers...tend to go into caring professions." In this next extract Khaled explains why he wishes to become a social worker: "In future hopefully when I become a social worker then I can reflect back on my experiences and then... I've been through the situation and I know how the young person, the child, will be feeling at that moment. I know because I felt that way."</p> <p>Theme 4</p>

The findings indicate that once care experienced young people arrive in Higher Education, there can be a tendency to assume this is a success in itself and that no further support work is needed. Aiden summed this up by stating: "In social work terms, we think when students progress to university, job done! He went on to highlight how ongoing support is essential to retain care experienced young people in Higher Education. The participants in our study identified four key areas they needed help with: ongoing mental health issues, continuity of care, accommodation and finance. Each will be discussed in turn. First, it was clear that some participants were continuing to deal with their emotional and mental health difficulties arising from their childhood experiences as they moved into their late teens and twenties. "There are lots of issues with young people in care around abandonment or loss. They lose their birth family, they lose their parents, they lose their friends, they often move multiple times."; "it makes it absolutely harder for somebody like me... who suffers from anxiety, to be able to succeed to an equivalent level as somebody else who didn't have those experiences." Secondly, lack of continuity of care was identified as a significant issue. Nicola, studying Nutrition, commented that she had difficulties with this once she moved to study at University, and her relationship with her foster carers fundamentally changed: " Yeah, I lived with them right up until I moved to uni, but in my case pretty much once their funding stops so did the parenting. I just felt like a lodger. Thus there is a danger that even where young people have experienced stable, settled and supportive foster or care home environments, they may be quickly propelled into much more independent and isolating circumstances, leaving them vulnerable to loneliness and loss of support networks. A third area where this group of students needed ongoing support related to accommodation, especially during the holiday periods. This was particularly important within their first year and first term. Nicola explained: "It was difficult to explain why I wasn't home at Christmas, why I was in [city] for Christmas Day." The fourth issue identified by the participants related to finance. Tom, one of the staff members from the university central support team for widening participation, stated that: "On the financial level, it's difficult, because I think that care-experienced young people are often quite cash-rich, because there are grants and bursaries available. But...often the care leavers will want to save that money and put it away for the future, because financial stability is something that might have been lacking in their lives." Shamila, studying Youth and Community Work, captured this dilemma, as well as the issue of having to learn how to budget once she received her funding in a lump sum, when she stated that: "This whole loan thing and paying your own rent it was really hard for me. I mean, I'm probably better off, but I kind of felt like 'Oh my God, if I don't pay my rent, this big amount, how am I going to make it last?' So that's been hard. That's what I'm learning. Finance was a factor identified by several participants and particularly the importance of ongoing financial support. Student Maria exemplifies this by explaining why this is central: 'because I have to pay for everything myself, and the cost of living and everything'. Taken together, the four key areas of need found in our study - mental health, continuity of care, accommodation and finance, represent a potentially toxic mix of complex and overwhelming stressors, especially as it is possible that care experienced students can find themselves grappling with more than one or even all four of these issues simultaneously

Theme 5

Participants identified a number of supportive factors during their studies at university. Ruth's assertion that 'you need somebody to try and help make you aware that you have needs, and that it is okay to have those needs' acts as a relevant starting point. In other words, recognising one's needs and having those needs validated is an important first step in gaining support. The first significant source of support identified by the participants was the personal tutor at university, so long as they were supportive, accepting and offered ongoing pastoral support. Karen valued her personal tutor for: "listening and not belittling me...she treated me like an adult and didn't ask for more details...it was nice to have that adult relationship." Tracy and Shamila emphasised the importance of having a personal tutor who knew them well and reacted quickly to sudden changes. Tracy stated her personal tutor: "has always known me as a very ambitious, proactive, high-achieving student who will never miss a session...suddenly this year I just stopped. She was the first one to notice...she was asking if I was okay." Secondly, a further university-based source of support, described by Nicola was the central University wellbeing team. She reflected on how she found support with her ongoing mental health issues from this team: "I got involved with them quite recently because I hadn't had any support since I left home with my mental health. And I found that really useful." Other university staff were also identified as helpful, usually particular subject tutors who took an interest in the student's progress. Thirdly, the role of other students in being friendly and supportive was also mentioned by some participants. This informal source of support provided valued help to complete assignments to a good standard as described by Khaled: "this particular person...he'll tell me in detail what to do and what not to do. And that's another kind of support." Nicola, who stayed in her university city for Christmas as she was unable to return to her foster home during the holiday period, went on to describe how this situation was rescued: "one of my flatmates stayed home and he made us Christmas dinner, which was quite nice." She went on to say that this was important, as she may have been on her own at this important holiday period. These two examples illustrate the importance of universities have robust induction programmes that allow new students to get to know others in their cohort or year of study, who can then act as informal yet significant sources of support. Fourthly, the ongoing support of the carer was also important for some participants, while others mentioned the role of local authority workers such as personal advisors. For instance, Paula recalled receiving help with her final year project from a member of staff from the Care Leavers' Council she attended. She contacted him in something of a panic, and she recalled: "the guy...was like 'Right, so you break it down. Stop stressing, you'll be fine.' Whenever I spoke to him, he'd ask me how I was getting on." Taken together, all of the above examples reflect the importance placed by participants on receiving practical as well as emotional support. Tom described how he encourages care experienced students to take on a student ambassador role

within the university which he has seen: "gives them really very strong employability skills. It's unlikely that care experienced students will have the same networks...that you can talk to and get work experience. So we try to really skill them up."

Theme 6

Finally, students repeated their belief that their own positivity and determination played no small part in their success at university. Ruth summed this position up well by saying 'I have just this burning thing that I will not let my past get in the way', while Nicola articulated it as a desire to control her own destiny: "When you're in foster care you don't know what it's like to be in control...you don't know what it's like to live your life until you get away from that."

Risk of Bias

Section	Question	Answer
Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes
Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes
Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes
Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes
Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Yes
Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes
Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Can't tell <i>(Method of thematic analysis was not described in detail)</i>

Section	Question	Answer
Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes (<i>triangulation with a literature review was performed</i>)
Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research is valuable
Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	Moderate
	Directness	Directly applicable

Quarmby 2014

Study type	Semi structured interviews Subgroup of interest Residential children's home
Aim of study	(1) What are the sport and physical activity experiences of looked-after children? (2) What meanings and values do looked-after children ascribe to their engagement in sport and physical activity?
Study location	UK
Study setting	One residential home in England
Study methods	A "mosaic approach": a participatory, multi-method approach whereby young people's own research artefacts (photographs, maps, drawings, etc.) are joined to talk and observations to gain a deeper understanding of their perspectives and everyday lives. In order to maintain the participatory nature of the research methods, the discussions of these artefacts were led by the

	<p>participants themselves and formed the basis of peer interviewing. the interview questions were developed in collaboration with the participants, meaning the language and terminology employed was accessible to all of the boys, with topics that reflected the issues that the peer researchers perceived to be critical within the overall frame of research. The resulting discussions were recorded and later transcribed. Peer interview texts, research artefact discussions, observations and field notes were thematically analysed. Since analysis was conducted immediately after a data collection session, participants were asked during the following week to comment on transcriptions.</p>
Population	looked-after children living in residential care
Study dates	February and July 2013
Sources of funding	Not reported
Inclusion Criteria	<p>Care Situation Looked after children living in residential care</p>
Exclusion criteria	None reported
Sample characteristics	<p>Sample size four looked after children in residential care</p> <p>Gender All boys</p> <p>Age Aged between 12 and 17</p>
Relevant themes	<p>Theme 1 Disruptive impact of changes in placement and schools on involvement in sporting activities - Changes in placements and consequently schools mean that for the majority of looked-after children, school attendance is problematic (Murray, 2012). As such, looked-after children often miss out on school-based sporting activities and are more dependent on out-of-school activities than other children. What is apparent in this study is that changes in placement may also impact on engagement with sport and physical activity outside of school. For example, during one peer interview about his sport timeline (Figure 1), Matt revealed to Adam that placement moves and subsequent changes in residential home have prevented him playing sport regularly with his cousin, who now lives further away than previously: "Adam: Why did you stop any sports or activities? Matt: Most of them because I,</p>

most of them were in school so, obviously I've moved school loads so I've stopped playing them now and I stopped playing rugby with my cousin cos he lives too far away now that I've moved again." Echoed in the voices of Nathan and Pete were further examples of the impact of placement instability. During their discussions of their timelines both reported that moving home was a reason for disengaging from sport and physical activity. Pete, for instance, indicated that he stopped horse riding because he moved care homes and later suggested that this was also a reason why he stopped dance. "Pete: Erm, the dancing is the best so far yeah, so far yeah, but erm I stopped it for two years and I'm gonna be starting it back up again Nathan: Why did you stop it for two years? Pete: I quit because I moved home so couldn't get there anymore and now I'm starting again hopefully in a few weeks' time... at a different place though." During his peer interview with Pete, Nathan also discussed the impact that placement moves have had on his engagement with sport, though unlike the others, he has been fortunate enough to pick up those activities again: 'Yeah, I have stopped football and scouts because I've had to move, but erm, I think I've been lucky to start it again quite quickly but at a different place with people I don't know'.

Theme 2

Lack of agency in schedules with residential homes limiting agency to engage in certain activities - it was evident that agency for these looked-after children was a constant struggle with the broader structures of the field that shaped their lives. For instance, early observations (detailed below) of the children's home indicate that specific rules and routines impact on young people's ability to engage in certain activities: "On several occasions today I witnessed the boys asking permission of care home staff to stay out later, play at the park or go biking with friends after school only to be told that they need to let staff know, the day before (before an allotted time), if they wanted to stay out later. This then needed to be negotiated with the care home manager and recorded on the weekly timetable. However, since dinner is usually served at 17.30, this would mean that the boys needed to be back by then anyway which gave them little time to engage in any sport or physical activity. (Field note entry)" While a lack of time was previously reported to be a key factor restricting leisure activities (including sports and physical activities) (Hollingworth, 2012), like these initial findings, this may result from structural and organisational policies (Gay, Dowda, Saunders, & Evans, 2011). For instance, having to eat evening meals at set times and needing to negotiate time for activities with staff. This was similarly reported by Adam: "Matt: What do you do now and why? Adam: I do biking and cricket inside of school, which I want to do on Wednesdays if I can ask staff if they'll let me. But, it's on Wednesday after school so I probably won't do it; I'll probably just do it out here with Matt [pointing to outside of the house]." This exchange demonstrated Adam's reluctance to ask staff if he could engage in a new activity not currently 'scheduled' for him.

Theme 3

Sport to help develop social networks - Perhaps the biggest 'selling point' for sport and physical activity is that such activities may offer marginalised young people, such as looked-after children, an opportunity to reintegrate into mainstream society and develop social networks. This notion of developing relational networks was evident here whereby sport and physical activity was valued for its instrumental value and as a means to an end. For instance, in his target activity (Figure 2), Pete placed spending time with friends as the most important reason for engaging in sport and physical activity, with 'sport for fun' as one of the least important reasons. During a discussion of his artefact, Pete further commented that: "My most important one, which is on the bulls eye or as call it, which I call it the red spot is to spend time with friends cos I normally spend time alone so first, is to spend time with friends because you have to get, you need to know what they're like and how they, and err you need to know what they're like and what are their favourite hobbies and food and they need to know anything about you. The second is to burn off energy and help my body... The very last one is to have fun." Matt, Adam and Nathan voiced spending time with others as a main reason for engaging in sport and physical activity: "Nathan: Err ... well mainly err that one [pointing to 'to keep my heart pumping'] and definitely that one [pointing to 'to spend time with friends'] cos you would spend time with your friends cos it's normally better. Spend time with your friends cos then you get in there and fit as well and you're getting yourself more exercise. Matt: Yeah, because when I was younger, I didn't do sport a lot but it was good to try and make friends... so I did play to try and make friends."

	Section	Question	Answer
Risk of Bias	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes

Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes
Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes <i>(However, no discussion regarding why some participants chose not to take part)</i>
Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes <i>(However no justification of the setting or saturation of data)</i>
Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Yes
Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes
Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes
Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes <i>(Respondent validation was used)</i>
Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research has some value <i>(The work represents the experiences of only four boys living in one residential care home, therefore there are some generalisability issues.)</i>
Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	Low
	Directness	Directly applicable

Roberts 2017

Study type	Semi structured interviews Evaluation of an intervention Letterbox intervention
Aim of study	A qualitative evaluation exploring how and why the letter box intervention did not achieve greater impact
Study location	UK
Study setting	Participants who took part in a randomised controlled trial of the letterbox intervention, a book gifting intervention for children involved in foster care. In England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. This qualitative study took place in Northern Ireland.
Study methods	Semi-structured interviews were conducted. These took place at the foster carers homes. The carers' interview schedule consisted of a series of questions which aimed to look at the use of the parcels in the house and the general literacy environment. interviews were recorded using a smart pen, which recorded audio data and written data. Data was transferred from the recording pen after each interview. Once all the interviews had been transcribed a thematic analysis approach to the analysis was undertaken.
Population	Children in foster care and their foster carers
Study dates	between 2013 and 2014
Sources of funding	Not reported
Inclusion Criteria	Involvement in an intervention

	Involvement in a randomised controlled trial of the letterbox intervention
Exclusion criteria	None reported
Sample characteristics	<p>Sample size 20 foster children and 11 foster carers</p> <p>Type of care three were in kinship care and 17 in foster care</p> <p>Gender Nine male, 11 female</p> <p>Age Ranged from age 4 to 6</p>
Relevant themes	<p>Theme 1 Developing a sense of ownership - In operationalising the concept of 'ownership', or, in this case, how the books might create a sense of ownership, the term appears, from the written material, to comprise a number of components: being present when the books arrive at the home; emotions at the time of arrival and opening of the parcels; and a place to store and access the books. "Ian: I love getting mail Researcher: If you were at home what did you do? Ian: I got it straight away because I love getting mail Researcher: Oh do you? Ian: Yes - I always look to see if there's something for me in there"</p> <p>Theme 2 Important role of the carer in explaining what the parcels are - On further exploration, our research revealed that a number of factors might contribute to feelings of excitement as indicated below: "Researcher:Why do you think that you love getting mail? Ian: Because of the excitement that there might be something special for me, like a letter from my mummy or something. Although how shewould get our address I don't know, I don't randomly go around giving my address to people or something." This example alludes to the important role of the carer in explaining what the parcels are,where they come from,who they come from, how the address has been obtained and provision of reassurance that that there are 'no strings attached' to the receipt of the free gift. Rather than the sense of ownership spontaneously arising on receipt of a parcel in the post, our research indicated that the emergence and growth of feelings of ownership was more a process over time, growing if sufficiently nurtured by the adult carers. Hence, where carers: showed an active interest in the arrival of the parcel and its contents and encouraged children to choose the best storage space these actions appeared to strengthen, support and legitimize the child's sense of ownership. Particular examples included children keepingmaterials in a designated bookcase or cupboard either in their bedrooms or in a central location, typically with other books, for the whole house to use and enjoy. On the other hand, where these supportive activities around the arrival of the books appear to have been less pronounced or did not take place (often through lack of time and competing demands) some children put the contents back into the envelope after each use and three of the children specifically stated that they kept the books in the envelopes all of the time. When asked why one child expressed worried about the perceived repercussions if they lost the parcel and another that they were not sure if the parcel was a gift or a loan. We also heard from children who handed to friends, neighbours and other family members, books from their parcels and who had not formed a sense of ownership. In exploring this it is clear that sense of ownership is inextricably linked to a child's understanding about the parcels and the carers own levels of support to the child in nurturing their sense of ownership.</p> <p>Theme 3 Range of responses of the children (attitude) - Some children had a positive attitude towards the parcels, were delighted to receive a free gift and took this on face value accepting it for what it was – a free gift to them, for them and to be used by them. Other children had a less positive attitude. Some appeared embarrassed at receiving a parcel, especially where</p>

there were birth children of similar ages in the home who had obviously not received a free gift; children who were guarded in their responses to the free gift thinking that it came with strings attached or hidden messages from home; and children who were indifferent either because they had enough books at home, or preferred to engage with forms of reading including computers, iPads and or kindles. The implicit assumptions behind the parcels, that children will be grateful at receiving the book gift; and that they are (book) deprived, hungry to read, grateful and ready to learn; were not always evident in the accounts of the children. In fact, it was found that, in reality, some children were not comfortable receiving free gifts and that others were 'book burdened'. Some foster children had a wide variety of materials and a lack of time for reading.

Theme 4

Engagement - In this research when the term 'engagement' was operationalised, it was clear that this was a combination of having a sense of ownership and a positive attitude both of which are processes rather than one off responses and both of which are supported and nurtured by adult carers and a receptive social context. It is not surprising that given wide variation in the sense of ownership and attitudes held by children towards the parcels that their levels of engagement also varied. This research found that children's reasons for engaging with the parcels, their motivation is closely aligned to their understanding from their carers as to what the parcels are for, where they come from, who sent them and why – that is children benefit from hearing about and being reassured about the motivations of the sender.

Theme 5

Engagement - book content - A child's motivation to engage is also affected by more practical considerations such as parcel content. Importantly Dr. Griffiths, the programme creator stated in our interview with her that the packs were not designed to please '100% of the children 100% of the time', rather there were books which were selected to appeal to a wide variety of children and which would help open children to new genres and new styles of writing. In reality, some children were left unimpressed with the choice of books. Almost all children had some books that they did not like. Similarly, some of the children had already read the books, and so were left with duplicates. For example, one child stated that 'I had already read that one' (Ruby), another said that 'I didn't like Chitty Chitty Bang Bang Flies Again' (Patricia). "I liked The Finger Eater because it was scary (Helen). In addition to mixed feelings about individual books there were a number of different responses to the level of texts provided. Some felt that the packs were: Too 'babyish'- 'umm I liked the... not like the reading books...but like the not reading books and like the other stuff I got. The reading books were too babyish (Jill)."In this example, the books were not read or used to their full potential because the child in question, who was an avid reader and who was very keen and able, felt that the books did not match either her ability level or her interest level. In this case the books were kept upstairs, or 'in a cupboard somewhere'. Others felt the books were too hard.

Theme 6

Engagement - understanding what to do - With regard to the Letterbox Club, one of the things that the programme implementers try to do is to include books which are aimed at the interest level of the child, however children do not have the same interest level, and that without the child's own input it appears increasingly difficult to decide what an individual will find interesting, irrespective of age or ability. Engagement also appears affected by a clear understanding of what to do with the parcel contents. This applies particularly to the stationery items and numeracy materials. In relation to the stationery items, most of the children reported enjoying them and using them in a variety of ways. Blank notebooks were popular with some children as they could do what they wanted with them. One child enthusiastically stated 'I LOVED them books!' (Nicola). Others said: "Me and (carer) uses them...for birthday cards and birthdays' (Oliver), 'I used the blank books for like, I used it to write- right now!musing it to write, because me and my cousin we made up a dance' (Ruby). However, other children reported not knowing what to do with the blank notebooks. One child said: 'I didn't know what actually I had to do,' (Mark), ' And another: Well...what were, you know, them jotter books actually for?' (Lisa)"

Theme 7

Hoarding and not using - Furthermore, the following extract with both a carer and child shows that, in this family, there was an abundance of stationery materials, which were seen as useful, hoarded and kept rather than given any real use by the child. In contrast, the carer took the view that the materials were not helpful for the child: "Researcher: And did you use the blank books and stationery? Debbie: Yeah Dawn: I just felt there was a surplus, and even the pencils and things, you would have lots of drawing things ,we have a drawer full of pencils so you didn't need them Debbie: Yeah but we needed the rubbers, we only had hardly any rubbers mum, sure they were all ripped and everything Dawn: I could say I could look at your pencil case and there is loads, I could put my hand on half a dozen rubbers."

Theme 8

Engagement with the maths games - Children's engagement with the math games also varied. There were some positive experiences: "Ruby: I liked the one where one person had a calculator and the other person had to try to add it up in their head as close as they could get it Helen: I loved bingo so I did, it was great! Kelly: Snakes and ladders, I liked that one

On the other hand, the following interview excerpt shows the feelings of one child who felt unable to engage with some of the math games: Researcher: What about the maths games? Ian: I didn't really play those Researcher: Why not? Ian: Sometimes I don't really have time to play the mand sometimes I don't really have anyone to play them with Researcher: did you look at them before you decided? Ian: I looked at them before I decided- I don't just completely brush off Researcher: so you looked and decided they weren't for you. Where did you put them? Ian: I just put them back in the thing Researcher: and do you still have them or did you give them to someone else? Ian: they are still somewhere but no one else would really want them."

Theme 9

Need for carer engagement with stationery items - It can be seen, as highlighted earlier, that levels of engagement are inextricably connected with the role of the carer. Here, below, the carer explains their approach to the stationery items: "Researcher: Now inside the parcels there was also blank books and stationery items inside - did you use any of them? Kelly: No, none of them Researcher: And why didn't you use those? Kelly: I don't know Kate (Carer): Because I don't allow any pens in the house because they always just write on the walls." Carer attitude towards and engagement with the parcels therefore had an impact on the levels and type of child engagement with the parcels. It was reported in our research that, in relation to the parcel contents, these were either kept 'just in case', in the hope they 'might play the mone day' or given to a charity shop (this was the case for two children), kept in a different location (this was the case for two children) and/or lost.

Theme 10

Ability - The findings of the RCT indicate that there were no statistically significant gains in relation to any of the outcome measures used namely: reading accuracy, rate and comprehension; reading enjoyment; and recreational reading. The qualitative findings help begin to explore why this might be the case. Four main points are important to highlight. First, children have expressed the view that they want to be more actively engaged in the book gifting process. Second, at its core, this scheme positions the child as 'hungry to read', yet there is little evidence to back that assumption. For many children reading was bolted on to lots of other events. Third, for those who did read, they used a range of modalities, including E-Readers, tablet computers and magazines. Fourth, the current focus of the programme is on the individual child and presupposes that the child's receipt of a gift alone will encourage ownership, promote a positive attitude, increase engagement and improve ability. However, findings from the qualitative study, illustrate that child factors (likes, dislikes; preferences; background factors; foster family context) and contextual factors (in particular the crucial role of adults in creating spaces, opportunities and supports for children to exercise their evolving capacities in relation to reading) impinge on the entire engagement process. Together these factors seem to suggest that it is important to use these findings in order to develop a theory of change which can help explain the programme, and translate this to a workable logic model which lays out the actual programme components).

Theme 11

Delivery of letterbox - In terms of the delivery of the Letterbox Club going forward there are a number of implications. In relation to the foster children and their evolving capacities, there is a wealth of evidence which highlights that learning to read and becoming a fluent reader requires effort and determination (Birch, 2014) and that 'the pursuit of knowledge [will not continue] unless the reader realises some personal gratification or internal reward from this engagement' (Alexander & Jetton, 2000, p.296). The logic model could draw attention to small changes that could be made to the Letterbox Club to support children's choice and participation. The packs, for example, could contain a pre-paid postcard that asks children to review/ rate the books in order to influence future packs for other children and help the child, as recipient, feel more involved. More substantive changes to delivery might also help. As indicated earlier, our research highlighted that children now read books in a range of formats rather than just hard copy. By engaging with children's increasing thirst for new technology, programme creators and funders could give children a device and a gift card which would allow them to source their preferred reading material and read it electronically.

Theme 12

Involvement and participation - Building on the theme of children's involvement and participation, their lack of choice was something which nearly all those children included in the study felt should be changed. In particular, they wanted books which were more closely aligned with their interests and ability and which they could choose themselves. The development of a logic model, that allows children to choose what they read has been deemed important and so by including an 'order form' with each parcel for example, children would be able to choose what they read from a pre-selected list, an important aspect of the reading process which would also allow them to feel a greater sense of ownership towards the books. Furthermore, children have indicated that they would like to have more information about why, how, by what means Letterbox parcels arrive at their home. The role of the carer in relation to this issue may need to be more clearly defined.

Theme 13			
Foster carer engagement - Building on the point about foster carer engagement, many of the carers involved were enthusiastic and competent, however lacked the knowledge about what to do and when to do it. The development of a logic model could delineate component parts of the foster carer role building on recent related research findings regarding individual tutoring (Flynn, Marquis, Paquet, Peeke, & Aubry, 2012) which have shown that, with training and guidance to carers/volunteers, the delivery of a regular tutoring programme over a number of weeks for a set period of time, supports children to make gains in reading in a relatively short space of time. Similarly, paired reading is an approach which has gleaned positive results for this group of children (Osborne, Alfano, & Winn, 2010; Tordön, Vinnerljung, & Axelsson, 2014) More generally carers could be asked to record what is read, when it is read, with whom and how long. Shared with the child involved, these records may encourage them to see the importance of reading regularly. In addition, reading records allow for child focused evaluation of the book choices and knowledge building around reading levels. Carers could also be asked to read an information leaflet giving tips on how to read with children and why it is important.			
Risk of Bias	Section	Question	Answer
	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	No <i>(There was no clear statement of the aims of this research)</i>
	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes
	Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes
	Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes <i>(However, no discussion regarding why/if some participants chose not to take part)</i>
	Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes <i>(However, no discussion regarding saturation of data)</i>
	Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't tell <i>(No indication that the researcher has examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location)</i>

	Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes
	Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes <i>(However, unclear if researcher critically examine their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation)</i>
	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Can't tell <i>(Unclear if credibility of findings has been taken into account in the design of the study e.g. use of triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst)</i>
	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research is valuable <i>(However findings relate to one intervention (letterbox))</i>
	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	Moderate
		Directness	Directly applicable

Schofield 2015

Study type	Semi structured interviews
	RQ2
	Mixed methods

Aim of study	To examine the risk and resilience profiles of young people in care who offend, including the role of social cognition characteristics (emotion recognition and hostile and benign attribution bias).
Study location	UK
Study setting	Four UK local authorities from different regions were approached to participate in the study, providing a diverse context: two urban authorities with ethnically diverse populations and two shire counties.
Study methods	The interviews with the sample of 100 young people combined a semi-structured narrative interview, focusing on a range of life experiences, with standardised social cognition and language measures. In the narrative interviews each young person was asked about their experiences of school, college and work; where they were living; who they were living with; what they did in their spare time; friends; offending; contact with birth family (if in care); their experience of professionals; and their plans for the future. This qualitative interview data was analysed thematically, coding from the data, but also drawing on the risk and resilience factors discussed above e.g. close relationships, self esteem and self efficacy.
Population	Looked after children with offending history, looked after children without offending history,
Study dates	2013
Sources of funding	Big Lottery Research Programme
Inclusion Criteria	<p>Age The target age range was 15–17</p> <p>Care Situation Looked after children in contact with the youth justice system; and looked after children without involvement in the justice system. 'Looked after children' were defined as young people who were looked after by the local authority through a care order or voluntarily accommodated under section 20 (Children Act 1989) for at least 12 months.</p>
Exclusion criteria	None reported

<p>Sample characteristics</p>	<p>Sample size 33 looked after children offenders, 35 looked after children non-offenders</p> <p>Type of care Referred young people were in a range of placements e.g. residential care, foster care, secure unit, and semi-independent living.</p> <p>Gender A gender ratio of 70:30 boys to girls</p> <p>Age age 14–19 (Mean = 17 y, SD = 1 year)</p> <p>Ethnicity an average of 36% black and minority ethnicity (BME) young people across the three groups, with no differences between groups</p>
<p>Relevant themes</p>	<p>Theme 1 The key protective elements that emerged from the interviews with the three groups and were supported by the case file histories can be grouped into two broad areas — the importance of positive, trusting relationships and the role of constructive activities, such as school, leisure interests or employment.</p> <p>Theme 2 The group of looked after children who were not offenders, and some who had previously offended but then desisted, were able to articulate both their own sense of progress in these areas, but also the connection to the quality of care they had received. Underlying these young people's capacity to take advantage of relationships and activity was their ability to reflect on and regulate emotions and behaviour.</p> <p>Theme 3 Positive activities - For a care population, a sense of belonging is also an important factor in reducing anxiety and supporting pro-social behaviour. The positive activities described included school, college and diverse sports and hobbies, but all were linked to relationships with teachers, foster carers, residential workers and peers who encouraged and supported young people to find success and enjoyment in pro-social activity.</p> <p>Theme 4 Positive relationships - For the looked after young people who were not offenders and who appeared more stable in placement and in education, the quality of their relationships was central to their development. In this example, it is clear that for young people, sustaining trust in supportive relationships and making prosocial moral choices are linked to support for the capacity to reflect on feelings and behaviour. "My carer (name) she's really nice and supportive and would help me through anything really. I've been here for seven years now. For me it's the best foster home I could have been to. She certainly helped me progress through school and everything. If I was ever in trouble and didn't know anything she'd always be there to back me up and ask why I done it and talked to me... She'd sit me down and say it wasn't a very acceptable thing to have done, what could you have done to be more positive? [16, male, LAC non-offender]" In other cases, relationships are clearly linked to building self-esteem and self-efficacy, enabling children to function more effectively outside as well as within the foster family. "I praise (my foster carers) so much — you just cannot get any better, they are the best ones going. What sort of things do they help you out with? Just everything...it's like emotional support, school life, education wise, friends, they help me to manage my money, how to live my life. They teach you all the basics and more. [15, male, LAC non-offender]"</p>

	<p>Theme 5 Residential care relationships can also form a turning point for benefit - Although positive foster care stories predominated amongst nonoffenders, residential care could also provide the turning point that enabled young people to go on to greater stability or to benefit from foster care. In this example, the secure base nature of the relationship (i.e. where trust promotes the capacity to explore) is evident — and the wonder in the natural world that this inspired in this boy continued throughout his adolescence. This is his account as a 15 year old, now in stable long-term foster care, of an expedition with a residential worker when he was 11. "It's amazing what's out there... There was seals in a river that goes out to the sea and it has this wall with all seaweed and a little bit of sand and he said, 'Here, look, do you think there's any life in them rocks?' and we would say 'No, there can't be nothing'...we used to go all through the rocks and find all this weird stuff like crabs and other stuff, it's just amazing. [15, male, LAC non-offender]"</p> <p>Theme 6 Reconciling the past to benefit from relationships on offer – For many of these more resilient teenagers, it was often the case that coming to terms with their family history allowed them to benefit from the relationships on offer and to develop a sense of belonging as a family member. "I wasn't a good child because my birth family never showed me any love...I was always angry, all the time, and then (foster mother) she saw what was going on and she knew, so she gave me love and she gave me what every mother should give their daughter and I changed my ways and now I don't do drugs or anything bad like that. [16, female, LAC non-offender]" This teenage girl is able to provide a coherent narrative that takes account of her foster mother's feelings and behaviour, and explains the association with improvement in her own behaviour.</p>		
Risk of Bias	Section	Question	Answer
	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes
	Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes
	Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes <i>(However, no discussion regarding whether/why some participants chose not to take part)</i>
	Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Can't tell <i>(Setting not justified; the researcher has not made the methods explicit; form of data unclear; no discussion of saturation of data)</i>

	Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't tell <i>(Unclear that researcher has critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location)</i>
	Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes
	Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Can't tell <i>(There was no in-depth description of the analysis process; unclear if sufficient data to support findings/extent of contradictory findings; unclear that researchers critically examine their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation)</i>
	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Can't tell <i>(No apparent discussion of the credibility of the qualitative findings in terms of triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst)</i>
	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research is valuable
	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	High
		Directness	Directly applicable

Sidery 2019

Study type	Semi structured interviews
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	Subgroup of interest UAS
Aim of study	to attain the carers' perspectives on the resource and support needs particular to caring for Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers
Study location	UK
Study setting	a semi-rural county in the South West of England with a considerably lower level of ethnic diversity than the national average
Study methods	Semi-structured interviews. Participants chose the locations of the interviews; most took place in carers' homes or at the local refugee support agency. Interviews lasted between 50 minutes and one hour and 40 minutes. Carers were interviewed about the needs of the unaccompanied young people previously or currently in their care and their perception of their preparedness for fostering them. They were also asked about their views on what training, support and resources had been, or would have been, useful to them. The interviews were transcribed verbatim. A process of inductive thematic analysis was then applied to the transcriptions to identify themes arising from the data.
Population	Foster carers with experience of fostering unaccompanied young people
Study dates	2016–2017
Sources of funding	None reported
Inclusion Criteria	Carer situation local foster carers with experience of fostering at least one unaccompanied young person
Exclusion criteria	None reported

Sample characteristics	<p>Sample size 11 foster carers</p> <p>Time in care Participants had been fostering between two months and over 20 years and had looked after between one and 20 unaccompanied young people each, predominantly male, in a mixture of emergency, respite and longterm placements.</p> <p>Gender four men and seven women</p> <p>Ethnicity One carer was Asian and the other 10 were British</p>
Relevant themes	<p>Theme 1 Different from fostering in general - Ten of the 11 foster carers interviewed had experience of fostering both unaccompanied young people and others from the local area. Each of them emphasised that the needs of unaccompanied young people had differed considerably from those of others they had fostered. Indeed, there was a sense of 'otherness' commonly reflected in carers' narratives, which framed looking after unaccompanied young people as 'signing-up' for a different kind of task from fostering in general.</p> <p>Theme 2 Five main areas of need - Carers' reflections on the needs of the unaccompanied young people they had cared for drew attention to five common areas of need: (1) cultural needs, including those pertaining to religion and food; (2) needs related to adjusting to life in England, e.g. learning to use a new currency and engaging in the English education system; (3) communication needs resulting from language barriers; (4) advocacy needs often related to accessing services; and (5) needs pertaining to the asylum seeking process, including recovery from trauma, emotional support and practical assistance to attend appointments.</p> <p>Theme 3 Need for training - Carers' reflections on their initial experiences of fostering unaccompanied young people indicated that many of these needs had been unfamiliar to them in the sense that they had not been anticipated, or that they had felt unsure how to meet them in practice. As one carer commented: "For someone who's from a completely different country, I think the foster carers should have a lot more support." At the time of the study, none of the carers had been offered the opportunity to attend any training about fostering unaccompanied young people in particular. Ten of the 11 carers proposed that a course specifically focusing on this topic was very much needed. Three carers articulated a sense of abandonment by their respective fostering services regarding the lack of training and preparation they had received: "Food, culture, language, you have no training whatsoever. These children are brought to you. The social worker comes back in a week, 'Are they OK?' or maybe phones, 'How are they?' Comes back in a week to see how they are, then they have a review within a couple of weeks. You have nothing. A lot of carers say we've just literally had the children placed here and we don't know what to do next."</p> <p>Theme 4 Contents of training - Several carers referred to rumours or misinformation being perpetuated by carers and social workers in the area about particular challenges – or conversely relative ease – associated with fostering unaccompanied young people. Correspondingly, there was a strong emphasis placed on needing to have a clear, honest and well-informed overview of fostering unaccompanied young people in the context of training: "I think we need training of what looking after an asylum seeker incurs, you know, the court process, the travelling, food, where they pray, Ramadan." Training about the asylum seeking process was frequently proposed as being essential: "I think you do need to know that little bit of background [regarding the asylum seeking process] because that's all going on in their mind. All the time." Several carers wanted training on potential cultural and religious differences and the expectations around family life that unaccompanied young people may hold. A range of additional topics for training were proposed by smaller numbers of carers and related to specific challenges they had each encountered. These included: assisting young people in learning English, communicating across language barriers, how to open a</p>

bank account, dealing with particular health needs, supporting access to education, providing emotional support following Home Office interviews, supporting those who have suffered multiple bereavements and caring for young people with post traumatic stress disorder.

Theme 5

Who should deliver the training - A clear message that stood out from the interviews was that carers wanted training to be delivered by people with relevant expertise. Those they saw as fitting this description included people who work with asylum seekers, foster carers who have fostered this group over a long period and young people themselves. One carer suggested, for example, that training about the legal process be delivered by a foster carer with experience of supporting multiple young people through this together with a young person who could share their first-hand experience of the process.

Theme 6

How much training - Carers tended to suggest that all of the key topics could be covered in one training session. Those who considered the frequency of training to be important shared the view that any course should run repeatedly through the year. One highlighted the benefits of this in terms of increasing the likelihood of carers being able to access the training before taking responsibility for an unaccompanied young person. Others emphasised the value of being able to attend a training session more than once, as a 'refresher' when needed.

Theme 7

Implications of not having training/information (lack of preparation) - Carers' reflections highlighted some of the implications of not having had training or some other form of introductory preparation. Most recalled knowing very little, if anything, about unaccompanied asylum seeking young people before their first placement. A prominent theme was not knowing quite what to expect before the young person arrived: "Well, I'll tell you the very first thing, when Adeel 1 came, we had no idea [what to expect]. This was our first asylum seeker. I looked up [online] about the unaccompanied children . . . it was a lot of research in a very short time. So, I don't think I really had any expectations. . . I had no idea. [After being given a few hours' notice that an unaccompanied young person was coming into placement with her]" Only two out of the 11 carers described feeling somewhat prepared the first time they had an unaccompanied young person arrive in placement. Of those two, one had some previous experience of working with asylum seeking children abroad and the other had intentionally set out to learn quite extensively about countries where unaccompanied young people commonly come from, why they leave, characteristics of their journeys and the needs they might have. Still, both referred to a level of apprehension around the 'unknown' aspects of a young person arriving in placement. One carer commented: "We don't know what they've been through, we don't know what their background is or their family or anything, do we. So we do take a big risk in taking them." Five carers alluded to a similar sense of risk they had felt before a young person arrived, largely related to the limited information known about them.

Theme 8

Fears associated with the "unknown" - Another carer referred to the 'fear of the unknown' in a broader sense: fostering an unaccompanied young person was her first experience of caring for a young person from another country and from a religion with which she was unfamiliar. She recalled her initial impression, before she had fostered an unaccompanied young person herself: "Maybe it's because I was a single carer, I was a bit frightened of the unknown, not having come across Muslims at all to be honest. Where I live there isn't a mixed culture. So . . . it's sort of the unknown isn't it a little bit. But I would definitely have one again." Initially, when she had provided respite for an unaccompanied young person for the first time, one of her relatives had expressed concern: "Cath: She was particularly concerned about my safety. Now you see, but that again, I was a single carer having a foreign person, a refugee . . . how do I . . . Interviewer: Was she concerned about your safety in terms of fostering generally? As in, you could have young people with quite complex backgrounds. Cath: No. . . Interviewer: So it was something to do with the unknown aspect. . . Cath: It was the unknown of having a refugee. Yeah. Definitely. And that is fear of the unknown, isn't it? Luckily, he was such a presentable young man, everyone who met him . . . Interviewer: Was won over? Cath: Completely! I mean he's extremely good looking, with a wonderful smile and very, very polite. So yeah, they were won over by him. Straight away."

Theme 9

Negative views of others and the surrounding culture - Having bridged the 'unknown', her sense of fear had subsided. However, she spoke of being very conscious of those she talked to about fostering him, because controversies over immigration had been in the media a lot at the time. Negative attitudes expressed by others within the local community were referred to by carers in two other interviews. Seven carers cited the news, often war reports, as being their only initial source of knowledge about the countries the unaccompanied young people came from. In some instances, false expectations had been influenced by the media. As one couple recalled: 'We were expecting a Syrian refugee. Coz that's what you hear on the media really.'

Theme 10

Resources for information - the internet - Although one carer mentioned not having time to look for resources online, carers in six of the eight interviews referred to searching on the internet for information. Most commonly, they had sought to learn about particular countries, cultures and religions but some also spoke of searching to find out about unaccompanied young people in general. For the majority of carers, it was after receiving a phone call asking them to provide an emergency or respite placement that they had started to look for information. This was often at short notice and the internet had been an easily accessible resource for quick research: 'When I was asked to have them on respite, I was frantically looking up things.' While some valuable facts and guidance had been found, the usefulness of information discovered on the internet had been limited in two ways. Firstly, on occasion carers had formed expectations about young people based on information they had learned online that were very generalised and did not take into account the uniqueness of each young person's preferences. For example, one carer recounted that having read that Muslims eat Halal food, she had gone to great lengths to find and use Halal meat for the young person in her care. However, after some time, she realised that he regularly ate non-Halal food away from home; when she asked him about this he explained that he did not need to be so restricted in his diet. Further limitations of the internet as a resource were apparent in scenarios where information that carers found online conflicted with what young people had told them about their religious or cultural needs or wishes. Three carers gave examples of this. One, who had fostered predominantly Muslim unaccompanied young people, described how she had managed to build a relationship with someone at a local mosque who had been able to help her to navigate this type of challenge: "There's another little holiday of about 12 days – well, not a holiday. It's like Ramadan but it's not. And at the end there's another Eid. Well, I had no idea what that was. So trying to find out, and actually I've got another friend who had a friend at the mosque and I'm like right, OK, so I've discovered lots of contacts of my own that I can then speak to and ask for advice. Coz they were also, they weren't eating at that time either. They were fasting. And when I looked it up on the internet, I couldn't see that they should be fasting. So I was really confused as to why they were doing this. [I later understood that] they had missed some days in the original Ramadan."

Theme 11

Sources of information - Refugee Support Organisations - Around half of the carers referred to a local refugee support project as a prominent local source of information regarding the legal process, religion, culture and family tracing opportunities. In this respect, two carers referred to it as 'a Godsend' and 'a lifeline'. One commented that they were lucky to live in a town with this type of a project. Not all carers had been aware of this resource when they first started fostering unaccompanied young people. Carers who had accessed this organisation for information also spoke about attending group sessions there, specifically hosted for foster carers to be able to discuss and learn about fostering unaccompanied young people. Two couples and a single carer in particular had highly valued the opportunity the group had afforded to ask questions to a child psychologist and a specialist support worker. Although some had clearly been glad of the opportunity to ask other carers for advice within that context, various challenges in the group dynamics were also highlighted.

Theme 12

Sources of information - support from social workers - A few of the carers had approached young people's social workers or their own social workers at some point for information regarding, for example, the asylum seeking process, specific cultural differences or the rights of the unaccompanied young people in their care. They encountered considerable variation in the levels of knowledge displayed by the social workers they approached. All but one shared examples of social workers having given them incorrect or contradictory information or having made assumptions about young people's needs that were not accurate. These scenarios highlighted gaps in some of the social workers' knowledge around unaccompanied young people, including their rights, cultural needs and the asylum process.

Theme 13

Expected level of social carer knowledge - Carers' perspectives on the knowledge that social workers should be expected to have varied considerably. Almost half felt that there should be a better level of knowledge across all social workers: "Social workers could do more. Like our fostering social worker, they don't know much about asylum seekers. They need to have a really thorough working knowledge of all of the aspects of this, so they can have the confidence to educate people like us."

Theme 14

The possibility of specialist teams - However, the majority proposed that it would be preferable, or more achievable, to have a particular social worker or team with specialist knowledge who could be a point of contact for those fostering unaccompanied young people. This view was influenced by a variety of factors. Some referred to how busy social workers are. One carer felt that social workers could not be expected to all become experts in such a vast topic area. Similarly, another emphasised that this group of young people differ very much from the families and young people with whom most social workers have been trained to work.

Theme 15

Sources of information - Foster carer peer support - Commonly, where foster carers knew of other carers who had experience of fostering unaccompanied young people, they had made contact to ask for advice at the outset. This tended to relate to practical matters, such as where to buy international food locally, and to gain insight on how others had managed to succeed in tasks such as opening a bank account, attaining a driving licence or securing a school place for a young person, which some had been involved in arranging. Carers often described such tasks as involving many 'hoops' to be jumped through, more so than for other young people in their care. Two carers elaborated on the benefits they saw in talking to carers rather than social workers, when faced with particular challenges: "I think when you are in a difficult situation to be able to ring another carer that actually understands is invaluable. Talking to a social worker is fine, but they're not living and breathing it. And they work roughly 9 to 5. I think I got my support from the other two foster carers in [town] who I could pick the phone up to, and that was a plus. And that was partly because they knew exactly what I was going through because they had gone through it. While maybe a social worker wouldn't have done." However, not all carers in the study shared positive experiences of peer support. One recalled being given incorrect information by another and it was clear from a range of narratives that there had been conflicting views among carers about how to respond to particular situations or challenges. One couple spoke about their disappointment at being put in touch with carers whom they felt could not relate to them in terms of their age and stage in fostering.

Theme 16

Not knowing others who had fostered UAS - At the point of their first placement, around half of the carers had not known any others who had fostered an unaccompanied young person: "Talk to other foster carers . . . That's easier said than done. You know we've only been in the area at that point just about a year. Fostering about six months at that point. We don't have a network." A few had been given contact details of people with relevant experience by their social workers, but most had not and wanted a means of more easily connecting with others.

Theme 17

Sources of information LANGUAGE - Local Community Contacts - A few carers had made particular efforts to find people who were from the same country as a young person in order to gain insight on aspects of culture and religion or to help them communicate with young people who didn't speak English. This happened more often at the start of a placement. Where young people spoke English, carers had been able to ask them about their needs and wishes directly. However, the majority emphasised that the presence of a language barrier often prevented this. Carers' accounts of particular challenges in the first week were very similar: they described that young people's needs had not yet been assessed and the first opportunity to access an interpreter would be the placement planning meeting, a week later. In some cases, carers had called upon people they knew from the local community who spoke the young person's language to help them communicate at this point. At times, these were people they had met only once or twice previously or 'friends of friends'. One couple described the sense of urgency they had felt about finding a way to communicate with a newly arrived young man: "We had a friend who spoke a bit of their language and I rung him and I said, 'We're in an awful situation, can you help us?' He came up and saw us and he also brought a friend . . . and so he explained things to them and he was telling us, which was very helpful. Because otherwise we were left, and that was it."

Theme 18

Filling knowledge gaps using a translator - Another carer illustrated the sort of questions she tends to ask young people when she finds someone willing to translate: "Give us a bit of background, on your country and, you know, stuff. So we've just got a little idea. So we're not blind. And they've told us about their country, their family, their traditions, their religions. What's normal to them, how their families were. So that we can sort of try to understand where they're coming from." Carers had also been able to fill knowledge gaps by asking questions to people they met in various meetings related to the young people. Multiple carers referred to the opportunity afforded when interpreters attended meetings to learn from their insight regarding, for example, particular cultures.

Theme 19

Building an information network - One carer spoke of how much she had learned by chatting to a social worker on journeys to court and another described a key conversation with a solicitor: "Jen: My knowledge came from the solicitor [who] was absolutely brilliant. Interviewer: So they gave you a lot of info about . . . Jen: All about the court proceedings, for instance. And I asked lots of questions. I said, 'I'm really sorry. I have no idea about any of this stuff so can you help me.' And he was really good." What such examples had in common was that they demonstrated ad-hoc opportunities for carers to learn. It was clear that carers' ability to access useful information improved as they developed networks of people who had knowledge they could draw on. One couple who had cared for unaccompanied young people for 14 years reflected: 'When we first started this, we didn't have any connections. Over the years, we've grown a phenomenal network.'

	<p>Theme 20 Sources of information - Printed resources - Most of the carers referred to printed resources they would find useful. Suggestions included print-outs of recipes from relevant countries, a list of websites with more information about life in different countries, a booklet designed for foster carers with details of particular religious customs and festivals and a flowchart of the asylum seeking process. Only one couple mentioned having come across The Fostering Network's (2016) booklet about fostering unaccompanied young people, which contains some of that information. Multiple carers also commented that it would have been helpful to have some locally tailored information, such as a list of where to buy Halal food nearby. One couple discussed their view that social workers ought to provide carers with a list of local groups or activities for young people, in particular places where they could meet and socialise with others from the same country. Over time, they had found out about such activities but when reflecting on the impact of not having been told about them, one described how 'There was no navigation for us. We were in the middle of the ocean left wondering which way do you go.'</p>		
Risk of Bias	Section	Question	Answer
	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes
	Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes
	Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes <i>(However no discussions regarding why/if some participants chose not to take part)</i>
	Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes <i>(However, no discussion of data saturation)</i>
	Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't tell <i>(Unclear that researcher has considered their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location)</i>

	Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes
	Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Can't tell <i>(Unclear that researchers critically examine their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation)</i>
	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Can't tell <i>(No discussion of credibility of findings in terms of triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst. However, findings were explicit and contradictory evidence was presented)</i>
	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research is valuable
	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	Moderate
		Directness	Directly applicable

Sugden 2013

Study type	Semi structured interviews RQ4
Aim of study	to take an inductive stance in exploring the voice of young LAC regarding what they perceive supports them to learn.
Study location	UK

Study setting	One British local authority
Study methods	Semi structured interviews and triangulation with a notepad diary used while at school. After the two-day period of using the notepad diary, participants brought them to the interview and discussed as much/little as they wanted about their diary entries, before additional interview questions were asked. Semi-structured group interviews discussed additional thoughts about what supported them to learn in school. All interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder and all information was transcribed in full onto a word processing package. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used to thematically analyse qualitative data.
Population	Primary school-aged looked after children
Study dates	Not reported
Sources of funding	Not reported
Inclusion Criteria	<p>Age between seven and nine years old</p> <p>Care Situation currently "Looked-after" when the research took place. The child currently lived in the local authority in which the study was carried out.</p> <p>Time in care Looked after for at least six months</p>
Exclusion criteria	None reported
Sample characteristics	<p>Sample size Six participants</p> <p>Time in care</p>

	<p>children had been in care for between one and three years</p> <p>Type of care five were in long-term foster placements while one was in a respite placement</p> <p>Gender five were male and one was female</p> <p>Age aged between eight and nine years</p> <p>Ethnicity Five participants were white British and one was Ghanaian</p>
Relevant themes	<p>Theme 1 Super-ordinate themes - School as a place of acceptance and belonging - Participants discussed the function of school as a place in which they felt accepted. School offered membership of an institution which was perceived as a stable and reliable environment, for example: "Interviewer: What is it about school that's nice? Freddie: Cos I have, I get to see my friends everyday" It was also a place which the young people frequently attended. The group believed that it provided them with the opportunity to belong; both at the level of a school community which could provide access to a social group and as a community which could provide opportunities for play, for example: "Alex: Well we've got displays of our work like erm I brung this boomerang toy and teacher put it up there cos it's one thing that of the things I got from Mexico ... and every single thing some people bring she puts on the wall cos she wants people to make that thing special."</p> <p>Theme 2 Super-ordinate theme - A relationship with key/significant adults - School additionally offered a relationship with key adults (most importantly the class teacher). This super-ordinate theme encapsulated the importance of: belonging, friends, play and teachers.</p> <p>Theme 3 School a place for exercising agency and having an individual voice - For many participants school offered the arena in which to make choices about their lives and assert some control over their futures. School offered an environment in which they were given a variety of lessons and experiences and could subsequently make choices on these, for example regarding which activities they enjoyed. In this sense school developed their ability to form views and have an individual voice, for example: "Interviewer: So what's your favourite subject in school? Billy: Football, playing football Interviewer: Yeah, why do you like playing football? Billy: Because it's my favourite sport! This voice was listened to by both peers and the adults around them. Participants could develop views about what they believe that they needed to best complete tasks (such as physical resources) or the ways in which they would gain support and what type of lessons they enjoyed.</p> <p>Theme 4 Responses from some participants alluded towards the opportunities for change which school could offer them, for example, the chance to begin again following a move of placement or to develop specific skills: "Interviewer: Yeah ... okay then you said about sort of behaviour erm is behaviour something that you work on with people? Chris: I don't work on it in this school, but my old school, I used to work on it. Therefore this super-ordinate theme encapsulated the importance of: academic success and resources and opportunities.</p> <p>Theme 5 The need for personalised learning - All of the young people supported a theme relating to the importance of their schools understanding them as individuals and subsequently personalising their learning. By understanding who the young people were and what they thought, participants could be heard and receive appropriate learning opportunities, for</p>

	<p>example: "Interviewer: So erm what do they do to help you Elliot? Elliot: Help me do my work?! Interviewer: Right and erm how do they do that? Elliot: Erm, uh, just – they write it down and then in the book and then I have to copy it into my book"</p> <p>Theme 6 Encouragement to increase confidence - Therefore this super-ordinate theme encapsulated the importance of: the child presenting information regarding their difficulties/areas of lower confidence and considering what could be put in place to increase their confidence, for example: "Alex: She would like say "Don't worry – I'll figure out a way to help you" and that really cheers me up."</p>		
Risk of Bias	Section	Question	Answer
	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes
	Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes
	Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes <i>(However, no discussion regarding why some participants chose not to take part)</i>
	Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes <i>(However, setting not justified and no discussion of data saturation)</i>
	Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Yes <i>(An inductive approach using participant diaries was used. However, little in-depth discussion of sample recruitment or choice of location)</i>

	Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Can't tell <i>(No mention of ethical approval being sought)</i>
	Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes
	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes <i>(Triangulation was captured using the participant diaries)</i>
	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research has some value <i>(Some generalisability issues since only 6 participants were sampled, transferability and limitations of this research were not discussed)</i>
	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	Low
		Directness	Directly applicable

Thomas 2012

Study type	Focus Groups Evaluation of an intervention Children in Care Councils Theme 32 In-depth interviews
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Aim of study	To see how far local authorities had been able to develop processes and structures that enabled children to exercise their minimum rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and also looked for examples that went beyond this to achieve elements of shared decision-making.
Study location	UK
Study setting	Boroughs around the city of London
Study methods	Interviews and focus groups. Interviews lasted just over an hour and covered questions about participation structures and their purpose, patterns of work and activity, successes and challenges, and open questions about the future. Following the interviews, focus groups were planned and undertaken with young people, participation workers, managers and elected members. These were conducted as action inquiry groups, and explored participants' experiences and understandings in terms of successes and challenges.
Population	Ten young people, four participation workers, four managers and three elected members, from a total of 12 boroughs
Study dates	between May and September 2010
Sources of funding	Not reported
Inclusion Criteria	Involvement in an intervention Young people were recruited through an open invitation to all Children in Care Councils sent via the participation worker.
Exclusion criteria	None reported
Sample characteristics	Sample size Ten young people, four participation workers, four managers and three elected members, from a total of 12 boroughs
Relevant themes	Theme 1

The purpose of Children in care councils (CCCs) - The purpose of CiCCs was generally seen to involve representing the voices of children in care and care leavers through a variety of consultative mechanisms, influencing those who make decisions about services and monitoring the delivery of the 'Pledge' and other policies. The Pledge, introduced in Care Matters, is developed in each local authority, with input from children, to ensure that children in care are aware of their rights and opportunities (Department for Education and Skills 2007, p. 22). The boroughs had worked together to produce a London Pledge (Young London Matters 2008), complementing the local Pledge in each borough. Young people saw the CiCC as an opportunity to 'have their own voice' and take a lead. They emphasized the importance of achieving tangible improvements in services, not only for themselves but also for younger children: "I don't want them to go through what I've been through'. (Care leaver)"

Theme 2

Representativeness of the CCS - Although a majority of authorities had set up a CiCC, the fact that most had fewer than 20 young people raises questions about their effectiveness, given the general lack of mechanisms to ensure democratic representation and communication with other children in care. Members tended to be seen as 'the voice of children in care' simply because they had been in care themselves. Some groups did make concerted efforts to engage with other children in care, as the following comment illustrates: "We're doing a fun day soon, a lot of us older ones chatting with them playing with them, finding things out, then coming back and writing things up and voicing what they've said'. (CiCC member)"

Theme 3

Common activities of the CCC - Direct involvement in local authority services Many CiCCs were involved in staff recruitment, induction and training, and some in inspections of services. These were opportunities for young people to influence directly how services are provided, and were experienced by them as meaningful participation.

Theme 4

Common activities of the CCC - Consultation activities Consulting other children and participating in national consultations were common activities. Responding to consultations is one way in which young people can participate in decisions about services. At the same time, young people were clear that there was a need for more direct involvement in decision-making through dialogue and regular meetings with the corporate parenting board and elected members.

Theme 5

Common activities of the CCC - Publicity, promotion, information and campaigning CiCC members saw helping to write the local Pledge and producing information about how young people can participate (newsletters, magazines, websites and videos) as important ways to become involved. Some had organized events for children in care and campaigned around specific issues such as meeting Pledge commitments.

Theme 6

Common activities of the CCC - Developing personal skills Participation tends to be seen in terms of young people having a say in decisions. However, this research also showed the importance of activities that supported personal development of members, e.g. work experience, gaining qualifications, volunteering and social activities, which provided opportunities for developing identity and building social capital. Most boroughs rewarded participants in their CiCCs, often using vouchers or an hourly payment. Office holders such as Chairs might have sessional contracts, and members were paid for providing training.

Theme 7

The primary role of participation workers was seen as to facilitate the operation of CiCCs and wider participation of children in care and care leavers. This included finding venues, navigating local authority systems, being a researcher for the CiCC and an advocate for the group. Participation workers wanted young people to be at the centre of decision-making about services, and saw it as their role to support that. As one put it, the role: "can't be just a job, it has to be a passion. It takes a lot of different skills, reflective people who are tenacious, very involved – and fundraisers'. (Participation worker)" There was some tension between facilitating and supporting young people to speak directly to decisionmakers and actually speaking on their behalf. How this was resolved reflected a combination of factors: the stage of development of the CiCC and members' skills and confidence; how well participation was embedded with political and professional leadership in the borough; and the skill and understanding of the participation worker.

Theme 8

Social workers were frequently seen as less supportive of young people's participation. It was suggested that many had limited understanding of the purpose or value of the CiCC, and were reluctant to make referrals. Young people attributed this to frequent changes of worker, use of agency staff, unmanageable workloads and, in some cases, to a lack of interest in young people. It should be emphasized that social workers did not participate directly in this research. "And he's there holding this social worker's hand and then the social worker leaves, and then we get another social worker, and just as we start to trust him, "Bye" .' (Young person)"

Theme 9

Concerns were also expressed in relation to the commitment of social work managers. One CiCC member noted: 'We have a better relationship with Directors than with team managers'. Where good relationships had been established with heads of service, there was evidence that participation had more impact. There were some tensions around the potential for young people to say something 'difficult'; service managers were sometimes thought to be wary of putting young people in front of Directors or elected members because 'young people don't always say things diplomatically' (Participation worker). Young people questioned how well some professionals were able to engage with them, provide appropriate settings and opportunities for them to participate, and treat them with respect and understanding.

Theme 10

As for relationships with elected members, the fact that 17 CiCCs met with councillors was encouraging. However, there was a feeling that public decisionmaking structures were not conducive to participation of young people. In one case, it was suggested that the political cycle did not support continuity and consistency, with frequent changes of the lead member. However, in the same authority, a councillor from each political group attended every meeting of the CiCC, with young people leading the meetings. Some young people were very positive about their experience of contact with political leaders: "'We secured funding from the mayor. Originally he said no but we turned around and went to him and said we're your corporate kids, would you deprive your child from using your living room? So why are you depriving us? So we sort of put it to him like that and he couldn't say no after that'. (Young person)" Elected members showed high levels of commitment to the participation of young people, but admitted needing more support and learning to make participation effective. Similarly, it was apparent with heads of service and managers that the need for support in embedding participation within their systems constituted a major barrier to involving children in care in design, development and review of services.

Theme 11

How the CCC was involved in decision making - Focus group participants were invited to reflect on how the CiCC was actively engaged in decisionmaking, using a 'decision-making cycle' with the following stages: 1. Identifying issues 2. Inquiry and discussion 3. Decision-making 4. Action 5. Evaluation and review. Although patterns varied from issue to issue, participants usually identified some combination of stages 1, 2, 4 and 5 as points where the CiCC or its members would be engaged. No adult participant identified stage 3, but several young people did, giving the example of recruitment panels. This suggests that issues where young people were able to participate most fully were not around strategic or operational management, but in 'niche' areas such as recruitment, induction and training. Young people saw this as an example of active participation in something that directly affected them; e.g. a 'buddying' scheme in one borough which partnered newly qualified social workers with children in care over their first year of service.

Theme 12

Elsewhere, young people's participation was expressed in campaigns around particular issues such as a failure to implement the Pledge, housing policy for care leavers or 'bin bag moves'. However, these remain isolated examples, rather than systematic evidence of profound impact. Given the newness of some CiCCs, it is understandable that their role is underdeveloped. However, even where CiCCs have been established for longer, it was often unclear what systematic influence the group had beyond recruitment and training of front-line staff.

Theme 13

For local authorities, there may be a tension between empowering young people and meeting performance targets for corporate parenting; although, as one borough informed us, those targets may not reflect what young people need. A more responsive approach to service provision can be achieved through participation perceived as dialogue and joint inquiry (see Percy-Smith & Weil 2003; Fielding 2006).

Theme 14

Personal benefit to LACYP of taking part - While being committed to make things better for all children in care, young people also emphasized the personal benefits they got from taking part: developing confidence and self-esteem, pride, independence and self-advocacy. Psycho-social benefits included a sense of identity and agency derived from meeting

other young people in care, sharing experiences and providing peer support; practical benefits included direct support services and social goods such as driving lessons, money, information about their rights and access to education and apprenticeship opportunities: "It's not just that it's our Council – we are all really good friends'. (Young person)"

Theme 15

Participants were asked to point to the main challenges and barriers to the development of CiCCs. Four issues emerged: funding and resources, continuity and succession planning, engaging with hard to reach groups and embedding participation in organizational culture.

Theme 16

With public spending cuts looming, funding was raised as a matter of grave concern. The general view was that the funding required to support an effective CiCC was relatively small, but a basic level was essential to enable it to meet regularly, engage in activities, reward young people and promote its work. Employing participation workers was critically important. Young people and staff saw lack of funds as the main factor holding back their work. It is evident that the development of CiCCs will depend on the ability of local authorities to protect a minimum level of spending to enable them to function, and to find efficient ways of using, perhaps sharing, resources.

Theme 17

Succession planning and continuity were an area of concern: in many boroughs there was no clear route for new participants to get involved, with a high level of dependence on the participation worker. Where the membership had been long-established and stable, there were concerns about an absence of new and younger members coming through to take the lead. The 'feeder group' model, which in some boroughs supported a smooth transition for younger children on to the CiCC, seemed to offer one way forward. However, this is more difficult for the many children placed out of borough. Concern about succession planning and continuity was connected to the issue of future funding: young people suggested that where CiCCs were still in early stages of development, the lack of established infrastructure compounded financial uncertainty. The participation worker was seen as the lynchpin, keeping children and young people engaged and interested, organizing meetings and events and advocating for the CiCC across the local authority. Yet investment in this resource was feared to be at risk as cuts begin to bite.

Theme 18

Hard to reach groups - The challenge of engaging 'hard to reach' groups may refer to, for example, disabled children, younger children, refugee children, young mums, young offenders, young people involved in gangs, young people not in education, employment or training, or those who are unwilling to engage. Experiences of engaging with these groups are localized and contextual, with some local authorities finding it hard to engage a particular group such as asylum seekers, while others found them easy to work with (in one CiCC this was the dominant group). This issue, then, demanded local solutions such as activities tailored to particular groups and targeted entry routes such as football or dance classes, as well as ensuring that staff were aware of the CiCC and actively encouraged young people to engage. Young people and participation workers were aware that those currently participating were often self-selecting, and made constant efforts to seek wider views. The most 'hard to reach', however, were those placed 'out of borough', of whom there are a high proportion in every part of London. In some cases, this means being placed in a neighbouring borough, which can present its own challenges: a visit to young people in a children's home in north London revealed that none of them had heard of their CiCC or knew the participation worker from their home authority, although when they heard of the successes of CiCCs, they expressed an interest in being involved, either by attending meetings or via the Internet. However, many children are placed outside London, often in Wales, Scotland or Northern England, and for them it is not practicable to attend meetings in London. Alternative methods of engagement such as social networks and websites have been suggested, but appeared to present difficulty because of professional anxieties about using the Internet to communicate with children. In only one borough were staff allowed to use a private Facebook group for their CiCC. It is of concern that children and young people placed 'out of borough' are not benefiting from opportunities to influence decision-making or participate with others. More work is needed to explore what effective participation for all young people in care might mean.

Theme 19

A culture of participation - Participants generally considered that embedding a culture of participation remains the fundamental task in the long term. As one worker put it, participation must be 'an ingredient in the cake', not merely the icing. At one level, this is about challenging the culture of participation as consultation, and uncertainty about how best to integrate young people's views into local authority systems. However, through the systemic inquiry process that participants engaged in, there was a realization that part of the challenge relates to developing an understanding of participation as 'learning for change', through dialogue and critically reflexive practice that enables systems to adapt and change in response to young people

	<p>Theme 20 Embedding participation - Embedding participation means that all practitioners adopt participatory practices, rather than leaving it to the participation worker. Social workers' attitudes were seen as a key element in this. With the legal obligation to take account of children's wishes and feelings, their commitment to a broader participatory approach is critical to making children's engagement a reality. Yet there was felt to be a tension between being a good corporate parent and empowering young people, and also 'between championing young people and ticking Ofsted boxes': "A highly performance-focused local authority will be hierarchical, top-down and undemocratic and one that does not support what we are trying to achieve, but is driven by the inspection regime'. (Social work manager)"</p> <p>Theme 21 Hopes for CCCs in the future - At the conclusion of the research, young people and their participation workers were invited to reflect on their hopes for CiCCs in the future, in response to these challenges. They expressed an ambition to deepen and widen their influence across local authority services and decision-making processes by firming up procedures, increasing their impact on policy development and corporate parenting, having more face-to-face contact with decision-makers and more creative involvement in strategic planning, and generally becoming more vocal and empowered. As one young person put it, the CiCC wanted to become 'statutory'.</p> <p>Theme 22 Pride in accomplishments/anxiety for the future of CCCs - In all our contact with young people involved in CiCCs, it was evident that there was a great deal of pride in their achievements. This was reflected in their motivation and commitment, and their concern to ensure the work would continue. At the same time, there was anxiety about dependence on others to secure the future existence of the CiCC. "I think it takes certain kinds of people – who better to do that than people in care because we have faced those challenges?' (Young person)"</p>		
Risk of Bias	Section	Question	Answer
	Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
	Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes
	Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Can't tell <i>(Research methods are not justified)</i>
	Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	No <i>(Researchers did not explain how participants were selected or why the participants they selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study)</i>

	Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	No <i>(No justification of study setting or explicit description of how interviews were performed)</i>
	Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't tell <i>(Unclear that researchers critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location)</i>
	Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Can't tell
	Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Can't tell <i>(no description of thematic analysis; unclear that the researcher critically examine their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation)</i>
	Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Can't tell <i>(It is likely some triangulation took place since interviews and focus groups took place, however there was no discussion of the credibility of these findings in terms of triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst)</i>
	Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research is valuable
	Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	High
		Directness	Directly applicable

Williams-Brown 2020

Study Characteristics

Aim of study	This study aimed to investigate practitioners' decisions on how early years pupil premium funding is used specifically for LAC
Study location	UK
Study setting	Educational practitioners in 13 different early years settings in the same Local Authority
Study methods	To identify shared perspectives, this study used Q-methodology which involves participants sorting a set of statements onto a distribution grid, shaped as a reversed pyramid. Participants sort these cards based on whether they agree or disagree with each statement. The distribution went from -4 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The statements derived from discussion with a focus group drawn from the LA's 'good to outstanding' group. The differing perspectives evident in the focus group generated 34 differing statements on EYPP funding and were taken to the same group for respondent validation before being used in the project's main data collection activity. Q data is analysed collectively to produce consensus viewpoints, which have statistical significance these consensus viewpoints are known as 'factors' in the analysis. The study retained factors that had an eigenvalue (strength of that factor in relation to others) of 1.00 or higher. The data generated three factors that were kept for interpretive analysis. The study additionally made use of a questionnaire survey with open questions.
Population	owners/managers of early years settings (e.g. preschool or nurseries)
Study dates	2017–2018
Sources of funding	Not reported

Inclusion Criteria	Delivering an intervention owners/managers of early years settings (e.g. preschool or nurseries)
Exclusion criteria	None reported
Sample characteristics	Sample size 20 owners/managers of early years settings
Relevant themes	<p>Theme 1 The Q-methodology findings - Factor One: "The EYPP limited funding does not support "closing the gap" for looked after children. We have to use innovative ways to make the funding work to meet the needs of our children. Not all looked after children need this funding" Participant eight stated 'it's too blunt a tool. It's not based on the child.' They agreed that more funding needs to be allocated per child (8; 2). These participants did not think that LAC miss out on accessing the funding because the adoptive parents don't declare their status (17; 0). They also did not believe that they found it more difficult to decide how to use the funding for LAC (20; -1). For this group, they disagreed that all LAC need this funding (5; -3). Participant fourteen declared, 'not all children who can claim need the money to improve their outcomes...it is difficult to spend money to "bridge the gap" that isn't there'. Participant thirteen added 'not all LAC need additional support and often the government dictate on what "they" think best rather than giving choice to those who know best.' These participants agreed that they have children who are not eligible for this funding but would benefit from it (30; 3). They would like more autonomy themselves to allocate the funding to children who really need it (4; 3). Participant thirteen said 'if we could choose children who need it and access funding immediately I feel this would benefit the child and setting better.' Similarly, participant fifteen stated, 'we work with the children and know the ones who need the funding.' Instead, these participants choose to use the funding for group activities that benefit more than one child (6; 2).</p> <p>Theme 2 Factor two: 'All funding is good funding, but we do struggle to decide how to use it to meet the needs of all eligible children. The EYPP funding does not "close the gap" for looked after children.' In contrast to factor one, these participants believe the EYPP funding is essential to support children's development (1; 2) and they generally stated that all funding in the early years is good funding (19; 2). Participant twenty said, 'it is good for the children that need additional support.' However, these participants did declare that they had not been personally responsible for allocating this funding in their setting (26; -3). Participant three said, 'as of yet haven't had a child eligible for this funding'. This may be why they placed some statements about it use in the neutral columns of the distribution grid. These included, being indifferent about whether it is more difficult to decide how to use the funding for LAC (20; 0). However, in comparison to factor one (though not as strongly stated) these participants did not believe that the funding 'closes the gap' for LAC (21; -1). They did not believe that LAC miss out because the adoptive parents do not declare their status (17; -1). However, they too did not strongly agree that all LAC need this funding (5; 1). The group agreed that they find it difficult to decide how to use the funding if the child has no developmental delay (33; 3). They appear to not consider using the funding for group activities to benefit more than one child as this statement was placed in the neutral columns of the distribution grid (6; 0). They did, however, state that they would struggle to know how to use the funding for each individual child (3; -3). Participant nine explained 'I feel that EYPP is great when it is used effectively for a child but if a child doesn't have any areas of developmental delay it can be hard to identify where support is needed.' In comparison to factor one, these participants strongly agreed that they had children who were not eligible for this funding, but would benefit from it (30; 4). Participant five said that it needs '... to be more accessible to all children who need help.' Participant nine added, 'because we feel that we have children who would benefit - however they would miss out due to the criteria.' Again, these participants believe the funding would be better used if they could allocate it to children whom they feel really need it (4; 3).</p>

Participant three declared, 'funding should be targeted to meet need rather than automatically being based on need/looked after status. We have many children who would benefit but don't meet the criteria.'

Theme 3

Q - methodology - Factor three: "The EYPP funding is essential funding that could not be better spent elsewhere. All looked after children do not need this funding, but the funds can be used to provide further interventions and support in settings." In comparison to factor two, these practitioners strongly believe that the funding is essential to support children's development (1; 3). Participant sixteen said, 'the EYPP is very useful and allows practitioners to focus upon a child's next steps; funding provides PVI settings with the financial freedom to purchase resources otherwise out of remit.' They agree that all funding in the early years is good funding (19; 2) and strongly state that the funding could not be better spent elsewhere (15; -4). These participants have children who are not eligible for this funding, but would benefit from it (30; 2). Participant eighteen declared that the funding 'needs to be extended to all children with developmental delays and the eligibility needs to be revised.' They do not agree that all LAC (5; -2) need this funding. They also held a weak agreement that the funding 'closes the gap' for LAC (21; 1). However, they do not agree that the funding would be better used if they could allocate it to children whom they feel really need it (4; -1). These participants do not always know how they will use the funding for each child (3; -1). However, they find no extra difficulty in allocating funding to LAC (20; -3) or children who have no developmental delay (33; -2). Importantly, they too use the funding for group activities that benefit more than one child (6; 3). Participant sixteen stated, 'with or without the EYPP, I feel I would know what interventions or support was needed for the children in my care.'

Theme 4

The EYPP's use to support the child's needs - Participant three detailed her thoughts on how the EYPP funding benefits LAC. She said looked after children can have a wide range of complex needs, which cannot be met easily in traditional settings with standard resources and training. The premium allows providers the opportunity to access learning opportunities and greater comprehension of a child's needs; thus equipping them better to meet said needs. Three participants in the questionnaire and focus group data felt that EYPP funding benefits individual needs. Participant four stated, 'the child's needs are at the forefront of spending the EYPP'. Equally, participant two said, 'it is good to know that the money will be allocated to the child...'. The benefits of extra resources and experiences that specifically support children's needs were highlighted by participant two and five. However, they both also voiced concerns about how the money is spent and how much money is allocated per child. Participant five stated, 'it is useful to buy resources for speech and language, emotional support but you can only buy so much resources'. Participant two also said that the EYPP funding is '...not enough money to support serious behavioural problems where 1:1 or small group supervision is required'.

Theme 5

Examples in practice: additional resources - Five practitioners mentioned the allocations of resources to support the developmental needs of LAC. However, there were only two practitioners that mentioned what resources were allocated specifically to these children. Participant one described a child who had speech and language difficulties and self-confidence issues. To support the child's self-confidence issues they organized age-appropriate dance lessons provided for by an outside agency. One of the participants in the focus group also explained that they had a child who was underdeveloped in maths, but he loved construction so they brought him bricks as a resource that would support his and his peer's development.

Theme 6

Examples in practice: additional training - Five of the practitioners mentioned training staff in their examples of the EYPP's use in practice. Four participants (participant one, two, three and one of the focus group participants) stated that the EYPP fund was used for speech and language training for staff members. Two of these participants said the funding had also been used for Makaton training. Participant three explained that their child could not speak when he/she started at the setting. The child's key worker attended Speech and Language and Makaton training and the child had 1:1 sessions that supported his development. Participant three's example was based on a different need to the other participants. She described a child who had recently been adopted and had a slight delay in Personal Social and Emotional Development (PSED). The setting decided to use the EYPP fund to '... upskill staff to better understand early childhood trauma, attachment and emotions'. All of the practitioners that provided these resources and training examples stated that their children did make progress (albeit for some the progress was minimal) in the targeted developmental areas. The most significant progress was made when the child received the funding for the full three terms. This was detailed by two of the participants. Participant three stated that the child with PSED delay had made 'vast progress' in 'narrowing the gap' between him/her and their peers. She went on to say that the 'funding 100% contributed to the setting being able to extend its usual research opportunities, to allow access to non-traditional training [into childhood trauma,

attachment and emotions]’. Participant four also stated that their child with multiple areas of developmental delay did make progress and they ‘... saw a marked improvement in behaviour and ability’.

Theme 7

Looked after children with no developmental delay - Not all LAC have developmental delay - Three participants mentioned that LAC are presumed to have developmental delay. Participant two stated ‘it is presumed that all children looked after need extra support’. Participant four added, ‘a child who is LAC is not always falling behind in their development. We have had some LAC who have met their age development bands’. She added that if a looked after child is falling behind the extra funding is good for them, but it is not always LAC who need the funding. One of the focus group participant reiterated that some of the LAC in their setting did not need the funding, however they had other children who did need additional funding to support their development, but were not eligible.

Theme 8

Support beyond the child’s development - Three participants mentioned examples of support that went beyond targeting developmental delay. Participant two stated that if the child is not developmentally delayed her setting looks at experiences that would benefit the child. She listed examples that included garden centres, dance classes and PE. One of the focus group participants explained that one of their LAC suddenly experienced their dad passing away and they brought a persona doll to support the child’s bereavement. Furthermore, participant five provided an example of using the fund to support one of their children’s interests. She said that this child loved playing in the home corner and making food out of items such as dough and mud. They organized a trip to pizza express and then continued food making activities at their setting.

Risk of Bias

Section	Question	Answer
Aims of the research	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes
Appropriateness of methodology	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes
Research Design	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes
Recruitment Strategy	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Can't tell <i>(There was no clear description of participants or why those selected were best placed to produce the data gathered in the study)</i>

Section	Question	Answer
Data collection	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes <i>(However, setting is not justified and research does not discuss saturation of data)</i>
Researcher and participant relationship	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't tell
Ethical Issues	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Can't tell
Data analysis	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes
Findings	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes <i>(respondent validation was employed)</i>
Research value	How valuable is the research?	The research is valuable
Overall risk of bias and directness	Overall risk of bias	Moderate
	Directness	Directly applicable

Appendix E – Forest plots

No forest plots were produced for this review question as meta-analysis was not attempted.

Appendix F –CERQual tables

Experience of carers supporting looked after children moving out of care

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
The need for higher expectations/more aspirational encouraging care that pushes LACYP to be better, particularly for education and higher/further education. Fears that focus on behaviour may mean education is pushed to the wayside. Educational aspirations was linked to hope for the future, particularly for unaccompanied asylum seekers.	15	No concerns The majority of studies were either low or moderate risk of bias. Studies were mostly marked down for either limited or largely unclear description of their methods of data collection, analysis, and synthesis. Five studies were “low” risk of bias, five were “moderate” risk of bias, and two “high” risk of bias.	No concerns	No concerns	No concerns Five studies (more than a third) reported partially indirect evidence (e.g. recruitment likely occurred prior to 2010)	High
The lack of positive role models and instability at home inhibited a child’s engagement at school. Importance of close reliable genuine relationships with carers (a secure base) for turning points in education. In addition, significant caring adults in the educational and social care setting were also important. Positive relationships with	13	No concerns The majority of studies were either low or moderate risk of bias. Studies were mostly marked down for either limited or largely unclear description of their methods of data collection, analysis, and synthesis. Four were “low” risk of bias, five were “moderate” risk of bias, and three “high” risk of bias.	No concerns	No concerns	No concerns Four studies (more than a third) reported partially indirect evidence (e.g. recruitment likely occurred prior to 2010)	High

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
individual members of staff (key adults) supported school stability and could help to foster self-belief and educational aspirations. Particularly in the case of unaccompanied asylum seekers. The need to feel that their lives mattered to someone else before it could matter to them. Someone to give a “kick up the backside”, to take an interest in their education, and support their learning.						
The important role of school and educational activities as another source of stability. Some found school to be a place of acceptance and belonging, where pro-social activities could be performed and agency supported e.g. sports/dance clubs. Group activities were particularly considered helpful for relationships in education. These activities could be particularly useful at times of transition (so long as they did not lead to looked after children being “singled	11	No concerns The majority of studies were either low or moderate risk of bias. Studies were mostly marked down for either limited or largely unclear description of their methods of data collection, analysis, and synthesis. Four studies were “low” risk of bias, two were “moderate” risk of bias, and four “high” risk of bias.	Moderate concerns Themes spanned the role of school as a source of stability. The role of group activities in educational settings and one on one educational activities with carers.	No concerns	No concerns Two studies (fewer than a third) reported partially indirect evidence (e.g. recruitment likely occurred prior to 2010)	Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
out"). In one study, a barrier to this was overly restrictive residential care scheduling. Educational activities were also considered supportive of attachment relationships when shared with the primary carer.						
Practical support is appreciated for education. For example, some wanted help with their home situation to be able to concentrate better at school. More directly, financial support, help with forms, educational resources e.g. books, information about educational rights and access to college/university and apprenticeship opportunities. Tutors may be useful when carers are unable to help with education, although carer-delivered interventions were preferred. For unaccompanied asylum seekers, securing a school place was a challenge alongside language barriers which must be overcome	11	<p>No concerns</p> <p>The majority of studies were either low or moderate risk of bias. Studies were mostly marked down for either limited or largely unclear description of their methods of data collection, analysis, and synthesis. five studies were “low” risk of bias, seven were “moderate” risk of bias, and six “high” risk of bias.</p>	<p>Moderate concerns</p> <p>Practical help could take many forms which led to some vagueness for this theme. Few studies considered each of the practical help examples mentioned.</p>	<p>No concerns</p>	<p>No concerns</p> <p>Three studies (fewer than a third) reported partially indirect evidence (e.g. recruitment likely occurred prior to 2010)</p>	Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
before educational progress can be made.						
Continuity of relationships impacted education in three major ways –frequent changes in social worker were felt to impede information sharing with schools. Continuity of school placements primarily was felt to be a priority for educational stability. As a result of the lack of continuity in their lives, looked after children and young people favoured educational interventions that did not introduce yet more transient figures e.g. carer-delivered interventions were preferred. Detrimental impact of placement moves, negative events at home/in the past, or with birth family, upon educational stability and ability to learn or concentrate while at school. However, occasionally, a fresh start at a new school could be helpful, e.g. to escape stigma felt in the	7	<p>No concerns</p> <p>The majority of studies were either low or moderate risk of bias. Studies were mostly marked down for either limited or largely unclear description of their methods of data collection, analysis, and synthesis. Two studies had “low” risk of bias, four were “moderate” risk of bias, and three “high” risk of bias.</p>	<p>Moderate concerns</p> <p>Some contradiction as school placement moves were detrimental in most cases, but could be helpful where the previous school environment had become non-conducive to learning. Also, continuity of relationships impacted education in three ways. Included studies did not necessarily consider all three.</p>	No concerns	<p>No concerns</p> <p>Three studies (fewer than a third) reported partially indirect evidence (e.g. recruitment likely occurred prior to 2010)</p>	Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
previous school where care status may be known, or previous unhelpful peers were present.						
Need for agency impacted on education in several ways. LACYP expressed a desire to be included in decisions regarding educational support (shared decision making). This would enable educational support tailored to their needs. Education itself was also seen as a path to greater control and agency – particularly for unaccompanied asylum seekers. Those who particularly preferred to be 'private/self-reliant' did not like to feel dependent on others.	9	No concerns The majority of studies were either low or moderate risk of bias. Other studies were mostly marked down for either limited or largely unclear description of their methods of data collection, analysis, and synthesis. Four studies were "low" risk of bias, three were "moderate" risk of bias, and one "high" risk of bias.	Minor concerns Themes regarding the need for greater agency and shared decision making for educational support were linked to themes regarding education itself as the means to greater agency.	No concerns	No concerns One study (fewer than a third) reported partially indirect evidence (e.g. recruitment likely occurred prior to 2010)	Moderate
Bespoke educational support tailored to the specific needs of the child was desired. Carers and young people should be included in discussions about what is required. Educational support should be holistic, understanding home context, social and	8	No concerns The majority of studies were either low or moderate risk of bias. Studies were mostly marked down for either limited or largely unclear description of their methods of data collection, analysis, and synthesis. Two studies were "low" risk of bias, three were	No concerns	No concerns	No concerns Two studies (fewer than a third) reported partially indirect evidence (e.g. recruitment likely occurred prior to 2010)	High

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
emotional problems, and individual learning styles. Not one size fits all– e.g. accessible options for those with learning disabilities.		“moderate” risk of bias, and two “high” risk of bias.				
LACYP often desired to keep their care status confidential in school settings. Preference for care, rather than school setting, for interventions. Dislike being singled out.	7	No concerns All studies were either low or moderate risk of bias. Studies were mostly marked down for either limited or largely unclear description of their methods of data collection, analysis, and synthesis. Two studies were “low” risk of bias, four were “moderate” risk of bias.	No concerns	No concerns	No concerns One study (fewer than a third) reported partially indirect evidence (e.g. recruitment likely occurred prior to 2010)	High
Resource constraints, high case load, lack of funding. This led to a sense that one needed to fight for limited resources. Felt need for educational advocates. Particularly for those looked after out of area. LACYP felt a lack of resources compared to other children e.g. laptops and internet facilities within care placements. “Something to call their own” was valued.	5	No concerns The majority of studies were either low or moderate risk of bias. Studies were mostly marked down for either limited or largely unclear description of their methods of data collection, analysis, and synthesis. Two studies were “low” risk of bias, two were “moderate” risk of bias, and one was “high” risk of bias.	Minor concerns Resource constraints impacted lack of funds for educational support and also felt lack of resources more broadly.	No concerns	No concerns One study (fewer than a third) reported partially indirect evidence (e.g. recruitment likely occurred prior to 2010)	Moderate
Improved, multiagency working and information sharing e.g. between primary and secondary	5	No concerns The majority of studies were either low or moderate risk of bias. Studies were mostly	Minor concerns Most studies reported the benefits of increased	No concerns	No concerns One study (fewer than a third) reported partially indirect	Moderate

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
schools and also between education and other agencies, was considered important to facilitate the support of LACYP in education. However, LACYP were also reluctant to have additional professionals in their lives. Specific training for trafficked children was suggested which could be provided across agencies.		marked down for either limited or largely unclear description of their methods of data collection, analysis, and synthesis. One study was “low” risk of bias, three were “moderate” risk of bias, and one “high” risk of bias.	multiagency working, however, this was balanced against the desire from LACYP themselves to reduce the amount of professionals they interact with on a day to day basis.		evidence (e.g. recruitment likely occurred prior to 2010)	
Continuity of relationships impacted education in three major ways –frequent changes in social worker were felt to impede information sharing with schools. Continuity of school placements primarily was felt to be a priority for educational stability. As a result of the lack of continuity in their lives, looked after children and young people favoured educational interventions that did not introduce yet more transient figures e.g. carer-delivered interventions were preferred.	4	No concerns The majority of studies were either low or moderate risk of bias. Studies were mostly marked down for either limited or largely unclear description of their methods of data collection, analysis, and synthesis. One study was “low” risk of bias, one was “moderate” risk of bias, and one “high” risk of bias.	Minor concerns Continuity of relationships impacted education in three ways. Included studies did not necessarily consider all three.	No concerns	No concerns One study reported partially indirect evidence (e.g. recruitment likely occurred prior to 2010)	Moderate

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
There was a need for schooling that persisted despite bad behaviour – with recognition that home context and background may spill over into school work.	4	No concerns The majority of studies were either low or moderate risk of bias. Studies were mostly marked down for either limited or largely unclear description of their methods of data collection, analysis, and synthesis. One study was “low” risk of bias, two were “moderate” risk of bias, and one “high” risk of bias.	No concerns	No concerns	No concerns One study (fewer than a third) reported partially indirect evidence (e.g. recruitment likely occurred prior to 2010)	High
Managers of early years settings found that the funding was limited and not needed for all. Managers struggled to decide how to spend it to meet needs. Some children can have a wide range of complex needs, which cannot be met easily in traditional settings with standard resources and training. For example, for a child who had speech and language difficulties and self-confidence issues age-appropriate dance lessons were provided for by an outside agency. Some practitioners mentioned training staff e.g. used for	2	Minor concerns One study was included which was moderate risk of bias. This study was marked down for quality primarily because there was no clear description of participants or why those selected were best placed to produce the data gathered in the study.	Minor concerns Some sub-themes clashed, for example the funds were clearly used appropriately in some cases, and in others practitioners were not clear how to spend the funding.	Serious concerns Only one study contributed to this theme	No concerns	Very Low

Theme	Studies	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	Confidence
speech and language training for staff members, or in Makaton. Support went beyond targeting developmental delay especially if not present, examples included garden centres, dance classes and PE.						

Appendix G – Economic evidence study selection

This question was not considered in the review of existing economic studies given its focus on qualitative evidence.

Appendix H – Economic evidence tables

No economic evidence was identified for this review question.

Appendix I – Health economic model

No economic modelling was undertaken for this review question.

Appendix J – Excluded studies

Study	Reason for exclusion
Baroni, Beverly, Day, Angelique, Somers, Cheryl et al. (2020) Use of the Monarch Room as an alternative to suspension in addressing school discipline issues among court-involved youth. <i>Urban Education</i> 55(1): 153-173	- non-UK retrospective non-randomised study
Beal, Sarah J, Wingrove, Twila, Nause, Katie et al. (2019) The Role of Shared Decision-Making in Shaping Intent to Access Services for Adolescents in Protective Custody. <i>Child care in practice : Northern Ireland journal of multi-disciplinary child care practice</i> 25(1): 64-78	- Survey extracted views (not true qualitative)
Bender, Kimberly, Yang, Jessica, Ferguson, Kristin et al. (2015) Experiences and needs of homeless youth with a history of foster care. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> 55: 222-231	- non-UK study
BRADY, Eavan and GILLIGAN, Robbie (2019) Exploring diversity in the educational pathways of care-experienced adults: findings from a life course study of education and care. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> 104: 104379	- non-UK qualitative study
CAPOUS-DESYLLAS, Moshoula and MOUNTZ, Sarah (2019) Using Photovoice methodology to illuminate the experiences of LGBTQ former foster youth. <i>Child and Youth Services</i> 40(3): 267-307	- non-UK qualitative study
Clemens, Elysia V, Helm, Heather M, Myers, Kristin et al. (2017) The voices of youth formerly in foster care: Perspectives on educational attainment gaps. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> 79: 65-77	- non-UK study

Study	Reason for exclusion
Crosby, Shantel D, Day, Angelique G, Baroni, Beverly A et al. (2015) School staff perspectives on the challenges and solutions to working with court-involved students. <i>The Journal of school health</i> 85(6): 347-54	- non-UK study
Day, Angelique Gabrielle, Baroni, Beverly, Somers, Cheryl et al. (2017) Trauma and triggers: Students' perspectives on enhancing the classroom experiences at an alternative residential treatment-based school. <i>Children & Schools</i> 39(4): 227-237	- non-UK study
Day, Angelique Gabrielle, Somers, Cheryl, Darden, Joanne Smith et al. (2015) Using cross-system communication to promote educational well-being of foster children: Recommendations for a national research, practice, and policy agenda. <i>Children & Schools</i> 37(1): 54-62	- Survey extracted views (not true qualitative) - Non-UK setting
Day, Angelique, Riebschleger, Joanne, Dworsky, Amy et al. (2012) Maximizing educational opportunities for youth aging out of foster care by engaging youth voices in a partnership for social change. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> 34(5): 1007-1014	- non-UK study
Derivois, Daniel, Guillier-Pasut, Nathalie, Karray, Amira et al. (2015) Evaluating the risks of school dropout amongst children in the care of the French child protection system: An exploratory study. <i>School Psychology International</i> 36(3): 301-312	- Survey extracted views (not true qualitative) - Non-UK setting
Durbeej, Natalie and Hellner, Clara (2017) Improving school performance among Swedish foster children: A quasi-experimental study exploring outcomes of the Skolfam model. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> 82: 466-476	- non-UK study

Study	Reason for exclusion
Dymoke, Sue and Griffiths, Rose (2010) The Letterbox Club: The impact on looked-after children and their carers of a national project aimed at raising achievements in literacy for children aged 7 to 11 in foster care. <i>Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs</i> 10(1): 52-60	- not true qualitative study
Flores, Jerry, Hawes, Janelle, Westbrooks, Angela et al. (2018) Crossover youth and gender: What are the challenges of girls involved in both the foster care and juvenile justice systems?. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> 91: 149-155	- non-UK qualitative study
Forsman, Hilma (2017) Foster carers' experiences of a paired reading literacy intervention with looked-after children. <i>Child & Family Social Work</i> 22(1): 409-418	- non-UK study
Gabatz, R.I.B.; Schwartz, E.; Milbrath, V.M. (2019) Institutionalized child care experiences: the hidden side of work. <i>Revista gaucha de enfermagem</i> 40: e20180412	- non-UK qualitative study
Garcia Yeste, Carme, Gairal Casado, Regina, Munte Pascual, Ariadna et al. (2018) Dialogic literary gatherings and out-of-home child care: Creation of new meanings through classic literature. <i>Child & Family Social Work</i> 23(1): 62-70	- non-UK study
Groinig, Maria and Sting, Stephan (2017) Educational pathways and the influence of social context conditions on educational biographies of care leavers. <i>Hrvatska Revija Za Rehabilitacijska Istrazivanja</i> 53(suppl): 278-287	- non-UK study
GROINING, Maria and STING, Stephan (2019) Educational pathways in and out of child and youth care. The importance of orientation frameworks that guide care leavers' actions along their educational pathway. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> 101: 42-49	- non-UK qualitative study

Study	Reason for exclusion
Hass, Michael, Allen, Quaylan, Amoah, Michelle et al. (2014) Turning points and resilience of academically successful foster youth. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> 44: 387-392	- non-UK study
HANRAHAN, Fidelma; BODDY, Janet; OWEN, Charlie (2020) 'Actually there is a brain in there': uncovering complexity in pathways through education for young adults who have been in care. <i>Children and Society</i> 34(1): 46-61	- Study goes through a series of cases, unclear how themes were extracted across participants
Johansson, Helena and Hojer, Ingrid (2012) Education for disadvantaged groups- Structural and individual challenges. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> 34(6): 1135-1142	- non-UK study
Kendall, Sally, Johnson, Annie, Martin, Kerry et al. (2005) Vulnerable Children's Access to Examinations at Key Stage 4. Research Report RR639. National Foundation for Educational Research: 1-169	- qualitative study published prior to 2010
Kirk, Chris M, Lewis, Rhonda K, Nilsen, Corinne et al. (2013) Foster care and college: The educational aspirations and expectations of youth in the foster care system. <i>Youth & Society</i> 45(3): 307-323	- Survey extracted views (not true qualitative)
Lane, Tiffany Yvette (2017) Tribulations and achievements: The lived experiences of African American college students formerly in foster care. <i>Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment</i> 27(3): 141-150	- non-UK study
LIABO Kristen (2013) Turning the tables. <i>Every Child Journal</i> 4(1): 30-35	-Unable to attain

Study	Reason for exclusion
Liabo, Kristin, Gray, Kerry, Mulcahy, David et al. (2013) A systematic review of interventions to support looked-after children in school. <i>Child & Family Social Work</i> 18(3): 341-353	Systematic review checked for relevant citations
Littlewood, Kerry A, Strozier, Anne L, Whittington, Danielle et al. (2014) Kin as Teachers: An early childhood education and support intervention for kinship families. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> 38: 1-9	- No outcome of interest reported [Surrogate outcomes: e.g. parents knowledge of development and home environment]
Lopez, Josua and Fernandez, Erica (2020) "You Never Know When You Will See Him Again": Understanding the Intersectional Dimensions of Immigration, Indigeneity, and Language for Unaccompanied Indigenous Minors. <i>Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership</i> 23(1): 5-20	- Case study
Lopez, Ruth M.; Lee, Jaein J.; Tung, Rosann (2020) Implementing a Summer Enrichment Program for Secondary Newcomer Students in a New England Community. <i>International Journal of Leadership in Education</i> 23(1): 77-92	- Unclear that population are LACYP - Case study - Non-UK setting
LOREE Amy M. (2014) KinCareTech: interactive, internet-based software to support kinship caregivers. <i>Journal of Family Social Work</i> 17(2): 154-161	- non-UK study
MANNAY Dawn and et al (2019) Enabling talk and reframing messages: working creatively with care experienced children and young people to recount and re-represent their everyday experiences. <i>Child Care in Practice</i> 25(1): 51-63	- no outcome of interest (meta-research)

Study	Reason for exclusion
McCrae, Julie S, Brown, Samantha M, Yang, Jessica et al. (2016) Enhancing early childhood outcomes: Connecting child welfare and Head Start. <i>Early Child Development and Care</i> 186(7): 1110-1125	- non-UK study
Melkman, Eran, Refaeli, Tehila, Benbenishty, Rami et al. (2016) An empirical test of a model of academic expectations among youth in residential care. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> 67: 133-141	- non-UK study - Survey extracted views (not true qualitative)
Mendis, Kathy, Gardner, Fiona, Lehmann, Jennifer et al. (2015) The education of children in out-of-home care. <i>Australian Social Work</i> 68(4): 483-496	- non-UK study
Mendis, Kathy, Lehmann, Jennifer, Gardner, Fiona et al. (2018) Promoting academic success of children in care. <i>British Journal of Social Work</i> 48(1): 106-123	- non-UK study
Miller, J Jay, Benner, Kalea, Donohue-Dioh, Jessica et al. (2019) Supporting collegiate foster youth and alumni: A mixed-method planning approach for higher education. <i>Evaluation and program planning</i> 72: 67-76	- non-UK study
Mires, Carolyn B; Lee, David L; McNaughton, David (2018) "Every child that is a foster child is marked from the beginning": The home-school communication experiences of foster parents of children with disabilities. <i>Child abuse & neglect</i> 75: 61-72	- non-UK study
Morton, Brenda (2015) Seeking safety, finding abuse: Stories from foster youth on maltreatment and its impact on academic achievement. <i>Child & Youth Services</i> 36(3): 205-225	- non-UK study

Study	Reason for exclusion
Morton, Brenda M (2015) Barriers to academic achievement for foster youth: The story behind the statistics. <i>Journal of Research in Childhood Education</i> 29(4): 476-491	- non-UK study
MOUNTZ, Sarah and CAPOUS-DESYLLAS, Moshoula (2020) Exploring the families of origin of LGBTQ former foster youth and their trajectories throughout care. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> 109: 104622	- non-UK qualitative study
NCT00239837 (2005) Prevention Program for Problem Behaviors in Girls in Foster Care. https://clinicaltrials.gov/show/nct00239837	- trial registration
Neal, Darlene (2017) Academic resilience and caring adults: The experiences of former foster youth. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> 79: 242-248	- non-UK study
Newbigging, Karen and Thomas, Nigel (2011) Good practice in social care for refugee and asylum-seeking children. <i>Child Abuse Review</i> 20(5): 374-390	- unclear that population are looked after children
Ohene, Serena K and Garcia, Antonio (2020) Narratives of women's retrospective experiences of teen pregnancy, motherhood, and school engagement while placed in foster care. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> 108	- non-UK qualitative study
Okumu, Jacob O. (2014) Meaning-Making Dynamics of Emancipated Foster Care Youth Transitioning into Higher Education: A Constructivist-Grounded Theory. <i>Journal of The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition</i> 26(2): 9-28	- non-UK study

Study	Reason for exclusion
Osborne, Cara and Alfano, Julia (2011) An evaluation of consultation sessions for foster carers and adoptive parents. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i> 27(4): 395-413	- Survey extracted views (not true qualitative)
Parker, Elisabeth (2017) An actor-network theory reading of change for children in public care. <i>British Educational Research Journal</i> 43(1): 151-167	- case study
Peake, Anne (2011) The needs of looked after children: A rapid response when school placement may be in jeopardy. <i>Educational and Child Psychology</i> 28(3): 73-80	- Intervention description/practice report
Perez-Garcia, S., Aguila-Otero, A., Gonzalez-Garcia, C. et al. (2019) No one ever asked us. Young people's evaluation of their residential child care facilities in three different programs. <i>Psicothema</i> 31(3): 319-326	- non-UK qualitative study
Quinones, Elizabeth A (2020) The step-up career development program with unaccompanied Latinx refugee youth in resettlement high schools. <i>Career development interventions for social justice: Addressing needs across the lifespan in educational, community, and employment contexts.</i> : 81-96	- Intervention description/practice report - no methods described
Rana, Meenal, Qin, Desiree Baolian, Bates, Laura et al. (2011) Factors related to educational resilience among Sudanese unaccompanied minors. <i>Teachers College Record</i> 113(9): 2080-2114	- non-UK study
Rania, Nadia, Migliorini, Laura, Sclavo, Erika et al. (2014) Unaccompanied migrant adolescents in the Italian context: Tailored educational interventions and acculturation stress. <i>Child & Youth Services</i> 35(4): 292-315	- non-UK study

Study	Reason for exclusion
Richardson, Sabrina M and Yates, Tuppert M (2014) Siblings in foster care: A relational path to resilience for emancipated foster youth. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> 47(part3): 378-388	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not an intervention of interest <i>[sibling co-placement]</i> - Non-UK setting
Rygaard N.P. (2010) Designing the fair start project - a free e-learning and organizational development program for orphanages and foster families in quality care giving. <i>Clinical Neuropsychiatry</i> 7(6): 181-187	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No outcome of interest reported - Intervention description/practice report
Sanders, Michael and Et, al (2020) What works in education for children who have had social workers? Summary report.: 56	exclude due to mixed population – “children who have had a social worker”
Salazar, Amy M, Haggerty, Kevin P, Roe, Stephanie S et al. (2016) Fostering Higher Education: A postsecondary access and retention intervention for youth with foster care experience. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> 70: 46-56	- non-UK study
Schelbe, Lisa, Hansen, Megan E. Deichen, France, Veronica L et al. (2018) Does camp make a difference?: Camp counselors' perceptions of how camp impacted youth. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> 93: 441-450	- non-UK study
Schroeder, Joachim (2012) Insecure Identities: Unaccompanied Minors as Refugees in Hamburg. <i>Bulgarian Comparative Education Society</i> : 1-6	- no methods described

Study	Reason for exclusion
Semanchin Jones, Annette; Bowen, Elizabeth; Ball, Annahita (2018) "School definitely failed me, the system failed me": Identifying opportunities to impact educational outcomes for homeless and child welfare-involved youth. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> 91: 66-76	- non-UK qualitative study
SIRRIYEH Ala (2010) Support for migrant children. <i>Community Care</i> 1710: 22-23	- no methods unclear how interviews and analysis performed
Skilbred, Dag Tore, Iversen, Anette Christine, Moldestad, Bente et al. (2017) Successful academic achievement among foster children: What did the foster parents do?. <i>Child Care in Practice</i> 23(4): 356-371	- non-UK study
Strolin-Goltzman, Jessica, Woodhouse, Valerie, Suter, Jesse et al. (2016) A mixed method study on educational well-being and resilience among youth in foster care. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> 70: 30-36	- non-UK methods
Taussig, Heather N, Culhane, Sara E, Raviv, Tali et al. (2010) Mentoring Children in Foster Care: Impact on Graduate Student Mentors. <i>Educational horizons</i> 89(1): 17-32	- No outcome of interest reported <i>[Not foster children related outcomes]</i>
Taussig, Heather, Weiler, Lindsey, Rhodes, Tara et al. (2015) Fostering healthy futures for teens: Adaptation of an evidence-based program. <i>Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research</i> 6(4): 617-642	- No outcome of interest reported <i>[Acceptability outcomes]</i> - Survey extracted views (not true qualitative)

Study	Reason for exclusion
Trout, Alexandra L, Hoffman, Steven, Huscroft-D'Angelo, Jacqueline et al. (2014) Youth and parent perceptions of aftercare supports at discharge from residential care. <i>Child & Family Social Work</i> 19(3): 304-311	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No outcome of interest reported - Not an investigation of an intervention - Non-UK setting
TOBOLOWSKY Barbara, F. and et, al (2019) Former foster youth experiences with higher education: opportunities and challenges. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> 104: 104362	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - non-UK qualitative study
Turner, Jennifer and Gulliford, Anthea (2020) Examining the Circles of Adults Process for Children Looked After: The Role of Self-Efficacy and Empathy in Staff Behaviour Change. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i> 36(1): 32-51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No outcome of interest reported
Weinberg, Lois A; Zetlin, Andrea; Shea, Nancy M (2009) Removing barriers to educating children in foster care through interagency collaboration: a seven county multiple-case study. <i>Child welfare</i> 88(4): 77-111	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case study - Non-UK setting
WOODIER David (2018) A relational approach helps change teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of young people who are looked after. <i>Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care</i> 17(2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - practice report - not true qualitative/no qualitative methods
Zetlin, Andrea; Weinberg, Lois; Shea, Nancy M (2010) Caregivers, school liaisons, and agency advocates speak out about the educational needs of children and youths in foster care. <i>Social work</i> 55(3): 245-54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - non-UK study

Appendix K – Research recommendations – full details

Research recommendation

No research recommendations were drafted for this review.

Appendix L – References

Other references

None

Appendix M – Other appendix

Two expert testimonies were included among evidence presented in this review chapter.

Expert testimony to inform NICE guideline development – Principle SEN Manager

Section A: Developer to complete	
Name:	Deborah Johnson
Role:	Practitioner - Principal SEN Manager
Institution/Organisation (where applicable):	The Special Educational Needs Service for Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council

Contact information: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx	
Guideline title:	Looked After Children and Young People (LACYP)
Guideline Committee:	Advisory committee
Subject of expert testimony:	Addressing the needs of LACYP with special educational needs and disability
Evidence gaps or uncertainties:	It was highlighted by the committee that the evidence review looking at barriers and facilitators to support the learning needs of school-aged LACYP was lacking evidence on the needs of those with special education needs and disability. Expert testimony was sought to fill this important gap.

Section B: Expert to complete

Summary testimony: [Please use the space below to summarise your testimony in 250–1000 words. Continue over page if necessary]

References to other work or publications to support your testimony' (if applicable):

N/ A

Disclosure:
Please disclose any past or current, direct or indirect links to, or funding from, the tobacco industry.

None

Declaration of interests: Please complete NICE's declaration of interests (DOI) form and return it with this form.

Note: If giving expert testimony on behalf of an organisation, please ensure you use the DOI form to declare your own interests and also those of the organisation – this includes any financial interest the organisation has in the technology or comparator product; funding received from the manufacturer of the technology or comparator product; or any published position on the matter under review. The declaration should cover the preceding 12 months and will be available to the advisory committee. For further details, see the NICE policy on declaring and managing interests for advisory committees and supporting FAQs.

Expert testimony papers are posted on the NICE website with other sources of evidence when the draft guideline is published. Any content that is academic in confidence should be highlighted and will be removed before publication if the status remains at this point in time.

Deborah Johnson – presentation



The statute:

- ▶ Head of Virtual School
- ▶ Special Educational Needs Service
- ▶ Social workers
- ▶ IRO's
- ▶ Admissions
- ▶ Health

All have a duty to work together to promote the well being of children and young people (CYP) but how does this work in practice?

- ▶ Virtual Schools (VS) are placed in different Directorates in LAs; they sit across both education and care so can be placed in either
- ▶ The knowledge and experience of the Virtual School team spans a wide range of legislation across multi agencies
- ▶ SEN Services are also required to have this same span of knowledge, but they are rarely placed together
- ▶ Very few social work teams understand fully the SEND Code of Practice or the legislation that underpins it

Critical issues

- ▶ The most critical issue is school placements; the requirement to provide high quality placements
- ▶ To provide support, advice and placements that promote high quality education
- ▶ To place a LAC CYP into school within 20 days
- ▶ To work in conjunction with other key partners
- ▶ To hold and distribute funding (Pupil Premium plus) and adequate funding for SEND placements
- ▶ To co-produce EHCPs, LAC Reviews, PEPs, Care Plans ensuring the views, wishes and aspirations of the CYP are captured and listed to/acted upon
- ▶ The need for excellent data and data/information sharing
- ▶ Yet the Government advice* rarely mentions SEND Service despite acknowledgement that 70% of LAC CYP may have SEN (SEN Code of Practice, Section 10.1)

*Promoting Education of LAC etc 2014

School:

Very clear specifications:

- ▶ Should be good or outstanding
- ▶ Full Time
- ▶ A placement where they can make good progress
- ▶ The CYPs views, wishes and feelings are taken into account
- ▶ Identified placements can include boarding schools or independents
- ▶ The correct support in school should be provided

School:

This can work if the VS and Head of SEND work closely together!

- ▶ Good or Outstanding; combined knowledge and are more willing to share information, including Care Plans to ensure the correct placement is identified
- ▶ Full time; what is needed to achieve this based on all information
- ▶ A placement where they can make good progress; this is achievable if the correct support mechanisms are in place
- ▶ The CYPs views, wishes and feelings are taken into account; good preparation and advocacy and a full understanding of the CYPs history
- ▶ Identified placements can include boarding schools or independents; but tends to happen cross border
- ▶ The Virtual School Head/team will know more about an educational placement than a social worker

School challenges:

This cannot be achieved by a single service!

- ▶ Good or Outstanding; increasingly challenging as many are now Academies
- ▶ Full time; Can the CYP cope with this?
- ▶ A placement where they can make good progress; Are the most inclusive schools the most high achieving? Frequent placement moves make this more challenging
- ▶ The CYPs views, wishes and feelings are taken into account; does the CYP choose their mode of education?
- ▶ Identified placements can include boarding schools or independents; Independent mainstream schools are not S41 so SEN cannot direct admission; they are their own admission authority
- ▶ Placement within 20 days is reasonable, but is very hard to achieve as schools refuse entry; procedures for admission need significant backing from Government to give VS more power

Additional Factors:

- In relation to education, there is very little funding allocated via the VS for the most vulnerable group
- Very few LAs have a dedicated 'rapid response' team to support LAC CYP experiencing mid year change
- Pupil premium plus is limited, has no clear boundaries over how it is spent
- Has no statutory mechanism to check spend
- Is not transferrable or payable based on time e.g. if a child moves placement
- Is not sufficient to cover detailed professional support in school
- Any funding in EHCPs is linked to Outcomes but the ability to think flexibly is critical, particularly as so many services are income generated and require commissioning

Considerations:

- VS and SEND should be more closely aligned
- Pupil Premium Plus should be examined in terms of the amount, spend and transferability
- Budgets in LAs are rarely 'spare' and are tightly aligned to commissioned services. Funding should be provided for LAC EPs, SALT, OT, CAMHS etc for CYP when moving into new settings; particularly when not residing in their 'home' borough to provide rapid, wrap around services to support their change of placement.
- School admissions need legislation to prevent refusals, delaying admission or preventing full time attendance (where applicable)
- Social workers need to understand education! They need to understand the need to share information; education understands confidentiality!
- Health boundaries need clarification; service continuity should not be lost due to moves

Expert testimony to inform NICE guideline development – Virtual School Headmaster

Section A: Developer to complete	
Name:	Patrick Ward
Role:	Practitioner – Virtual School Headteacher
Institution/Organisation (where applicable):	Headteacher of Lewisham Virtual School and Vice Chair of NAVSH (National Association of Virtual School Heads)
Contact information: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx	
Guideline title:	Looked After Children and Young People (LACYP)
Guideline Committee:	Advisory committee
Subject of expert testimony:	The role of the virtual school in supporting the educational needs of LACYP
Evidence gaps or uncertainties:	It was highlighted by the committee that the evidence review looking at the barriers to, and facilitators for, supporting learning needs of LACYP was lacking

evidence on the role of the virtual school. Expert testimony was sought to fill this important gap.

Section B: Expert to complete

Summary testimony: [Please use the space below to summarise your testimony in 250–1000 words. Continue over page if necessary]

References to other work or publications to support your testimony' (if applicable):

N/ A

Disclosure:

Please disclose any past or current, direct or indirect links to, or funding from, the tobacco industry.

None

Declaration of interests: Please complete NICE's declaration of interests (DOI) form and return it with this form.

Note: If giving expert testimony on behalf of an organisation, please ensure you use the DOI form to declare your own interests and also those of the organisation – this includes any financial interest the organisation has in the technology or comparator product; funding received from the manufacturer of the technology or comparator product; or any published position on the matter under review. The declaration should cover the preceding 12 months and will be available to the advisory committee. For further details, see the NICE policy on declaring and managing interests for advisory committees and supporting FAQs.

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Patrick Ward – presentation

The Role of the Virtual School Headteacher

Patrick Ward- Headteacher of Lewisham Virtual School and Vice Chair of NAVSH (National Association of Virtual School Heads)

Agreed Areas of Focus

- The key problem of looked after children missing from education
- Lack of accountability
- Pupil Premium – how is it being spent?
- The role of the private sector
- Training needs for teachers – trauma informed

The Role of the Virtual School Headteacher

- Lead professional for education within the corporate parenting network
- Challenge, scrutinise, support
- Set the agenda for measuring outcomes
- Accountable for outcomes?

Lack of Accountability

- No data is collected on the responsibility of local authorities to secure education provision for CLA
- No data is collected to demonstrate that education funding for CLA is being spent within the terms of the grant
- DfE have acknowledged that they are not able to hold LAs accountable on either of these points
- No evidence that this is an area of focus for Ofsted in local authority inspections
- No statutory powers for Virtual School Headteachers

The Key Problem of Looked after Children Missing from Education

- Many looked after children are not placed on a school roll by their corporate parent
- There is a culture of ignoring statutory responsibilities in this area due to lack of oversight, use of unregistered provision, ghost rolls
- Distorts national attainment figures and creates a perverse incentive for local authorities not to secure appropriate provision
- Would it be good enough for your child?

Pupil Premium – how is it being spent?

- No evidence that pupil premium for looked after children is being spent within the terms of the grant
- VS led evidence suggests that significant amounts are being used by local authorities to manage underspend in other budgets
- A significant proportion of PPG in schools is left unaccounted for by LA processes

The Role of the Private Sector

- Non maintained independent schools increasingly used due to foster care breakdowns, county lines and lack of local authority provision
- These provisions operate outside all relevant statutory frameworks including admissions and exclusions code
- High cost provisions that provide an excessive strain on LA budgets
- Staff often have no teaching qualification or specific training to meet need

Training Needs for Teachers – trauma informed

- To gain a clear understanding of behaviour as communication
- To understand the concept of a inherently traumatised cohort being more likely to send out more complex messages
- To understand attachment as something universal in learners rather than adopting a diagnosis model

What then is to be done?

- A government led initiative to collect data on looked after children who are CME with a clear indication of how authorities will be held to account on this issue
- A requirement for all authorities to confirm on an annual basis that they are allocating PPG in line with the terms of the grant
- Good maintained provision to be made available in the residential sector
- Indicators tracked by Ofsted or equivalent body. Outcomes for CLA to be a limiting judgement for schools and local authorities
- Trauma awareness to be a statutory element of behaviour management policies in schools

