Identifying and Responding to Child Neglect in Schools in Wales

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Abstract

Schools are pivotal sites for identifying and responding to child neglect due to their universal positioning within the community. This thesis presents an investigation into how schools respond to concerns of child neglect which is the most common reason a child is placed on the child protection register in Wales. Findings from the study contribute new understanding about the nature and level of support delivered by a range of staff in mainstream schools. The study employs an explanatory two-phase design comprising analysis of quantitative and qualitative methods across three local authorities in Wales.

The study's design sits across three levels of service intervention, from the early identification of neglect in schools as universal services, the implementation of preventative and voluntary multi-agency support, through to the school's level of involvement in the statutory child protection process. The first phase of the study analyses quantitative data drawn from documents held on social work case files *(n=119)* in three authorities. The second phase employs thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews undertaken with a variety of staff in six schools from teaching and non-teaching roles *(n=30),* together with non-participant observation of school-based decision-making practice *(n=5).*

Findings highlight the complexity which surrounds child neglect and draw attention to the difficulty of merging two multifaceted systems within one narrative. The first phase identifies the problematic nature of the case file data as a result of intricate social work processes, varying cultures of recording, and large amounts of missing data. In the second phase differences between the two fields of responsibility emerge emphasising the often-messy practice reality of inter-professional working. This thesis makes an original contribution to understanding the challenges which exist for schools when responding to child neglect. The findings have important implications for future policy and practice in the delivery of school-based service provision, and social work practice with schools when working with children who are living with neglect.

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Glossary

ADSS	Association of Directors of Social services
ALENCo	Additional Learning and Educational Needs Coordinator
AWCPPs	All Wales Child Protection Procedures
AWHOCs	All Wales Head of Children's Services Group
ASSIA	Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts
BEI	British Education Index
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
CA	Core Assessment
CAADA	Coordinated Action Against Domestic Violence and Abuse
CASCADE	Children's Social Care Research and Development Centre
CG	Core Group
CP	Child Protection
CIN	Child in Need
CPC	Child Protection Conference
CPR	Child Practice Review
CWDC	Children's Workforce Development Council
DCPO	Designated Child Protection Officer
DCPT	Designated Child Protection Teacher
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service (Certificate)
DSP	Designated Senior Person for Child Protection concerns (Wales)
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ERIC	Education Resources Information Centre
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
EWS	Education Welfare Service
HCRW	Health and Care Research Wales, Welsh Government
HOY	Head of Year
HRA	Human Rights Act
HT	Head Teacher
IA	Initial Assessment
IR	Initial Referral
ICPC	Initial Child Protection Conference

NMCDS	National Minimum Core Data Set
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Child
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children's Board
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
MAT	More Able and Talented
MMR	Mixed Methods Research
NICE	National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
NISB	National Independent Safeguarding Board
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
PS	Professional Services
PSE	Personal, Social, Emotional (Education)
RCPC	Review Child Protection Conference
RCSB	Regional Children's Safeguarding Board
SCIE	Social Care Institute for Excellence
SCR	Serious Case Review
SEAL	Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning
SEN	Statement of Educational Need
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SREC	School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
SSW	School Social Worker
SSWB Act	Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act
s.47	Section .47 Enquiry in the Children Act
TA	Teaching Assistant
TAC	Team Around the Child
TAF	Team Around the Family
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
WA	Welsh Assembly
WASPI	Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information
WG	Welsh Government
WLC	Welsh Language Commissioner
WNP	Welsh Neglect Project
YOS	Youth Offending Service
YOT	Youth Offending Team

1. Introduction

Rationale for the Study

In Wales, child neglect is the most common reason for taking child protection action (Welsh Government, 2017). In 2016, 1,170 children were registered on the child protection register for neglect alone (Stats Wales, 2017b), with a further 180 children registered for neglect and a secondary category of physical and/or sexual abuse (NSPCC, 2017; Stats Wales, 2017b). This figure accounts for 46% of all registration categories in Wales between 2015 and 2016. Child neglect is widely recognised as a chronic and pervasive public health issue (Action for Children 2010; Daniel et al, 2009; Stevens & Laing, 2015). It is often considered to be the most complex form of child maltreatment, rarely based upon a specific incident. Instead, neglect is usually broad-based with a myriad of causes and indicators (Daniel et al, 2011; Horwath, 2007), which makes providing the appropriate type and level of support to the child a substantial challenge for practice. This makes it much more difficult to identify whether the care a child is receiving is poor enough to be labelled neglect.

Responding to child neglect is not the sole responsibility of social services. With increasing burdens on the child protection system, social services are increasingly required to perform as an emergency service, with early intervention and provision services being progressively more stretched (Haynes, 2015). Intervening in neglect at the earliest opportunity not only serves to minimise the long-term and dangerous effects on children, but it also saves the cost of reactive services on the public purse (Haynes, 2015; Stevens & Laing, 2015). A number of professionals in a range of universal services are well-positioned to recognise the signs of neglect in its early stages (Haynes et al, 2015), and take a shared approach which enables them to respond to the problem as effectively as possible.

Staff within schools hold a particular advantage, as schools possess long-standing interactions with children between the ages of 4 to 16 years old (this is the compulsory educational age bracket in Wales). Teachers and other school staff play a consistent role in children's lives through the provision of universal services (Daniel et al, 2009 & 2010). Teaching staff in schools and colleges form an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children (NSPCC, 2016b; Welsh Government, 2015), whilst non-teaching staff hold the added benefit of observing children and their interactions in more informal situations such as the breakfast club, canteen or school yard.

In 2013, the Welsh Government funded the Welsh Neglect Project (WNP), which was a unique two-year collaboration between Action for Children (Gweithredu dros Blant) and the NSPCC (Cymru/Wales). In the first year, the project scoped key areas for multi-agency action on child neglect in Wales, exploring practitioners' responses to neglect. The WNP investigated practice around neglect in the statutory sector including the use of tools, protocols, multi-agency working, relationships with families, and decision making and planning (Pithouse & Crowley, 2016). The study comprised semi-structured telephone interviews with the local authority-led safeguarding children's boards (LSCBs) across Wales, a desk survey and document analysis of LSCBs' tools and protocols, together with focus groups with participants from a range of professional backgrounds (Stevens & Laing, 2015). In the latter stages of the project some investigation was undertaken into the role of early years' services and schools, although the findings of the work is yet to be published.

The WNP's findings identified joint working across disciplines as one of the biggest challenges to working with child neglect (Pithouse & Crowley, 2016). The study highlighted the need for increased integration and co-location of services, knowledge transfer amongst staff, specific opportunities for reflection on practice, secondment openings across agencies and the desired increase in pooled resources - all of which are supported by literature in the field (Daniel et al, 2010). The study recognised communication and inter-agency practice between social services and schools to be a

particular difficulty (Baginsky, 2008), with professionals in schools acknowledged as being vital for noticing and intervening early in cases of neglect (Stevens & Laing, 2015).

This thesis focuses upon the role of schools in identifying and responding to child neglect. It explores the extent of mainstream schools' involvement in identifying and responding to child neglect. It also considers the existing relationship between schools and social services, and the individual experiences of a range of school staff and how they respond in their everyday roles to children and their parents when they are concerned a child is experiencing neglect. The thesis investigates the partnership between two fields of professional responsibility across the continuum of neglect, from early identification of neglect in schools and the implementation of school-based support, through to the schools' participation in the child protection process. The study uses both quantitative and qualitative research approaches, although the emphasis is positioned on the latter. Composite methods include: social work case file analysis, semi-structured interviews, and non-participant observation of school-based decision-making meetings.

Overall Objective

The aim of this thesis is to provide new evidence and understanding about how schools in Wales currently respond to child neglect. The composite methods sit across three different levels of statutory service intervention: school-based early identification and prevention (level 2), 'child in need' provision and planning (level 3) and child protection registration and intensive support (level 4) (Welsh Government, 2008). Case file analysis (*n=119)* investigates the level of involvement of schools in the child protection process when a child has been registered on the child protection register under the category of neglect, with qualitative data gathered through interviews (*n=30)* and observations (*n=5)* with a wide range of school staff to explore their thoughts, feelings and experiences of identifying and responding to child neglect. The study aims to triangulate data from three different vantage points to understand what lies within (Gorard & Taylor, 2004).

The project has three key research questions:

(i)   What is the extent of involvement of mainstream primary and secondary schools in identifying and responding to child neglect?

(ii)   What are the experiences of a range of school staff in responding to children and their parents when they are concerned that a child is experiencing child neglect?

(iii)   What is the nature of the relationship between schools and social services in responding to child neglect?

In order to answer the research questions posed, an explanatory two-phase research design is employed (Creswell, 2003; Gorard & Taylor, 2004; Teater et al, 2017). The study's method begins with secondary analysis of a numeric dataset compiled from social work case files from three local authorities with differing levels of social deprivation and varying rates of neglect. The initial quantitative phase of the study aims to provide context for the second phase of the study, where focus is placed upon six in-depth qualitative case studies of primary and secondary schools in Wales. The selection of the participating schools was informed by descriptive data collected in the first phase of the study. Schools were identified for their high levels of referrals to social services which resulted in a child being registered on the CPR under the category of neglect. The results have important implications for policy and practice in schools, and for social work practice, and aim to improve the overall well-being of neglected children.

Structure and Content of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into seven chapters which follow this introduction. Chapter two presents a review of the key literature in the field. The chapter is split into three sections: (i) an overview of child neglect, (ii) social care in schools, and (iii) schools' response to child neglect. The first section explores the conceptual complexity which characterises the knowledge on child neglect. It considers the manifestation of

empirical problems, professional barriers, the level of impact of neglect, children's understandings, together with literature on associated and compounding factors which exist within the family. The second section goes on to explore the presence of social care within schools in Wales and highlights the significance of schools' inter-agency partnerships with social services. Here, a range of roles are discussed and the barriers to inter-agency practice recognised. The third section identifies a paucity of research into child neglect in schools, and focuses upon findings from the WNP (Stevens & Laing, 2015). Due to the dearth of research available in the United Kingdom, the discussion expands focus to recognise three key themes which emerge from the international empirical research in the field: (a) training of school staff in child neglect, (b) the identification and intervention of neglect in schools, and (c) interdisciplinary responses to child neglect involving schools.

Chapter three outlines the methodology of the study. The chapter is organised into six sections and begins by identifying the three key research questions identified in the literature review. An outline of the study's design is provided and the strengths and limitations of using a mixed methods research design are considered. The discussion describes the composite methods which sit across three different levels of service intervention. A description of the sampling framework is provided together with a chronological account of the data collection process, and the lengthy access negotiations undertaken with individual research sites. Data analysis techniques are outlined and here the processes of data management, transcription, and data storage are all described. The ethical issues and sensitivities encountered during the study are explored with reflections organised into four themes for clarity of discussion: (a) general ethical considerations of the study, (b) ethical issues arising during data collection in local authorities, (c) ethical issues arising during data collection in schools, and (d) ethical issues related to the role of the researcher.

Chapters four, five, and six present the main research findings within the thesis. Before detailed analysis is presented, these chapters are preceded by a short overview of the findings. The overview summarises and presents to the reader the key findings from

each phase of the study; quantitative analysis of case files (phase 1), qualitative interviews and non-participate observation (phase 2). The overview also illustrates how findings from the first phase of the study informed the design of the second phase undertaken in schools. The proceeding three analysis chapters then focus upon three different dimensions of the findings, which are brought together in the final chapter with a concluding discussion.

Chapter seven is the final chapter of the thesis and begins by providing a brief summary of the aim, purpose, and rationale for the study, before considering the wider implications for policy and practice. The chapter identifies a number of key recommendations for future neglect-practice in the field, and is organised into five key areas for discussion: (i) issues arising for social work practice, (ii) issues arising for staff in schools, (iii) implications for inter-agency practice, and (iv) implications for other professionals, and (v) implications for research. The chapter concludes by identifying the limitations of the study, outlining areas for the future development of the research, and offering key messages for practice when working with child neglect in both a national and international context.

Legislative and Policy Context

This chapter explores the current legislative and policy context of child neglect in schools in Wales. The rights of the child are first explored under the structure of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (UNCRC) and the European Convention on Human Rights (1994) (ECHR), giving focus to the statutory duties and responsibilities placed upon the State to intervene in family life. The discussion next turns to the recent implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014) (SSWB) and its new focus upon well-being within contemporary policy. The chapter concludes by identifying the existing safeguarding policy within schools in Wales, 'Keeping Learners Safe' (Welsh Government, 2015b), highlighting the importance of the professional relationship between school staff and social services.

Social welfare in Wales, including the governance of social services and the protection and well-being of children, became a devolved matter for the National Assembly for Wales (hereafter referred to as the Welsh Assembly) in 1999 (Drakeford & Gregory, 2011; Williams, 2011). The Welsh Government is responsible for the delivery of child protection in Wales. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989) is an international agreement implemented to protect the rights of children. It introduces the fundamental principle that the protection of children from harm is the responsibility of everyone working with children and their families (Welsh Government, 2015). The Convention includes the right of the child to protection from abuse, and to care and services for children with a disability or children living away from home. The UNCRC was ratified by the United Kingdom Government in 1991 and consists of 45 articles. In 2011, Wales became the first administration in the UK to enshrine the principles of the UNCRC with a legislative mandate - the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure (2010), imposing a duty in Welsh Law for all Welsh Ministers to have due regard to the rights and obligations in the agreement when making decisions (Holt, 2014). The key articles of the UNCRC which provide the framework for this research into neglect-practice within schools (also referred to in the 'Keeping Learners Safe' policy guidance) are as follows:

- (art.12) Children have a right to have their voice heard in decisions which affect them
- (art.19) A right to be protected from violence, abuse and neglect
- (art.28) A right to an education
- (art.29) A right to an education that is directed to the child's personality talents and mental and physical abilities.

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) is an international treaty, signed by the United Kingdom in 1948, and subsequently incorporated into legislation in the Human Rights Act 1998. Although the Human Rights Act (HRA) does not explicitly mention the rights of children, they are covered by legislation as persons within the law, the same as adults (Holt, 2014). The HRA makes it unlawful for authorities to act in a manner which is discordant with the rights contained within, for example, a person's

right to respect for a private and family life. Social workers therefore have a dual mandate - causing tension in practice - to both support and protect children from harm in all areas of their lives, whilst also exerting control over families whose parenting is considered to be inadequate or harmful under their duties set out in the SSWB Act (2014) and associated guidance. Both the UNCRC and the ECHR frameworks validate the role of the State in the intervention in family life when an individual's rights are being contravened.

The most significant legislation which governs child protection practice in Wales is the SSWB Act 2014 (Social Care Legislation in Wales, 2017b), and the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016, which have introduced a more robust framework for a partnership-approach to safeguarding children (Welsh Government, 2017). This approach fits with the core principal of safeguarding which states it is everyone's responsibility to protect the safety and well-being of children (Welsh Assembly Government, 2006).

The recent implementation of the SSWB Act (2014) in 2016 significantly altered the way social services and safeguarding procedures are governed in Wales. The Act and its associated policy framework primarily focuses upon peoples' well-being, their rights and responsibilities (Welsh Government, 2015). The Act gives emphasis to early intervention services, increasing provision within the community to reduce the escalation of acute need (Social Care Wales, 2017). It does this by placing a responsibility on local authorities to implement preventative provision (s.15) which responds to the identified needs of specific groups. All local authorities in Wales hold a statutory duty under the Act to safeguard all children in their areas by 'providing services for a child or someone other than the child who has needs for care and support' (SSWB Act 2014, s.21(2), s.37(2) and s.38(1,2,4)).

The SSWB Act highlights an important legislative transition from previous notions of 'welfare' (as outlined in The Children Act 1989) to the concept of peoples' 'well-being' in

contemporary policy. It does this by assigning a duty on persons exercising functions under the Act to seek to 'promote the well-being of people who need care and support' (s.5). The legislation also introduces a 'people' model and describes a child as a person who has a need for care and support under the legislation (Social Care Legislation in Wales, 2017a&b). Elements of 'well-being' are defined in the Act as 'physical and mental health and emotional well-being' and the need for 'protection from abuse and neglect', not only in 'domestic, family and social relationships' but (of particular application to this study) also within the person's 'education, training and recreation'. The definition (in relation to a child) also includes aspects of 'physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and behavioural development' (s.2(2)(3)). In 2016, part 6 of the SSWB Act replaced part 3 of the Children Act 1989 which relates to support provided to children and families by local authorities (NSPCC, 2018).

Prior to the implementation of the SSWB Act in 2016, there was no formal mandatory reporting duty in Wales for professionals working with children and young people. However, the SSWB Act has introduced an organisational responsibility for local authority partners to report concerns. Part 7 of the legislation states, 'if a relevant partner of a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a child at risk and appears to be within the authority's area, it must inform the local authority of that fact' (s.130). The mandatory duty only applies to public bodies and the relevant partners of the local authority which include: the youth offending team, police, probation services, ministers, NHS trust, and the local health boards (Social Care Legislation in Wales, 2017b; Welsh Government, 2004), and not individual practitioners in private practice.

Collection of data for this study took place prior to the implementation of the SSWB Act. However, the recent shift in legislative emphasis delivered by the Act provides a timely and constructive framework for the focus of this thesis. The prominence of 'well-being' set out by the Act conveys a need to understand happiness, comfort and security as an all-encompassing and holistic notion which incorporates all areas of a child's life. The emphasis upon well-being provides an overarching policy model which is congruent with

the early and preventative focus of this research into the identification of neglect. It also rationalises the study's investigation into practice in the context of universal services by focusing upon mainstream primary and secondary schools across the country.

Keeping Learners Safe (Welsh Government, 2015b) is the key policy document in Wales which provides guidance to schools and colleges about safeguarding children. The policy reiterates that safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility (NSPCC, 2016b), highlighting the importance of professionals working together (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, 2017) and sharing information with one another to establish a comprehensive picture of the child's needs. The guidance explicitly refers to staff in schools and colleges as forming the wider safeguarding system for children, and highlights the importance of schools working closely with other agencies in a co-ordinated manner, particularly social care, police and health services. The policy document aims to direct all staff in education services to ensure they have the appropriate systems in place to create and maintain a safe learning environment for children. The document sets out the responsibility to identify any safeguarding or welfare concerns and for the institution to take action to address them, where appropriate, in partnership with the relevant agencies (Welsh Government, 2015).

The guidance supports education providers to promote the welfare of children and young people in Wales. It is issued under section 175 of the Education Act 2002, and sets out accountabilities for all education institutions in their safeguarding duties. Section 175 of the Education Act states that local authorities and education institutions 'must have regard' for the purposes of meeting their duties under the guidance, and should undertake their functions in a way that recognises the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (Welsh Government, 2015). The guidance supplements the Working Together to Safeguard Children (Welsh Assembly Government, 2006) policy document which provides a framework for multi-agency practice, setting-out the roles and responsibilities in education services so that all staff play a part in safeguarding children.

2. Review of Literature

This chapter provides a review of the literature in the field. The chapter begins by outlining the literature search and appraisal strategy used. The main discussion is organised into four key sections. The first section provides a broad overview of child neglect with the purpose of contextualising the literature review's focus upon practice in schools in this area. It does not provide a comprehensive review of the literature on child neglect, but instead offers a background for the proceeding discussion of attention which is child neglect within a school setting. The second section outlines the role of social services with the purpose of providing context for the role of statutory services. The third section provides a discussion on the existing presence of social care in schools, and highlights how social care in schools fits within the broader framework of services for children. The fourth section focuses specifically upon the school's response to child neglect and delivers a full literature review of what is already known about the problem.

The first section of the chapter explores the conceptual complexity which characterises the knowledge on child neglect. It goes on to discuss the associated and compounding factors commonly present in circumstances where child neglect is present. Next the discussion acknowledges the existence of professional barriers in this area of practice, and considers the variability in the level of impact neglect has upon a child. The overview finishes by identifying a limited literature on children and young people's constructions of neglect, their individual thoughts, feelings and experiences of what is a truly complex public health issue.

The second and third sections of the chapter provide the reader with a broader context for the discussion by describing the role of social services and the role of social care in schools, and how both fit together under the framework of services for children. The fourth section is the main focus of the chapter. It concentrates upon understanding the school's response to child neglect and reveals a paucity of research in the field (Daniel et al, 2010). In the absence of sufficient research within Wales and the United Kingdom, the review expands focus to include empirical research within an international context.

Three key themes emerge and provide a framework for the organisation of the discussion: (i) child neglect training for school staff, (ii) identification and intervention in neglect in schools, and (iii) interdisciplinary responses to child neglect involving schools. The chapter concludes by identifying a number of areas in the literature for further development and investigation, congruent with the research questions posed by this study.

Literature Search & Appraisal Strategy

This section sets out the approach undertaken in the literature review by providing a description of the search and appraisal strategy employed. The discussion first outlines the methods used to gain a broad understanding of the topic and the search strategy, both of which were undertaken at different times during the process of the study's completion. Before the literature review commenced, background reading on the topic of child neglect was undertaken drawing upon respected academic texts within the field. Search engines were used with key terms such as 'school(s)' 'education', 'teacher(s)', 'social work(ers)', 'child(ren)' 'youth(s)' and '(child) neglect' or 'child maltreatment' with the purpose of gathering current rhetoric, media and news articles which referred to the role the schools play in identifying and responding to child neglect.

Secondly, a thorough search of key databases and relevant journals was undertaken across both social and educational fields. This was followed by an exploration of the grey literature produced by organisations outside of traditional academic publishing networks. The search included Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC) (US version), Web of Science, Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA), Scopus, British Education Index (BEI), and Social Care Online. Many of the results returned unrelated and unconnected searches which were of no relevance to the topic. Despite the refinement of key words and search terms and the introduction of a limited time frame (20 years), search results often remained tenuous to the area of interest.

Consequently, the literature search was expanded to include empirical research within an international context. Literature on the school's response to child neglect was scarce and the search was expanded from 'child neglect' to more broadly include 'child abuse and neglect'. Reference tracking was also employed to scan reference lists in full text papers which held particular interest and relevance to the study (Shaw & Holland, 2014). The search produced a diverse range of literature quality in the field, so sampling and methods were critically appraised for their importance and value before inclusion in the review (Ridley, 2012). Government and third sector websites were also searched to identify current regional and national policy documents regarding children's safeguarding and safeguarding in schools. It is important to state that a systematic review of literature was not within the limited scope of this small doctoral study, nor has any attempt been made to methodologically evaluate the evidence referenced throughout this thesis.

Overview of Child Neglect

This review of literature begins with a broad overview of the topic of neglect. Child neglect is the most common form of child maltreatment in Wales. In 2016, 1,155 children were registered on the child protection register for neglect alone (Stats Wales, 2017b), with a further 95 children registered for neglect with a secondary category of physical abuse and a further 20 with a secondary category of sexual abuse (NSPCC, 2017; Stats Wales, 2017b). This represents 47% of all children registered on the child protection register (CPR) in Wales between 2016 and 2017 (Stats Wales, 2017b). Neglect is not only the most prevalent form of maltreatment, but it is widely recognised as being the most complex (Welsh Government, 2015). This is because neglect is rarely based upon a specific incident and has no single cause (Holland et al, 2013; NSPCC, 2015). Neglect is also multifaceted, having broad and varied consequences for individuals right across their life span (Allnock, 2016; Brandon, et al, 2014), and is recognised as a significant risk for other forms of child maltreatment (Berelowitz et al, 2012). This makes providing an appropriate and timely response, suitable to a child's needs, a real challenge for practice.

The All Wales Child Protection Procedures (AWCPPs) define the neglect of a child as the 'the persistent failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including starvation, or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including nonorganic failure to thrive' (Children in Wales, 2008:15). As with the AWCPPs, the most common definitions of neglect in the United Kingdom pay emphasis to the notion of 'persistent' or 'ongoing' happenings of neglectful parenting (Children in Wales, 2008: DHSSPS, 2005; Scottish Government 2010).

However, the SSWB Act (2014) defines neglect in Wales as 'a failure to meet a person's basic physical, emotional, social or psychological needs, which is likely to result in an impairment of the person's well-being (for example, an impairment of the person's health or, in the case of a child, an impairment of the child's development) (Part 11, s.197). A significant difference between the contemporary Welsh and the other definitions in the nations of the United Kingdom is the emphasis on 'persistence'. The SSWB Act removes the term 'persistent' from the legal definition of child neglect, allowing for consideration of isolated incidents of neglect within the Welsh context (Allnock, 2016). With legislation and policy in England continuing to include the term in legal definitions and policy guidance, the impending divergence in thresholds for intervention across England and Wales seems inevitable.

Neglect is a chronic and pervasive public health issue (Action for Children 2010; Daniel et al 2010) which continues to be evidenced as the most prevalent form of child maltreatment in Wales and the other three nations of the United Kingdom (Allnock, 2016; Jutte et al, 2015). The phrase 'neglect of neglect' has been continuously used over the last twenty years to describe the absence of knowledge and empirical research in the field on neglect (Hobbs & Wynne, 2002; Taylor et al; 2010; Wald, 2015). McSherry (2007) goes further suggesting an 'absurd paradox' exists in which neglect continues to remain the most under-studied and least understood form of child

maltreatment compared to other forms of abuse, despite its wider prevalence, chronicity and impact throughout the individual's life span (Dubowitz, 2007).

Allnock (2016) suggests that neglect has lacked attention in comparison to other forms of abuse because it is thought of as less serious than other forms of child maltreatment, often accumulative and not always instantly observable. Such conceptual characteristics continue to ensure that neglect is perceived as secondary to other categories such as sexual or physical abuse, which typically provoke much stronger societal responses compared to child neglect (Dubowitz et al, 2005). There is also conflation in practice and research settings between child neglect and emotional abuse, and is not uncommon for commentators to combine the terms or present them adjoined in literature. This could reflect attempts to connect two of the more 'overlooked' forms of maltreatment, compared to that of physical or sexual abuse which tend to dominate the common dialogue in child protection (Doyle & Timms, 2014).

Baker and Festinger (2011) recognise the conceptual division between the constructs of emotional abuse and emotional neglect. Emotional abuse is considered to be a deliberate act of parental action that degrades or diminishes the child, whereas emotional neglect is the consequence of the parent or carer being 'psychologically unavailable' to the child (Erickson & Egeland, 2002). Emotional abuse is a form of child maltreatment separate from child neglect, and refers to instances where children have been isolated, ignored, humiliated, tormented, terrorised or criticised (Minty, 2005). Its prevalence continues to increase (Simmell et al, 2016), being widely regarded as one of the most harmful and detrimental aspects of neglect upon a child's development. After neglect, it is the second most common category of abuse for which a child is registered on the child protection register in Wales (NSPCC, 2016b; Stats Wales, 2017b).

In 2013, the Welsh Government commissioned the WNP which was a collaboration between NSPCC Cymru/Wales and Action for Children-Gweithredu dros Blant (Stevens & Laing, 2015). The project researched the current evidence base and existing practice on neglect in Wales, identifying recommendations and resources to improve multi-

agency services to address child neglect across the spectrum of need. The study was comprised of semi-structured telephone interviews with leads in 22 of the local authority-led safeguarding children's boards (LSCBs) across Wales, a desk survey and document analysis of LSCBs' tools and protocols, and focus groups with participants drawn from a purposive sample across a range of professional backgrounds (Stevens & Laing, 2015). (As referred to on page 8 of this thesis, the implementation of the SSWB Act replaced local safeguarding children's boards with regional safeguarding children's boards and an NISB).

The project focused upon six core areas: (i) local area population level needs assessments, (ii) multi-agency neglect protocols, (iii) multi-agency neglect assessment tools for individual children and families, (iv) research into the role of education services in tackling neglect, (v) training arrangements for multi-agency staff, (vi) governance and driving improvement of multi-agency responses to neglect (Stevens & Laing, 2015). The Welsh Neglect Project found communication between social services and schools to be a particular obstacle (NSPCC 2015), identifying the need to strengthen joint-working at a strategic level across agencies and disciplines. This remains one of the biggest challenges in work on child neglect (Horwath, 2013), which could be due to the conceptual complexity surrounding the knowledge in this area, a point which is considered in the following section.

Conceptual Complexity

Daniel et al (2011) argue that neglect can be defined both 'broadly and narrowly'. Although literature offers simple typologies of neglect which include categories of medical, nutritional, emotional, educational, physical, and lack of supervision and guidance (Horwath, 2007; Farmer & Lutman, 2012), effectively describing the complexity of neglect is quite problematic (Daniel et al 2011). This section of the literature review draws upon an increasing body of literature which analyses the conceptual intricacy of child neglect. It begins the discussion by identifying the theoretical complexities of the concept and explores neglect as a social construct

(Horwath, 2013). The discussion then considers the challenges of capturing the absence of 'something', the significance of parental intentionality, the notion of 'good enough' parenting and the impact of gender.

It is clear that neglect does not take a single form. Neglect is often caused in a manner of ways and for a range of reasons, most usually by parents and carers not adequately meeting a child's basic needs physically and emotionally. Neglect is commonly understood as an 'omission' of appropriate care (Holland et al, 2013; Schumacher et al, 2001; Stowman & Donohue, 2005), compared to other forms of child maltreatment such as physical or sexual abuse, which are considered acts of 'commission' (Horwath, 2007). Acts of omission include a failure to meet the physical needs of a child such as food, clothing, shelter and warmth; failure to meet their emotional needs by omitting to provide cognitive stimulation, adequate health care, ensuring the child meets their developmental milestones, and protecting and safeguarding the child from harm (Howarth, 2007).

There is also further complexity in terms of effectively attempting to capture the 'absence of something', as opposed to identifying the presence of something such as an acceptable level of physical and emotional care (Daniel et al; 2011), or a specific incidence of physical or sexual abuse to a child (Connell-Carrick, 2003). English et al (2005:191) conceptualise neglect as 'the absence of a desired set of conditions or behaviours as opposed to the presence of an undesirable set of behaviours'. This raises questions about what is deemed by society to be an acceptable or unacceptable level of parenting or care in our society for our children (Horwath; 2005 & 2013).

Notions of culpability, intentionality, and whether neglect is wilful, is a well-versed discussion in the lexicon of neglect. Allnock (2016) suggests misunderstanding and disagreement in the literature in relation to omission of care to a child. One perspective argues that the omission of care resulting from deliberate harm to a child should be considered abuse rather than neglect, proposing neglect only results from parent or caregiver ignorance or opposing primacies in the family (Golden et al, 2003). The

alternative argument proposes that any neglectful acts, whether intentional or not, should be considered harmful, irrespective of the reason they have happened. Horwath (2007) goes further to argue against a preoccupation with establishing intention, instead shifting attention to the impact of neglect upon the child (Allnock, 2016; Dubowitz et al, 2005). This approach prioritises focus on the underlying causes behind the neglect occurring, so as not to eclipse concern about the child, and potentially obstruct working relationships with parents (Erikson & Egeland, 2002). This perspective holds significant value in terms of understanding the child's position within their broader cultural and socio-economic environs.

Children living in poverty in the United Kingdom are over-represented in the child protection system, and above all are particularly vulnerable to neglect (Horwath, 2013; Stokes & Schmidt, 2011). Whilst there is a strong association between neglect and lower socio-economic class (Cawson, 2002; Bywaters et al, 2016; Pelton, 2015) it is important to differentiate neglect from circumstances of poverty. Parental neglect can only occur when a parent or carer has reasonable access to the necessary resources required to meet the child's basic needs (Erikson & Egeland, 2002).

The association between poverty and neglect is complex. In 2015, 29% of children in Wales were living in relative poverty (Welsh Government, 2016). Although living in poverty does not predetermine the presence of neglect (Farmer & Lutman, 2012), it is commonly cited as a predictor or known risk factor (Action for Children, 2013; Christoffersen & DePanfilis, 2009; Jonson-Reid et al, 2012; Tanner & Turney; 2003). Shanahan et al's (2017) quantitative study into within poverty risk factors, indicates that children who live in lower socio-economic neighbourhoods are more likely to experience physical neglect than children who live in higher socio-economic communities. Findings of the study suggest that families who are impoverished and live in low-quality neighbourhoods, may experience additional levels of deprivation (Shanahan et al, 2017).

The relationship between neglect and poverty is best viewed as interrelated rather than causal (McSherry, 2007). Families who live in poverty are more than 40 times more likely to be referred to social services compared to families of a higher income (Bywaters et al, 2016). However, many neglectful families become known to social services having sought support and help from services due to their limited financial circumstances (Burke et al, 1998 cited by Farmer & Lutman, 2012; Stevenson, 2005).

Households known to social services for neglect are more likely to have socio-economic difficulties than those referred for investigation for potential physical or sexual abuse. In their evidence review into the relationship between poverty, child abuse and neglect, Bywaters et al (2016) identify a relationship gradient between socio-economic circumstances and the rate of child abuse and neglect across society. The authors identify that the greater the financial hardship experienced by the child and their family, the greater the likelihood and severity of child abuse or neglect occurring. In Wales there is a correlation between the level of deprivation experienced and the number of children on the child protection register. Elliott and Scourfield (2017) also reported a stronger relationship in Wales than is present in the other nations within the United Kingdom. The findings of the study emphasise the significance of the child's wider socio-cultural environment to the likelihood of neglect occurring.

Neglect is characterised by the relationship between the child and parent or carer (Glaser, 2000), and contextualised by the child's individual needs (Horwath, 2007). It is not a static phenomenon, but a social construct that moves and shifts temporally through the influence of cultural and ideological values (Garbarino et al, 1986; Scourfield, 2000). Therefore what is perceived to be neglect will continue to change over time and place. It is therefore not possible to agree a single definition of neglect that spans many settings. This poses a significant challenge for researchers, practitioners and policy-makers across a number of different practice, policy and academic contexts (Daniel et al, 2011).

Defining neglect requires a social judgement about what is considered a normative standard of care for a child, at a particular point in society (Garbarino & Collins, 1999: Rees et al, 2011). Neglect is multifaceted in terms of its own construction, differing within a range of contexts. Consequently, perceptions and understandings of neglect change over time, resulting in certain characteristics of neglect being either lessened or emphasised - dependent upon cultural and community norms, and the socio-political context within which they sit (Horwarth, 2013). This has been exemplified in recent years where nutritional neglect is fast becoming increasingly linked with the problem of child obesity rather than malnourishment and hunger. Parents or carers are positioned as playing a key role in poor diet choices which influence the quality and quantity of the food their child consumes (DoH, 2005; Horwath, 2007).

Although there is no single agreed definition of neglect which can span a range of settings, there are a number of types of neglect widely acknowledged within the literature (Daniel et al, 2011; Farmer & Lutman, 2012; Horwath, 2007). These include: medical neglect, nutritional neglect, emotional neglect, education neglect, physical neglect, and lack of supervision or guidance. Medical neglect refers to denying or diminishing a child's illness or health needs, including dental and optical care, speech and language therapy, and failing to seek the required medical attention or administration of appropriate treatments (Ertem et al, 2002). Children with complex needs are considered increasingly vulnerable to medical neglect, often requiring intensive or prolonged support for their ongoing health needs from their primary parent or carer (Sullivan & Knutson, 2000).

Nutritional neglect occurs when a child or young person is not provided with adequate food or nutrition for growth (Hobbs & Wynne, 2002). Although nutritional neglect is traditionally associated with young babies and their failure to thrive, as previously mentioned in this chapter there are growing links between childhood obesity caused by unhealthy diets and lack of exercise in contemporary society (Horwath, 2007). These factors not only increase risks to health in adulthood, they also escalate the propensity for the manifestation of diseases in later life, such as diabetes (The International Obesity

TaskForce, 2005) or heart disease, alongside many other related psychological effects associated with being overweight.

Emotional neglect is widely associated with hostile or indifferent parental care or actions which damage a child's emotional well-being, their self-value and worth, and impacts on their ability to thrive, be happy and achieve (Iwaniec, 1995). Emotional neglect commonly takes the form of lack of parental interaction, and the failure to provide emotional warmth and care, which in turn fails to develop the child's sense of belonging, and cultivate a positive self-identity (Horwath, 2007). Emotional neglect differs from emotional abuse, but as previously discussed they are often conflated in practice and research settings.

Educational neglect occurs when a parent or carer fails to ensure an appropriate education is provided for the child. In addition to state requirements for school attendance (Erikson & Egeland, 2002), it also includes wider aspects of the child's learning and development such as: suitable stimulation, taking an interest in the child's education, identification of and provision for any special educational needs, and engaging with parents' evenings, assigned homework tasks and school events.

Physical neglect is probably the most familiar type of neglect to practitioners (Horwath, 2007). Physical neglect can occur both on the child and in the home, and is often the result of unhygienic or inadequate living environment. On children, it often manifests in physical indicators, and can appear as dirty clothing, tidemarks on the skin, the smell of dirt and faeces as the result of poor hygiene, and poor-fitting or simply insufficient amounts of clothing for the climate. In the home, physical neglect is commonly revealed in damp, or unheated houses, or the absence of electricity, water, or inadequate safety guards for the fire and stairs. That said, it is distinct from lack of supervision or guidance (Coohey, 1998), which specifically refers to the 'failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger' or abandonment (Rosenburg & Cantwell, 1993).

Associated and Compounding Factors

Literature is divided as to whether children with additional needs are more vulnerable to child neglect, or whether the families' inevitable engagement with a range of professionals simply makes them more visible to inspection (Horwath, 2013). In an American study of over 50,000 school children, Sullivan and Knutson (2000) found that disabled children were 3.8 times more likely to be neglected than children without disabilities. The study also highlighted that disabled children were more likely to experience multiple forms and multiple incidences of maltreatment, and were often perceived as more susceptible to neglect due to both their separation from other children, and the of lack control over their own bodies and lives (Sobsey & Doe, 1991 cited by Farmer and Lutman, 2012). This is supported by Taylor et al's (2014) study into disabled children and child protection in Scotland, which found that children with disabilities were more likely to experience maltreatment than children without disabilities, and likely to experience more than one form of maltreatment.

Conversely, Govindshenoy and Spencer's (2006) systematic review of population-based studies found the evidence base to be weak, identifying that only physical disability was correlated with the experience of child maltreatment. The study noted children with psychological, emotional and learning disabilities appeared to be associated with the occurrence of neglect. Equally, children with disabilities may be increasingly predisposed to neglect due to the increased caring duties, medical needs or complex routines their disability demands from their parent or carer (DePanfilis, 2006).

Public Health Wales provide evidence to demonstrate a strong association between experience of adversity in childhood and health harming behaviours (Bellis, et al, 2016; Dube et al, 2003; Public Health Wales, 2016). Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events which occur in childhood such as being a victim of neglect or abuse, or being exposed to parental alcohol or drug use, mental health problems, incidents of domestic abuse, or criminal incarceration. Children who experience abuse or neglect, stressful or poor-quality childhoods and are brought up in households where there is

domestic violence, alcohol or drug abuse are more likely to adopt health-harming and anti-social behaviours in adult life (Bellis et al, 2016). Children who experience ACEs are more likely to have difficulty forming secure attachments with their parent and are thought likely to have unsolved interpersonal problems regarding trust and dependency in later life (Pianta et al, 1989; Public Health Wales, 2016; Riggs, 2010). The Welsh Childhood Experiences Study (Bellis et al, 2016) found that suffering four or more harmful experiences during childhood increases the chances of high-risk drinking (by four times), smoking (by six times) and the involvement in violence in the last year (by 14 times) in adulthood.

Bellis et al (2016) argue that individuals who experience ACEs in childhood, often end up trying to raise their own children in households where adversities are more common. This means that childhood understandings of relationships also inform a person's approach towards their own parenting creating a generational cycle of adversity. This could impinge upon a parent's ability to notice the child's cues, or even understand that a response is required by the child (Crittenden, 1992). Such neglectful parenting behaviours can occur when carers are not fully attuned to the child's needs, and do not understand which actions are likely to cause which outcomes in their child's behaviour (Horwath, 2007).

Although it is not possible to determine the causes of neglect, there are some key features on antecedents which appear to be connected (Horwath, 2007). Carers or parents may have poorer parenting and problem-solving skills compared to other non-neglectful parents or carers (Brayden et al, 1992). For parents who neglect their children, there appears to be an increased lack of capacity to deal with children's behaviour in terms of cooperation and boundary-setting. A lower parental educational level is also associated with a greater risk of child neglect occurring (Scannapieco & Connell-Carrick, 2005). There is further vulnerability for children who are cared for by parents who have a learning disability, history of maltreatment during childhood, attempted suicide, mental health or substance misuse problems (Carter & Myers, 2007; Connell-Carrick, 2003; McKeganey et al, 2002).

Likewise, parental drug and alcohol use can have a profound effect upon an individual's ability to adequately care for a child. Although substance and alcohol use do not directly cause neglect, Murphy & Harbin (2003) state that they have an impact upon the individual, and in turn this may impact upon their capacity to parent, potentially affecting the development of the child. Substance or alcohol misuse can create erratic arrangements of supervision for children, leaving them increasingly vulnerable, whilst exposing them to drug-related activities and dangerous paraphernalia (Daniel et al, 2011). Household income is often spent on parental drug addiction rather the resources needed to meet the child's basic needs. Substance or alcohol use may result in lack of awareness of health problems or missed routine appointments (Horwath, 2007). Bedtime and school-time routines can often be ignored or disrupted, with older children commonly reported as taking on caring roles for their younger siblings (McKeganey et al, 2002).

The 'toxic trio' is a term widely used in literature to describe the co-occurrence of mental health problems, substance misuse and domestic violence and abuse within the family (Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse, 2014). In addition to mental health problems and the presence of substance misuse, domestic abuse also has a significant impact upon the development of a child (Hester et al, 1999; Humpreys & Mullender, 2003). Witnessing or experiencing domestic violence, either seeing a parent abused or experiencing the trauma of a violent incident in the home, or being used as a shield for defence by the non-abusing carer, all have a detrimental effect upon the child's health and well-being (Kantor & Little, 2003).

In their study into practitioner perceptions of child neglect in England, Horwath & Bishop (2001) found that domestic abuse was an issue in over one fifth of all neglect cases in the sample (n=16). The mixed methods study employed case file analysis (n=57), a postal questionnaire, and five focus groups with practitioners working in children's social work to investigate current practice responses to child neglect and practitioners' understandings of the issue. The study identified that alcohol misuse

(31.3%), domestic violence and abuse (21.6%) and mental health issues (13.5%), were the three most common types of parenting issues present in cases of child neglect.

<u>The Impact of Neglect</u>

The impact of child neglect upon children's development has become widely recognised in the last twenty years. Neglect is increasingly documented as having a more severe effect on the development of a child than that of other types of abuse (Hildyard & Wolfe, 2002: Howe, 2005). It is harmful to a child's emotional, cognitive and behavioural development and impacts severely upon their overall sense of well-being (Stevenson, 2005). Of all the forms of maltreatment, neglect is recognised as the most dangerous form of maltreatment because of its potentially long-term and profoundly negative effects (Welsh Government, 2015). This includes poor school attainment, delayed development and low self-esteem (National Society for the Prevention of Child Cruelty, 2014a&b), poor emotional and mental health, and can result in poor social skills and isolation (Action for children 2010).

The effects of neglect continue throughout an individual's life and can affect the nature in which relationships are formed, increase the likelihood of unemployment or unskilled roles, and ultimately inform how they parent their own children (Horwath, 2007). It is crucial that neglect is identified and prevented at the earliest opportunity through existing universal services. This approach is congruent with the recently implemented SSWB Act framework and the contemporary policy approaches in Wales, which both emphasise early intervention so as to reduce the escalation of acute need (Social Care Wales, 2017).

Failure to meet key developmental milestones throughout early childhood significantly amplifies the effect of neglect later in the child's adolescence (Schore, 2002). The early experiences of a child significantly impact upon brain development affecting their emotional, behavioural and cognitive development (Twardosz & Lutzker, 2010; Welsh

Government, 2016). Brain growth is largely reliant upon satisfactory nutrition, with malnourishment affecting the child's physical growth and bone development (Horwath, 2013). Poor diet and deficiencies inevitably affect school-aged children's behaviour, ability to learn, and academic activity (Kerr et al, 2000; Mackner & Starr, 1997; Polonko, 2006). Neglected children can be observed to be 'touch hungry', striving for physical contact or affection from adults, often from a teacher or in the form of a member of staff at school (Erikson et al, 1989).

Should neglect start early in life, be chronic and protracted, the damage to a child is likely to be irreversible even in later childhood - irrespective of the quality or level of care that is provided to ameliorate the damage caused (Doyle & Timms, 2014). Stress experienced during pregnancy due to domestic violence or abuse, substance misuse or alcoholism may result in inadequate nutrition and care to the child in utero (Monk et al, 2013). This is significant for the developing foetus, resulting in long-term consequences such as the child being smaller and born prematurely, which is associated with a developmental propensity for physical, cognitive, social and behavioural difficulties (Talge et al, 2007; Hildyard & Wolfe, 2002).

Reference is given to 'chronic' or 'continuing' neglect experienced by the child as recurrent and associated with the more severe and long-term effects of cumulative developmental problems (Truman, 2004; Stone, 1998). This is not to reduce the detrimental impact of episodic neglect, nor to negate the significance of 'one-off' or 'accidental' incidents that can result in harm or child fatality. Identification of a 'one-off' or specific incident of neglect, such as the child being unsupervised or harmed, is what often leads to the exposure of broader and more damaging effects of chronic or persistent neglect on the child (Horwarth, 2013).

The impact of neglect upon a child can differ considerably, producing both short and long-term consequences on their development and future well-being. Horwath (2016) suggests that apparently identical actions by a parent or carer can affect individual children or young people within the same family in a different way (Daniel et al, 2011;

Dickens, 2007). It can be said that the effects of neglect are variable and often described as being on a spectrum. Rutter (1998) identifies two significant factors when assessing the prospective impact of neglect upon a child: the length of time spent in the neglectful living environment and their age.

The earlier the child experiences neglect and the more prevalent and chronic the said neglect is, the greater is the likelihood of the child suffering from long-term and continuing effects of the maltreatment (Perry, 2001). According to Doyle and Timms (2014), a child that is neglected in early life, is likely to have insufficient stimulation which can result in fewer connections being made between neurons in the brain. This means that younger children are more likely to recover functioning from the impact of neglect, if they are both removed from the setting and their development stimulated appropriately (Rutter, 1998).

Living in an emotionally abusive or neglectful environment, such as witnessing domestic violence (Hester et al, 1999), being left unsupervised for long periods of time, or experiencing the insecurity of being left in the care of strangers, leaves children exposed to extended periods of stress (Doyle & Timms, 2014). According to De Bellis (2005), elevated levels of chemicals in the brain related with stress reactions result in adverse brain development in children. Children who experience insecurity or confusion, through neglectful care-giving are likely to develop altered regions of the brain that facilitate the ability to process expressive language and speech (Choi et al, 2009; Gaudin, 1999; Howe et al, 2000; Tomada et al, 2011). Neglect can impede the development of the prefrontal cortical regions (De Bellis, 2005), increasing the likelihood of learning disability, inattention, and poor academic achievement. It can also lead to passivity and a child's incapacity to not only process but also tolerate, strong negative and positive experiences (Doyle & Timms, 2014). If neuronal pathways are not stimulated they are likely to 'wither' (Horwath, 2007), making reaching their full developmental potential improbable because their emotional, social or cognitive needs have not been satisfied during the early stages of life (Perry, 2001: Durkan et al, 2015; Welsh Government 2016).

Consequently, neglected children are more likely to have difficulty articulating emotion, becoming confused when differentiating between feelings shown by others, and further, knowing how to respond to them effectively (Pollack et al, 2000). Neglectful parenting can in some cases be the cause of formation of insecure attachment between a baby and a care-giver, when parents are anxious, annoyed or withdrawn and unable to provide a compassionate emotional response to the infant (Horwath, 2007). This type of attachment may be more likely to occur when parents are emotionally unavailable to their child, during episodes of mental ill-health, domestic violence, or substance misuse and addiction (Horwath, 2007).

Professional Understandings

The conceptual complexities in understanding and quantifying child neglect feeds into wider complications over how services respond to this issue. Differentiating between the broad understanding of neglect in terms of a child whose needs are not being met and the much narrower operational category of neglect for the purposes of service intervention is a complex issue for practice (Daniel et al, 2011). This makes the capacity to accurately judge whether the care a child is receiving is poor enough to be labelled 'neglect' quite problematic across different services, particularly given the added interpretive layer of varying professional values and beliefs, and the wider impact of social and cultural ideals upon a range of parenting styles (Dubowitz et al, 1998; Truman, 2004). Although literature proposes general agreement on what is considered inadequate care of a child, the threshold for what constitutes 'good enough' care by comparison is vague. This raises a significant difficulty when establishing agreed thresholds for statutory intervention (Allnock, 2016).

In the context of neglect, statutory thresholds establish the minimal level of adequate care for a child and consequently identify what is deemed neglectful and in need of intervention services. However, matching operational and narrow definitions of neglect with concerns about a child, is of limited use and can result in the loss of attention upon

the child's lived experience. Horwath (2013) for example, positions neglect as a social construct with the notion of 'good enough parenting' central to effective conceptualisation. She further suggests the way in which neglect is constructed impacts upon which children are labelled 'neglected' in the community, and the intervention services that are delivered by social workers to meet their needs (Dickens, 2007; Horwath, 2013; Mardani, 2010).

Children's Experiences

Despite the relatively large body of literature on child neglect, there is a dearth of research in the United Kingdom (and internationally) which explores children and young people's understandings and experiences of neglect (Gorin, 2016). In Daniel et al's (2010) systematic review of the recognition of neglect and early responses, the largest gap in evidence was the views of parents and children. Although the reason for this is not entirely clear, some studies have experienced practical difficulties in gaining access to recruit children as participants for research (Farmer & Lutman, 2012; McLeod, 2007). Gorin (2016) suggests a number of alternative justifications for the lack of evidence in children and young people's views: research with children often requires greater resources, time and energy, conceptualising neglect is more complicated than; and at times conflated with other forms of child maltreatment; and the research may cause distress to minors many of whom are vulnerable and in need of greater protection.

That said, the Child Safety and Victimisation Survey (Radford et al, 2011) is the largest study in the United Kingdom to provide robust evidence about young people's views on neglect. The study was undertaken with just over 3000 young people aged between 11 and 17 years old (*n=2,275*), and 18 and 24 years old (*n=1,761*), who were asked about their experiences of abuse and neglect. The study identified that 10% of the younger age category had experienced 'severe' neglect, which included significant emotional neglect, lack of supervision or care which would place them at risk, or neglect which was defined as abusive or criminal (Radford et al, 2011).

In Rees et al's (2011) study into adolescent neglect, young people (n=51) between 12 and 24 years of age were actively involved in the research advisory group and as co-researchers, to explore their perceptions and experiences of neglect. The study found that young people's definitions of neglect were much broader than those of adults, and included nuanced aspects of care (Gorin, 2016). Findings of the study highlight young people's priorities and ideas of what constitutes good parenting, to differ from those held by adults (Rees et al, 2011). Young people did not solely express their experiences of neglect as acts of omission by their parents, but also as acts of commission. This included active choices made by the adult, with young people's definitions of neglect often including deliberately punitive and active strategies by the parent or carer.

This finding was echoed in Chan et al's (2011) study into Children's Views on Child Abuse and Neglect in primary schools in Hong Kong. Twelve focus groups were carried out using vignettes in six primary schools across a number of districts of Hong Kong with Chinese children (*n=87).* In addition to children and young people's views being markedly different to those of adults, the study found that children did not have a homogeneous construction of maltreatment, with an added consciousness and sensitivity to different forms of abuse. Literature suggests that children and young people's experiences and perceptions of neglect are heterogeneous, necessitating personalised interventions in practice which can respond to the intricacy of individual experiences (Chan et al, 20; Mennen et al, 2010; Rees et al, 2011).

The wider effects of neglect in schools were expressed by children in ChildLine Scotland's study into children's concerns about their parents' health and well-being (Backett-Milburn & Jackson, 2012). In telephone calls to the charity *(n=400*), children talked about the broader effect of their parents' health and well-being in terms of the impact it has on their own lives. Being neglected and caring for other family members were identified by children as significantly impacting their lives at school. Children talked about experiences of truanting or hiding the signs of abuse, or being bullied at school because of their inadequate clothing or poor levels of hygiene (Backett-Milburn & Jackson, 2012). Poor attendance or tiredness and lack of concentration can lead to

poor attainment in relation to their ability, or exclusion for behaviour problems (Gorin, 2016).

Young people who participated in the project 'Action on Neglect' (Daniel et al, 2014) defined neglect as 'not enough love, 'having no interest in me', having to look after their siblings, 'you end up doing your parents' job', 'the responsibility is passed to you', and insightfully, when 'parents neglect themselves'. The study provided new and powerful perceptions from a young person's group into what children and young people felt like *being neglected*, with comments including 'love is a doing word', and 'it's one thing to say they love you [parents] but they have to show it' (Daniel et al, 2014). These key messages indicate that young people believe that spoken words are not sufficient to ameliorate parents' responsibility for acts of practical care.

A subsequent study undertaken in England by one of the authors (Tucker, 2011) went on to analyse the barriers that young people faced when they tried to assert that they were experiencing potential or actual neglect or abuse. The findings constructed a 'typology of disbelief' with the purpose of giving children a voice for their concerns. The data were drawn from a snowballed sample of 108 young people who were interviewed either by telephone or face-to-face. Four 'circumstance categories' were identified that could potentially lead to a young person not being believed: 'background' and 'baggage', 'family matters', 'reluctance and refusal', and 'personal relationships' (Tucker, 2011).

Children and young people feel they may not be believed by practitioners when disclosing instances of neglect (Tucker, 2011). Fear of making the situation worse is cited as a significant barrier to telling someone about their experiences. Neglect, compared to other forms of abuse, is considered especially likely to wear away a child or young person's ability to identify the need for help and then have the capacity to seek support from an external source (Daniel et al, 2014; Jobe & Gorin, 2013). Present evidence about children's help-seeking actions indicates that they are more likely to display secondary signs of needing support or help, rather than ask professionals

directly (Gorin, 2004). When attempting to get their voices heard, children experience being constrained by systems, and met by workers who they perceive as 'sceptical' and 'judgemental' (Allnock & Miller, 2013). However, when maltreatment is disclosed teachers are the most likely professionals to be turned to, after informal recipients.

The Role of Social Services

Social work with children and families is widely considered to be one of the most complex and difficult areas of social work practice (Okitikpi, 2011). During child protection investigations, all services including health, education, early years and childcare, social care, youth offending, police, advisory and support services, and leisure are obliged to share the information they hold with the local authority (Thompson, 2016) under the Working Together guidelines (Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information, 2017; Welsh Assembly Government, 2006; Welsh Government, 2004). Although not a legal process, the child protection system is a highly formalised procedure governed by substantial statutory guidance (Welsh Government, 2008). It is a multifaceted and complex system, positioned within a multi-agency arena (Thompson, 2016). The All Wales Child Protection Procedures provide a system which protects specific children suffering or at risk of suffering 'significant harm' as a result of abuse or neglect (Welsh Government, 2008).

Local authority social workers hold the lead organisational role in the delivery of child protection practice (Parton, 2014). Social service departments within each local authority host social work practitioners whose role it is to support and protect a wide range of vulnerable children through casework with families (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, 2017). There are many different children's social work roles within the local authority which are commonly organised into a number of teams. However, it should be noted that there are considerable variances in the organisation of services. Some specialist roles would normally include: the duty, referral and/or assessment team, long-term or children and families team, children in care team, care

leavers' team, Youth Offending Service (YOS), Emergency Duty Team (EDT), children with disabilities, and fostering and adoption teams. Child protection practice is principally facilitated by the duty and assessment and long-term/children and families teams, up until the stage a child might be placed into care of the local authority.

Fundamentally, statutory social work practice with children and families is concerned with the quality of parenting (Parton, 2014). Care versus control is a well-versed debate in social work with children and families, highlighted by the aforementioned tension in human rights legislation and the statutory powers possessed by local authorities. Under the SSWB Act (2014), the responsibility for coordinating and ensuring consistency of safeguarding practice which protects the welfare of children across Wales is held by the National Independent Safeguarding Board (NISB), which supports a number of regional safeguarding boards to deliver their duties across Wales (Welsh Government, 2017c).

Social services deliver statutory children's social work within a broader framework of services for children (Social Care Institute of Excellence, 2012). The framework for services with children can be described as a four-tier model that stretches across the child's continuum of needs. A visual representation of the tiers of service intervention is included on the page 35 of this thesis. Local authorities are responsible for producing a guidance document setting out levels for service intervention in their own area. The purpose of the 'threshold' document is to provide guidance and clarity on levels of service provision, not only to ensure consistency across services, but to make sure children and families are receiving the correct provision for their identified needs. There is common variance between local authorities in the construction of thresholds for service intervention.

The terminology and boundaries between each tier can differ between local authorities, but largely the intervention levels are as follows: (Tier 1) universal services, (Tier 2) early intervention and preventative services, (Tier 3) specialist services for children with multiple needs (care and support), and (Tier 4) specialist services for

children with severe and complex needs including child protection services (child protection) (SCIE, 2012). The level of support offered to a family can be escalated or de-escalated either up or down the tiers of service intervention, depending upon the current level of need identified by the allocated social worker and the severity of risk posed to the child.

Every child should have their basic needs met through universal services which includes schools, health visitor appointments, and access to a general practitioner (these are commonly referred to as 'Tier 1' services). Early intervention and preventative services are delivered by a range of organisations including early years and childcare services, schools, health services, some third sector organisations or charities. These are often referred to as 'Tier 2' services and usually entail single agency interventions focusing support upon specific children with identified additional needs. The SSWB Act emphasises the need to increase preventative services in communities in Wales to minimise the escalation of need (Social Care Legislation in Wales, 2017b).

All local authorities are required to use a Team Around the Family (TAF) approach which sits within the 'Tier 2' level of service intervention (Holland et al, 2013). If a TAF model is implemented, a virtual team of professionals will be assimilated with a designated lead professional. The model involves identification of the family's needs using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) before appropriate support is provided to the family by a multi-agency team of practitioners (SCIE, 2012). This thesis focuses primarily upon the partnership work undertaken between schools and social services which sits within 'Tiers 3 and 4' of this framework. Statutory social workers in Wales, primarily work with children and families who are experiencing serious and complex issues (SCIE, 2012).

Figure 1. Illustrating the four levels of service intervention for children
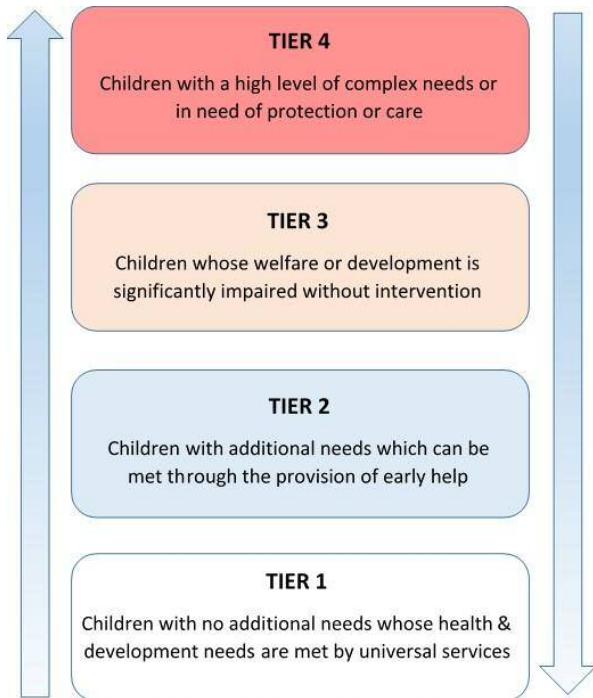
When schools wish to raise concerns about a child they make a referral to social services. The referral is received by the first response or assessment and referral teams or via the local authority's multi-agency safeguarding-hub to first assess and categorise the concerns. These teams also provide a point of contact for agencies wishing to discuss their concerns with a qualified worker (Holt, 2014), or to access advice on whether making a referral is appropriate. A decision will be made as to whether the concerns held require further investigation. If so, the matter will be allocated for 'a proportionate assessment of the child's well-being to determine whether they might have care and support needs, or are in need of protection from significant harm' (SSWB Act, 2014 s.21(2)(4)). The assessment will focus upon investigating the allegations of neglect and/or abuse, and make recommendations which ensure the child is protected from future harm (Children's Social Work Matters, 2017) by implementing appropriate support and resources.

If an assessment of the child's well-being is required, the case will be allocated to a social worker who will complete the process and be responsible for implementing service provision tailored to the child and family's needs. Practitioners are tasked with

completing the assessment, implementing support services, and undertaking regular statutory visits to the child at the family home to ensure the child's ongoing welfare. The support is managed by the social work practitioners and delivered by a range of internal and external partner or specialist organisations under the structure of a plan. The plan is then monitored through regular multi-agency review meetings held by the local authority, which aim to improve the child's and family's circumstances and safeguard the child from future harm (CSWM, 2017).

Families First is a prevention and early intervention programme which exists in every local authority in Wales (Welsh Government, 2017a). The Tier 2 programme coordinates a range of targeted services aimed at working with the whole family, providing support to those who fall below the threshold for children's social service intervention (Holland et al, 2013). Flying Start is also a tier 2 targeted early years programme for families with children under 4 years old, living in disadvantaged areas of Wales (Welsh Government, 2017b). The Welsh Government funded programme delivers free part-time child care for children aged 2-3 years, together with an enhanced health visiting service for families.

Social work practitioners facilitate intensive family support through 'child in need' (CIN) or 'child protection' services (CP) where a child is provided with support whilst on the child protection register (CPR). While receiving support from social services, a child's needs will be assessed at regular intervals using the Framework for Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (Department of Health, 2000) to ensure that the right level of support is provided.

Social Care in Schools

This section provides an overview of the literature on the presence of social care in schools. There is a paucity of literature on the role of integrated social care services in schools in Wales. As a result, the discussion centres upon four key pieces of educational

research from England, which evaluate the role of social work professionals in schools (Cummings et al, 2005 & 2007; Children's Workforce Development Council, 2010a; Wilkin et al, 2008). The discussion begins by introducing the model of practice currently employed in schools in Wales, and considers the significant role school staff play in the lives of children. The range of social care roles in schools is acknowledged here as varying considerably between institutions. The dialogue concludes with a critical analysis of the strengths and limitations of social care in schools, exploring the efficacy of co-located services whilst considering the potential barriers to effective multi-agency practice.

The 'community-focused school' model is commonly employed across Wales, with many schools providing services outside of the school day with the purpose of meeting the needs of pupils and the wider communities they serve (Welsh Assembly Government, 2003). These services often include adult education, study support and sports programmes (Governors Wales, 2008). In terms of social care, the model aims to enhance partnership working within the community by offering pupils better access to specialist services with the purpose of reducing child poverty (National Assembly for Wales, 2001; Welsh Assembly Government, 2003).

Community-focused schools promote joined-up working between agencies such as social care and health and are designed to advance parental involvement in learning, to improve supervision of children outside of school hours (Welsh Assembly Government, 2003), and to offer families a more comprehensive and holistic service which more fully meets the needs of the community. Schools have historically offered some form of health or welfare function, but the model has become more formalised since the 1980s (Baginsky, 2008). Some schools now locate social care practitioners on school premises with the purpose of offering added support to children and their families. This approach is often referred to as an 'extended school' and intends to bridge the child's school and home life, whilst offering support to families and the education staff through the establishment of positive working relationships (Daniel et al, 2014).

Although there is no one model of the extended school, the extended services offered aim to meet the needs of the local community they serve (Baginsky, 2008). Services include learning support, clubs, activities, pastoral support, health, and social care services. The design of the extended school intends to raise standards of achievement, whilst also improving the life chances of children from more deprived areas (Reid, 2005). The model aims to forge closer working relationships between education and social care colleagues through the co-location of specialist services which encourage swift and clear referral routes that improve the overall health and well-being of the child (Carpenter et al, 2012; Reid, 2005; Wilkin et al, 2008).

The idea of extended schools originated from the 'full service' schooling initiatives in the United States to meet the needs of pupils, their families and the wider communities through provision of a comprehensive range of services (Dryfoos, 1994 & 1998). The concept of 'full-service' schooling was that of a 'school-based health and social services centre', where space was set aside within the school buildings for outside agencies to occupy alongside education staff. It is important to distinguish between the concept of 'full service' schools and that of 'school-based' or 'school-linked' services which are more typical of the 'extended-school' model employed in the United Kingdom (HM Government, 2011). Many schools in Wales and across Great Britain have, or are in the process of establishing, flexible and co-ordinated service structures that span the traditional boundaries of education and social care (Baginsky, 2008).

Child neglect is among a wide range of problems that present potential barriers to effective learning and teaching (Adelman, 2014). Over recent years, an emerging literature recognises teachers and school staff as some of the most significant adults in a child's life. They are well-positioned to have a profound impact upon a child's cognitive, social and emotional development (Baginsky, 2008; Daniel, 2008). There is a general paucity of information on 'school-based services' that connect children and their families with supportive resources by way of co-located health and social care agencies (Chanmugam, 2009; Wilkin et al, 2008). The majority of research that has been undertaken in the United Kingdom into integrated school provision, principally focuses

upon the evaluation of 'extended schools' and the difficulties encountered in their formation (Wilkin et al, 2008). Although school staff play a crucial role in the protection of children, there is very little research which explores the school's perspective on safeguarding or the role that social care professionals have within its organisation (Wilkin et al, 2008). It therefore remains unclear as to what level, and in what form, the safeguarding role is being exercised within educational institutions.

The purpose of positioning social care professionals in schools is to encourage combined working between social services, education and health to more effectively meet the needs of a child and their family (Cummings et al, 2005). In Wales, a small number of local authorities provide schools with school social workers (SSWs). Although the SSW role is a relatively new role in Wales, the role of social workers in schools has been in existence in New Zealand for a number of years and has proved to be very effective (Buckley, 2005; Department of Child Youth and Family, 2002). The SSW role in Wales is delivered by qualified statutory social work practitioners who offer early and preventative advice and support to specific schools located in the local authority. Where possible, some SSWs also deliver informal training sessions to a range of school staff on a variety of social issues. The role sits within 'Tier 2' services providing early help and support to schools either informally or through the TAF model. Should the level of risk posed to the child increase, meeting the threshold for intervention by social services at Level 3 and above, the SSW can internally refer cases to colleagues for allocation within these statutory teams for continued intervention and support at a higher level of provision.

It is important to differentiate the new role of the SSW in Wales, from that of the established SSW profession in the United States (American Council for School Social Work, 2017; School Social Work Association of America, 2016). The American model of school social work commonly employs and positions the practitioner within the individual school and its organisational framework. Practitioners are viewed as 'specialised instructional support personnel' (ACSSW, 2017). Although SSWs in the United States hold a degree in Social Work, the emphasis is placed upon their skills and

expertise in working with children in a school setting, rather than providing specialist services at 'Tiers 3 and 4'. In contrast, the SSW in Wales is employed by the local authority through social services, managed and supervised within a social work discourse, and works closely with the child protection teams to respond to a range of issues both inside and outside of the school. The focus of the work is the child's overall welfare and safety and the prioritisation of the child's well-being with the purpose of sustaining the child in regular education.

Pritchard and Williams (2001) state that SSW roles can prevent children coming into care, reduce truancy and delinquency, at the same time as improving teacher morale and pupil attainment and attendance (CWDC, 2010a). SSWs are well-placed to identify non-punitive approaches to supporting pupils at school (Cameron, 2006; Doel, 2010). Integrated working between education, social services departments and health services, was first promoted in England through the Every Child Matters agenda (2003; Cummings et al, 2005). The paper referred to extended schools as fundamental to achieving the five key objectives for children: staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, and enjoying economic well-being (HM Government, 2004). Extended schools provide a range of additional services outside of the school day to meet the needs of the children and their families from nursery age through to secondary school, echoing the agenda's drive to strengthen a preventative and early intervention approach to safeguarding children (Carpenter et al, 2012; NIdirect Government Services, 2015; Wilkin et al, 2008).

In Wilkin et al's (2008) study into the value of social care professionals working in extended schools, just over a third of all local authorities in England (n=57) identified examples of effective integrated practice. The mixed methods study employed telephone interviews (n=38) and case-studies (n=6) with a range of staff involved with extended school provision and integrated services. From the responses received from the 57 local authorities, four key models of social care practice emerged: (i) unqualified support workers for families or pupils either linked or based in schools, (ii) qualified social care professionals who were linked to or working with schools, (iii) student social

worker placements in schools, and (iv) training events and informal opportunities provided to school staff by social care professionals. Although the types of models found by the study were not mutually exclusive, the first two models were most commonly employed in schools, with more than twice as many participating local authorities engaging these models, as the third and fourth categories.

The majority of local authorities reported the Every Child Matters (2003) agenda to be the rationale underpinning their chosen model of integrated practice (Wilkin et al, 2008). Most of the participants in the study cited service integration as the primary motivation for locating social care professionals in schools, whilst increasing early and preventative services which could provide 'swift and easy access' to comprehensive support for young people (Cummings et al, 2011; Wilkin et al, 2008). Principally, participants spoke about the process of locating social care professionals in schools as working towards achieving fully integrated services that would allow both fields of responsibility greater influence and impact on children's needs than if they were working as individual agencies (Wilkin et al, 2008).

The Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) (2010b) undertook research into the development and progress of the role of the school social worker in England. The small-scale exploratory study 'Championing the extended schools social workers' role: prevention and practice' employed qualitative interviews with five practitioners within the field, who had existing links with the researcher. The aim of the study was to investigate the suitability of schools for the co-location of social workers across a small cluster of schools. Existing practice was explored, with findings identifying potential benefits for early and preventative social work, together with strategies for overcoming challenges in developing the service further (CWDC, 2010b).

The study found that social work presence in schools was regarded positively and recognised as having a specific skill set with which to respond to social issues. The findings highlighted the school social workers' ability to gather information and undertake assessments as being helpful, and being able to undertake direct work with

children and families as beneficial. Participants spoke about the school social work role as being 'the glue that holds things together' (CWDC, 2010b:11), being well-positioned to give advice on statutory thresholds and social services' involvement when levels of risk moved beyond the remit of preventative work. There was also consensus that the role effectively bridged the communication and liaison gap between professional discourses - a practice challenge identified in more recent studies on child neglect (Holland et al, 2013; Stevens & Laing, 2015) - and made the shared discussions more meaningful (CWDC, 2010a&b).

Social care practice in schools in England and Wales tends to have an early intervention and preventative focus, commonly targeting support at children and families who are below the threshold for intervention from social services (Rose et al, 2006; Wilkin et al, 2008). Although the efficacy of social care practice within schools in Wales is yet to be evaluated, pockets of integrated practice between education and social care do exist. Where integrated services are not established, school-linked social care services are more common, usually taking the form of education welfare officers (EWOs) who are employed by the local authority. The remit of the Education Welfare Service is to respond to a range of education-based issues, but primarily its purpose is to promote school attendance and prevent persistent absence (Welsh Government, 2005).

Social care roles in schools vary across Great Britain and are often carried out by both qualified social workers and unqualified family or pupil support workers. Activities include the delivery of preventative programmes for children, casework, family support, parenting classes, general advice, signposting to specialist services, counselling, mentoring and also acting as the lead professional in a TAF model (Wilkin et al, 2008). Wilkin et al (2008) found that the activities undertaken in schools by social care professionals were largely similar, irrespective of whether the staff were qualified or not. However, aside from the similarities in the activities delivered, the study identified a significant difference in the manner in which the roles were carried out.

The study identified that unqualified social care professionals (typically family or pupil support workers) had a tendency to focus upon proactive, preventative work with young people who were below the threshold for intervention by social services. Conversely, qualified social work practitioners concentrated upon more reactive or crisis-intervention work that needed specialist intervention at a Tier 4 level (Wilkin et al, 2008). In short, the model of practice for social care professionals in schools varied according to the level of qualification held by the individual. Participants expressed the opinion that non-qualified social care staff were adequate in their capacity to meet the level of need presented by pupils, and that qualified workers were not necessary. This perspective was principally underpinned by the low-level and early identifiable nature of the presenting social problems in the school (Wilkin et al, 2008).

Multi-agency partnerships offer children the potential for integrated outcomes, but there are many reasons that prevent the success of inter-disciplinary working across social care and education discourses (Milbourne, 2005). Schools have not traditionally been the setting for social care practitioners, but a key advantage of locating social care services in schools is accessibility both for the children and their families and also for the school and social care professionals (Wilkin et al, 2008). School sites are often centrally located in the community, offering discreet and increased accessibility to co-located social care services within a convenient and familiar location. The advantage can be minimal disruption to a child's day as they may otherwise need time off school to attend offices at another premises (Wilkin et al, 2008).

Wilson and Hillison (2004) suggest that the co-location of services can also result in a reduction in the school's time spent on pastoral issues (Senior et al, 2016), whilst developing a more encouraging and nurturing ethos within the school and an inclusive support service to children. This in turn improves academic progress (Cummings et al, 2007; Daniel et al, 2008), and largely reduces costs incurred by the school. Co-locating social care professionals in schools or on school-sites can provide an easily accessible service from a non-teacher in a confidential setting (Wilkin et al, 2008). Social care in schools can provide increased support to pupils at difficult times, reduce anti-social

behaviour, improve attendance, and deliver a service to those who fall below the social services threshold for intervention (Rose et al, 2006; Senior et al, 2016; Wilson & Hillison, 2004).

Difficulties are also acknowledged in establishing integrated services on school-sites, particularly with regards to effectively engaging families with services (Wilkin et al, 2008). Some parents hold entrenched views about social workers, attaching stigma to receiving support from statutory practitioners regardless of their location (Boddy et al, 2007). Accessing support from a family or pupil support worker could be considered less intimidating and more akin to working with a member of school staff (Wilkin et al, 2008).

There is a further challenge in accomplishing confidentiality of services when social care is co-located within an education setting, raising questions about the security of sensitive and personal information (University of East Anglia, 2005). Wilkin et al (2008) found the central nature of the school within the community to be detrimental in terms of parents achieving a discreet entrance to services, away from friends and family. Some parents were not comfortable using available rooms in the school if these were positioned in public or inappropriate locations. Finally, the co-location of social care within schools discouraged some parents from accessing services, due to their own poor experiences of education (Wilkin et al, 2008).

Potential Barriers to Inter-Agency Practice

There are a number of potential barriers to inter-agency practice. Because professional groups are characterised by status, hierarchies, specific credentials, bodies of knowledge, codes of ethics/professional practice, and processes of accountability (Davis, 2011; Tomlinson, 2003), assumptions about other professional discourses, their differing cultures and organisational priorities can create barriers to achieving effective

service delivery (Atkinson et al, 2002). The failure to generate effective collaboration amongst agencies can cause a division within integrated services (Milbourne, 2005). Co-locating social care staff in schools can help bridge this gap, by building stronger and more constructive professional relationships between professions, whilst enhancing an awareness of the child's needs.

Although effective multi-agency practice improves the quality of information sharing and communication, there is also potential for elements of duplication and confusion around professional identity to occur (Atkinson et al, 2002; CWDC, 2010a). Mutual respect and an understanding of colleagues' roles is essential for successful multi-agency practice (Hallett & Birchall, 1992). Often, the time and capacity needed for different organisations to establish relationships with one another is not fully acknowledged in the formation and development of services (Milbourne, 2005).

Wilkin et al (2008) suggest that long-standing tensions between social care and education are also dissolving as a consequence of social care professionals being based within extended schools. Positioning social work staff in schools will shift the engrained and often stigmatised perceptions of social workers held by families in the community (Wilson & Hillison, 2004). In Milbourne's (2005) study into 'Children, families and inter-agency work' in education settings, families expressed that a key advantage of inter-agency practice in schools was having access to support from a professional who was flexible and able to understand issues in both their home and school lives. Interestingly, families were not concerned about having the opportunity to seek help from multiple agencies within the school or which agency the professional was positioned within (Milbourne, 2005). This could demonstrate the efficacy of the co-location and the reduction in families' need for support from multiple agencies. The study also found that practitioners felt able to practise more flexibly than if they were located within a statutory agency, further benefiting from the autonomy experienced within smaller organisations.

This chapter has provided a summary of the legislative and policy framework governing child neglect practice in schools in Wales. The discussion has explored the rights of the child in the context of the UNCRC and the ECHR, highlighting the statutory duties of social workers to intervene in children's lives to ensure they are able to live free from neglect. It has outlined the recent implementation of the SSWB Act in 2016 and described the complex role of social services and the levels of service intervention in neglect. The presence of social care in schools was considered, principally focusing upon the existing approach undertaken to safeguard children from neglect through early support and preventative school-based services. The discussion concluded by highlighting the importance of the working partnership between schools and social services and identified a need for further research in this area.

The School's Response to Child Neglect

The following section provides an overview of the literature on the school's current responses to child neglect. The discussion opens by identifying the significance of the school's role in identifying and intervening in child neglect at the earliest of opportunities. In the absence of literature specific to Wales, the discussion identifies one small but key study in England which investigates the experiences of school staff in early help and child protection practice. The review then turns to the available research within the United Kingdom, and focuses upon four key studies which investigate teacher training in child protection (Baginsky, 2003; Baginsky & Macpherson, 2005; Hodgkinson & Baginsky, 2000; McKee & Dillenburger, 2009). Due to the paucity of research concerning the broader roles of school staff as a whole (not simply teachers) in responding to child neglect in the United Kingdom (Richards, 2017), the concluding section of the literature review opens out to consider the available research in an international context. Three key themes emerge from a global perspective on schools and child neglect, and are discussed respectively: (i) training of school staff in child neglect, (ii) identification and intervention of neglect in schools, and (iii) multidisciplinary responses to child neglect involving schools.

In Wales, one study has been identified which relates to child neglect practice in schools. The study investigates the role of early support in schools and early years services for children experiencing child neglect and was funded by the Welsh Government during year two of the Welsh Neglect Project (as previously outlined in the introduction) (Welsh Government, 2015). In addition to the two studies which focus upon child neglect practice in schools, there are a further seven empirical studies which more broadly explore 'child abuse and neglect' in schools in the United Kingdom (England *n=6*, Northern Ireland *n=1*), with a further 40 studies identified from a number of independent countries (America n=21, Australia n=6, Canada n=2, New Zealand n=2, and one study each from India, Malaysia, Netherlands, Nigeria, Palestine, Saudi-Arabia, Spain, Taiwan, and Turkey). Unsurprisingly, the majority of literature on neglect and schools emerges from America, reflecting the existing presence of social care in schools, and the established professional role of the school social worker in an educational setting.

Overall, literature in the field commonly focuses upon teachers within education rather than the broader concept of school staff as a collective and diverse group, which is the specific focus of this thesis. The literature discusses neglect in the context of schools investigating 'child abuse and neglect' as a combined form of child maltreatment, rather than discussing neglect as an independent form of abuse. The principal emphasis in literature from the United Kingdom is placed upon the safeguarding training needs of teachers in the matter of 'child abuse and neglect'. However, the international literature goes further and explores the efficacy of schools' reporting practice to child protection services, together with the value of interdisciplinary working between schools and child protection services. There are no studies identified by this review which investigate the nature of support provided by schools, nor the level of service schools provide to children experiencing neglect (Faller, 2006). It is for this reason that the terms 'child abuse and neglect' and 'teachers' are subsequently employed throughout the proceeding discussion in this chapter, so as to most accurately reflect the current rhetoric in the field.

The Significance of Identifying Neglect in Schools

One of the key ways that neglect is demonstrated is in the impact it has upon a child's attainment and attendance at school (Daniel, 2008). Children who experience neglect are often late for school, hungry, dirty, and may present with cognitive or emotional delay. It is for this reason that schools are pivotal sites for identification and intervention in child neglect (Stevens & Laing, 2015). Hunger, inadequate clothing, medical neglect, poor hygiene, persistent lateness (Daniel, 2005), and educational absence, can all be directly observed by staff in schools. Wider factors such as substance or alcohol use, learning disability, mental health problems, or domestic violence and abuse in the family, can all increase the likelihood of a child experiencing neglect, and can potentially be detected by school staff during interactions between the child and their parents at either end of the school day.

Teachers are adults who are most consistently present in a child's life, and have a significant effect upon a child's emotional, social and cognitive development. It is widely recognised that children are unable to learn successfully unless their basic needs have been met (Perry, 2001). This places a responsibility for pastoral care upon school staff, alongside education, to ensure the overall well-being and safety of pupils. School staff therefore play a central role in the child's individual world and the on-going culture and attitude of the school (Baginsky, 2008). School staff are in a unique position to notice neglect and contribute to its successful prevention (Baginsky 2003; Hawtin & Wyse, 1998; Whitney, 1993), being able to detect early changes in a child's behaviour, observe the child's interactions with their parents, or their failure to progress in accordance with expected developmental and educational milestones which could provide early indicators of neglect (Briggs & Hawkins, 1998; Crosson-Tower, 2003).

Alongside social and health services, the education service has had a long-standing and important role in safeguarding the welfare of its pupils (Baginsky & Macpherson, 2005). The school's role has become more formalised since the introduction of the Children Act 1989 with local authorities in England and Wales having a duty to safeguard the welfare

of the children within their area through a coordinated inter-disciplinary approach (Welsh Government, 2015b).   Each school has a Designated Senior Person (DSP) with a responsibility for child protection concerns, as detailed in the Keeping Learners Safe policy document, and within local authorities there is an education liaison role attached to social services. This leaves the success of the co-ordinator role dependent upon the ability of the school's broader staff group to identify the signs of neglect and report concerns to the appointed DSP (Baginsky & Macpherson, 2005: Hodgkinson & Baginsky, 2000).

Research in Wales

The WNP, commissioned by the Welsh Government in 2013, was a collaboration between NSPCC Cymru/Wales and Action for Children-Gweithredu dros Blant (Stevens & Laing, 2015). The project identified that communication between social services and schools was a significant challenge to child neglect practice (Haynes, 2015; Holland et al, 2013; Stevens & Laing, 2015), and recognised the need to strengthen joint-working across agencies and disciplines in the field (Horwath, 2013). Consequently, in the second year of the Welsh Neglect Project, some attempt was made to investigate the role of early support in schools and early years' services for children experiencing low-level neglect. The study aimed to explore the support currently provided to enable early years and education services to respond to the early signs of neglect. The mixed methods study employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches to collect data to map out the existing landscape, explore practitioners' understandings of neglect, identify potential barriers, and to identify best practice so as to locate solutions for education services to work more effectively.

An online survey was distributed to practitioners (predominantly head teachers) in education services across Wales, together with focus groups and interviews with practitioners and young people. Key findings from the study are briefly presented in the summary report from year 2 of the WNP (Welsh Government, 2015) and highlight that although formal child protection duties for education practitioners are set out in

legislation and guidance, their role in providing early support is not always considered clear. However, at the time of writing this thesis, the full research report was yet to be published, and as a result, limits discussion within this review.

Similarly, Richards' (2017) study into the experiences of designated safeguarding professionals in schools in England, highlights capacity challenges for staff who are also teaching a full timetable. The study, although very small (*n=6)*, investigates the experiences of six designated safeguarding staff in primary schools through the use of semi-structured interviews which explore experiences of multi-agency working. Findings echo the significance of school-size and staff's capacity in terms of the institution's ability to deliver early and preventative work. A high level of complexity was also recognised for staff in constructing meaning and making decisions based upon a child's presentation or their verbal accounts in circumstances of neglect. School staff reported the difficulties they experienced in 'representing harm that is cumulative' to be significant, and not knowing how to intervene when children are not adequately cared for (Richards, 2017:10). Due to the limited sample size, the study's findings are not generalisable, but do offer interesting insights into some of the challenges experienced by school staff in England when working with neglect in the school setting. Richards calls for further research in the school setting with a view to informing training and professional development in the identification and assessment of child neglect which provides a well-timed and fitting platform for this thesis.

Emerging Themes in Literature

In the United Kingdom there are seven studies which relate to schools and children's safeguarding practice. Six are from England and one is from Northern Ireland. Of the six studies in England, one focuses specifically upon the role of designated school staff (as mentioned above) and one upon the broader role of universal services (including teachers) in tackling child neglect (Haynes, 2015). The four remaining studies focus on teachers in the broader context of child protection training (Baginsky, 2003; Baginsky & Macpherson 2005; Hodgkinson & Baginsky, 2000; Webb & Vulliamy, 2001). Whilst the

study from Northern Ireland also focuses upon training needs, contrastingly it employs the combined term 'child abuse and neglect' rather than 'child protection' (McKee & Dillenburger, 2009). Due to the paucity of research within the United Kingdom, this review proceeds to expand attention to include empirical research within an international context.

The final section of this literature review summarises common themes which arise from the international literature in the field. The discussion is organised into three parts, one part for each theme identified. The dialogue begins with the first theme which explores the nature and level of neglect training for school-based staff, and the focus is broadly upon pre-service and post-qualifying child protection training for teachers. The second theme considers the identification of, and intervention in, child neglect in schools. Teachers' capacity to assess the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect are analysed, together with their understanding of the statutory duties and reporting procedures of social services. The third and final theme considers multiagency responses to neglect which involve the school. The theme discusses the efficacy of schools' inter-agency communication and liaison with other services, the value of information sharing, and the school's level of commitment to multi-agency practice.

(i) Child Neglect Training for School-Based Staff

Teacher training in child abuse and neglect plays a crucial role in teachers' awareness and identification of potential indicators of maltreatment (Karadag et al, 2015). This theme considers the literature on neglect-specific training for school-based staff. However, studies identified by the literature primarily focus upon the training of teachers as opposed to the broader school staff group. Walsh & Farrell (2008) argue that an increasing awareness of child neglect interrogates the current level of safeguarding training and preparation which is presently received by teaching professionals. The most significant barrier to educators effectively reporting abuse and neglect within the field of education was a lack of training or knowledge in detection or reporting procedures (Abrahams et al, 1992; Naregal et al, 2015). With a shift in public

concern generated from a number of high profile enquiries into child deaths (CYUSR Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Children Board, 2015; Johnson, 2004; Munro, 2005), attentiveness around the importance of ensuring appropriate educational responses to safeguarding continues to grow (Burnett & Greenwald O'Brien, 2007). Research into teacher training in child abuse and neglect, although somewhat limited in the United Kingdom, raises questions about how adequately teachers are prepared for the contribution they could make in identifying child abuse and neglect within the school setting (Abrahams et al, 1992; Hodgkinson & Baginsky, 2000; McKee & Dillenburger, 2009).

Emphasis has been placed upon in-service or post-qualification child protection training for staff, highlighting a paucity of pre-service training for student teachers and newly-qualified teachers - despite being placed in annual field placements (McKee & Dillenburger, 2009; Hodginson & Baginsky, 2000). A survey commissioned by the NSPCC found that newly-qualified teachers did not feel ready to respond to, or deal effectively with, childhood trauma on entering professional practice due to the lack of training they had received during their qualifying courses (Baginsky, 2001; Baginsky & Macpherson, 2005; Walsh et al, 2005). This raises concern, given that in 2016, 18,990 children in Wales were assessed as 'Children in Need', meaning they received some level of support from social services (Stats Wales, 2017c). This figure equates to more than 3% of all children in Wales, suggesting a propensity for student teachers to encounter large numbers of children at school who are experiencing abuse or neglect and are in need of support (Cawson, 2002).

In a study of 26 School-Centred Initial Teacher Training consortia (SCITT) in England, the design of child protection training modules within higher education institutions was found to be inconsistent, whilst ten courses failed to provide any training on child abuse or neglect whatsoever (Hodgkinson & Baginksy, 2000). The remaining courses offered between 1 and 8 hours of teaching, the content of which was mostly technical, with tutors reporting concerns about the lack of time and expertise for in-depth or adequate coverage on the topic (Hodgkinson & Baginksy, 2000). There were differences between

primary and secondary courses, with primary course providers locating maltreatment teaching within child development elements of the course, and secondary course providers linking child maltreatment to PE and bullying.

The study found students lacked knowledge and understanding about child maltreatment, holding a narrow perception of the broader picture in terms of the frequency and location of abuse and neglect in a national context (Hodgkinson & Baginsky, 2000; McKee & Dillenburger, 2009). Due to time constraints (Baginsky, 2003), course providers adopted a permeation of content rather than a specific formal model of training, with the content offered leaving teachers unskilled and unprepared for identifying child abuse and neglect in their roles (Hodgkinson & Baginsky, 2000). McKee and Dillenburger's (2009) study into the pre-service child protection training needs of student teachers suggest compulsory study is needed for professionals working with children at the pre-service stage in a Further and Higher Education setting. This would be congruent with training in other countries, and would support teacher knowledge development in the identification and reporting of neglect.

Hodgkinson and Baginksky (2000) suggest that superficial and merely technically adequate knowledge of child abuse and neglect procedures within school-centred training jeopardises the formation of deep understandings of child protection issues, leaving assumptions unchallenged within the teaching profession. Clear training must include the development of skills including the capacity for teachers to recognise any potential signs of neglect, as well as understanding how to respond and report the concerns held (Baginsky & Green, 2007). However, McKee & Dillenburger's (2009) study identified that more than half of the participants had no awareness of social services, nor any knowledge of their own 'duty to care' towards the child (DHSS, 2005).

Whilst training on child neglect is vital, it is also imperative to recognise the reality of current teacher training, where the courses are under significant pressure to deliver considerable content in little time (Baginsky & Macpherson, 2005; Walsh et al, 2008).

Consequently, wider elements of child protection, pastoral support and social responsibility are often squeezed in favour of educational priorities (Baginsky & Macpherson, 2005). Baginsky's (2003) survey into the views and experiences of newly-qualified teachers in child protection training found that although participants received limited training during their initial qualification, they desired training on child abuse and neglect again once they were in practice. The study recognises that 'in-service' training impacts upon the level of confidence of newly qualified teachers who have, and have not, received 'pre-service' training in child protection (Baginsky, 2003). These findings were supported by Hawkins & McCallum's (2001) study in South Australian schools which in addition to increased confidence, also reported improved recognition of indicators of abuse and neglect, awareness of responsibilities and knowledge of thresholds for reporting concerns.

Non-teaching education professionals such as school counsellors and school psychologists report being better prepared in identifying child abuse and neglect than teaching staff (Bryant & Baldwin, 2010). This could be due to the fact that more weight is placed upon safeguarding training within their pre-service qualifications, or the focus of the programme is upon aspects of the child's wider social, emotional, and behavioural learning in a school setting. It might also be that non-teaching staff have more capacity to prioritise in-service training in the absence of restrictive core teaching hours.

In Bryant & Baldwin's (2010) study into school counsellors' perceptions of mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect experiences in America, participants recognised a need for additional training specifically in supervisory neglect (and emotional and sexual abuse). In contrast to teachers (Abrahams et al, 1992), many of the school counsellors expressed training to be useful, and that it provided them with an understanding about signs and symptoms, responsibilities, definitions and procedures relevant to reporting child protection concerns in their roles (Bryant & Baldwin, 2010; Crenshaw et al, 1995).

Nearly three-quarters of the sample in the study reported that training had been beneficial to their practice (Bryant & Baldwin, 2010), school counsellors felt certain or very certain of their responsibilities under mandatory reporting legislation, stating they were most confident in their ability to identify physical abuse followed by their ability to identify neglect (Bryant & Milsom, 2005). Gallmeier (1992) suggests that there has been little effort in the USA to establish university-based interdisciplinary graduate training in child abuse and neglect, with training favouring practice approaches to the assessment and prevention of child abuse and neglect.

(ii) Identification and Intervention in Schools

For purposes of clarity within this review of literature, in Wales there is an organisational responsibility for local authority partners to report concerns of neglect (as previously outlined in chapter 2 of this thesis). it is important to note the significance in research findings from countries where mandatory reporting is a requirement, and those where it is not. Wales aside, the USA, Australia and Canada are the key countries which all have established mandatory reporting systems. Other countries such as Argentina, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Spain and Sri Lanka have applied some form of related mandatory reporting legislation (Wallace & Bunting, 2007).

In England and Scotland, there is no formal mandatory reporting duty for professionals working with children and young people. However, in Northern Ireland it is considered a criminal offence not to disclose offences against children. The concept of mandatory reporting originates from America where it is an established concept and refers to the legal duty to report cases of child abuse or neglect to the relevant agencies (Wallace & Bunting, 2007). With no formal requirement for mandatory reporting in England or Scotland, the emphasis is placed instead upon voluntary reporting whereby professional duties are highlighted in policy guidance.

Although child neglect is a significant issue amongst teaching professionals, the education profession has been unhurried in establishing a discipline-specific knowledge-base for teachers (Sinclair Taylor & Hodgkinson, 2001). Education staff, including school administrators, canteen supervisors, learning support staff and teachers, all require specific knowledge about neglect as well as a good awareness and understanding of reporting procedures if they are to undertake their safeguarding responsibilities effectively (McClare, 1983).

The existing research on teaching professionals' knowledge about child abuse and neglect suggests that teachers do not receive adequate information to identify and intervene appropriately in cases of suspected child maltreatment in practice (Abrahams et al, 1992; Walsh & Farrell, 2008). The lack of teachers' knowledge in this area brings limits to their ability to effectively recognise and report cases of child neglect to social services. Lack of knowledge is often connected to poor pre-service and post-service training, potentially forming the basis for under-reporting of the issue by schools (Gilbert et al, 2009; Karadag et al, 2015).

Although teachers are aware of the signs of child abuse and neglect, under-reporting of the issue is still common (Goebbels et al, 2008) where teachers - particularly in primary schools (Schols et al, 2013; Webster et al, 2005) - fail to report suspected abuse or neglect to statutory agencies (Kesner & Robinson, 2002). Schols et al's (2013) qualitative study into how child healthcare professionals and primary schools teachers identify child abuse, employed focus groups to explore Dutch frontline professionals' recognition and reporting behaviours. The study found that both groups of professionals are aware of the signs and risks of child abuse, but have a deficiency in specific knowledge of the subject, rates of abuse, and reporting processes.

In the study, a number of teachers expressed their reluctance to fully admit the severity of a child's circumstances and provided justifications as to why they could not respond to the concerns they held; 'you can only do something when the child is in your class'

(Schols et al, 2013). Teachers also often acknowledged the parents' situation as a priority and the impact of limited income; 'the parents themselves might not perceive it as abuse, because they are doing their best and maybe they just cannot do better'. The danger of this perspective is that the risk of neglect to the child could be misjudged.

The study also found that teachers were inclined to 'hide behind' different social norms and standards which they construct for different parents, applying subjectivity to certain groups as a reason for not responding to observed signs of maltreatment (Schols et al, 2013). Teachers identified a number of barriers to reporting concerns of abuse or neglect to child protection services (Goebbels et al, 2008). These included feelings of guilt when a child is removed from the family as a result of the referral, the inability to report as a school professional with anonymity from the parents, anxiety about the parents' reactions and the need for parental consent (Schols et al, 2013).

Walsh and Farrell's (2008) study of eight early childhood teachers in Australia agreed with the call for a discipline-specific knowledge-base on abuse and neglect within schools (McClare, 1983; Sinclair Taylor & Hodgkinson, 2001). The qualitative study of purposively selected university-educated teachers explored a broad range of types of desirable knowledge when working with children experiencing abuse or neglect (Walsh & Farrell, 2008). The findings once again illuminated an absence of teachers' knowledge of the causes, incidence, prevalence, consequences, definitions, laws and policies relating to the subject.

In America, the National Teachers Survey (NTA) reports that almost three quarters (74%) of teachers sampled indicated they had suspected a child was being maltreated at some point, with 90% subsequently reporting the case to internal school personnel such as a social worker, nurse or head teacher (Abrahams, et al, 1992). Whereas only 23% of teachers stated they reported cases directly to child protective services, consistent with the findings of the National Incidence Study in terms of suspected child abuse or neglect cases known to schools that were investigated by child protection services (Feng et al, 2010; Goebells et al, 2008; Westat Associates, 1988).

Abrahams et al (1992) suggest that school personnel only report a small percentage of the abuse and neglect cases they have observed, once again raising questions for practice in terms of potential barriers to reporting suspected cases. Two thirds of teachers believed that lack of sufficient knowledge on how to identify and respond to child maltreatment proved an obstacle to their reporting. More than half of the teachers stated that fear of legal repercussions for false allegations affected their decision to report, together with concerns of damage to the 'parent-teacher' and 'teacher-child' relationships.

Under-reporting of child abuse and neglect within schools remains a significant problem. In their study into the reporting behaviour of teachers in cases of alleged abuse or neglect, Goebbels et al (2008) identified that teachers are often hesitant to report their worries about a child (*n=296)*. Teachers from 15 schools in Queensland in Australia completed a postal questionnaire on their detection and reporting behaviours (*n=296)*. Although most of the respondents had familiarity with reporting (81%), findings recognised that compared to their more experienced colleagues, teachers who had never suspected abuse or neglect (19%) were increasingly likely to have less confidence in their ability to recognise indicators, less teaching experience, lower academic qualifications and a higher level of perceived support.

Alarmingly, the study reported that 14.5% of teachers stated that they failed to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect, with two-thirds of these teachers having failed to do so on more than one occasion (Goebbels et al, 2008). The authors suggest that this figure is likely to be even higher, given the reliance on participants' retrospective memory of their own practice, combined with the undesirability of admitting that they have failed to act on concerns they had. These findings parallel those from Webster et al's (2005) study into over-reporting and under-reporting of child abuse, which reported that teachers under-reported in 33% of cases. Notably, Goebells et al (2008) also found that hours of child protection training failed to make a significant

difference, congruent with findings from previous Australian research with primary school teachers (Walsh et al, 2005).

(iii) Interdisciplinary Responses Involving Schools

It is well-documented that staff in schools have the maximum opportunity to see children on a daily basis, enabling them to compare current behaviour with peer norms or past behaviour (Lumsden, 1992) and observe subtle changes in their appearance that might indicate the presence of neglect (O'Toole et al, 1999). The successful and prompt recognition of child neglect is largely dependent upon the effectiveness of the relationship between schools and social services. In spite of this, literature continues to acknowledge the interdisciplinary liaison between the two fields of responsibility as considerably problematic (Holland et al, 2013; Stevens & Laing, 2015; Webster et al, 2005).

Barriers to effective interdisciplinary practice include inter-agency communication, information sharing and difficult inter-professional relationships (Webster et al, 2005). In particular, schools report long waiting times for responses to safeguarding referrals from social care agencies (Baginsky, 2000). Conversely, social care agencies report the inappropriate nature of referrals received from the field of education, citing reports as not 'serious enough' to meet thresholds for social services' intervention (Zellman & Antler, 1990). King and Scott (2012) go further in reporting much higher rates of 'unsubstantiated' cases being received from the field of education than from any other agency.

Professional responses to child abuse and neglect by school staff are investigated less frequently than responses by other professionals in the field (Abrahams et al, 1992; Tite, 1993). This is surprising, given that schools report the greatest number of cases of neglect and abuse to child protection services than any other type of agency. Likewise, teachers are widely accepted as being the largest source for under-reporting child abuse

and neglect (Crenshaw et al, 1995), and also the most under-represented group on multi-agency panels and conferences and at training sessions (Baginsky, 2008). Baginsky (2000) argues against the view that this represents a 'lack of interest' in child abuse and neglect intervention, but attributes it instead to a reflection of teachers prioritising teaching and government attainment targets.

In Australia and New Zealand, literature suggests that case characteristics exert the most significant influence on the recognising and reporting propensities of teachers to a social care agency, finding no correlation with that of their professional attitudes (Rodriguez, 2002; Walsh et al, 2008). In the New Zealand study which explores attitudes of education, health and mental health professionals, respondents were found to be most accurate on their non-mandatory identification and reporting of hypothetical scenarios involving sexual abuse, with least accuracy and certainty found for reporting scenarios concerning neglect (Rodriguez, 2002). These findings support the growing body of international literature that evidences child neglect as the most common form of child maltreatment, being the most overlooked and under-reported by professionals (Ards & Harrell, 1993; Rodriguez, 2002;).

Canadian research identifies such concern, in terms of the ability of education and child protection systems to work together towards a common safeguarding goal that ensures the health and welfare of children (King & Scott, 2012). The quantitative study analysed 7,725 reports of potential maltreatment made by professionals to the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (Trocmé et al, 2005), investigating systematic differences in the characteristics of educators as compared to other professionals. Findings showed that school-based professionals were responsible for over a third of referrals, with educators' reports being twice as likely to be unsubstantiated upon investigation by child welfare services than those from other professionals.

Education staff were over-represented in their referrals for physical abuse, with two thirds of all professional referrals coming from school-based professions. All other

categories of child maltreatment were less reported, with child neglect referrals from educators suspected 41.7% of the time, compared to a substantiated rate of 31.3% upon investigation by social care (King & Scott, 2012). This could be related to the age of the children with neglect reports being more common amongst younger ages (Jonson-Reid et al, 2007). The study found that there were fewer caregiver risk factors judged to be present by an investigating social worker in those cases reported by educators compared to referrals from other professionals. Contrastingly, school-based professionals were more likely to refer cases to social care for children who had alleged functioning problems, and were significantly more likely to report cases involving children with difficulties in a physical/emotional/cognitive domain or presenting with a behavioural problem.

The consistent unsubstantiation of child maltreatment reports from school-based staff pertains to the fact that teacher reports are often drawn from child disclosures, compared to referrals from other health and social care agencies that are based on observation or parental reporting. This raises questions about the manner in which teachers interact with children and also the limited training teaching staff receive about identifying child abuse and neglect (Kesner & Robinson, 2002; King et al, 1998). Shoop & Firestone (1988) further suggest that educators, although aware of their duty to report, may be less informed about the procedures, reporting concerns to internal school-administrators rather than directly to child protection services.

Research also proposes that educators' beliefs about the attitudes and potential responses of child protective services inform the decision to report, suggesting that a referral for physical abuse may be more likely to receive attention than concerns in relation to neglect (Jonson-Reid et al, 2007; Tite, 1993). It is suggested that educators could be overlooking children in their classrooms who are experiencing neglect, as it is much more difficult to identify and substantiate concerns to social care agencies.

Gaps Identified in the Literature

This chapter has provided a review of the literature in the field of child neglect in schools.   The discussion was organised into two main sections. The first provided a broad overview on child neglect, whilst the second section focused upon understanding the school's existing response to the issue. The first section explored the conceptual complexity of child neglect, considered associated and compounding factors commonly present in circumstances where child neglect is present, discussed professional barriers to practice and considered the variability in level of impact upon a child. Children's experiences of neglect were identified as an area which is currently under-researched in the United Kingdom. The second section concentrated upon understanding the school's response to child neglect, revealing a real paucity of research in Wales. The review next considered research within an international context and identified three key themes for discussion: (i) child neglect training for school staff, (ii) identification and intervention in child neglect in schools, and (iii) inter-disciplinary responses to child neglect involving schools.

The first theme in the international literature identified the inadequacy of training in child protection matters. The empirical research focused solely upon the role of teachers and did not extend to include other members of school-based staff. Teachers were found to lack knowledge and understanding of the signs and symptoms needed to identify child protection concerns in their daily roles.   Despite being predisposed to encounter a large number of children in need of support from services, teachers were reported to feel unprepared and ill-equipped to contribute in the identification of abuse and neglect. Conversely, school counsellors and psychologists were identified as feeling more prepared than teachers, expressing training as useful in providing them with the necessary skills and understanding needed to report concerns in their roles. The literature however, did not extend further to include the training views and experiences of the non-teaching, specialist, and learning and support staff which commonly form the majority of the wider staff team within schools.

In the second theme, the shortfall in knowledge about how to identify and intervene effectively in cases of child abuse or neglect emerged. Again, the literature primarily focused upon the role of the teacher, disregarding the role of other staff members. The theme acknowledged the absence of a discipline-specific knowledge-base in this area, highlighting teachers' lack of capacity in effectively recognising and reporting cases of maltreatment to social services (and its connection to inadequate pre- and post-service training). A number of barriers to reporting abuse and neglect included the prioritisation of parents' situations over that of the child's lived experience, desire not to fully admit the severity of the child's circumstances, feelings of guilt, the inability to report anonymously as a professional which raised anxiety about parents' reactions. The literature did not provide findings on how maltreatment is identified in the school setting, nor did it investigate the nature or level of support that schools provide to children living with neglect.

The third theme focused upon the beneficial positioning of schools in enabling staff to have the maximum number of opportunities to recognise and identify child maltreatment at the earliest point possible. Schools are best placed to observe children over an extended period of time, monitor their behaviour, and make referrals to social services. Although the successful recognition of abuse and neglect was identified as being largely dependent upon the relationship which exists between the two fields of responsibility, the literature acknowledges that interdisciplinary liaison is considerably problematic. School staff express that social workers' attitudes and responses to referrals inform their decision to report, but despite the identification of a number of professional barriers in multiagency practice, the literature does not consider the nature of the interdisciplinary relationship between social services and schools. The gaps identified in this review of literature form the basis for the research questions posed by this study. These questions are outlined in the following chapter.

Research Questions

Due to the dearth of research on child neglect in schools in Wales, this chapter identified three themes which emerged from the international literature: (i) child neglect training in schools, (ii) identification and intervention in schools, and (iii) interdisciplinary responses to child neglect involving schools. The literature on maltreatment in schools had an unequivocal focus upon the role of teachers, as opposed to the wider staffing group which exists within schools and includes teaching, non-teaching, and support staff roles.

It was not possible to infer whether the literature could be generalised to non-teaching members of staff in schools, or whether the findings were specific to the teaching profession. The literature also investigated 'child abuse and neglect' as a collective form of child maltreatment, rather than researching child neglect as an independent type of abuse. This emphasises a need for research in the field which investigates the broader role of schools as an institution, in terms of both the individual and combined contribution made by a wide range of school staff to child neglect practice.

The literature did not discuss the method by which teachers identified or responded to safeguarding concerns within the school setting, nor did it investigate the actual nature and level of support that schools provide to children living with neglect. Although a number of professional barriers between partner organisations were identified, there was no exploration into the specific nature of the interdisciplinary relationship between schools and social services which would be of sound interest and significance for practice. These gaps in the knowledge on child neglect in schools form the basis for this study and provide the framework for three key research questions:

The questions are as follows:

(1) What is the extent of involvement of mainstream primary and secondary schools in identifying and responding to child neglect?

(2)   What are the experiences of a range of school staff in responding to children
and their parents when they are concerned that a child is experiencing
neglect?

(3)   What is the relationship between schools and social services in responding
to child neglect?

3. Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology of the study. The chapter is organised into six sections. The discussion begins by summarising the gaps identified in the review of literature undertaken in the previous chapter of this thesis. The study's three key research questions are defined. The second section goes on to provide an outline of the study's design, which draws upon both quantitative and qualitative methods across different levels of service intervention, with the purpose of answering the research questions posed most comprehensively (Bryman, 2012). (A diagram illustrating the composite methods and the study's design is provided on page 73 of this thesis). The strengths and limitations of using a mixed methods approach are carefully considered, and the concatenation of the combined methods are described. The composite methods include social work case file analysis, semi-structured interviews with school staff, and non-participant observation of practice in schools.

The third section defines the study's sampling framework employed to select each of the three local authorities in Wales, which further informed the identification of case study schools. The fourth section provides a chronological account of the data collection process, together with a description about the protracted access negotiations with individual research sites. The fifth section explores the specific techniques engaged for purposes of data analysis. These include statistical analysis of case file data using IBM SPSS Statistics, together with thematic analysis of interviews with staff and observations undertaken in schools. Here the processes of data management, data transcription, and data storage followed within the study are all clearly outlined in the discussion.

The sixth and final section in this chapter provides a reflection on the ethical issues and sensitivities encountered throughout the duration of the study. For purposes of clarity, these reflections are organised into four themes for discussion: (a) overarching ethical considerations, (b) ethical issues arising during data collection in local authorities, (c) ethical issues arising during data collection in schools, and (d) ethical issues related to

the role of the researcher. The discussion concludes with a summary of the key points covered throughout the chapter.

Research Questions

Due to the dearth of research on child neglect in schools in Wales, the previous chapter identified three themes which emerged from the international literature. These themes were as follows: (i) child neglect training in schools, (ii) identification and intervention in schools, and (iii) interdisciplinary responses to child neglect involving schools. As previously discussed, the literature on maltreatment in schools focused upon the role of teachers, rather than the wider range of staff roles in schools (including teaching and non-teaching roles). The literature also examined 'child abuse and neglect' as a combined form of child maltreatment, rather than child neglect as an independent form of maltreatment. There is subsequently a need for research into child neglect in schools which investigates the wider role and responsibility of the schools in terms of its response to child neglect.

From the review of literature in the previous chapter, three key research questions were designed to provide the framework and focus of this study. The questions are as follows:

(1) What is the extent of involvement of mainstream primary and secondary schools in identifying and responding to child neglect?

(2) What are the experiences of a range of school staff in responding to children and their parents when they are concerned that a child is experiencing neglect?

(3) What is the relationship between schools and social services in responding to child neglect?

<u>Research Question 1</u>

To answer the research questions as comprehensively as possible, three composite methods were selected in a Mixed Methods Research (MMR) design. To investigate the extent of involvement of mainstream primary and secondary schools in identifying and responding to child neglect throughout the child protection process, case file analysis of children's social work records was employed. Hayes and Devaney (2004) cite the use of social work case files as an important resource in research, not simply for their content but also because of the context of their production (Prior, 2003). Collecting statistical data from case files can offer a more comprehensive picture of the scale, range and effect of the issue which social workers are dealing with.

Drawing data from digitised case files can offer practitioners evidence-based knowledge on issues which will support the quality of future practice in a range of agency social care settings (Teater et al, 2017), and provide researchers with rich insights into current practice (Hayes & Devaney, 2004). However, in spite of the distinct opportunities case files offer, Shaw and Holland (2014) report a dearth of social work research involving individual records. They suggest this is because case file records as 'sources of data' have become less favoured than other methods in the field (Padgett, 2008). This could be because very little information is gathered as routine practice on social work case files, in contrast to health records for example (Teater et al, 2017).

The level of schools' involvement in cases of child neglect was quantified through the analysis of a number of documents (Prior, 2003) on a child's file within social services. Seven documents were selected, each constructed or populated at various points within the child protection process. The case file analysis element of this study gathered a variety of quantitative information on the child's characteristics, the support provided by schools up until the point of registration of the child on the CPR, and the level of interaction of school staff in a multi-agency environment, primarily from qualitative data which was a challenge (Teater et al, 2017). The method identified patterns across participating local authorities (n=3) in the study, and provided a broad overview of the area of interest, (i.e. the school's response to child neglect), before turning to a smaller

number of in-depth school-based case studies (*n=6)* (Gorard, 2002; Rendall, 2003) which investigates individual perceptions and experiences of working with neglect in schools in greater depth.

Research Questions 2 & 3

To investigate the extent and nature of the interdisciplinary relationship between schools and social services, the methods of non-participant observation and qualitative semi-structured interviewing were employed. Two school-based case studies within each of the three local authorities (n=6) were selected with the purpose of providing an in-depth examination of the professional relationship between the two fields of responsibility.

Bryman (2012) defines non-participant observation as a situation in which the researcher observes, but does not participate in the event taking place. The non-participant observation in this study aimed to capture the active performance of staff's decision-making practice within its own setting (Ritchie, 2003), in contrast to participants' personal recollections of past events for the purpose of interviews. Ritchie also highlights the process of observation as offering researchers the chance to document and analyse the reality of participants' behaviour in action.

The individual thoughts and feelings of a range of school staff when responding to suspicions of neglect were gathered through semi-structured interviews in schools. Interviews can be described as small-scale explorations into individuals' lives within their own community (Richards, 2009). They allow rich meaning to be mutually constructed, with the researcher composing and framing channels of enquiry in which the participant shares their understandings, thoughts, and feelings. The interviews in the study were focused upon staff's personal and practice experiences of responding to concerns of child neglect within a school setting.

The semi-structured interview often consists of a series of general questions framed by an interview schedule. The order of questions or themes are often pre-specified with the use of a topic guide (Ritche & Lewis, 2003). This allows an approach which provides flexibility for the researcher to expand upon certain responses provided by the participant where it is felt to be appropriate, or probe for additional information if so desired (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003). A disadvantage of the method is that it only allows limited answers to questions, and involves the researcher and participant moving between different themes of enquiry. With restricted probing, greater depth is only likely to be achievable from articulate or more assured individuals participating in the study.

As acknowledged earlier in the chapter, literature in the field focuses primarily upon the role of teachers in responding to child neglect in schools (Baginsky, 2003; Baginsky & Macpherson, 2005; Hodgkinson & Baginsky, 2000; McKee & Dillenburger, 2009). Subsequently, the interview participants *(n=30)* were drawn from a wide spectrum of both teaching and non-teaching roles with the aim of including staff who have contact with children both inside and outside of the classroom. Half of the participants were from primary schools and half were from secondary schools. Fifteen of the participants were qualified teachers who were currently in teaching, specialist, or managerial roles in the school. Eight were in learning assistant roles (LSA), with the remaining seven participants holding administrative or supporting roles such as office managers, administrators, lunchtime supervisors, or school crossing patrol.

Twenty-three of the participants were female, six were male. Eight held a child protection designation as part of their role responsibility. (All schools are required to appoint a Designated Senior Person (DSP) with lead responsibility for managing all child protection issues). The person does not have to be a qualified teacher, but must be a senior member of the school's leadership team with the authority to take on the role. The DSP receives additional training on how to recognise and identify the signs of abuse and neglect and on knowing when to make referrals to the appropriate investigating agencies (Welsh Government, 2015).

Research Design

In order to answer the research questions posed, an explanatory two-phase research design was employed (Creswell, 2003; Gorard & Taylor, 2004; Teater et al, 2017). The study's method begins with secondary analysis of a numeric dataset compiled from social work case files from three local authorities with differing levels of social deprivation and varying rates of neglect. The initial quantitative phase of the study aimed to provide context for second phase of the study, where emphasis is heavily weighted upon six in-depth qualitative case studies of mainstream schools in Wales. The selection of the participating schools was informed by descriptive data collected from social work case files in the first phase of the study. Schools were identified for their high levels of referrals to social services which resulted in a child being registered on the CPR under the category of neglect.

The study draws upon a critical realist perspective. Bryman (2006:29) describes critical realism as recognising the 'reality of the natural order and the events and discourses of the social world'. Critical realism asserts that understanding of the social world can only be obtained through the identification of underlying factors (Crompton & Gubbay, 1977) not immediately obvious in the observable event, which not only govern but also constrain the intricate realities of everyday life (Bhaskar, 1989; Houston, 2001). Critical realism offers two levels of reality, the first is a surface level, and the second consists of the constructions and causal mechanisms which function beneath this level (Brante, 2011). Houston (2001) validates the use of critical realism in social work practice to 'rediscover' a depth of understanding about the person in their wider social context and analyse the causal mechanisms which result in the observable day-to-day suffering.

Mixed methods research is the integration of methods from qualitative and quantitative strategies in a single study (Bryman, 2012). The use of mixed methods is driven by the needs of the investigation, as opposed to the ideological position or preferences of the researcher (Gorard & Talyor, 2004). The study's design begins with the secondary analysis of data from children's social work case files (Shaw & Holland, 2014) and the

initial construction of a small-scale dataset. It then moves to in-depth interviews (Richards, 2009) with school staff, complemented by non-participation observation of decision-making practice which intends to add additional insight to the findings of the of the research (Teater et al, 2017). Interview data were drawn from a range of staff in the participating schools. The motivation for choosing a mixed methods approach is underpinned by the need to most effectively answer a range of research questions posed by the study (Bryman, 2012), and a desire to gather the most comprehensive and reliable evidence possible (Gorard & Taylor, 2004; Perlesz & Lindsay, 2003) from within the field.

The primary strength of MMR (Creswell, 2003; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003) is its ability to deliver a full and comprehensive representation of the object studied (Gorard & Taylor, 2004). Richards (2009) argues that quantitative and qualitative approaches do not exist in different worlds, but are simply different methods of recording the same world. As isolated approaches, quantitative and qualitative methods each possess their own strengths. A mixed methods approach however, can bring greater power and strength (National Research Council, 2002) - particularly to smaller projects (Gorard & Taylor, 2004; Richards, 2009) - through the suitable amalgamation of multiple methods which complement one another. This study integrates the three different forms of data as a whole with the purpose of producing a more rigorous, balanced and comprehensive mixed methods approach to the study (Gorard & Taylor, 2004).

Findings from all methods were combined in a complementary manner through the process of triangulation (Bryman, 2006; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Gorard, 2004; Teater et al, 2017). The grouping of methods intended to produce different perspectives on how schools work with child neglect (Gorard, 2004) by concatenating data from three different vantage points (Kelle, 2001). These points include: (i) what staff were saying (interviews), (ii) what staff were doing (non-participant observation), and (iii) what staff were recording (case file analysis) (Floersch, 2000). A diagram illustrating the composite methods in relation to service intervention levels is provided on the following page. Perlesz and Lindsay (2003) suggest the method of triangulation

in order to enrich the validity of the research, improve the reliability of the study's findings by providing a more comprehensive interpretation, and decrease the potential for bias to occur. Triangulation also compensated for the limitations of individual methods, by drawing upon the strengths of all three composite parts.

Figure 2. Illustrating the Composite Methods Used in the Study in Relation to Levels of Service Intervention
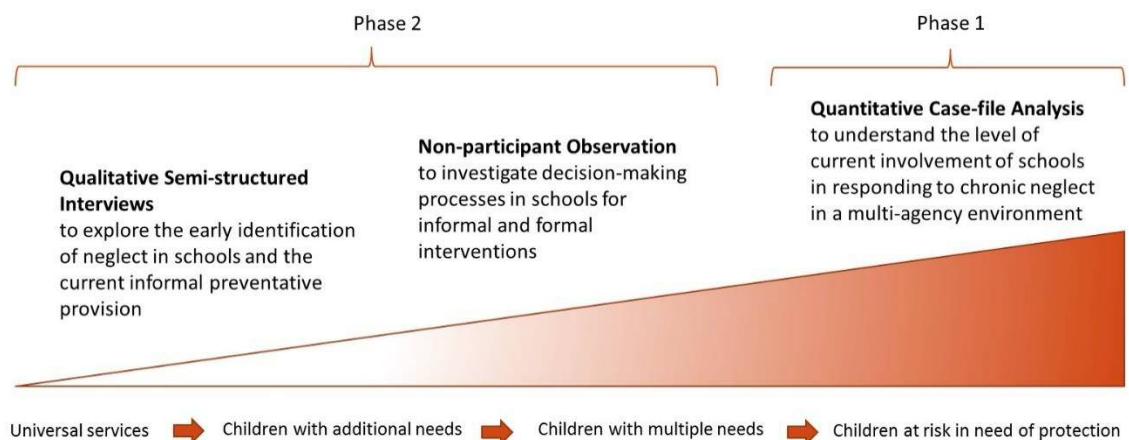
Creswell (2003) states that combined approaches are more widely employed in the contemporary world of research. There is recognition that the chosen methods in a study must fit with the research questions identified (National Research Council, 2002). In particular, the ongoing development of MMR is related to the advancement of expertise and skills of educational researchers, and the improvement in quality of the research they produce (NERF, 2001). More recently, the discussion has evolved from whether data can or should be combined, to questions about how this can be done most effectively so as to produce rigorous findings (Gorard & Taylor, 2004; National Institute of Health, 1999; National Research Council, 2002). MMR has the ability to create a greater influence upon potential policy-makers. The combination of figures and individual experiences responds to broad organisational need, and offers reportable statistics together with unforgettable personal accounts which can be used to connect and engage with wider audiences (Gorard & Taylor, 2004).

The critique of MMR is primarily two-fold: individual research methods carry epistemological obligations, and quantitative and qualitative strategies are located as

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distinct and unconnected paradigms (Bryman, 1992). The first argument opposing the use of MMR suggests that individual research methods are inextricably embedded in epistemological and ontological frameworks of knowing (Hughes, 1990). An epistemological position concerns the discussion about what is regarded as acceptable knowledge within a specific discipline (Bryman, 2012). The idea of epistemology centres around the problem of whether the world can be understood according to the ideologies and procedures of the natural sciences, and essentially how we know what is 'real'.

As a result, choosing to employ specific methods rooted to particular epistemological groundings is considered problematic (Smith, 1983; Smith & Heshusius, 1986). The second argument, closely associated with the former, goes a stage further to regard quantitative and qualitative methods as paradigms, each possessing definite principles and beliefs (Kuhn, 1970) which conflict with one another (Morgan, 1998). The debate proposes the amalgamation of different research strategies in a single project to be impossible and when done, only takes place at a shallow level and within the framework of a single paradigm (Bryman, 2012).

The opposing argument is that qualitative and quantitative research strategies are not understood as clear paradigms and as such, there are areas of similarity and cohesion which also exist between one another. The data collection methods employed in this study prioritise the strengths of combining a number of techniques and, although individual epistemological positions are acknowledged, their connections with method are not perceived as immovable or unescapable (Bryman, 2012). From a technical perspective, as taken in this study, the quantitative and qualitative strategies are viewed as compatible, independent from epistemological frameworks, which makes MMR a conceivable and in some ways an advantageous approach that enriches data and broadens research understanding (Shaw & Holland, 2014).

Sampling

<u>Local Authorities</u>

The following section sets out the sampling methods for selection of the (i) local authorities, (ii) the schools, and (iii) the members of school staff. The discussion begins with the selection criteria for the local authorities, where the intention was to select three diverse local authorities which had the potential to highlight any regional variances in the way that schools responded to children experiencing neglect. Within the selection criteria, deprivation remained a constant principle. Three diverse local authorities were selected in accordance with the following four principles:

(i)   holding a varied geographic positioning in Wales (either urban, rural or Valleys location)

(ii)   possessing a low, average, or high rate of children registered on the CPR (Child Protection Register) (per 10,000)

(iii)   possessing a low or high rate of children registered specifically under the category of child neglect on the CPR (per 10,000)

(iv)   either a low, average or high rate of deprivation on the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) (Stats Wales, 2011a &2017f), within the most deprived ten percent Lower Super Output Area (LSOA)

Pseudonyms were allocated to the three participating local authorities so that social work departments were not identifiable. This was done for purposes of anonymity, to attempt as far as possible the protection of individual practitioners' well-being, in accordance with confidentiality procedures, but also as a condition of the authority's participation (Ransome, 2013). The allocated pseudonyms were 'Urban Authority', 'Valleys Authority', and 'Rural Authority' which broadly reflected the geographical position of the department. A summary about each of the participating research sites is provided below.

Urban Authority

The first authority is a geographically small, urban local authority with a high population. It is a culturally diverse authority positioned in the south of Wales, with around 10-20% percent of people in the area identifying as from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) background. This figure is significantly higher than the national average (Stats Wales, 2016a), and is a reflection of the higher rates of immigration into the municipality (Welsh Refugee Council, 2017d). Around 10-20% percent of the population in the Urban Authority have Welsh language skills (Stats Wales, 2011b). In terms of deprivation, almost 20% of the authority sits within the most deprived 10% LSOAs in Wales, with more than half of the authority sitting within the most deprived 50% LSOAs in Wales (Stats Wales, 2011a & 2017f).

Valleys Authority

The second authority is a small local authority based in the Valleys of South Wales. It is positioned within Wales' former principal industrialised region, which until the early twentieth century was a hub for Britain's coal mining and ironwork manufacturing. Since the decline of the area's active productions in the 1980s, unemployment rates in the region have been reported amongst the highest in the United Kingdom. In terms of deprivation, over 20% of the Valleys Authority sits within the most deprived 10% LSOAs in Wales, with nearly 75% of the authority sitting within the most deprived 50% LSOAs in the country (Stats Wales, 2011a). It has a lower population than the Urban Authority, which continues to reduce year on year due to emigration (Stats Wales, 2016b). The Valleys Authority is predominantly white Welsh, with less than 15% of the community identifying as having Welsh language skills (Stats Wales, 2011b).

Rural Authority

The third Rural Authority covers a large geographic area in Mid Wales. The authority is mainly agricultural, with a very low population compared to the two other authorities. Less than 2% of people in the Rural Authority identify as being from a BAME background. Over half of the authority's population identify as having Welsh language

skills, which is more than twice the national average for Wales (Stats Wales, 2011b). In contrast to the majority of authorities across the country, the Rural Authority hosts a high proportion of gypsy and traveller sites within its boundaries (Stats Wales, 2017h). In terms of socio-economic deprivation, less than 5% of the authority sits within the 10% most deprived LSOAs, with over half of the authority sitting within the most deprived 50% LSOAs in Wales (Stats Wales, 2011a).

Schools

The selection of the six school sites in each of the three local authority areas was underpinned by inferential statistics from case file data in the three local authorities. One mainstream primary and one mainstream secondary school were selected within each local authority (*n=6)*, on the basis of their high level of referral rates to social services (for concerns which resulted in a child being placed on the CPR under the category of neglect). With the support and influence of the Education Officers employed within each local authority, head teachers in the schools which had made the highest number of referrals to social services, were contacted to discuss the study and begin access negotiations.

During the design of the study, it was originally hoped that the case study schools would be linked with each other within each particular local authority catchment area. This would have enabled an examination of the relationship between feeder primary schools and their respective secondary schools in terms of how they respond to neglect throughout the duration of the child's compulsory education. This aspect of the design proved unachievable due to the restricted capacity of some linked schools within the sample to participate in the study.

Members of School Staff

In response to the literature focused upon the experiences of teachers, participants were drawn from a wide number of staff roles within this study. To ensure that a range of staff from each of the six schools in the sample participated in the study, staff were

selected from a list of five different role categories so as to reduce bias and promote diversity. A schedule of role categories was designed and provided to head teachers in each of the six schools. Head teachers were invited to identify at least one staff member from each of the five categories who would consent to participate in an interview.

The role categories were designed to generate a broad range of staff knowledge, experience, and expertise from a number of different school-based roles was captured within the study. The list of role categories was developed with the support and guidance of an experienced teacher with a background in both state and private education, in a school unconnected to the study. The categories were as follows: (i) management and strategic staff: this included head teachers, assistant or deputy head teachers, and senior management, (ii) teaching staff: this category included subject and class teachers, heads of year, and newly qualified teachers, (iii) pastoral staff: such as school counsellors, school nurses, education welfare officers, school social workers, and parenting workers, (iv) education support staff: including teaching or learning assistants, sports club staff, play staff, and school escorts, and (v) support & administrative staff: such as administrators, office managers, canteen staff, playground supervisors, or breakfast club staff (a copy of the schedule is included in appendix 1 of this thesis).

Data Collection

In congruence with the study's design, data collection commenced in 2015 and was concluded in 2016. The process began with the case file analysis of children's social work records held in each of the three local authorities. At the time of the study's inception, access approval for children's case files in Wales was the responsibility of the Chair of the All Wales Heads of Children's Services Group (AWHOCS) at the Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru (ADSS) (ADSS Cymru, 2017). The ADSS is the professional and strategic leadership organisation for social services in Wales.   When access negotiations were instigated, the responsibility for access approval was in the process of being passed from the AWHOCS Group to the individual directors of social

services in 22 of the local authorities in Wales. Consequently, a letter introducing the study and requesting access approval to case files was emailed directly to each of the directors of children's services.

Hughes and Griffiths (1999) refer to research access negotiations as a constant and developing process, in which a number of 'gatekeepers' require consultation at various stages of the journey. The complexity and length of the negotiation process became apparent early on in the study. Eight local authorities replied to the introductory letter with strong interest in participation. Preliminary meetings with strategic managers were undertaken with each individual department over a six-week period. Each meeting included discussions about the aim, purpose and practical arrangements necessary for data collection to take place. At the meetings, all eight authorities confirmed their desire to participate in the study. The three authorities most closely aligned with the study's sampling criteria were selected (the criteria is outlined on page 82 of this thesis). The authorities were then contacted individually by email and advised of their successful participation in the study. As part of the ongoing negotiation (Hughes & Griffiths, 1999), conversations with each council's Education Authority Officer were also initiated. All Officers encouraged school participation in the study, supported access negotiations, and fostered supportive partnerships between the head teachers and the researcher.

A period of two weeks was negotiated with strategic directors in each local authority for data collection to be undertaken. A workstation was identified at each premises for the researcher, with computer access to the case management system, and identity and access cards were generated. Before data collection commenced, confidentiality agreements with each participating local authority were signed (Lewis, 2003), in accordance with their organisational processes and procedures. I was given training by each local authority on the case management systems prior to field work commencing. These sessions provided guidance on how to access and locate information on the department's electronic records. The environments where data collection took place varied. In two authorities a private room was organised, away from the bustle of service

delivery, one close to the social work teams, one not. In the third, I was sat amongst the Strategic Director's administrative team.

Authorities were asked to collate the 50 most recent case files which met the study's sampling criteria (*n=142)*. The criteria consisted of three key principles: (i) the school had referred the child or family to social services, (ii) the child was of school age 4-18 years old, and (iii) the child was registered under the category of single and joint registrations for 'neglect' on the CPR at the initial child protection conference (ICPC). (Although the compulsory school age for children in Wales is 4-16 years old, the sampling criteria was drawn from the legislative framework of the Children Act 1989, which defines a child as every person under the age of 18 years old). Data were systematically recorded on individual case file schedules and coded onto a binary datasheet in SPSS software. After the data had been cleaned and prepared for analysis, the total sample of files was reduced to 119. The 23 case files belonged to children who were registered at the same case conference as their sibling, but who were not yet of school age (or who were still in-utero and had been registered on the CPR prior to their birth) (This is commonly referred to as a 'pre-birth registration'). These files belonged to siblings of the child who were under the age of 4 years old, and had been presented by the local authorities' selection process by default. This made the files ineligible under the sampling criteria and they were removed before data was analysed.

A coding schedule was designed to collect the quantitative data from children's case files (Bryman, 2012; Teater et al, 2017). The schedule included over 100 variables which measured the level of involvement of schools in child protection proceedings when a child had been registered on the CPR under the category of 'neglect'.
Due to the subjective nature of CIN intervention (level 3), and the absence of a classification of abuse at this level, the sampling criteria focused solely upon child protection cases (level 4) where the local authority had made a decision to register the child on the CPR under the category of 'neglect'. This approach was taken due to the fact that none of the participating authorities routinely categorised their referred cases

by nature of concern, until the child was formally registered on the CPR under a statutory category of 'neglect'.

Each of the documents included in the coding schedule were selected with the purpose of evidencing aspects of the schools' involvement at formal points within this process (a diagram illustrating the statutory child protection process is included on page 82 of this thesis, detailing the seven points at which data were collected from case file documentation). The design of variables was informed by the gaps identified in the review of literature in chapter two of this thesis. This was done with the aim of collecting data which would most effectively answer research question one (Bryman, 2012; Teater et al, 2017) *What is the extent of involvement of mainstream primary and secondary schools in identifying and responding to child neglect?* Data collection points in the child protection process were identified prior to the implementation of the SSWB Act in 2016, and as a result are not fully congruent with the new legislative framework. The schedule included information about the child's basic characteristics and was focused upon the schools' involvement in supporting the child. (A copy of the case file coding schedule is included in appendix 2).

The documents sampled were as follows:

> (1) Initial referral form from the school
>
> (2) Initial assessment made by social services
>
> (3) Strategy discussion and related section 47 (Children Act, 1989) investigation
>
> (4) Core assessment
>
> (5) Minutes from the initial child protection conference (ICPC)
>
> (6) Minutes from the first core group (CG)
>
> (7) Minutes from the review child protection conference (RCPC) (three months after ICPC).

Before data collection began, the schedule was piloted in an unrelated local authority in Wales (Bryman, 2012) to test the schedule on an electronic case management system. Arthur and Nazroo (2003) describe piloting as an imperative aspect of data collection design, ensuring tools are both functional and purposeful before research is

undertaken. As a result of the testing process, some additional categories were added to certain variables, and string data options were also introduced to capture more detail to allow for deeper analysis. The piloting process ensured that the schedule was practical and adequate in its capacity to collect the necessary information.

Figure 3. Illustrating the Child in Need and Child Protection Statutory Processes (Slater & Sharley, 2018)

Referral to SSD

1

Referral screened by SSD

Initial assessment

2

Refer to other agency

Child in Need (S17)

Strategy meeting (S47)

3

CORE assessment

CORE assessment

4

No further action

Child in need meeting

Case conference - includes registration

5

Service input

Service input

6

At any point a case can be escalated to S47 (Strategy meeting) if new concerns are identified or the situation deteriorates.

Review meeting

Review conference

7

Outcomes would likely be:

1)   No further action

2)   Continue with CIN (S17) working

3)   Escalate to Case Conference (S47)

Outcomes would likely be:

1)   Deregistration and move to CIN (S17)

2)   Continue registration (same of different category(ies))

3)   Escalate to court (can take place at any time)

Descriptive statistics were then analysed with the purpose providing an overview of the landscape of the sample, and informing the selection of case study schools *(n=6)*, those of which had the highest rates of referral to social services. When the schools had been selected, ethical approval from the School of Social Sciences' Research Ethics Committee (SREC) at Cardiff University (SREC: 1480) for phase two of the data collection was obtained. Following which, head teachers of the schools were approached with an introductory letter outlining the aim and purpose of the study. The letter highlighted the existing support of their local authority's Education Officer and detailed access requirements necessary for participation in the research.

Head teachers were slow to respond to initial communications about the study, more so than the directors of social services during the first phase of the research. The access negotiations which followed were both complicated and protracted. Schools were more cautious about becoming involved in the study, all seeking reassurance that the views and opinions of individual staff would not be a measurement of the institutional perspective and vision held. Access negotiations were slow and required the additional support of Education Authority Officers in the respective authorities at various points throughout the process.

When access was successfully approved by the schools (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003), individual visits were made to each head teacher with the purpose of initiating working relationships and agreeing timescales for data collection. Data collection days were authorised to begin during the second term of the schools' academic year (February 2015) as head teachers felt it held the least competing priorities, whilst allowing staff time to have got to know any new pupils from the previous September. All of the schools elected to hold interviews on a single day with the purpose of minimising potential disruption to the curriculum.

Five semi-structured, in-depth interviews with staff were arranged in each school (*n=30)*, organised as consecutive appointments on the hour, from 9am to 3pm excluding lunchtime. Each day began with a meeting between myself and the head teacher to

perfect practical arrangements and discuss potential opportunities for observation. This was followed by five interviews (four if the head teacher was a participant), each approximately 45 minutes to one hour in duration (Legard et al, 2003). Interviews were undertaken in a private room within the school for purposes of confidentiality and to minimise the level of disruption to the school day.

Prior to interviews commencing, each school was provided with a study information sheet, and a participant consent form by email (copies of which are included in appendix 3 of this thesis). Head teachers were asked to distribute the information to all participants before the interview day. This approach was taken so that staff could think about their participation in the study (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003), have space to digest information, and have time to formulate questions before meeting the researcher (ESRC, 2010; Shaw & Holland, 2014). Through this process, information was successfully disseminated to participants in five of the six participating schools in accordance with the Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care in Wales (Welsh Assembly Government, 2017, s.3.4.2). In the remaining school, the information was not internally disseminated in congruence with this process until the morning of the interview day. However, to ensure that informed consent was fully achieved, additional time was created at this school for extended discussion about the study and participation in the research before the interviews took place.

The interview schedule was designed to elicit five areas of conversation in a natural sequence of discussion with the participant (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003). The first theme introduced the researcher and the aim and purpose of the study. At this point the participant was encouraged to ask questions and engage in a discussion about the notion of informed consent (Richards, 2009). The second theme focused upon exploring the participant's role, background and past experiences, including any professional qualifications or training in child neglect they had undertaken. The third theme discussed understandings and experiences of child neglect. The fourth focused upon experiences of professional support and guidance from colleagues within the

school. The fifth theme explored professional relationships with families, and the impact, if any, of making a referral to social services.

Before interviews were undertaken, the interview was piloted with two school-based professionals who were known to the researcher. They had both worked in schools in Wales, but neither were connected to any of the six participating research case studies. Both interviewees were qualified teachers. The first was a newly qualified teacher who at the time of the pilot was not in practice, but undertaking doctoral research. The second was an experienced peripatetic primary school French teacher, who at the time of the pilot was working as a languages tutor. Both interviews were audio recorded. This provided an opportunity to test the audio equipment, but more importantly allowed time to consider the fluidity of the interview schedule questioning techniques and the ordering of the five themes.

Arthur and Nazroo (2003) suggest that promoting flexibility in the ordering of specific issues during interviews is a more effective approach than following a rigid plan. As a result of the testing of the interview tools, vignettes were added to the interview schedule with the purpose of stimulating deeper discussion. Vignettes are a valuable tool which can provoke deeper discussions around a specific example or case study (Hughes & Huby, 2004). They typically take the form of text or images which aim to create meaning or stimulate a response from the participant during the interview (Hughes & Huby, 2002). The addition of vignettes aimed to provide a shared platform for dialogue about individual practice responses to child neglect in a school setting. (All vignettes were provided in a bilingual format and are included in appendices 10-15 of this thesis).

Four vignettes were constructed for use in the interviews with school staff which detailed a number of scenarios about child neglect in a school setting. Two different definitions of neglect were also shared with participants to deepen discussion. The two definitions were taken from the AWCPPs (Children in Wales, 2008) and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. To ensure validity (Gould, 1996), the content

of the vignettes was drawn from data collected during the case file analysis element of the study. This was done through the analysis of string data from school staff referrals with the purpose of constructing realistic scenarios which regularly present to staff within a school setting.

The vignettes were aimed at two staff groups: classroom-based staff and non-classroom-based staff. Two vignettes were developed for each distinct group. The vignettes focused upon either the most commonly cited or least commonly cited concerns of neglect, which had arisen in the case file analysis sample during the first phase of the study. This approach is similar to that of Spratt (2001) who, in his research using case file analysis and interviews with social workers, reports the construction and simulation of vignettes from real child protection referrals (Wilks, 2004). The vignettes were introduced to the participant during the interview, after discussions about understandings of neglect had taken place (theme 3). The purpose of this approach was to use an analytical tool to assess the attitudes and perceptions of participants about hypothetical situations, whilst ensuring a level of consistency between interviews and avoiding bias.   The method constructed a specific hypothetical situation known to both participant and researcher, teasing-out (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003) deeper deliberations (Bryman, 2012) during the discussion.

When interviews were completed, head teachers were asked to identify potential opportunities where staff could be observed in their decision-making practice when intervening in child neglect. Unstructured observation in five of the six participating schools, was undertaken with the purpose of exploring the practice of school staff when responding to neglect. The method of observation intended to provide an understanding of how individual staff members worked with colleagues within and outside their schools to decide on the nature and level of support required by a child.

The non-participant observation was undertaken within routine school-based meetings. The meetings observed all offered staff opportunities to provide different levels and sources of support for a child suspected of living with neglect. In the primary schools,

staff meetings were observed (*n=2*). In the secondary schools, the meetings included a multi-agency Team Around the Family (TAF), a teaching assistant support meeting, and a pastoral meeting in the secondary schools (*n=3*). Due to the small size of the primary school in the Valleys Authority, it was not possible to undertake an observation of decision-making practice, as concerns were raised directly with the head teachers on a one to one basis. Consent to observe practice was obtained by the chairperson of the meeting and notes were taken throughout the observations. I introduced myself and the purpose of the study before the meeting began. All staff members were provided with an information sheet about the study.

When all interviews had been undertaken, each school was sent a £50 National Book Token in recognition of, and thanks for, their participation in the research. The book tokens were hand-delivered to each school by the researcher before data analysis began. To manage professional endings, all 30 interview participants were sent a card thanking them for their time and interest in the study and inviting them to contact the researcher should any further questions arise.

Data Analysis

This section of the chapter provides a description of the data analysis techniques employed for data analysis of each composite method used in the study. The individual techniques are each described in the order of their analysis in the study: statistical analysis of case file data, followed by thematic analysis of the interview data. Data from the case file analysis was transferred from the hardcopy coding schedules to an electronic dataset which had been constructed in IBM SPSS statistics software. The data sheet prepared the data for analysis by merging all the variables gathered from all the coding schedules from the three authorities and grouped them in a single document (*n=119*).

The values for each variable were entered into the data sheet in a numerical format. Binary variables were coded as 0 for 'No', and 1 for 'Yes'. Nominal and ordinal variables were assigned consecutive values i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and so on, whilst metric data such as the child's date of birth, number of siblings, number of times previously registered on the CPR, were entered into the datasheet in their existing format (Kent, 2015). Some string data were also captured on the hardcopy case file schedules with the purpose of gaining deeper understanding about specific aspects of the data (for example, the content of neglect referral concerns, specific types of neglect raised, the type of school-based support provided). Variables where data were indecipherable were coded as '-77' (to account for illegible handwriting or damaged documents in paper files), data which were missing were coded as '-88', and data which were not yet input on the system as '-99'. (Although this code was originally constructed for instances where work had been undertaken but not yet recorded on case management systems, it proved inactive and was later removed from the analysis).

Next, data were prepared for analysis. This process involved individual records being checked, coded and assembled on the data sheet (Kent, 2015) and two files removed from the sample due to the absence of the majority of variables. These electronic files only held basic details about the child's characteristics, having been transferred onto the system from paper files. (The hardcopy files could not be located in the local authority's archives). Where cell counts stood at less than 5 (Field, 2009), variables were transformed by regrouping categories through the recode function in IBM SPSS Statistics. (A table illustrating the original and recoded variables is included in appendix 4 of this thesis).

In order to know the extent (Teater et al, 2017) of a particular social issue, inferential statistics are commonly employed to provide understanding about the nature and context of the subject of interest. Descriptive statistics were produced from the case file data gathered during the first phase of the study through the production of frequency tables in IBM SPSS Statistics software. The inferential statistics offered a broad overview of the nature and level of involvement of school staff in supporting a

child who is experiencing neglect. When case file data were finalised, analysis informed the selection of a number of school sites within each participating local authority, whilst the string data formed the basis for the design of four vignettes (included in appendices 10-13) for use in interviews as outlined earlier in this chapter.

When the interviews were completed, data were sent to a professional audio-typist for transcription. The typist had been recommended by other doctoral researchers in the department, having extensive experience of transcribing interviews for social research. Confidentiality guidelines were agreed with the audio-typist before work commenced. When interviews had been undertaken, audio recordings were allocated a unique research study number to support interview participant confidentiality and the broader anonymity of the schools. Data files were labelled with this number before files were securely transferred outside of the university.

Sound files were emailed between myself and the audio-typist through Cardiff University's FastFile software system for transcription (FastFile, 2017). FastFile is an encrypted interface used by a range of organisations to manage the transfer of large data files, where an electronic web-based interface facilitates secure and fast transfer of files from the university's secure server to nominated individuals outside of university. When data files were uploaded by the researcher, the interface automatically emailed the transcriber a private web link to download the documents. Fully transcribed interviews were returned by using the same facility, with the transcriber deleting all files from their records once the work had been completed.

Next, the interviews and observations were thematically analysed. This began by familiarisation with the interview data through repeated reading of the interviews, and initial note-taking. Recurrent themes which were of interest and significance to staff's neglect-practice in schools (Taylor & Ussher, 2001), and considered important in relation to answering the study's research questions, were identified, and then manually coded by topic. This involved the systematic searching of the interview data (Spencer et al, 2003), and the subsequent assignment of individual colours to particular passages of

data. Richards (2009) defines topic coding as allocating interview passages to certain topics or categories. An example of the coding undertaken on interview transcripts during analysis processes is illustrated in appendix 17 to this thesis).

Themes which highlighted shared aspects of school-based practice were next organised into separate Word documents for more detailed analysis. These were then summarised and synthesised, and again re-organised, through the method of memo-writing. A number of analytic memos were produced during this process, as ideas became refined, with memos produced and reproduced (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). The method comprised a cyclical process of revisiting the entire interview data and the coded extracts a number of times (Braun & Clark, 2006). Spencer et al (2003) describe this process of analysis as a 'conceptual scaffolding', whereby researchers move up and down or forward and back between stages as themes and ideas are developed into meaningful groups.

Although thematic analysis is a widely used method in qualitative research, Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that it is not well acknowledged nor well defined in literature (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Tuckett, 2005). They argue that thematic analysis is a flexible research tool to be regarded as an introductory qualitative method that offers core skills for other types of analysis. It can be used independently of theoretical and epistemological frameworks, across a range of approaches, with the purpose of delivering both complex and comprehensive accounts of qualitative data.

Ethical Issues & Sensitivities

This section reflects upon a range of ethical issues and sensitivities encountered throughout the research. The section is organised into four themes for clarity of discussion. Theme (a) opens the discussion and reflects upon the overarching ethical issues encountered during the study. This includes data protection considerations and the sensitive nature of child neglect as a research topic. Theme (b) reflects upon the

ethical issues which arose during data collection within local authorities. Here the discussion explores accessing case files without the consent of individuals, confidentiality and organisational anonymity. Theme (c) reflects upon the issues which arose during data collection within schools. This theme explores the impact of the research upon participants, ideas of informed consent, and matters of staff confidentiality. Theme (d) reflects upon ethical issues which were related to the role of the researcher. The discussion explores the researcher's professional identity, the potential effect of vicarious trauma, and the effect of emotional labour (Brotheridge & Gandy, 2002) when processing accounts of chronic or severe neglect experienced by a child.

(a) Overarching Ethical Issues

Ethical approval was obtained from the School of Social Sciences' Research Ethics Committee at Cardiff University. Applications for ethical approval for both phases of data collection were made independently of one another; phase one on 17 April 2015 (SREC: 1480) and phase two on 29 October 2015 (SREC: 1480). (Copies of the approval letters from the School of Social Sciences' Research Ethics Committee are included in appendix 5 and 6 of this thesis). Due to the sensitive nature of child neglect as a social research topic (Shaw & Holland, 2014), the Health Care Professionals Council's standards of conduct (HCPC, 2016) and the Codes of Professional Practice set out by Social Care Wales (SCW, 2017) were carefully consulted in congruence with the researcher's professional identity.

I am a registered social worker in England (HCPC, 2016), with a background in statutory children's safeguarding practice. I am experienced in working with high levels of emotional labour (Kinman et al, 2011), and have worked alongside a range of professionals who routinely work within difficult and challenging situations. For the purposes of accessing sensitive case file information and conducting data collection in schools with children, I obtained an up-to-date Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate through Cardiff University prior to the study commencing.

(b) Ethical Issues Related to Research in Local Authorities

Hayes and Devaney (2004) highlight the difficulties of accessing social work case files for research purposes. Case file analysis supports the requirement for evidence-based practice in social work, with interventions being based upon knowledge about what works most effectively for service-users (Sheldon & Chilvers, 2002). The explicit consent of each child for access to their case file was not sought. It can be said that individuals who are the subject of social work records should be able to authorise who it is that reads the information (Teater et al, 2017). Consent was sought from the head of services in each of the three local authorities, under the framework of the local authorities' individual confidentiality agreements with the researcher. As Swain et al (1998) argue, the advantages of accessing rich data that can offer knowledge to an extensive audience about a specific subject can be outweighed by the potential harm to an individual, so here an ethical viewpoint about public interest overrides the individual's right to privacy (Teater et al, 2017). That aside, the data sought by the study was not focused upon the individual child and their experiences, but instead upon the nature and level of involvement of practitioners within the organisation's statutory process.

Due to the sensitive nature and complex construction of neglect, there would have been significant difficulty in deciding who was best-situated to provide consent to individual case files. Hayes & Devaney (2004) suggest that seeking and not obtaining informed consent from service-users risks the likelihood of incomplete evidence, whilst also increasing levels of potential bias in the sample. Moreover, social work records do not solely refer to the child. They contain a considerable amount of personal information about siblings and other family members involved in the child's life, which interrogates the assumption about who owns the information (Shaw & Holland, 2014).

This makes the process of establishing consent quite problematic. Seeking consent for files for children where parental consent is necessary (in the UK most research ethics

committees require parental consent for children under the age of 16) raises questions about whether the parent or carer was the person responsible for the very act of neglect upon the child. Furthermore, if the neglect was deemed wilful and intentional, the likelihood of obtaining consent to case files from the primary care-giver so as to access information would be considerably less likely to occur.

Conversely, for those children deemed competent in their understanding of the implications of consent (Heath et al, 2007), questions are raised as to whether they continue to receive support from the organisation of study. Asking children to participate in research about the statutory process they are engaged with is unethical. Nonetheless, making contact with a child when their involvement with the service had ceased also had potential to aggravate, cause embarrassment or further emotional suffering (D'Cruz, 2000). Needless to say, seeking informed consent from individuals would require provision of contact details for children or their families. This not only breaches organisational confidentiality procedures, but relies upon contact telephone numbers and addresses not having changed (Hayes & Devaney, 2004).

As previously mentioned in the chapter, confidentiality agreements were signed between the researcher and the individual organisation in accordance with their data protection policies. Each authority was allocated a pseudonym, whilst individual case files were assigned a unique research study number so that data could not be attributed to a particular social work file (Ransome, 2013). A list of research study numbers and connecting case file numbers was stored separately from the main body of data on an encrypted and password protected laptop bought for the sole use of the study to ensure safe handling of information (Shaw & Holland, 2014). Although there is always a possibility for deductive disclosure in small scale studies such as this, these steps were taken with the intention of anonymising both the identity of the social service departments, and the children's case files held therein.

<u>(c) Ethical Issues Related to Research in Schools</u>

Prior to data collection commencing, three members of staff in unrelated schools were consulted as advisors about the nature and level of information they felt would be useful to know if they were participating in the study (Shaw & Holland, 2014). Drawing upon the information gathered, all participants were provided with an information sheet and consent form that broadly outlined the purpose of the study prior to the interview day. All documents were provided in a bilingual format with the purpose of making the information accessible to participants in their first language (documents were translated by Cardiff University's Translation Department). The study information sheet advised participants about the confidential nature of the interview (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Each school was given a pseudonym connected with the local authority in which they were based for reasons of anonymity for both sites and individual staff. Participants were informed that any identifiable data, whether directly or indirectly attributable, would be subsequently removed from the transcript, and data files were to be stored securely on Cardiff University's password protected server (under principle 7 of the Data Protection Act (1998)).

Informed consent was obtained from all members of school staff who participated in the study (*n=30)*. Ritchie & Lewis (2003) suggest that gaining informed consent requires the provision of information to the participant about the purpose of the study (and their involvement with it), the funder, researcher, and subsequent use of the data obtained. Consent however, is not a one-off negotiation, it is a continuing process which can occur over a number of interactions between researcher and participant (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Shaw & Holland, 2014). Informed consent also includes the right for an individual to withdraw consent at any time or discontinue their participation in the study without giving a reason. It is therefore central to the relationship established between researcher and participant, and reflected as an ongoing practice where ethical considerations remain principal (Ransome, 2013).

To ensure each participant understood informed consent, they were provided with the study information sheet and consent form for a second time before discussions began, and asked whether or not they wanted to participate in the study. Everyone participating in the study was given the opportunity to ask questions to clarify aspects of the study and to discuss the implications of their involvement (Shaw & Holland, 2014), or the meaning of giving informed consent. As part of this process, participants also stated whether they felt comfortable with an audio-recorder being used during the interview, or whether they preferred the researcher to take some handwritten notes (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

The decision to use audio-recording equipment was made to enable full attention to be given to the participant's narrative, whilst also ensuring that accurate records of their responses were captured in an unobtrusive manner (Legard et al, 2003). When interviews were transcribed, there was some evidence of sound interference on a small number of the sound recordings. This was likely to be the result of mobile phone or electronic devices in close vicinity to the audio-recording device. Consequently, a small number of phrases on the sound files were inaudible. Although uncommon, there were a few instances where somebody entered the room whilst the interview was in progress. This was because the interviews were often carried out in resource rooms or bookable spaces, sometimes the head teacher's office. In the event of this interruption, (typically a pupil or member of staff at the school) discussions were stopped, verbally noted by the researcher on the recording, and not restarted until the participant gave their consent to proceed.

Ethical frameworks in social research intend to safeguard the welfare and safety of participants who could potentially experience harm as a result of the study (Hugman, 2010; Shaw & Holland, 2014). Child neglect is not just a sensitive topic to research, it is also a highly emotive subject. Gathering the thoughts, feelings and opinions of staff in this study relied upon participants offering detailed accounts of their work with vulnerable and neglected children. The interview schedule was designed to deeply explore staff experiences and feelings they had experienced when working with neglect,

which had the potential to cause difficult emotions during the recollection of past practice. Shaw and Holland (2014) suggest that harm can be caused to the participants when the method used requires them to re-experience upsetting or traumatic past events. They go on to state that this type of harm is particularly relevant for participants within qualitative social work research.

Butler (2002) proposes a code of ethics for social work research which recognises strong links between research and that of professional practice. The code is justified by habitation of the same place, space, subjects and audiences, and 'seeks to empower service users, promote their welfare, and improve their access to economic and social capital on equal terms with other citizens' (Butler, 2002: 245). Attempts were made to reduce the potential levels of harm to the participants in the study by offering an informal space directly after the interview to debrief on any difficult experiences if they felt this would be helpful. Participants were also encouraged to inform their line manager about the emotional impact of the interview so that further support could be provided within the structure of the school.

Interviews have the potential to significantly impact upon a participant's well-being and it is important to set the scene sensitively and with care, considering how the framing of a discussion might affect what the individual is prepared to share, and how certain questions may increase discomfort or unease (Richards, 2009). During the field work, there was one occasion where a participant became openly distressed during an interview. When recalling a historic and severe account of child neglect, the worker began crying. As her emotions unfolded, she expressed how surprised she felt at becoming upset over the child's circumstances, so many years after the event had taken place.

> *"I'm getting upset, now; I'm that sad! [Sniffs, tearful] …I never got upset; it's mad, isn't it? …I've never been upset about it before - ever!"*

In the first instance, I acknowledged the participant's emotional reaction sensitively, and gave her the option of ending and withdrawing from the interview early (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Roberts, 2002), or taking a short break from the discussion to limit the level of emotional distress experienced (British Sociological Association, 2002). Both options were declined by the participant in favour of proceeding (Ransome, 2013). The discussion was sensitively diverted in favour of another theme, and after the interview was complete I remained with the participant to offer support and check how she was feeling (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). On leaving the interview room the participant independently informed the head teacher about her emotional reaction, permitting the school to implement further support.

Aside from the potential harm caused to participants during the study, there was also the potential of harm caused to children through poor or bad reporting practice detected during interviews with staff. Participants were invited to draw upon personal experiences of identifying child neglect in their roles, with the purpose of demonstrating the manner and nature of support they provided to a child. One particular discussion with a member of school staff raised concerns about the adequacy of safeguarding protocols and procedures that were being followed, potentially placing a child at risk of harm. When this situation arose, I followed agreed protocol as detailed in the ethical approval from Cardiff University and immediately informed my supervisors in accordance with the key principles outlined in Cardiff University's child protection procedures (Cardiff University, 2017; ESRC, 2010) and the AWCPPs (Children in Wales, 2008).

(d) Ethical Issues Related to the Role of the Researcher

In conducting the interviews, there was also potential for harm to be caused to myself as researcher. Interviews were undertaken on school premises not only to minimise disruption for staff, but also to ensure the safety and well-being of the researcher by avoiding carrying out interviews at unknown personal addresses. In their inquiry into researcher safety, Bloor et al (2007) found that emotional risks were much more

prevalent than physical risks during research studies. The experience of emotional labour involved in researching sensitive topics remains under-acknowledged in current literature (Seear, 2017). Emotional labour can be described as a situation where one needs 'to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others' (Hochchild, 2003:7).

Shaw & Holland (2014) suggest that researchers who are knowledgeable and skilled practitioners may still find the detailed narratives of qualitative interviews disturbing. Some research methods have the capacity to draw out more in-depth accounts from individuals than there is commonly time or space during a social work practitioner's assessment or interview. For this reason, careful attention was given to the potential risk of vicarious trauma (Pearlman & McKay, 2008) to the researcher, from hearing distressing experiences of working with children experiencing chronic neglect. Analysis of secondary sources of data such as social work case files *(n=150),* also had potential to cause anxiety or trauma in my role as researcher (Moran-Ellis, 1997). Attempts were made in the data collection processes of the study to reduce the emotional risks through regular conversations planned between myself and my supervisors at Cardiff University. The meetings provided a safe and confidential environment in which I could 'debrief' after extended periods of data collection, and reflect upon how I felt about the emerging content of the data (Shaw & Holland, 2014).

My professional identity played an important role throughout the duration of the study. My background in child protection practice brought both strengths and challenges to the study. Strengths were evident in terms of understanding the topic and context of research in the overall design of the study and also in terms of the benefit it had upon negotiating access successfully with local authorities. There were also professional strengths which supported communications with schools and, in particular, the qualitative interviews with individual staff where meaning was co-constructed between the researcher and participant. In terms of the challenges, professional identity continued to play a strong contextual role during the analysis of

data, where it was important to acknowledge the limitations of a researcher already possessing practice knowledge about the field of interest.

Corbin Dwyer and Buckle (2009) refer to researchers as holding 'insider' and 'outsider' membership status, and question whether researchers should be part of the population they study. My 'insider' membership status centred upon my professional registration as a social worker and previous employment in statutory child protection practice with a local authority in England. During the design of the case file analysis phase of the study, my professional identity was considerably advantageous in understanding existing meaning-systems (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) both within the organisation of the local authorities, and more broadly within the culture of the social work profession. Although I was positioned as an 'organisational outsider' (Roesch-Marsh et al, 2011) I held 'insider status' (Corbin Dywer & Buckle, 2009) as a social work practitioner. During access negotiations, my occupational identity (Shaw & Holland, 2014), professional status, and inherent social work ideology offered a distinct advantage in gaining access approval to children's case file data in social service departments.

Through an ongoing dialogue with heads of services in each local authority, my identity was categorised as a doctoral student, with a statutory child protection practice background. Rosesch-Marsh et al (2011) suggest that acknowledgment of a shared practitioner experience can help support and facilitate the access process with efficacy, with shared identity building trust and rapport with the participating local authorities (Davidson, 2001; Nairn et al, 2005). My 'insider' status brought existing skills for the reading of complicated and lengthy electronic social work case files and knowledge of the organisational framework and systems the data were positioned within. The shared insider status also offered reassurance to strategic directors in terms of ensuring local authority confidentiality procedures were carefully followed, whilst the organisational anonymity of both the research sites and data were fully understood.

I held 'outsider' status (Corbin Dywer & Buckle, 2009) in terms of my relationship to the identity of school staff. Although I had experience of working closely with schools as partner agencies in statutory practice, there was no commonality with staff who were positioned within an education discourse. There is often a common tension between staff in schools and social workers, which is reflective of a divergence between an education and social model of practice. With this in mind, my identity and familiarity of the statutory child protection system had potential to cause social desirability bias (Grimm, 2010) within interviews.

Grimm (2010) defines social desirability bias as the tendency of research participants to provide answers to questions that may be regarded more positively, rather than giving responses which are an accurate reflection of their own practice or experience. My membership identity was made known to the communities being studied (Corbin Dywer & Buckle, 2009) during access negotiations with head teachers in all six schools. However, with the purpose of limiting the potential for social desirability bias in the data, my status was not routinely declared at the beginning of interviews, unless the participant initiated a conversation on this topic. Before the interviews began, participants were reminded about the importance of their opinions and experiences in the field, and encouraged to talk openly and honestly to me about their understandings and to identify and report concerns about children they had suspected were being neglected.

Concluding Comments

This chapter has outlined the methodology of the study. It began by summarising the gaps identified by the review of literature in the field of child neglect and schools. After the study's three key research questions were defined, an overview of the study's MMR design was provided. The strengths and limitations of using a mixed methods approach were considered and the composite methods and sampling framework described. Next a chronological account of the access negotiations and data collection processes were

provided. The final section of this chapter offered a reflection on the ethical issues and sensitivities encountered, including the overarching ethical considerations throughout the duration of the study, ethical issues during data collection, and ethical issues related to my role as researcher.

Having explored the methodology, the discussion now turns to the findings of the study. In the following three chapters of this thesis (four, five, and six), findings from the analysis of data are presented. These chapters are arranged in terms of the differences which emerge from the data over three different levels: local authority, school, and between different professions. The analysis begins with chapter five which considers the patterns of neglect that manifest within local authorities. These patterns are discussed at the individual level and consider the differences between the Urban, Rural, and Valleys Authorities participating in the study.

Chapter six goes on to explore the differences between schools and amongst individual school staff. The discussion is split into two sections, the first exploring the context of the six institutions participating in the study, and the second drawing upon detailed interviews to provide greater detail about the variances within schools at a cultural level. Chapter seven is the third and final analysis chapter in this thesis. It highlights the differences which exist between the two fields of responsibility – social services and the school system. The depth and breadth of the inter-agency partnership between schools and social services is carefully examined here, with professional difference between school staff and social work practitioners emerging at individual, cultural and organisational levels.

Part II

Overview of the Findings

This chapter provides a broad overview of the findings from both phases of the study. The discussion is split into four sections and begins by describing the three composite methods employed in the mixed methods research (as illustrated by the diagram on page 73 of this thesis). The discussion then explains how phase one informed the later selection of case study schools, as well as informing the construction of data collection tools in the second phase of the study. The second and third sections provide a summary of the key findings from phase one and phase two of the research respectively. The fourth section presents an overarching synthesis of the study's main findings and concludes the discussion by introducing the three proceeding analysis chapters which form the second part of this thesis.

Design of the Study

As previously outlined in the methodology chapter of this thesis, the research study employs an explanatory two-phase design (Creswell, 2003; Gorard & Taylor, 2004, Teater et al, 2017). The research sequence began with phase one which undertook analysis of a numeric data set compiled from social work cases files *(n=119)* from three local authorities in Wales. During this first phase data was collected from seven key documents on 119 children's social services' files. The quantitative sample included the fifty most recent case files where the child was of school age, the school was the referring agency to social services, and the child had been registered on the child protection register. This first phase gathered statistical data which brought new understanding about the school's level of involvement in the child protection process. The principal aim was to provide a broad context and landscape of child neglect in schools from which to explore the area of focus in much more detail during the second

phase of the study, where emphasis would be placed upon investigation of school staff's thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

The second phase of the study comprised of six in-depth case studies of mainstream schools, one primary and one secondary school each positioned within the three participating local authorities *(n=6)*. Composite methods in the second phase included semi-structured interviews with school staff from a wide range of roles (*n=30)* (five participants per school) (a copy of the role categories is included in appendix 1 of this thesis). The second phase was also complemented by non-participant observation of school-based decision-making meetings. Meetings or exchanges which provided an opportunity for staff to report or discuss concerns about a child which had arisen at school were identified by the researcher and head teacher in each school *(n=5).* The primary school in the Valleys Authority was not able to provide an observation opportunity due to their small size and limited institutional infrastructure.

In terms of the study's two-phase explanatory design (Creswell, 2003; Gorard & Taylor, 2004, Teater et al, 2017), the second phase of the research was informed by data collected in the first phase in two distinct ways. Firstly, the selection of the six participating schools from inferential statistics, and secondly the design of four vignettes for use during discussions in interviews with school staff. For both aspects, data was drawn from one document on the child's social work case file; the schools' referral form to social services which set out the reason for concern about the child. The following discussion describes the two ways in which this data from the first phase was used to inform the second phase. The discussion is supported by a diagram which illustrates the concatenation of the two phases on the following page of this thesis.

Selection of Participating Schools

The first way in which phase one informed phase two was the method in which the case study schools were identified in each of the three local authorities. The selection of one primary and one secondary school within each of the three local authorities was

informed by inferential statistics generated from social work case files during phase one of the study. Schools in the sample which reported the highest levels of referral activity to social services (which resulted in a child being registered on the child protection register under the category of neglect) were identified as the most desirable schools to participate in the study.

Figure 4. Diagram illustrating the concatenation of both phases in the study's design
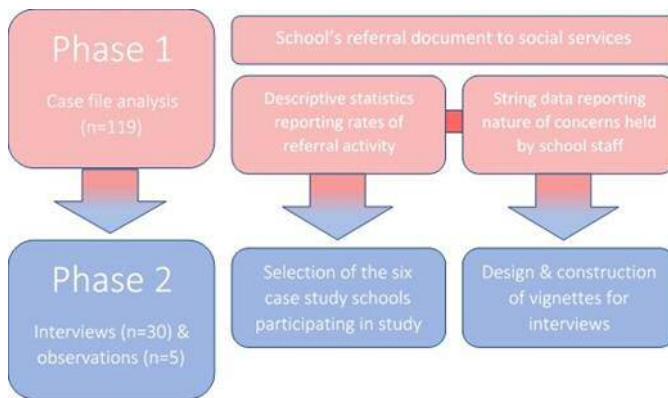
This purposive sampling strategy was employed due to the limited size of this doctoral research, to ensure case studies where the presence of neglect had been identified were selected. The six schools which agreed to participate in the second phase of the study (and subsequently granted access approval for the research to commence), each sat within the ten highest referring institutions in the reported sample in phase one. As discussed in the methodology chapter of this thesis (on page 77), the attempt to secure feeder primary schools and their respective secondary schools proved unachievable due to restricted capacity to participate.

Design of Interview Vignettes

The second way in which phase one of the study informed phase two was the way in which the interview vignettes were constructed for use in conversations with school staff. As described in the methodology chapter of this thesis (on page 86) four vignettes were created each based upon descriptive statistics and string data which was drawn from the school's referral form to social services which was held on the child's social work case file. The vignettes detailed four individual scenarios which simulated real

referrals in the data from phase one, illustrating how child neglect presents within a school-setting. The vignettes were constructed to illustrate realistic examples of the (i) most commonly cited concerns of child neglect, and (ii) the least commonly cited concerns of child neglect made by schools in the reported sample. String data formed the basis of the narrative used in the vignettes, which were employed as an analytical tool to assess the attitudes and perceptions of participants about identifying child neglect in their daily roles (copies of vignettes are included in appendices 10-13 to this thesis).

Findings: Phase One

This section provides a summary of the key findings from each phase of the study. It begins by presenting the findings from phase one of the mixed methods research which consists of analysis of children's social work case files (n=119). The first phase of the study answers the first research question posed: *What is the extent of involvement of mainstream primary and secondary schools in identifying and responding to child neglect in the child protection process?*

The principal finding from phase one of the research is the problematic nature of the quantitative data. Statistical analysis during the first phase of the study highlights the challenges of accessing data from children's social work case files. These challenges are identified as both practical (in terms of achieving the desired sample size) and numerical (in terms of uncovering large amounts of missing data), each reflecting the complex nature of statutory social work and the multifaceted processes which exist in front-line child protection services.

In addition to the problematic nature of the data, findings also identified patterns in the reported sample, and illuminated a number of variances in recording practices across the three local authorities. The discussion now offers a summary of the three key

findings from phase one organised under the following sub-headings: (i) social work processes, (ii) common patterns, (iii) variances between local authorities.

Social Work Processes

A number of challenges arose during the process of case file data collection which resulted in the nature of the data held by the study being problematic. These issues are presented as the principal finding from phase one. This is because the challenges of case file data collection are in themselves a 'finding' from the data. The first challenge encountered was the inability to achieve the desired sample size in each local authority. Although local authorities were asked to provide the 50 most recent case files which met the criteria (set out on page 80 of this thesis), however low regional populations together with the move from hardcopy paper files to electronic recording systems in vastly different years in each local authority created practical obstacles in accessing the anticipated total quantity of files *(n=150)*. This resulted in a smaller overall quantitative sample size than initially expected in the design stages of the study *(n=119).*

In addition to the practical challenges, the practice processes which exist in front-line child protection work also heavily influenced the nature of the quantitative data collected. As discussed within the methodology chapter of this thesis (on page 82), data were collected from documents at a number of points in the child protection process. In child protection practice, it is typical for referrals from outside agencies to be duplicated to the files of siblings. This is done to ensure that investigations about concerns raised are undertaken on any child who may be affected by the concerns raised. This resulted in three levels of data being held by the study: referral level (family level), child level (individual level), and local authority level (cultural level).

Secondly, the time taken for a child's case to progress from the school's referral to the child's subsequent registration on the child protection register, and the nature and level of intervention(s) provided during this process, all vary considerably, and are influenced by a number of factors. These factors include the existing frequency and severity of risk

of neglect, and also the presence of protective factors in an individual child's circumstances. Findings from phase one of the study highlight the intricacy of movement through the formal child protection process and between levels of service intervention. This complex nature of child protection intervention(s) and social work processes makes the ability to determine the causality of neglect from the case file data problematic.

Finally, findings from phase one of the study uncovered substantial amounts of missing data. The level and degree of information recorded by social work practitioners on case files varied considerably, both within and across each of the three local authorities. Large amounts of missing data were particularly found on three specific variables: (i) if the child had a statement of special educational need (52%), (ii) the child's religion (46.2%) and (iii) the main language the child spoke (26.9%). The Rural Authority was identified as having the largest amount of missing data overall (followed by the Valleys and then Urban Authorities) on case files in the reported sample. These high levels of missing data threatened the reliability of the data and subsequently were not included in the analytical finding chapters in part two of this thesis.

Common Patterns

The second finding from phase one identified common patterns in the landscape of child neglect within the reported sample. Descriptive statistics revealed that more boys (58%) were identified as living with neglect than girls, and that educational neglect (51%) was cited most frequently in the schools' referrals to social services, closely followed by physical neglect (45%). Findings report that children who were experiencing levels of neglect which warranted a statutory child protection intervention were more likely to be in mainstream education (88%), be of primary school age (73%), have one sibling (30%) and have a mean age of 9.6 years old. Descriptive statistics also report that the child's ethnicity was predominantly White British (88%), and the majority of the sample to have not been previously registered on the child protection register (58%).

In terms of social work assessments completed by practitioners, descriptive statistics found that 83% of initial assessments (IAs) contained general information contributed by the school about their involvement with, or support given to the child, with only 60% of IAs including specific evidence about the child's educational needs. Within the core assessments (CA) in the reported sample, findings show an increase to 90% for inclusion of general information contributed by the school, and an increase to 87% for specific evidence of educational needs.

In nearly half of the reported sample a range of school-based support was offered to the child, either prior to or during the child protection process in response to concerns of child neglect. When a multi-agency child protection conference had been convened by social services to decide if the child was registered for neglect, data in the reported sample illustrate that school staff attendance, their sharing and contribution of a report about the child, or the allocation of actions on the child's child protection plan, all decreased by the time the review conference was held (three months later).

Variances

The third finding from phase one of the study was the identification of variance between the three participating local authorities. When case file data are split by local authority, variance emerges across three variables: (i) the age of the child, (ii) the number of siblings the child has, and (iii) the type of neglect cited in the schools' referral form to social services. In the Valleys Authority, the mean age of the child was reported as more than a year younger than the Rural Authority (and six months younger than the Urban Authority). Children in the Valleys Authority were also reported as having two siblings compared to the other authorities where they only had one sibling.

In terms of the type of neglect concerns reported, the Rural Authority was the only authority where the schools did not report emotional neglect in any of their referrals to social services. Emotional neglect is conspicuous by its absence in the Rural Authority due to the fact it is widely regarded as one of the most harmful elements of neglect

upon a child's development. The schools in the Valleys Authority cite the highest number of concerns in referrals for 'other' types of abuse (such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, etc.) above any other category of concerns about neglect. Comparatively, the Urban Authority cited the least concerns categorised as 'other' types of abuse within the reported sample in their initial referrals about the child which could suggest the most accurate identification of child neglect indicators within their referrals to social services.

Variance also became evident in the data in terms of the level of school-based support that was offered to a child living thought to be experiencing neglect. Support offered by schools included practical support, referral and signposting to services, emotional support, provision of clothing, provision of food, other, and financial support. When data were split by local authority, variance emerges highlighting that schools in the Urban Authority provide 10% more support (51%) to children than the schools in the Valleys Authority (41%), and 20% more support than schools in the Rural Authority (31%). This could indicate that the schools in the Urban Authority provide more early and preventative support to ameliorate child neglect, or simple be reflective of a greater quantity and variety of services and resources available in an urban area.

The under-reporting of concerns about children from a BAME background in the Valleys Authority was also identified as a finding of phase one. This was set against descriptive statistics which suggested the slight over-reporting of concerns of neglect about children from these backgrounds in the other two authorities (Urban and Rural). However, on deeper analysis, given both Urban schools possessed unusually high percentages of pupils who identified from a BAME background (primary school 40% and secondary school 75%) compared to the national statistics for the local authority. This raises important questions about the proportionality of reporting levels for this group in both Urban Authority schools.

Findings: Phase Two

The discussion now turns to the findings from phase two of the study. Phase two comprised of semi-structured qualitative interviews with five staff in each of the six schools (n=30) and non-participant observation of school-based meetings (n=5). Interviews were undertaken with a range of staff from teaching and non-teaching roles to ascertain their thoughts, feelings and experiences of working with child neglect. The non-participant observation was undertaken in five of the six case study schools in structured meetings of a varied nature linked to the size and structure of each school. There were two principal findings from phase two of the study. Both findings were characterised by the overarching theme of 'difference', and both were informed by the interview and non-participant observation data. The two principal findings from the second phase are summarised below: (i) differences between schools, and (ii) differences between professions.

Differences Between Schools

The first principal finding answers the second research question posed by the study: *What are the experiences of school staff in different roles when responding to children and their parents when they are concerned that a child is experiencing child neglect?* Interview and observation data identify the existence of a number of cultural variances between each of the six schools and note three important factors which influence the institutions' responses to child neglect. These factors include the approach taken by the school, the available learning and training environment for staff, and individual staff members' relationships with the child's family.

These cultural variances which exist between participating schools affect the level to which staff feel able to work effectively with issues of neglect. This finding has important messages for practice in school when working effectively with issues of child neglect. Interview and observation data identify staff in the smaller-sized schools as consistently demonstrating good practice when identifying and responding to neglect in

the school-setting. Three important factors emerge from the qualitative data gathered in phase two which are influential in the way the school responds to the complex social issue across teaching and non-teaching roles. These factors are; (i) the approach taken by the school and whether the infrastructure of the institution was built upon a proactive or reactive framework, (ii) the learning and training environment created for staff by management in the school, and (iii) the staff member's individual relationship with the family concerned. Data from the non-participant observations supported and strengthened these findings and provided further evidence of each of the three factors by capturing the 'active performance' of staff in their roles (Ritchie, 2003).

From the non-participant observation data, key organisational strengths in each school were also identified. Data was triangulated with the three factors that emerged from the interview analysis in terms of how information was shared by staff within the school, and how decisions about support for children were made. The observed strengths are captured at the beginning of chapter five of this thesis, where individual case study profiles for each school are presented. These strengths include the school's ethos of safeguarding practice, taking a proactive or open approach to working with issues of neglect, the hosting of external agencies within the school premises, the prioritisation of inclusion and wellbeing for all pupils, using creative and flexible methods and approaches for working with parents from BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) backgrounds, internal pastoral meetings, the willingness to work with external organisations including social workers, and formal multi-agency meetings held on school premises.

Differences Between Professions

The second principal finding from phase two answers the third research question posed by the study: *What is the nature of the relationship between schools and social services in responding to child neglect?* Interview and observation data found a number of differences in the way each field of responsibility (the school and social services) responded to child neglect within their respective roles. Five themes are identified from the analysis of data as follows; (i) the visibility of neglect and the legitimation of

staff needing to *see* neglect on a child, (ii) professionalism and the relationships which exist across the two agencies, (iii) the power held by social services and ideas of stigma in relation to statutory services, (iv) the existence of rules and routines in the school system, and (v) the lack of professional confidence school staff had in their ability to respond to child neglect effectively.

The second principal finding acknowledges numerous differences which manifest between the two fields of responsibility; the school and social services. This finding has significant messages for practice in terms of inter-professional working between universal services and social work practitioners when safeguarding children from child neglect. Five key themes which characterise the different ways in which the school and social services respond to child neglect differently in their respective professional roles are identified.

The first theme highlights the way in which school staff were primarily drawn to the observable presentation of the child when looking for indicators of neglect. The 'visibility of neglect' runs throughout the interview data with staff expressing the need to '*see*' neglect on the child in terms of their hunger, distress, or ill-fitting or inadequate clothing for the climate. The reliance on physical characteristics as evidence of neglect is suggested as being a rational reaction to the system within which schools operate, limited by only 'seeing' the child exist within the school's premises, rather than in their home environment or wider family functioning.

The second theme recognises the centrality of 'professional relationships' to effective practice between the school and social services. Substantial difference is acknowledged between the two fields in terms of professional culture, language, expertise, knowledge of families, and understanding of statutory thresholds for intervention in child neglect. The national problem of recruitment and retention in the social work profession emerges as causing significant damage to inter-professional relationships and school staff's ability to forge a close working partnership with social work practitioners. The third theme identifies the power held by, and stigma attached to social services, and the

impact upon both school staff and the families they support. A paradox is identified whereby school staff speak about the idea of statutory involvement as a device to engage reluctant families with school-based voluntary support, creating a significant divide between universal and child protection services.

In the fourth theme a strong culture of 'rules and routines' is recognised within the school system. Data from interviews and observations both acknowledge the impact of the schools' hierarchical safeguarding policies and protocols upon decision-making practice when responding to concerns of child neglect, and the subsequent effect on inter-professional relations between the two fields. The final theme identified in the second principal finding from phase two, is the 'lack of confidence' staff had in their ability to recognise and respond to child neglect in their professional role. Interview and observation data both provide robust evidence that draws attention to the inadequacy of training for school staff, both broadly in terms of safeguarding practice and more specifically with regards to child neglect. Findings suggest that the absence of relevant skills, knowledge, support, and professional confidence act as barriers to effectively identifying indicators of neglect and responding to the multifaceted issue in school-settings.

Synthesised Findings

This chapter has provided an overview of the findings from each phase of the study. The discussion opened by describing the three composite methods employed in the mixed methods research and how phase one informed phase two of the research. This section now concludes the overview by summarising the overarching findings of the mixed method study. Because it is widely accepted that safeguarding children is not the sole responsibility of social services (Baginsky, 2008; Brandon & Belderson, 2016; NSPCC, 2015 & 2016b; Taylor & Daniel, 2005; Welsh Government, 2016), the positioning of schools at the centre of the community is pivotal in staff's ability to recognise and intervene in child neglect at the earliest stage (NSPCC, 2015; Stevens & Laing, 2015).

Findings from this study provide new evidence which contributes to understanding how child neglect is identified and responded to in mainstream schools in Wales and what school staff identify as barriers in their day-to-day safeguarding roles. The synthesised findings highlight the intricacy which exists in the inter-professional relationship between the school and social services. This section offers a summary discussion which presents the overarching findings on school-based practice across the spectrum of child neglect.

Findings from both phases of the study largely emphasise the challenges of merging two multifaceted systems within one narrative, reflective of the messy and often problematic reality of inter-professional working (Baginsky, 2008; Okitikpi, 2011). Analysis of data from both phases of the study accentuates the sheer complexity which surrounds the conceptualisation of child neglect in safeguarding practice with children and young people. Synthesised findings from quantitative and qualitative phases report divergence between the theoretical definitions of neglect (commonly held in schools), and the much narrower operational categories which exist in front line child protection practice (Horwath, 2013). Such variance in definitions of child neglect together with differing understandings of threshold levels for service intervention in statutory services are both acknowledged as influencing the identification of the issue and the type of support subsequently implemented to the family.

The overarching idea of difference is clearly exposed in the synthesised findings from both phases of the study. This idea is found in both the varying cultural and organisational approaches taken across the six schools, and the professional differences between the two fields of responsibility; schools and social services. Findings from both phases highlight the significance of schools taking a proactive approach to child neglect, both in terms of institutional infrastructure and the establishment of communities where staff can learn, develop and share information with more experienced colleagues in the school. The following three chapters present a detailed analysis of the principal findings across three distinct levels; (i) the common patterns and variances of child

neglect in local authorities, (ii) the differences which emerge between schools, and (iii) the differences whist exist between each profession.

4. Patterns of Neglect in Local authorities

This chapter begins the analysis of the study by exploring the patterns of child neglect which emerge across the three local authorities. Drawing upon the review of literature in this thesis, the dialogue opens by highlighting the complexity surrounding the conceptualisation of child neglect. Following on from chapter two, the idea of statutory 'thresholds' are discussed, their impact considered, and the challenges they create for practice across different organisational contexts identified. The chapter goes further to deliberate the varied operational and professional definitions, and the inevitable consequence of different understandings of neglect upon accessing resources for children (Horwath, 2013).

The chapter is organised into three main sections: social work processes, common patterns, and the variances which exist between the participating local authorities. The first section explores the effect of complex social work processes upon the nature and level of data gathered within the study. Here, analysis draws attention to the challenges encountered during data collection, which resulted in the manifestation of three data levels: child, school, and local authority. The discussion explores the complexity this presents: in the limited quality of the data, together with its reliability, in terms of making claims about causality from the reported sample.

The second section goes on to provide an overview of the case file data. Common patterns across each of the local authorities are revealed and large amounts of missing data acknowledged. Descriptive statistics are reported to clearly present the school's level of involvement in identifying and responding to child neglect, with findings related to literature in the field. The third and final section identifies the variances which emerge in the case file data across local authority practice in this area. The difficulty of merging two complex and multifaceted systems within one narrative is recognised, reflecting the practice reality of inter-agency working between schools and social services. The chapter acknowledges a need for more robust case file data in this area,

and finishes by identifying a number of variables which would improve the development of future research in the field.

The Impact of Local Authority Thresholds

As discussed within the review of literature in chapter two, defining neglect requires a social judgement about what is considered to be an adequate standard of parenting for a child, at a particular point in time (Garbarino & Collins, 1999; Rees et al, 2011). Agreeing upon a single definition of neglect causes considerable difficulty for practitioners and researchers (Taylor & Daniel, 2005), not only because it is multifaceted in terms of construction, but because it differs within a range of contexts, and changes over time (Horwath, 2013). The construction of neglect also involves moral assessments of parenting capacity (Gough & Stanley, 2007), and is contextualised by the socio-political framework in which it sits (Horwarth, 2013; Jones & Gupta, 1998). This makes the establishment of a statutory threshold for entry into the child protection system, and an operational category to access services and organisational resources for neglect (Platt, 2006), particularly challenging for practice.

The policy document 'Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004' (Welsh Assembly Government, 2006) outlines a responsibility for all LSCBs in Wales to develop policies and guidelines which set out the statutory thresholds for intervention in cases of neglect (Children in Wales, 2014). The recent implementation of the SSWB Act (2014) subsequently transfers this responsibility to the regional children's safeguarding boards (RCSBs), congruent with the introduction of the new legislative framework. Threshold guidance aims to support a range of practitioners in identifying children who are in need of support or protection (Dickens, 2007). It sets out agreed transition points at which local authorities should provide, stop providing, or make changes to the level of services they offer to children living with neglect.

Accurately assessing whether services for a child (or someone other than the child who has needs for care and support, (SSWB Act 2014)) should be provided, raises challenges in practice. Dickens (2007) suggests that establishing appropriate statutory thresholds in cases of child neglect is more difficult than for other types of abuse which offer visible injuries (Platt, 2006). This is because neglect, unlike physical or sexual abuse, often has no 'decisive' event on which to focus a decision, but instead, is based upon impressions, judgements, or opinions about negligent occurrences, in the context of the individual child's needs, age, culture, and family environment. Jones and Gupta (1998) argue that the focus upon incidents rather than the broader context of a child's life, results in insufficient protection for children experiencing neglect.

As a result, cases of neglect raise fundamental dilemmas in statutory practice, particularly within the inter-agency relationship between social services and schools, and the definition of neglect as a category for service provision. In essence, evidence about a child is often not understood and analysed in the same way by different professions (Dickens, 2007). In this study, this manifests through the differing cultural perspectives and values held by social workers and school staff, in terms of judging whether or not the threshold for statutory intervention for neglect is reached and the services for a child should be provided. This idea is explored in greater detail in chapter six of the thesis, where findings highlight the significance of professional discourse in the identification of neglect. Having considered the impact of local authority thresholds on the accessibility of services to children, the discussion now explores the complex processes which exist within statutory practice.

Social Work Processes

Social work with children and families is commonly thought to be one of the most complex and challenging areas of social work practice (Okitikpi, 2011). Although the child protection system is not a legal process, it is highly formalised and governed by substantial procedural guidance (Welsh Government, 2008). This section of the chapter explores a number of challenges which arose during the process of case file data

collection from case files within the participating local authorities. These issues are included here, rather than in the previous chapter, because the challenges are in themselves, 'findings'. The discussion begins by considering the practical challenges of accessing the case file sample *(n=119)* from each participating local authority for the research study.

The low population in the Rural Authority resulted in a markedly reduced sample size (*n=35)* compared to that of the Urban (*n=41*) and Valleys Authorities (*n=43*). Low population predetermined the limits of the number of cases which met the sampling criteria in each area, with cases in the Rural Authority having to be drawn from registrations as far back as 1999 in order to facilitate the requirements of the sample. This date was four years earlier than the Valleys Authority (2003), and twelve years earlier than the oldest case file sampled in the Urban Authority (2011), which is reflective of the range of population levels within each authority. For similar reasons, of all the case files in the Rural Authority sample, none had current registrations on the CPR. Although these observations provide a stimulating context for local authority analysis, attention must first be given to understanding how the complex nature of the statutory child protection process is often accountable for the variability in duration and shape of child protection interventions.

As previously discussed in the Methodology in this thesis (chapter three), data were collected from case files at specific points from documents in the child protection process. A diagram illustrating the administration of the child protection process is provided on page 82 of this thesis. The diagram is annotated at the seven points where case file data were drawn from documents on the child's file. These points are as follows: (1) initial referral form from the school, (2) initial assessment made by social services, (3) strategy discussion and related section 47 investigation, (4) core assessment, (5) minutes from the initial child protection conference, (6) minutes from the first core group, and (7) minutes from the review child protection conference. This process provides an understanding of the 'documentary reality' (Atkinson & Coffey, 1997) in which the meaning of data were contextualised, whilst being representative of

the child protection system and organisational bureaucracy in which the documents were created (Hayes & Devaney, 2004; Prior, 2003).

Although administration of the process is often progressed through the sequence of documents sampled, it is important to note that the length of time taken to move from an initial referral made by the school to the registration of the child on the CPR, can vary considerably between cases. There is not one reason for this, but a number of causes including the nature and severity of the school's concerns, the level of risk thought to be posed to the child, the parent/carers' individual circumstances, and the presence of protective factors which mitigate the impact of harm upon the child. Progression from initial referral to registration, may at times also be dependent upon the agency's levels of available practitioner resources. That said, stringent timescales govern local authorities' investigation into whether the child is suffering, or likely to suffer 'significant harm' (Brayne & Carr, 2008; The Children Act 1989) and subsequently, whether they are in need of protection or care (Welsh Government, 2008).

Lower level interventions which effectively manage or lessen the level of risk posed to a child, or evidence that parents/carers have made positive changes in response to the concerns held by social services, can result in service provision being reduced from a child protection (CP) level to a 'child in need' (CIN) level. This could potentially increase the length of time that a case remained 'open' to the social work team, but not in the formal child protection process. Should the severity of risk later increase once again, the matter could be again escalated to a child protection level and an ICPC convened to decide whether the child should be registered on the CPR.

Understanding the intricacy of movement between the various levels of service provision in the CP system is paramount in understanding the impact the process has upon case file data analysis, specifically in terms of recognising the implications upon social work intervention. The CP system provides a framework designed for interventions to move up and down between service provision levels, from a CIN (level

3) to a CP (level 4), depending upon the level of risk posed to the child (defined within The Children Act, 1989; Welsh Government, 2008). School-based or other partner agency support offered at a universal level is commonly classified as early intervention or preventative work and categorised as level 2 provision. Such variation in the level and duration of interventions, combined with the changeable and often complex lives of families in the CP system, makes the ability to determine the causality of neglect from the case file data problematic.

In addition to the difficulties created by social work processes, challenges also arose with regards to the physical practicalities of collecting data from case files across three diverse authorities. Each local authority possessed different software packages which stored and managed electronic case file data, organising and recording information in a variety of ways, primarily in qualitative form. Although Shaw and Holland (2014) suggest the digitisation of social work case files to have improved access to data, difficulties were experienced during data collection when attempting to locate the required information within each of the different software packages. This considerably increased the length of time taken to collect data in each of the three local authority sites.

The date of transition from hardcopy paper files to electronic software varied considerably between each local authority, with additional differences in the precision with which the task was administered. For example, a number of case files in the Rural Authority were not available electronically (aside from identifying information about the child such as name and date of birth), but instead archived in hardcopy and stored at different premises in the region. In this instance, the location of two archived files could not be ascertained and subsequently had to be removed from the sample. Hardcopy case files were typically long, although legibility fluctuated between practitioner and authority quite considerably. Use of professional language often differed between files, and some details were simply left incomplete. These findings are congruent with literature which highlights such problems of data collection from social work case files (Fortune & Reid, 1999; Hayes & Devaney, 2004; Shaw & Gould, 2001).

The challenges continued in terms of the level and degree of information recorded on each case file. This varied extensively, both within individual authorities and across the three case studies. Large amounts of missing data illustrated a common pattern across the sample in terms of the absence of recorded information on baseline information, and were found on three specific variables: (i) 'If child subject to a Statement of Special Educational Need' (52.1%), 'Religion' (46.2%), and main 'Language' spoken (26.9%). The substantial amounts of missing data (summarised below) on each of these variables threatens the data's reliability, and for such reason will not be included in the analysis of the sample, later in the chapter. Descriptive statistics, and missing values for each of the aforementioned variables are provided in the table below:

Table 5. Illustrating Missing Data

	N	%	Miss. Data %
Religion	*64*	*53.8*	*46.2*
Christian	*3*	*2.5*	
No religion	*36*	*30.3*	
Atheist	*1*	*0.8*	
Not stated	*24*	*20.2*	
Child's Main Language	*87*	*73.1*	*26.9*
English only	*81*	*68.1*	
Bilingual (including English or Welsh)	*6*	*5.0*	
If Child Subject Statement of Educational Need (SEN)	*57*	*47.9*	*52.1*
Yes	*18*	*15.1*	
Currently being assessed	*1*	*0.8*	

Figure 6. Bar Chart Illustrating Amounts of Missing Data per Local Authority
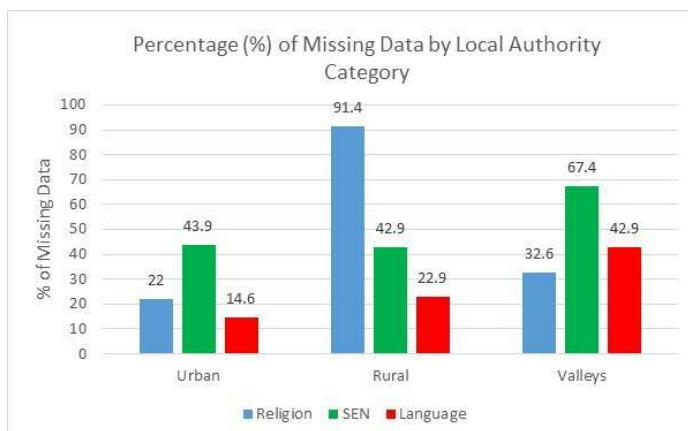
When the three aforementioned variables are split by local authority, differences in recording practices become evident. After the variable 'Religion' is split, the Rural Authority reports a vast 91.4% as missing data, compared to a reduced 32.6% in the Valleys Authority, and an even smaller percentage of 22% in the Urban Authority. This might be reflective of the sample in the Rural Authority being more historic than in the other two authorities as it had the most physical files requested from archives. Alternatively, it might suggest that social work practitioners in this authority are not routinely gathering information about a child's religion in their case work. In contrast, it is the Valleys Authority which reports the highest level of missing data for the variable 'If Child Subject to a Statement of Educational Need' at 67.4% (compared to urban 43.9% and rural 42.9%).

The Valleys Authority also reports the highest level of missing data for child's 'Language' at 42.9%. This is compared to the Rural Authority which has 22.9% missing data for language which is surprising given it has one of the highest proportions of Welsh speakers in the country (Stats Wales, 2011b) (The Urban Authority reports 14.6% of missing data for language). The high levels of missing data for language in the Valleys Authority is not surprising, given the lack of diversity and low rates of Welsh language speakers which is less than 15% (Stats Wales, 2011b & 2017d&e). The high levels of missing data could also be due to the fact that data were collected from children's social work files which dated as far back as 1999 (in the Rural Authority, and 2003 in the Valleys Authority, as discussed earlier in this chapter).

This means that the much of the data in the sample held, predates the implementation of the Welsh Language Measure (2011). The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure was given royal assent in February 2011, modernising the legal framework regarding the use of the Welsh language in the delivery of public services (Law Wales, 2016). The oldest case file in the Urban authority was 2011. As a result, the right to access services in Welsh, and all of the local authorities' mechanisms for recording data in this regard, would have improved markedly over time.

Overall, inconsistencies in data recording on social work case files are likely to be reflective of the organisational practices of social workers within each local authority, or the different professional culture established within each of the social work teams. Teater et al (2017) recognise the quality of recording on social work case files to be enormously variable, with files often including very little or no standardised data which can be compared with other populations. Garfinkel (1967:191, cited by Hayes & Devaney, 2004) suggests that the use of any records in research brings a litany of 'troubles to recite'. Garfinkel (1967) frames the common problems encountered with case file data as 'normal and natural', suggesting that the information documented in files is often a representation of the social worker's available time for recording and based upon a judgement about what is considered significant to the everyday practice of the organisation (Hayes & Devaney, 2004).

In terms of identifying patterns within the variations in missing data across three variables (illustrated in the bar chart on page 122), it is the Rural Authority that has the largest amount of missing data out of all the participating local authorities. Hayes and Devaney (2004) state that social work case files are interesting for two reasons: their documentary content and the context of their own production and consumption. Despite the cultural tendency in social work to record concise facts rather than extensive impressions of events, case files can offer a valuable insight into practice. The propensity to record succinct information can often leave the file only able to offer a limited representation of case-management, which might contain substantial bias (Fuller & Petch, 1995; Floersch, 2000) or be lacking in comprehensive information.

Variable Selection

A total of 107 variables were collected from each social work case file. A number of variables were selected with the purpose of most effectively answering the study's three research questions by: (i) capturing the basic characteristics of the child in order to understand the landscape of neglect in the sample, and (ii) to gain an understanding

about the level of involvement of school staff in identifying and responding to child neglect in the child protection process. The variables were chosen for data capture across the following areas:

- the characteristics of the children in the sample including age, ethnicity, religion, language, gender etc.
- the date and number of times the child was registered on the CPR
- the nature of the school's referral to social services including the types of neglect that were identified and the role of the professional making the referral
- whether any school-based support was provided to the child and if so, in what form
- the level of involvement of the school in assessments undertaken by social services
- the level of involvement of the school in the child protection process

Variables capturing the child's characteristics from case files such as gender, age, ethnicity, language, religion, type of school, were gathered with the purpose of comparing findings from the reported sample with the consensus on the prevalence of child neglect in literature. Drawing upon the discussion within the literature review in chapter two of this thesis, the variables intended to explore whether boys were more represented than girls, whether younger children were more commonly recognised as experiencing child neglect than adolescents, whether the child's religion or ethnicity made neglect more or less likely to be identified and reported by a staff member within the school setting, and whether primary schools delivered additional support to children through an informal culture of care. A variable to capture whether the child had a Statement of Educational Need (SEN) was also included with the intention of exploring the relationship between a child's additional needs within the school context, and the propensity for neglect to occur. A copy of the study's case file schedule is included in appendix 2 of this thesis for information. The work of Selwyn et al. (2010) was broadly considered in terms of guiding thinking about the intended design and format of the document. Case file data were then cleaned and prepared for analysis, and one archived

file was removed from the sample because it contained little more than the child's name, date of birth and a date of registration on the CPR. The details of this file have been retained for the purposes of ethical procedure, which will enable information to be traced in the eventuality of a complaint.

When the schedule was designed, it was hoped that data on the associated and contributing factors in the child's household would be available, with the aim of gaining understanding about aspects of causality of neglect (for example, the presence of domestic abuse, mental health, learning disability, substance misuse, alcoholism, child sexual exploitation). Unfortunately, this was not achievable because the three local authorities participating in the study did not routinely record and categorise this information within the seven sampled documents. When data was recorded, it was in a qualitative format which differed between each case management software system, which impacted upon the quality of the data available for analysis.

The Urban Authority consistently recorded and categorised wider family and environmental issues which they judged as significant and contributory to the child's registration for 'neglect' on the CPR. These issues were identified and documented within the child protection conference minutes. Some case files in the Valleys Authority contained data on 'associated and compounding factors', but this information was sporadic and somewhat unpredictable. The inconsistency of recording practices across the three local authorities in the study once again highlights the variable, and at times, the limited quality of the case file data held. The high levels of missing data in the Rural Authority, together with the recording variation across all three authorities, makes the comparison of 'associated and compounding factors' in cases of neglect quite problematic. These variables have subsequently not been included in the analysis due to such small cell counts. (A summary of the descriptive statistics for each of the variables are set out in the table on the following page).

Table 7. Summary of Variables

	N	%
Type of Local Authority	119	100.0
Urban	41	34.5
Rural	35	29.4
Valleys	43	36.1
Child's Gender	119	100.0
Male	69	58.0
Female	50	42.0
Ethnicity	116	97.5
White British	103	86.6
Any Other White Background	4	3.4
White and Black Caribbean	1	0.8
Any other mixed background	3	2.5
Any other Asian background	11	0.8
African	3	2.5
Any other ethnic background	1	0.8
Number of Previous Registrations on the CPR	119	100.0
None	64	53.8
1	35	29.4
2	10	8.4
3 or More	10	8.4
Number of Siblings on the CPR	119	100.0
0	20	16.8
1	36	30.3
2	27	22.7
3	24	20.2
4 or More	12	10.1
Type of Education the Child is Receiving	119	100.0
Mainstream Education	92	77.3
Mainstream Education with an SEN	14	10.9
Special Education Provision	7	5.9
Other or No Provision	7	5.9
Child's Age in Years at Point of Referral	119	100.0
4	10	8.4
5	9	7.6
6	11	9.2
7	12	10.1
8	8	6.7
9	15	12.6
10	16	13.4
11	7	5.9
12	11	9.2
13	9	7.6
14	7	5.9
15	4	3.4
Type of School Child Attending at Date of Registration on CPR	119	100.0
Primary School	87	73.1
Secondary School	32	26.9
Additional concerns of neglect identified by social services at Initial Assessment	119	100.0
Yes	66	55.5
Provision of School-Based Family Support	119	100.0
Yes	50	42.0
Did School Attend Initial Child Protection Conference	119	100.0
Yes	98	82.4

Types of Neglect

Drawing on the work of Farmer and Lutman (2012), Initial Referrals to social services were read and coded to record the presence of seven sub-types of child neglect. Nearly all of the case files detailed a number of different types of neglect in their referral to social services which raised concerns about the child. The concerns were presented in narrative form by a member of school staff in the document. The variables are defined as follows:

(1)   'Medical Neglect' is defined as a failure to seek appropriate medical attention, neglect to administer medication and treatments (including dental, optical, speech and language or physiotherapy) (DePanfilis, 2006).

(2)   'Nutritional Neglect' is defined as providing inadequate calories for normal growth, failure to thrive, or obesity (Farmer & Lutman, 2012).

(3)   'Emotional Neglect' is defined as unresponsiveness to basic emotional needs, hostile or indifferent parental behaviour, failure to interact, no provision of physical or emotional affection (Horwarth, 2007; Minty & Pattinson, 1994).

(4)   'Educational Neglect' is defined as poor school attendance, lateness to school, not providing stimulation, not supporting the child's learning, not ensuring that the child's additional educational needs (AENs) are met. (Horwath, 2005, 2007). This category includes cognitive neglect.

(5)   'Physical Neglect' is defined as poor hygiene, being smelly, dirty, poor home conditions or environment, inappropriate sleeping conditions for the child (Minty & Pattinson, 1994).

(6)   'Lack of Supervision or Parental Guidance' is defined as the failure to protect the child from physical harm or danger when the child is not supervised, child being left unattended, abandonment/desertion, inadequate supervision for the child's age (Dubowitz et al, 1998).

(7)   **'Other'** is defined as any other child abuse which was included within the concerns of the schools' referrals, but which was not neglect and therefore not included in any of the neglect categories above. This information was collected from the case file as string data and included aspects of physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

Descriptive statistics for each of the 'Types of Neglect' identified in the initial referral document from the school are set out below:

Table 8. Illustrating Presence of Child Neglect Sub-types Identified Within School's Referral (n=119)

	%
Medical Neglect	*16.0*
Nutritional Neglect	*13.3*
Emotional Neglect	*6.7*
Educational Neglect	*51.3*
Physical Neglect	*44.5*
Lack of Supervision	*35.3*
Other Concerns	*39.5*

Common Patterns

The second section of this chapter provides an overview of the common patterns which emerge in the data from social work case files *(n=119)* during phase one of the study. This section focuses upon providing descriptive statistics with the intention of contextualising the subject matter. These figures also informed the selection of schools participating in the qualitative stage of the research, and were further drawn upon in the development of vignettes for use in the interviews (as previously outlined in the Methodology chapter of this thesis).

Overall, the sample reveals that more boys (58%, *n=69*) were identified by schools as living with neglect (at a level which warranted the intervention of statutory services) than girls (42%, *n=50).* This is reflective of the sample which included more boys than girls. As expected, the descriptive statistics report that educational neglect (51%, *n=61*)

was the type of neglect which was cited most frequently in the schools' referrals to social services. This was followed by physical neglect (45%, *n=53*) which was the second most common form of neglect, other concerns of abuse (39.5%) and then lack of appropriate supervision of the child (35%, *n=42*). It is important to note that all of the case files mentioned at least two or more types of neglect in each referral to social services, so the bar chart below is a representation of a number of concerns raised within each referral made by the school.

Figure 9. Bar Chart Illustrating Presence of Child Neglect Sub-Types Identified Within Schools' Referral
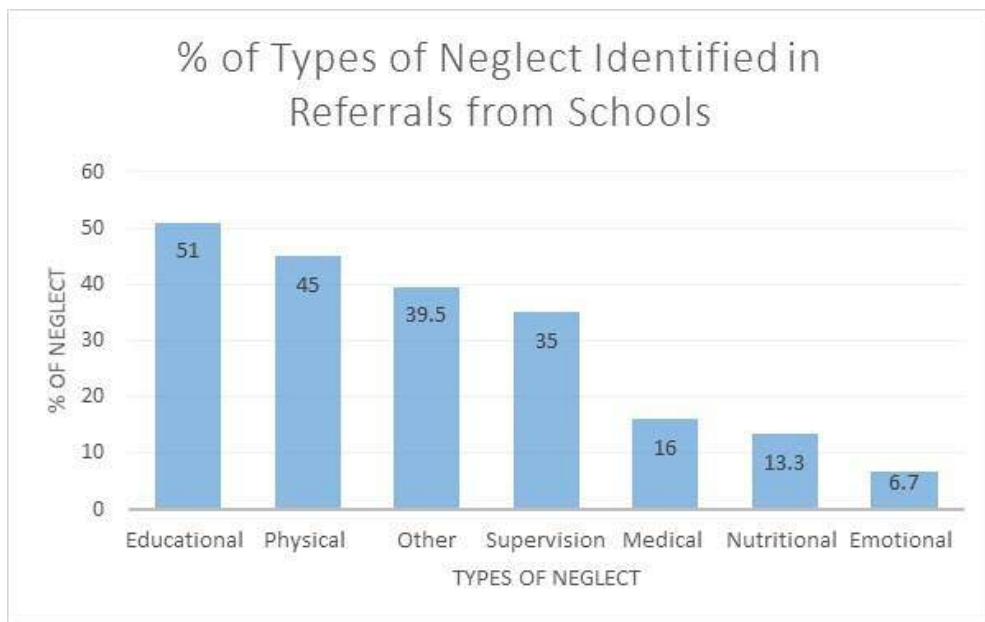
These findings correspond with literature in the field which suggests boys are more represented than girls in terms of prevalence of child neglect (Egry et al, 2015; Raiha & Soma, 1997). It is not surprising that the descriptive statistics report that educational neglect is the most commonly cited concern in the sample, as the concerns are from within the school setting and subsequently contextualised by the overarching educational policy and framework. After educational neglect, it was physical neglect which was highlighted in the sample as being the second most common form of neglect. Horwath & Tarr (2015) state that physical neglect is more easily observed on a child than any other type of neglect within the school setting.

The sample also revealed that 'other' concerns of abuse were reported in 40% (*n=47*) of cases in the sample. The importance of schools simultaneously reporting 'other' concerns of abuse alongside concerns of neglect is congruent with literature (Johnson-Reid et al, 2007; Tite, 1993) which states that referrals that also include evidence of physical abuse are considered much more likely to receive attention from social services, than referrals citing concerns of child neglect alone.

The sample reveals that children experiencing neglect at a level which warrants intervention of statutory services are more likely to be in mainstream education (88%, *n=105*), be of primary school age (73%, *n=87*), rather than secondary school age (27%, *n=32*), have one sibling (30.3%, *n=36*) and have a mean age of 9.6 years old. Literature widely acknowledges the wider prevalence of neglect in younger children than in adolescents (Jonson-Reid et al, 2007; Radford et al, 2011; Rees et al, 2011). Webb and Vulliamy (2001) acknowledge the broadly-held view that primary schools offer a more nurturing 'culture of care' (Nias, 1999) than secondary schools. This could potentially explain the more frequent identification of neglect amongst younger children, and is congruent with the reality that unmet care needs are more visible in younger children who are fully reliant upon the support of an adult care-giver. In terms of the child's category of education, the category reported in the sample is consistent with the national population in Wales, where the majority of children attend mainstream education rather than other educational provision.

Across the sample as a whole, descriptive statistics report the child's ethnicity as White British (88%, *n=103),* and the highest proportion to not have been previously registered on the CPR (58.1%, *n=64*). 29% (*n=35)* of children in the sample had been previously registered once, 8% (*n=10)* twice, and a further 8% (*n=10)* registered three times or more. These statistics are broadly reflective of national statistics which report previous registrations on the CPR for abuse or neglect in Wales (which ranges between 15-30% within the three local authorities participating in this study) (Welsh Government, 2016).

During statutory assessment processes, social workers routinely seek and gather information from partner agencies about the child's circumstances. The descriptive statistics reveal that 83.2% *(n=100)* of Initial Assessments (IAs) contain general information contributed by the school about their ongoing involvement with, or support given to, the child. Furthermore, 60.4% of IAs included evidence about the child's individual educational needs. Within the Core Assessments (CAs) these figures increase to 90% with general information contributed by the school, and to 87% with evidence about the child's educational needs. (A CA, *now called 'a proportionate assessment' since the implementation of the SSWB Act,* was required as part of the s.47 enquiries and involves a comprehensive assessment of the child, as opposed to an initial assessment which was undertaken when a referral is accepted by social services with the purpose of investigating concerns and categorising the level of service intervention a family may need). The 'information contributed by the school to assessments' (shown in light blue) is most important, as the variable is defined as any information which has been provided by the school about the child's overall wellbeing in the school context. The bar chat suggests that both the level and depth of information contributed by the school increase when children received support from statutory services.

Figure 10. *Bar chart Illustrating the Level of Involvement of the School within the Assessment Process*

Level of Involvement of School within the Child's Assessment

Level of Assessment Undertaken by Social Services

- Information Contributed by School
- Evidence specifically relating to Educational Needs
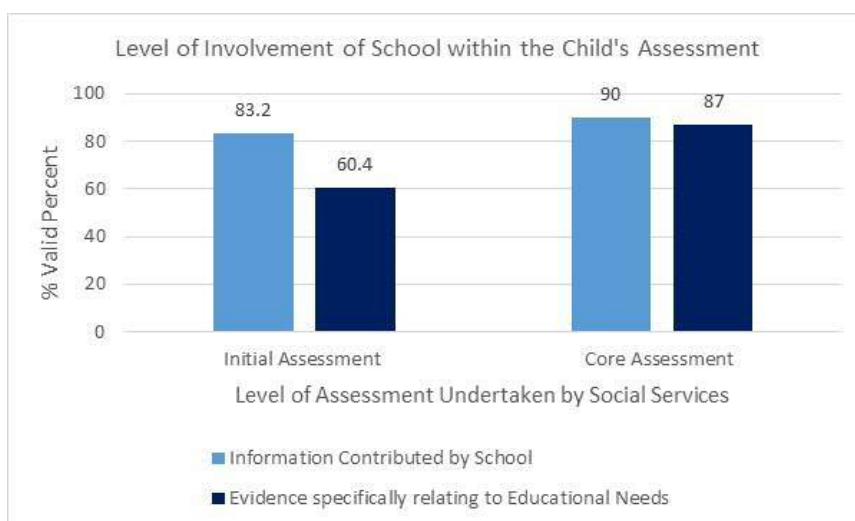
The case file data reveal that schools are contributing information to assessments in the majority of cases in the sample. The figures suggest that schools become more engaged in providing information for core assessments than for initial assessments. From the assessments on the case files, it is not entirely possible to ascertain whether the information was provided by the school to social services, or whether, the information was sought by the social worker from the school. It could be suggested that the typically longer period of time taken for a core assessment to be activated and completed would give workers from either professional field more opportunity and resources with which to exchange information for inclusion in the assessment. Alternatively, it might be indicative of more established and therefore more effective working relationships within the child protection process.

In terms of the level of school-based support offered to children, data reveal that 42% (*n=50)* of case files show evidence of support offered by the school. This support was made either prior to the referral to social services, or during the time the case was 'open' and receiving a statutory social work intervention. String data were collected on the different types of school-based support, which often spanned a number of categories. The school-based support is disaggregated as follows: financial support was offered in all of the cases (100%), then practical care in 42%, referrals and signposting to agencies in 38%, emotional support in 20%, provision of clothing in 20%, provision of food in 18%, and other forms of support in 4% of the cases which school-cased support was provided to children.

With regards to the school's level of involvement in the child protection process, data were compared between the ICPC and the child protection review conference (CPRC) (which is typically held three months after the date of the ICPC). The bar chart below reveals that the school attended 89% of ICPCs, but attendance dropped to 72.5% at the CPRC. Moreover, the school led on 76.1% of actions on the child's plan at the ICPC, but again this dropped to 69% at the CPRC. This could infer that school staff are less likely to be involved in the child protection process once a child has been registered on the CPR and the case has been referred to social services, and once social services are named as the lead agency on the child's plan schools have a lesser sense of ownership

or accountability for providing services within this multi-agency environment (Horwath, 2013).

This perspective highlighted as a practice issue in the Social Care Institute of Excellence's (SCIE) (2016) recent briefing paper into the sharing of information by schools at child protection conferences. The paper recognises a number of difficult issues in inter-professional communication which have been identified in serious case reviews (SCRs), with added information from three multi-agency 'summits'. The report found that school staff may hold the perception that once a referral to statutory services is made, further concerns do not need to be raised. It is suggested that this could be connected to school staff not wishing to upset the child's parents by sharing difficult or negative information which might damage their future working relationship.

Figure 11. Bar Chart Illustrating the Level of Ongoing Involvement of the School in the Child Protection Process
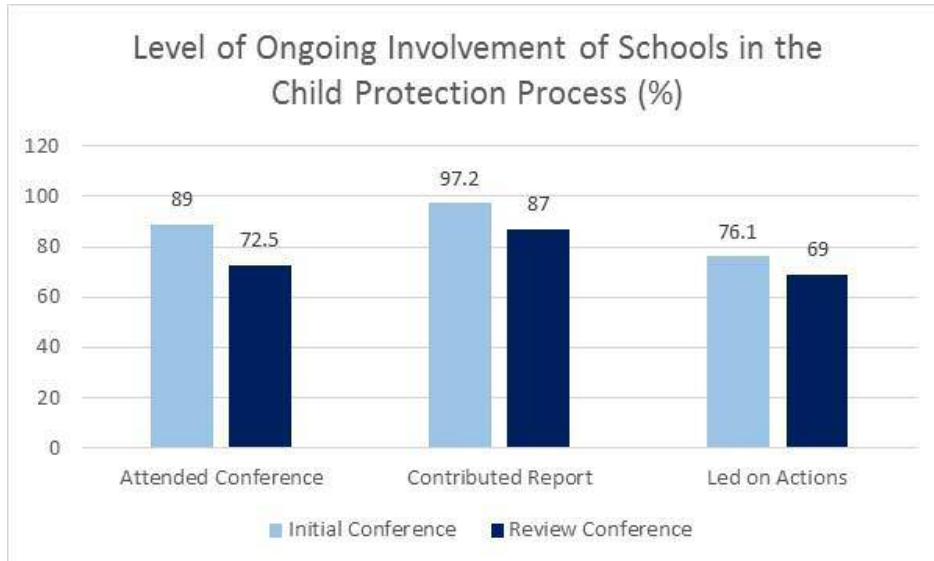
Conversely, these findings might be reflective of poor organisational processes within social services which may be responsible for not consistently informing schools of the child's scheduled review meeting date, or that such dates fall outside of term time which is not uncommon in practice. When case file data are split by local authority, the

schools in the Valleys Authority are revealed as most commonly attending the child's ICPC (88.4%, *n=38*), followed by the Urban (82.9%, *n=34*), then Rural Authorities (74.3%, *n=26*). This highlights a difference in the schools' attendance at the child's ICPC of 14%, dependent upon the geographical positioning of the authority. This could suggest that the schools situated within much smaller geographic areas are more likely to have the resources and time to attend ICPCs than schools in much larger, rural authorities.

The case file data also reveal that at the ICPC, the school contributed a report in 97.2% of cases in the sample. This figure dropped by a further ten percent to 87% at the CPRC three months later (as illustrated in the bar chart on page 134). When these figures are compared to the schools' attendance at the conferences, the data suggests that school staff are more likely to submit a report to social services rather than attend the conference in person. The reduction between the number of schools submitting a report about the child at the CPRC, compared to those submitting a report at the ICPC could be interpreted as schools feeling a reduced sense of responsibility to share information once social services are managing the process and an allocated worker involved.

Variances Between Local Authorities

The third section of this chapter gives consideration to the variances which arise within the case file data at a local authority level. The discussion begins by exploring variances which arise in the quantitative data, through the examination of descriptive statistics split by local authority. With the intention of providing greater depth and gravity to the analysis, the discussion also draws upon the interviews undertaken with school staff. The dialogue of variance is considered in the broader context of varying threshold levels for statutory intervention in neglect, highlighting a number of areas where difference emerges at a local authority level.

When case file data are split by local authority, variance first emerges in the sample in terms of the child's age. In the Valleys Authority, the mean age of the child is 8.5 years old. In the Urban Authority, the mean age is reported as six months older (9 years old), and in the Rural Authority, the mean age is fourteen months older (9.7 years old) than the Valleys Authority. All mean ages of the child in each of the three local authorities in the reported sample are congruent with the most common national age for a child (of school age) on the child protection register in Wales (Stats Wales, 2017b). Analysis of the case file data also reveal disparity at the local authority level in the average number of siblings in the reported sample.

Children from the Valleys Authority have two siblings, compared to the Rural and Urban Authorities which report children to only have one sibling. This could suggest that school staff in the Valleys Authority are identifying neglect earlier and in sibling groups, compared to staff in the other two authorities. This could reflect the broader knowledge often held by school staff in smaller communities about the wider family's history and the functioning of past generations. (This idea is explored in greater detail in the following chapter of this thesis).

Variance is also demonstrated in the 'type of neglect' evident in the string data collected from the schools' initial referral form to social services on case files. (Definitions for these variables are provided in appendix 16 of this thesis). When the variable is split by local authority, data reveal the Rural Authority as the only authority which did not report emotional neglect within any aspect of their concerns at point of referral (compared to the Urban Authority that reports 12.2%, and the Valleys Authority 7%). The lack of attention given to emotional neglect by schools in the Rural Authority, and more broadly within the sample as a whole (6.7%), is conspicuous by its absence (Horwath, 2005), particularly because it is widely regarded as one of the most harmful and detrimental elements of neglect upon a child's development (Iwaniec, 1995).

Figure 12. Bar Chart Illustrating the Types of Neglect Identified in School Referrals by Local Authority
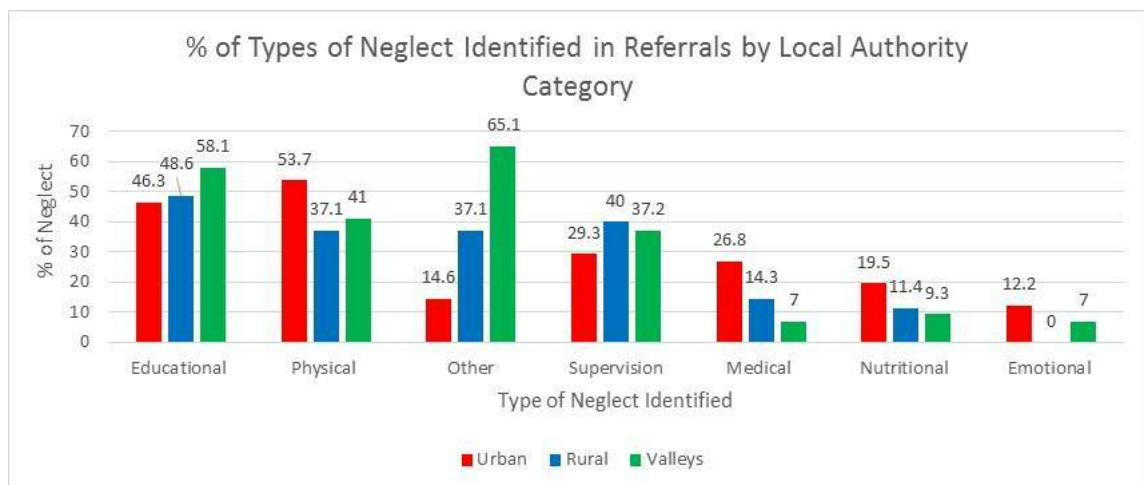
In terms of the 'type of neglect' identified in the sample at the point of referral to social services, the Valleys Authority also stands out because it raises around 30% more concerns about 'other' types of abuse (65.1%) than the other two local authorities (compared to rural 37.1% or urban 14.6%). This category of 'Other' (concerns which are not neglect) represents the highest percentage of concerns raised by any local authority in the sample. Despite the context of a school setting, together with an educational discourse, this percentage (65.1%) is higher than the expected concerns of 'Educational Neglect' (58.1%), which holds the uppermost percentage in the sample overall (51%).

Splitting the data by local authority raises questions about the individual assumptions and beliefs about children's needs and what is considered an adequate level of parenting (Horwath, 2013). Aside from the anticipated difference in professional culture between schools and social services, the data reveal that perceptions and constructions of child neglect also differ at a local authority level, evident in terms of the referrals accepted which resulted in a child being registered on the CPR for neglect. Alternatively, this finding could suggest that referrals in the Valleys Authority which also include evidence of other types of abuse, are considered much more likely to receive attention from social services than observations or worries of neglect alone (Jonson-Reid et al, 2007; Tite, 1993).

The variation at local authority level also emerges from the interview data. During the interviews with a range of school staff, participants highlight specific types of neglect as more prevalent in their school's local catchment area. This is illustrated in the following extract where a Pastoral Manager talks about her experiences of attending a training course which she felt had limited relevance for her practice because it drew upon examples from outside of the school's local area:

> '...because the gentleman that did the course...he came from a totally different area, with totally different problems; and a lot of the references he made back to, "Oh, well, I remember a time when this pupil did this, that and the other", we're in a very tough area in [name removed] and a lot of the problems we have here, I don't think are necessarily experienced anywhere else. Like, the child poverty in this area is massive'. **Pastoral Manager, Valleys Authority** [25/57].

In the extract, the manager refers to the distinctive nature of the region, and in particular the high levels of child poverty in the area. She emphasises her belief that specific areas experience different problems from one another. Staff also talked about different categories of neglect being more or less evident dependent upon the socio-economic demographic of the area. In the following extract, the head teacher proposes neglect to be constructed differently in the more affluent 'leafy suburbs', compared to poorer communities. This extract draws upon the example of children living with neglect because of the absence of professional parents:

> 'I also live in a community where there's high... you know... high wages; but I'm very aware that, in that community, there's neglect. My daughter attends a high school in a green, leafy suburb; but there is neglect in that school as well; I think what the issues are there – and we do have it in here to a certain extent – if you've got professional parents, they can't give the time to the children; so they're neglected in...sort of their [own way]. What they need is a parent to be around, to be available to speak to them. So I'm very much aware that neglect isn't just in an area like this'. **Head Teacher, DSP (Urban Authority)** [16/192].

In the extract the head teacher talks about the impact of professional parents' employment upon the supervision of a child. The interview excerpt refers to neglect in terms of a parent's capacity to provide appropriate levels of supervision for their child because of their professional responsibilities. Although the extract acknowledges some similarity across local authorities, it highlights the idea that specific localities or schools have their own individual constructions of neglect, reflective of the socio-economic demographic in which they are positioned. That said, there is no available data from any of the four UK countries about the socio-economic circumstances of children registered on the CPR (or child protection plans), or of children in local authority care (Bywaters et al, 2016).

As previously discussed within the Literature Review of this thesis, the presence of poverty is not essential, nor sufficient enough for child neglect to occur. However, there is a substantial body of evidence which reports that poverty and low income are strongly linked to abuse and neglect (Brandon et al, 2014; Cleaver et al, 2011; Katz et al, 2007a). In their study into the relationship between poverty, child abuse and neglect, Bywaters et al (2016) identify a strong association between a family's socio-economic situation and the likelihood of their child(ren) experiencing neglect. The bigger the economic hardship experienced, the greater the likelihood and severity of neglect occurring. Unreported evidence from the authors' large study found that CPR rates for neglect were seven times higher in neighbourhoods that were amongst the most deprived 20% in England, compared to the most affluent quintile (Bywaters et al, 2014a&b).

The point is further echoed in the following extract from a member of school staff in the Rural Authority. The schools' Team Around the Child (TAC) administrator talks about the type of neglect most commonly seen in the Rural Authority, compared to the 'usual' types of physical or nutritional neglect which are expressed as more commonly observed:

> *'So… that neglect side yes…although their parents are hardworking,*
> *they're finding money for the drugs, and the kids are in their designer*

gears, you just think, you know… how? You know… so different, it's a
different type of neglect, it's not neglect where they're not being fed, it's
not neglect where they're looking scruffy, they're all made up, they're
immaculately dressed, [laughs] but they're being neglected because
they're being left to roam, they're watching whatever, they're sexually
active, they're smoking, and they're watching their parents smoke you
know… so it's not the typical neglect, whereas you automatically think
neglect is looking dirty, no money, down here it is, it's…it's weird, to us
we do have a lot of neglect issues, but they're not the typical unclean,
you know… we have got a couple obviously, there's personal hygiene,
and you'd have that everywhere, but it's not typical here, we find that
they are clean you know… they're tidy they're smartly dressed…neglect
from the alcohol, from the drugs, umm… social media, so we've got that
side of it rather than the personal hygiene…yeah, it's different.'
Administrator, Team Around the Child (TAC) Meetings (Rural Authority),
[13/492].

In the extract, the staff member describes lack of appropriate supervision and guidance,
and refers to children being exposed to substance and alcohol misuse, sexual activity,
and being left to 'roam'. Although both extracts highlight a lack of supervision to be a
common form of neglect in their area, they each define and construct the issue within
their own local context.

Variance also arose at the local authority level with regards to the level of school-based
support that was offered to children living with neglect. When case file data were split
by local authority, descriptive statistics report the schools in the Urban Authority to
have provided 10% more school-based support (51.2%, *n=21*) to children than the
Valleys Authority (41.9%, *n=18*), and 20% more support than the Rural Authority (31.4%,
n=11). School-based support was defined as evidence of the school providing help at
any point up to and including the CPRC. Support was categorised into practical support
(46%), referral and signposting to other services (34%), emotional support (20%),

provision of clothing (19%), provision of food (16%), other (5%), financial (0%). Where schools provided support to a child experiencing neglect, this was most commonly across a combination of these categories.

Figure 13. Bar Chart Illustrating the School-based Support Provided by Local Authority
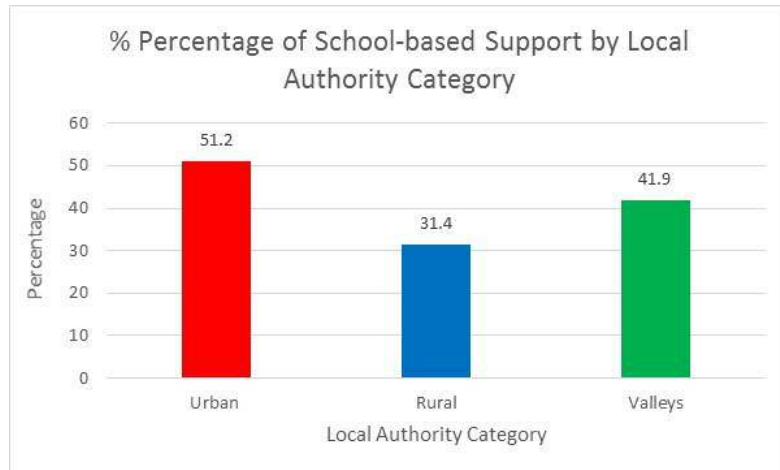
These figures might suggest that schools in the Urban Authority deliver a greater quantity of support in terms of the early intervention and preventative support they implement to ameliorate the effects of neglect. Alternatively, it could be a simple reflection on the greater quantity of services and resources available in an urban area compared to rural or Valleys' communities. When this result is triangulated with data from interviews and observations, similar findings are revealed. During interviews with staff in schools, a number of participants expressed awareness in the variation of resources and funding between local authority areas, and the impact this had upon their ability to deliver sufficient and appropriate support to children suspected of living with neglect.

These points are illustrated in the following extract which highlights a head teacher's frustration at the lack of available funding and the need to work more creatively in schools to provide alternative provision:

'...some agencies, I guess, are underfunded themselves, and they probably have an equal amount of frustration that we do. So you feel like kind of in the middle of a hurricane, sometimes, with it all. So you kind of look after your

own area, and say "Well, we just have to rely on ourselves", and we have to develop good systems and avenues of support here in the school; as well as trying to engage with as many outside agencies as you can. So what we're trying to do at the moment – with regards to outside agencies – is create a... like a... kind of directory, really, of services; all the different agencies and people that are out there, and what they can do to help and support us; so that our response can be as co-ordinated and as accurate as possible. As well as developing the resources within the school.' **Assistant Head Teacher, DSP (Urban Authority)** *[24/109].*

In the absence of funding, the head teacher talks about the need to develop effective systems of support within the school to maximise the level and range of resources available to each child.

The variation between resources in local authorities is also evident in the local implementation of statutory provision. A number of staff in the Rural Authority schools talk about the advantages of having a school social worker (SSW) funded by social services in their local authority. At the time of writing this thesis, the role existed in only a few local authorities across Wales, and was not implemented in the Urban or Valleys Authorities participating in this study. The school social worker is considered to be a particularly valuable resource to a number of schools in each area. The role provides schools with face-to-face support for children, social work advice and guidance, some training opportunities for school staff, and attendance at the school-based TAC meetings every fortnight.

When the variable 'ethnicity' is split by local authority, all of the children in the reported sample for the Valleys Authority are recorded as of White British or Any Other White (100%) background, with no children reported from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background. This figure is slightly less than the national statistics for people who identify as from a BAME background (1.7%) in the local authority sampled (Stats Wales, 2016a). In the Rural Authority, 97% of the reported sample were children from a White

British or Any Other White background, leaving 3% identifying from a BAME background. This figure is slightly higher than the national statistics for the local authority sampled (2.2%) (Stats Wales, 2016a). In the Urban Authority 80% of the reported sample were recorded as identifying from a White British or Any Other White background. Of the remaining 20% in the variable, the sample is split between the following categories: Any Other Mixed background 5%, White and Black Caribbean 2.5%, Any Other Asian 2.5%, African 7.5%, and Any Other Ethnic Background 2.5%. The percentage of children from a BAME background in the sample (20%) is again slightly higher than the national statistics for the local authority (16.3%).

At first glance, these figures suggest the under-reporting of concerns about children from a BAME background in the Valleys Authority, but the over-reporting of concerns of neglect about children from these backgrounds in the Urban and Rural Authorities when compared to the national data for the local authority as a whole. Although the Rural Authority is broadly consistent with the national local authority data, the reported sample for the Urban Authority is slightly higher (by 3.7%). That said, both schools in the Urban Authority, possessed unusually high percentages of pupils identifying from a BAME background (primary school 40%, secondary school 75%. The characteristics of each school are outlined on page 156 of the following chapter, which raises important questions about the proportionality of reporting levels for this group in both Urban Authority schools.

There are also limitations with regards to the terminology and categorisation of a child's background in social work case file information that must be acknowledged. Thoburn (2016) suggests that the current recording mechanisms for ethnicity do not capture adequate diversity and is a mixture of physical attributes (black or white) with a country or continent of heritage. Conversely, European countries collect data on whether or not the child or parent was an immigrant, and do not consider categories of ethnicity (Thoburn, 2016). In Wales, the diversity within the white population or other ethnicities is not adequately categorised. This makes understanding the impact of ethnicity or

heritage upon child neglect in Wales quite a challenge, given the predominant white population of the sample.

During interviews with school staff in the Urban Authority, many participants talk about the need to respond to high levels of families from ethnic minority groups that are within their local communities. During interviews, many staff mentioned the diverse nature of the pupil population, and highlighted the strikingly higher percentages of children from BAME backgrounds who attended the schools (Primary 40%, Secondary 75%), compared to the average for their local authority which is 16.3% (Stats Wales, 2016b). Thorburn et al's (2000) study into family support in cases of emotional maltreatment and neglect, identified that concerns about children from ethnic minority groups were more likely to be generalised and non-specific, than for children from white backgrounds. Findings of the study suggest that children from minority backgrounds referred for neglect were less likely to be the subject of inquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 (at risk, or likely to be at risk and in need of protection), and more likely to receive an assessment of need than white children (Owen & Straham, 2009).

This could be understood by O'Neale's (2000) social services inspection of services to ethnic minority families, which found that workers did not take a rounded approach in the assessment of the child, commonly failing to identify abuse and neglect or special health needs, for fear of offending cultural norms. Findings suggest that workers failed to recognise that culture and meaning within diverse groups also vary between families. The study identified that workers bore the responsibility of locating non-existent ethnically-sensitive services, whilst families were not consulted about their specific and individual needs (O'Neale, cited by Horwath, 2007).

This could pose two possibilities for understanding case file data in the reported sample: concerns about children from BAME backgrounds are initially under-reported by schools for fear of offending cultural norms, or, referrals schools have made to social services are less likely to be investigated by social workers under s.47 of the Children Act and as a result less likely to be registered on the CPR for neglect (and consequently be included

in this sample). Either suggestion lacks congruence with literature which recognises black children as being much more likely to be in child protective services (Ards et al, 2012), and provides substantial evidence from many high-profile inquiries into deaths of children from black or minority backgrounds since the 1980s (Bernard & Harris, 2016; Turney, 2016).

Testing Relationships and Building Models

Although not included within the original design of the study, when descriptive statistics had been gathered to provide contextual data on the landscape of the sample, there was opportunity to consider undertaking further quantitative analysis. The potential for a more sophisticated level of data analysis was explored with the purpose of testing particular hypotheses. A binary logistic regression model was selected with the intention of estimating the probability of a child who is living with neglect receiving support from the school, at either end of the neglect continuum, based upon a number of predictor variables. A binomial logistic regression model was chosen to explain the relationships between a distinct dependent binary variable and a number of categorical and continuous independent variables within the sample (Field, 2009; Kent, 2015).

Two predictor models were designed to explore the presence of relationships within the case file data. The first model examined the level of school-based support provided to a child living with neglect (through early and preventative support offered within the school). The second model examined the school's level of involvement in the statutory child protection process in terms of their attendance at the ICPC (when the threshold level for statutory intervention in neglect had been reached and the child placed upon the CPR). Each predictor aimed to explore whether there were any relationships between the predictor variables: 'type of local authority', 'gender', 'type of school', 'type of education', 'additional concerns of neglect identified by social services at first assessment', 'number of siblings', and 'number of times previously registered on the CPR', and (i) whether or not the child was provided with 'school-based support' or (ii) 'whether the school attended the ICPC'.

Significant relationships were principally anticipated in three areas: (i) where the child lived, (ii) if they attended an alternative educational provision to a mainstream school, and (iii) if it was the first time they had been registered on the CPR. Firstly, an association was expected between the type of local authority the child lived within, and whether the child was more likely to receive school-based support. It was anticipated that a correlation would be evident between children living within the Urban Authority (geographically smaller in size, urbanised, and more heavily populated area), and whether they received support from the school. The hypothesis was based upon the practical accessibility and greater diversity of resources within an urban context, compared to the logistical challenges of delivering support to families living within an expansive, lightly populated, rural setting. This was reflected within descriptive data which found schools in the Urban Authority to offer support to over half the children in the sample (51.2%) compared to 31.4% in the Rural Authority (as illustrated in the bar chart on page 141).

The second area where an association was anticipated, was between the type of educational provision the child was attending, and whether the child received support from the school. A relationship was expected in terms of more support given to children who attended alternative educational provision. This expectation was based upon the hypothesis that children who are receiving support for additional needs are more likely to be visible to a number of school staff, and concerns or worries of child neglect would be more easily detectable in the school setting. Paradoxically, it was expected that staff from mainstream schools would be more likely to attend the child's ICPC than those in specialist provision, who would be constrained by limited time and resources.

The final area where an association was anticipated was between the number of times the child had been registered on the CPR and the support given by the school. A relationship was expected to be found between children who were registered for the category of 'child neglect' for the first time, and whether they received support from the school. This is because there is an acknowledged perception that once schools have

made a referral to social services, further concerns do not need to be raised (SCIE, 2016) nor additional support implemented.

Research hypotheses for both models assumed relationships between the predictor (independent) variables, and whether the child was likely to receive support from the school (H1). The null hypotheses assumed no relationship or difference was present between the predictor variables and whether the child was more likely to receive support from the school (H0). (A summary of expected relationships together with hypotheses are detailed in appendix 7 of this thesis). In the first instance, cross tabulations were run to test for the presence of bivariate relationships in the data with a view to building a logistic regression model. Cross tabulations together with a summary of the analysis for both predictor models are also provided in appendix 7). Chi square tests found no statistically significant relationships between the predictor variables and either dependent variable ($p=<0.05$). Equally, t-tests were run for 'Age of Child' against both dependent variables and neither reported statistically significant relationships. Summaries of the model coefficients for each predictor model are provided in the tables below.

Table 14. Illustrating Model coefficients 'Whether School-based Support' was Provided ($p=<0.05$)

	p	x^2
Type of Local Authority	*0.219*	*3.036[a]*
Gender	*0.709*	*0.139[a]*
Type of School Attending	*0.852*	*0.035[a]*
Type of Education	*0.946*	*0.005[a]*
Additional Concerns Raised of Neglect	*0.111*	*2.545[a]*
Number of Siblings on the Child protection register	*0.486*	*3.477[a]*
Number of times previously registered on the CPR	*0.470*	*1.512[a]*

Table 15. Illustrating Model coefficients 'Whether the School Attended the Child's ICPC' ($p=<0.05$)

	p	x^2
Type of Local Authority	*0.266*	*2.649[a]*
Gender	*0.931*	*0.007[a]*
Type of School Attending	*0.848*	*0.037[a]*
Type of Education	*0.254*	*1.303[a]*
Additional Concerns Raised of Neglect	*0.864*	*0.029[a]*
Number of Siblings on the Child protection register	*0.242*	*5.471[a]*
Number of times previously registered on the CPR	*0.151*	*3.778[a]*

This means that no significant relationships existed between the child's gender, the local authority they lived within, the type of school they attended, the type of education they received, whether additional or more complex concerns of neglect had been identified by social services at initial assessment, the number of siblings they had, the amount of times they had been registered on the CPR, and (i) whether the child received school-based support, or (ii) whether the school attended the child's ICPC. Therefore both research hypotheses (H1) are rejected and the null hypotheses accepted (H0). Due to the absence of statistically significant relationships, it was not possible to run the binary logistic regression model as hoped.

The absence of statistically significant relationships between any of the selected predictor variables and either dependent variable could have been attributed to a number of reasons. Firstly, the small sample size gathered by this study makes the emergence of patterns within the case file data problematic. The small sample size is small and linked to the multifaceted nature of neglect. To ensure consistency and reduce bias within the sample, only cases which had reached the statutory threshold for child neglect were included in the sampling criteria. This substantially limited the number of case files available within each local authority. Secondly, timescales could also have impacted upon whether or not relationships were statically significant. This is both in terms of the different lengths of time taken for each child to move through the child protection process (from initial referral to being registered on the CPR), and the variable age and content of the case file itself, with the oldest file dating as far back as 1999.

Aside from the scale of the project, another reason for the absence of statistically significant relationships in the data could be connected to the actual form of the data itself. As discussed earlier in this chapter although data for 'school-based support' were predominantly gathered from information provided within the referral document, the variable was constructed from string data that had been captured across all seven sampled documents within the child protection process (see diagram on page 82 of this thesis). This means that the figure itself may not be wholly reflective of the levels of

support provided by schools prior to the statutory referral, or if support was received it was recorded within case file documents that were not included in the study's sampling criteria.

Concluding Comments

This chapter has explored the patterns of child neglect across the three local authorities participating in this study. The discussion opened by highlighting the complexity which surrounds the conceptualisation of child neglect, in the context of varying local authority thresholds for statutory intervention. The chapter then acknowledged the divergence between broader theoretical definitions of neglect, and the operational categories in statutory practice which typical gate-keep specialist services and resources (Horwath, 2013). The heavy procedural guidance of child protection practice was described, outlining the messy reality of social work processes (Baginsky, 2008), common patterns in the quantitative sample, and a number of variances which emerged between the three local authorities participating in the study. Overall, the discussion has recognised the difficulty of merging two very complex and multifaceted systems within one narrative, clearly reflected by the reality of inter-agency practice when responding to child neglect between schools and social services.

The first section considered the intricacy of social work processes upon the nature and level of data gathered within the study. Focus was given to the difficulties encountered during data collection methods and the subsequent manifestation of three levels of data in the study described: child, school, and local authority. The discussion identified limitations in the quality and reliability of the data and considered its capacity to make claims of causality. The second section provided an overview of the case file data, identifying common patterns within the sample across the three local authorities. Large amounts of missing data were identified and questions raised about the routine recording and collection of information by social workers for children's case files.

The third section highlighted the variances in data between each local authority. Analysis showed that children in the Valleys Authority were more than a year younger and came from families where more siblings were known to social services. The case file data inferred that neglect may be identified earlier in schools in the Valleys Authority, and is recognised across sibling groups, in contrast to the other two authorities. Other forms of abuse to that of child neglect were most commonly cited in referrals by schools to social services, followed by educational and physical aspects of neglect. Emotional neglect was the least recognised form of neglect by all local authorities and was particularly conspicuous by its complete absence within referrals made by the Rural Authority. The fourth section reported no statistically significant relationships between a number of predictor variables and whether school-based support was provided to the child, or the if the school attended the child's ICPC.

This chapter has acknowledged a number of difficulties with the case file data in both the challenge of data collection processes from social work case files, and during the data analysis stages within the study due to difficult social work processes and cultures. Gathering data from case files which are predominantly qualitative in nature, for quantitative analysis has proved problematic. In particular, due to variances in recording practices, the high levels of missing data on a number of important variables really limited the level of analysis made possible by the study. Three variables were identified as possessing large amounts of missing data: 'Religion' (46.2%), 'Child's Main Language' (26.9%), and 'If the child was subject to a Statement of Educational Need' (52.1%).

In addition to the high levels of missing data, the variable 'Ethnicity' also highlighted an inadequacy in the categorisation of diversity within the White population. This made understanding the impact of ethnicity and its relationship to child neglect, quite problematic, given the predominance of 'White British' ethnicity in the sample (86.6%). The findings consequently acknowledge a need for more robust case file data in the field. A request is made for an improvement in local authority case file recording, with the routine collection of specific variables (in addition to the National Minimum Core

Data Set recently implemented by the SSWB Act 2014) during statutory social work practice to support the development of future research in this field.

Floersch (2000) states that in order to fully understand practitioner activity, it is necessary to research oral as well as written narratives of the same practice events. Because social work case files inevitably anchor themselves to a particular time and place in society, they are representative of practitioners' knowledge at the time of the recording (Epstein, 1995). It is therefore important to ascertain both the personal and professional aspects of the event of concern. For this reason, the analysis now goes deeper to focus upon the individual experiences of school staff. By drawing upon the case file data gathered from professional documents within social work case files, the analysis next turns to the personal thoughts, feelings and opinions of a range of staff in order to understand child neglect practice in a school setting.

5. Differences Between Schools

This is the second of three analysis chapters presented in this thesis. The chapter examines the valuable role of the school in promoting children's health and well-being and protecting them from neglect. The discussion is organised into two main sections. The first section introduces each school participating within the study (*n=6),* together with a brief overview of what staff consider to be the school's strengths when responding to child neglect. The discussion considers the school's advantageous position within the community and highlights the smaller-sized schools as consistently demonstrating good practice when identifying and responding to child neglect.

The second section of the chapter goes deeper to explore the experiences of school staff in a range of different roles when responding to children experiencing child neglect. Here, participants' thoughts, feelings and opinions about working with child neglect are considered. The discussion draws principally upon the qualitative interviews (*n=30)* and non-participant observations (*n=5)* undertaken with staff in the six schools, together with inferential statistics from the social work case file data. Findings illustrate significant variation in practice amongst individual school staff across three common factors: (a) proactive and reactive approaches, (b) learning and development environments, and (c) relationships with families.

The Case Studies

As described in the Methodology chapter, one primary and one secondary school from each of the local authorities (Urban, Valleys, and Rural) participated in the study (*n=6).* Each school was selected because of its high level of referral activity evident within the reported sample of case files. A brief summary about each school is provided with the purpose of contextualising the analysis of interview and observation data which follows. Within the six summaries, a number of practice areas are highlighted which staff consider to be whole-school strengths and were particularly valuable in supporting an effective response to child neglect in the school setting.

Case Study 1: Urban Primary School

The first school is a small urban primary with approximately 250 to 300 pupils, offering provision for nursery, infants and juniors. The percentage of pupils that meet the criterion for free school meals is between 40-50%, which is significantly higher than the national average (19%) (Welsh Government, 2017e). The school is positioned within a pocket of social and economic deprivation within the city. Around 40-50% of the school's pupils identify from a BAME group which is higher than the Local Authority average (around 35%), and significantly higher than the national average in Wales (11%) (Welsh Government, 2017e). Around a quarter of the school's pupils are categorised as having an additional learning need. As with all the case studies participating in the research, the school is classed as an English-medium school.

Staff express the school's strength to be in the ethos of safeguarding practice which is embedded into the institution's organisational framework. Emphasis is given to all safeguarding issues in the day-to-day running of the school, with the head teacher displaying a keen interest and passion for supporting children experiencing neglect. It appears this approach sets a high precedence which drives a sound awareness of, and attention to, neglect amongst the school's staff team. A proactive and open approach is said to be used to convey the school's safeguarding procedures, facilitated through the school's website, newsletter, and daily interactions with families. Posters on walls, and ID badges for staff and visitors were all visible and offer reminders of the safeguarding focus and processes. A counselling service is hosted by the school which provides support to pupils to encourage confidence and emotional well-being, as well as offering informal professional guidance and expertise to staff on an ad-hoc basis.

Case Study 2: Urban Secondary School

The second school is a medium-sized urban secondary with 800-1000 pupils. The school is located near the centre of the city, servicing a transient community whilst many families wait for their first choice of school and long-term settlement in other

areas of Wales. Over three-quarters of the school's population identify as being from anything other than a 'White British' background (Welsh Government, 2017e), which is more than double the Local Authority average (30%), and a great deal higher than the national average for Wales (9%).   A significant minority of pupils attending the school have just arrived in the UK, meaning that some pupils possess considerably limited language and literacy skills. The proportion of pupils who receive support for additional learning needs (in the range of 30-40%) is higher than the national average for Wales (around 25%).   The school has significantly more students who meet the criterion for free school meals (in the range of 30-40%) than the Local Authority (20%) and national averages (17%) (Welsh Government, 2017e).

Due to the high levels and complex mix of students from minority ethnic groups, the school expressed their strength to be the promotion of inclusion and well-being of all pupils. The school's most recent Estyn report states that over sixty first languages were spoken in pupil's homes in 2013 (references have not been included for purposes of confidentiality). For this reason, resources are said to be commonly allocated to engage translators to support the school's communication with parents and families from BAME backgrounds in their first languages, encouraging open dialogue and an increase in discussion about the child's learning (Davis, 2011). The school reports adopting creative and flexible approaches to supporting parents, which includes funding transportation for families to attend meetings at the school if required, so that they may engage with their child's education and well-being.

Case Study 3: Valleys Primary School

The third school is a small primary with approximately 150-200 pupils, situated within an isolated Valleys community within one of the country's most socially and economically deprived areas (Stats Wales, 2011a & 2017f; Welsh Government, 2017e). The school is located close to a former mining village and serves a close local community. Few pupils attend from outside the locality. The most recent Estyn report states that all pupils have English as their first language, and only a very small

proportion are of non-Welsh White backgrounds. The number of pupils that meet the criterion for free school meals (in the range of 30-40%) is slightly above the Local Authority average (27%), and significantly higher than the national average (19%).

Over a third of pupils at the school have additional or complex learning needs (in the range of 30-40%), which is about ten percent higher than the local authority and national averages (25%). Due to the small size of the school, the head teacher advised that all safeguarding issues were dealt with on an individual basis by himself as and when they arise. For this reason, the school felt unable to offer any opportunities where decision-making practice could be observed during the study. At the time of the research, the Valleys Primary School was being inspected by Estyn as part of a national programme of school inspection and categorised as 'good'.

Case Study 4: Valleys Secondary School

The fourth school is a large all-age (3-16 years) school with approximately 1200-1400 pupils (Welsh Government, 2017e). The secondary campus is situated within a Valleys community within a former industrial region of Wales in one of the country's most severely deprived areas (Stats Wales, 2011a). Near to a quarter of the school's pupils meet the criteria for free school meals (in the range of 20-30%), which although similar to the Local Authority average, is higher than the national average in Wales for secondary schools (19%). Almost all the pupils come from a White British background and speak English as their first language, with only a few identifying as from minority ethnic backgrounds (Welsh Government, 2017e). Less than 30% of pupils at the school are categorised as having additional or complex learning needs which, although it is broadly congruent with the local authority average, is less than the national average for Wales (25%). At the time of the research, the secondary school was inspected by Estyn as part of a national programme of school inspections. The school was categorised as 'inadequate' in the report, which highlighted a lack of focus on pupils' well-being.

The school talked about having recently implemented regular pastoral meetings for monitoring the well-being and development of its pupils. The school felt these meetings were a strength of their practice where attention was drawn to new pupils who had recently joined the school or were not yet known to pastoral staff. Discussions were held between team members, giving staff opportunities to identify pupils in their groups who were in receipt of free school meals and/or statutory provision. Although the approach was new, it was referred to by staff as a strength of practice, giving attention to factors that could potentially increase a child's vulnerability to neglect. The pastoral meeting also created a constructive environment that encouraged the sharing of information between colleagues and a chance to engage in exploratory discussion.

Case Study 5: Rural Primary School

The fifth school is a small rural primary school with approximately 250-270 pupils (Welsh Government, 2017e). The primary school is situated in a small town on the coast within one of the most economically and socially deprived areas in Wales (Stats Wales, 2011a). More than a quarter of the school's pupils meet the criteria for free school meals, which is higher than the Local Authority (18%) and national average (19%) (Welsh Government, 2017e), and over a quarter of pupils are categorised as having additional or complex learning needs. This percentage is broadly congruent with the national average for Wales (25%), but lower than the average in the school's local authority (31%). All pupils at the school come from a White British background and speak English as their first language.

Staff express enthusiasm and willingness to engage with specialist knowledge and support from outside agencies with the aim of developing practice around neglect. During interviews school staff talked about their readiness to mobilise existing relationships with social services, and more specifically to seek advice and guidance directly from the region's school social worker. The school staff say they use this professional resource not only to respond to individual queries most effectively, but

also in the provision of informal school-based learning opportunities for staff around neglect. Staff meetings observed were small, which created ample opportunity for discussion and an environment conducive to practice reflection on responding to suspicions of neglect.

Case Study 6: Rural Secondary School

The sixth and final school is a small rural secondary with approximately 450-500 pupils (Welsh Government, 2017e). The school is situated in a small harbour town within a former coal mining region of Wales. As a result, a significant number of the school's pupils experience social and financial disadvantage due to high rates of unemployment (Stats Wales, 2017g). Nearly a third of the school's pupils meet the criteria for free school meals which is 10% higher than the national average in Wales (17%). Between 30-40% of pupils are categorised as having additional or complex learning needs, which is higher than the Local Authority (33%) and national averages (25%). Very few pupils at the school identify as being from a minority ethnic group (Local Authority: 6%, national average: 9%) (Welsh Government, 2017e).

The small rural secondary prides itself on promoting an ethos of community and family spirit, with a relaxed environment that places a strong emphasis upon pastoral care. Staff at the school report prioritising partnership work with local agencies, whilst also drawing upon the expertise of the school-based youth worker, counsellor and pupil support unit. During interviews and observations, staff express their regular TAF meetings to be a practice strength when working with child neglect, as this statutory framework provides a multi-agency model in which to share information and expertise across disciplines, whilst also focusing upon the individual needs of the children discussed.

The Role of the School

As discussed in the literature review in chapter two, the school's role in promoting the health and welfare of children is widely acknowledged in literature as significant (Baginsky, 2008; Hendry & Baginsky, 2008; Watson et al, 2012; Webb & Vulliamy, 2001), with staff in a non-stigmatising position from which to identify child neglect. The culture of the school and its broad range of staff, all shape the way that children make sense of the world, and their own place within it (Daniel, 2008). Because children attend school for a significant proportion of their lives, staff are able to regularly observe children and identify when they are not meeting their expected developmental milestones (Bandele, 2009).

Schools are recognised as having a profound influence upon all areas of a child's development, and possess the advantage of observing children on a daily basis, and over an extended period of schooling. This allows school staff to play a key role along with other universal services in identifying and responding to the signs of neglect, offering school-based support, and making referrals to social services (Action for Children, 2013; NSPCC, 2015; Pithouse & Crowley, 2016) to ensure children are protected from harm (ECHR, 1994; UNCRC, 1989). Safeguarding needs to be positioned at the forefront of the school's purpose so as to establish support strategies which contribute to children's overall well-being (Bandele, 2009), whilst simultaneously removing any barriers to their learning (Daniel, 2008; Fletcher-Campbell, 2008).

Stevenson (2005) identifies the school's role in the assessment of neglected children as pivotal, and the quality of the school's relationship with social services as being fundamental to the effective delivery of inter-agency practice. She questions what is known about the levels of knowledge that partner agencies contribute to statutory assessments of children (Allen, 2011), identifying an absence of data regarding the support given to children from neglectful families in mainstream education. In terms of successful practice, Baginksy (2008) suggests that a common method of identifying

need is required across different services and multiple areas of need (Waldfogel & Washbrook (2011). This chapter aims to explore what is known about the nature and level of care currently provided by schools in Wales to children experiencing neglect, specifically how need is identified and in what way the support is delivered within the school setting.

Case file data reveal that in 42% (*n=50)* of the reported sample, there is evidence of schools offering multiple types of support to children and their families. This included preventative support to the child or their family prior to making a referral to social services and often continued as part of multi-agency child protection plan. As outlined in the previous chapter of this thesis, 'school-based support' included multiple elements of support: financial support (100%), practical care (42%), referrals and signposting to outside or specialist agencies (38%), emotional support (20%), provision of clothing (20%), provision of food (18%), and other forms of support (4%). Although the data were predominantly gathered from information provided within the schools' referrals to social services, the variable was constructed from string data captured across all seven sampled documents within the child protection process (see diagram on page 82 of this thesis). This means that the figure is not wholly reflective of the level of support provided by schools prior to the statutory intervention by social services.

In terms of the level of involvement of schools in providing support to children when risk had already been identified and a child protection conference convened, case file data reveal that 89% of schools attended the child's ICPCs, dropping to 72% three months later when the CPRC took place. With regards to the actions identified on the child protection plan, the school contributed support in more than three quarters of the cases in the sample (76%). This contribution was reduced at the time of the child's CPRC (69%). When these figures are compared to the preventative school-based support above (42%), this could suggest that schools are much more likely to provide support for neglect when a child is engaged in the child protection process and social services are the lead agency. However, when considering the later reduction of

support at the CPRC, this could be indicative of schools feeling a reduced sense of ownership or accountability for providing ongoing levels of support to the child within a statutory framework where the social services hold the lead statutory duty (Welsh Government, 2004), and also have the capacity to commission specialist services (Horwath, 2013).

The second section of this chapter considers in greater depth, which common aspects influence practice in schools when working with children who are thought to be experiencing neglect. The discussion is organised into three factors, each drawing upon data extracts from the interviews undertaken with staff, and notes taken during observations of decision-making practice. These three factors are presented for discussion as follows: (a) proactive and reactive approaches, (b) learning and development environments, and (c) relationships with families. The analysis considers each factor sequentially, beginning the discussion with 'proactive and reactive approaches'.

Proactive and Reactive Approaches

The first factor is concerned with the school's overall approach to child neglect. It explores whether staff perceive the school to embed a proactive or reactive approach to working with child neglect, and whether the overall ethos and culture of the school delivered a preventive safeguarding strategy for its pupils. Here, the school's infrastructure and level of strategic investment in how they respond to child neglect is considered and discussed.

Here, significant variation occurred within the interview data in terms of the different approaches taken by each of the schools. This discussion explores whether the overall ethos of the school is anticipatory in how they respond to the issue of neglect, or whether interventions are undertaken on a more reactive basis. Intervening in child neglect at the earliest opportunity not only minimises the long-term and dangerous

effects on children, but also reduces the enormous cost of reactive services to the public purse (Browne, 2007; Haynes, 2015; Stevens & Laing, 2015). The theme considers the schools which adopted a proactive approach within their organisation (Rees et al, 2011), and whether their prevention of neglect was embedded within the infrastructure of the institution, and linked to the allocation of appropriate resources.

There are no patterns in the interview data that suggest primary or secondary schools identify or respond to child neglect in a particular way. Instead, interview data reveal good practice to be evident in the schools that took individual approaches to working with the complex issue. The majority of interview participants from both of the urban schools and also the rural secondary school (n=3), all talk about engaging proactive strategies in the way they respond to child neglect. In particular, a large number of staff in the urban primary school articulated a clear vision and ethos of safeguarding children in its day-to-day organisation. Strategic staff in the urban secondary school championed a strong investment in the area of inclusion and well-being, talking about the allocation of specific resources and support to engage families from minority groups. The existence of a 'neglect-champion' at strategic level, was also talked about in the small urban primary, where the head teacher was particularly passionate, leading upon school-based expertise in this area. During the study, the small rural secondary school was observed delivering early and preventative provision to children experiencing neglect through a TAF framework, in a regular multi-agency meeting held at the school.

The following extract from an interview with a head teacher reflects the method in which early and preventative practice is embedded into the policy framework and culture of their school:

> *'So the first training day… is always in September 1ˢᵗ … we use it [to] revisit our vision; and part of that then is the safeguarding. So we always revise our safeguarding arrangements. It's on walls, it's everywhere in the school. We review our procedures, so that everybody is clear; some staff think "Oh, here we go again!" but it is important; and staff actually do value that, you know,*

they realise that it's important. Every member of staff carries round their photograph...and on the back [of] the visitor's badge is how to respond to allegations or disclosures. And then on the back of that is the contact details of the people in the school, including our governor who's got responsibility for safeguarding. But... because our safeguarding policy is on our website, and parents know that... it goes on our newsletter periodically as well, every couple of months I just remind parents that we take safeguarding really, really seriously' **Head Teacher, DSP (Urban Authority primary school)** *[16/73].*

The extract illustrates how strategic staff use 'inset' days to facilitate review of the safeguarding vision with staff members. The head teacher expresses a number of ways in which the school embeds a preventative ethos, and talks about displaying safeguarding protocols on the walls in the school to serve as daily reminders to families, staff and visitors. She also speaks about providing staff and visitors with badges which have safeguarding procedures printed on the reverse of the cards, offering summary guidance and the contact details of designated staff members in the school. An active approach to neglect is also highlighted as manifesting outside of the school premises, whereby safeguarding procedures are shared with families via the school's website and newsletter. Bandele (2009) suggests that a whole school approach to safeguarding practice requires easily accessible policy documents which detail clear procedures for all staff working with children.

Many staff also emphasise the importance of inclusion and well-being for pupils, expressing a motivation to 'go further' in the support they offer to children and their families. In the following extract, an assistant head teacher refers to focusing resources on attempts to engage parents with staff in the school in a number of ways:

'One of the things that this school does differently to other schools is they put a lot of money into resources for inclusion and well-being; [it's] also prepared to be very creative and very flexible...we've taxied parents in before; we've gone to pick them up for meetings; we send people around to their houses – we've had meetings in people's houses before – so we would

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go further. We would go much further than a phone... repeated phone calls or an email. You know, we would go much further there to get the mother in – and it is pretty common, this kind of thing – and engage them there. And then it would be a constant monitoring after that; engaging with parents and monitoring the impact of support'. **Assistant Head Teacher, DSP (Urban Authority secondary school)** *[24/199].*

The persistence necessary to successfully engage families with school-based support when responding to child neglect is highlighted. The assistant head teacher speaks about the importance of repeatedly offering comprehensive support to families and the significance of monitoring interventions closely. Bandele (2009) emphasises the importance of involving parents proactively from the start and the need for an inclusive practice culture with learners who are supported to achieve their full potential. Horwath (2007) suggests that all professionals share an important role in the early intervention of neglect (Haynes, 2015; Haynes et al, 2015), with education settings often responsible for consistently monitoring a child at school (Baginsky, 2008; Goebbles et al, 2008). Horwath (2007) goes on to argue that the early identification of neglect is critical when working with young children, due to the potentially detrimental consequences of allowing a case to 'drift' with no clear outcomes for the child (Stevenson, 1998).

Although there has been an expansion in the variety of supportive adults in classrooms over the last few decades (Watson et al, 2012), some staff felt that children do not receive the essential social and emotional support they feel is necessary, nor do they believe it is underpinned by a preventative curriculum that supports children to make informed and positive choices for a safe and healthy lifestyle as suggested by Bandele (2009). This contrasting perspective emerges from the following excerpt where a teaching assistant talks about the recent narrowing of her role:

'I find it really frustrating, and I think because I'm a nursery nurse and not a teacher, and this was the very reason I became a nursery nurse, was because I didn't want to concentrate on the academic side of it, you know...I didn't

want to necessarily focus on the educational side of things, although nursery nurses and support assistants are now dragged into that side. When I did my NNEB [Diploma in Nursery Nursing] the role of a nursery nurse was to nurture, and this is what these children now are not getting because support assistants are used so much to do the educational side of things and marking and preparing – and it's taking away from the children's social and emotional support'. **Teaching Assistant for the Nursery/Reception Class (Valleys Authority primary school)** *[04/156].*

The frustration felt is clear. A number of teaching assistants at having to provide academic support to teaching staff within schools, which they believed was to the detriment to children's social and emotional needs. Braun & Schonveld (1994:92) propose that the 'value base in most schools is very supportive to child protection work', because they respond to the child's social, emotional, psychological, and educational needs so as to educate the child in their entirety (Webb & Vulliamy, 2001). In the extract below, the staff member expresses the excessive nature of colleagues' teaching workloads and their consequent emphasis upon academic administration:

'I think that is because umm… teachers and heads, their workload is so unbearable at the moment, they're so busy concentrating on data and on input and on paperwork and planning and preparation, that the actual, the soul of the child umm… it sounds an awful thing to say, it's almost forgotten but, there isn't really any time for it, we've had to now, plan and have lessons for PSE, social, well that should be a huge umbrella, that should be a constant ethos through the school'. **Teaching Assistant (Valleys Authority primary school)** *[04/189].*

Here the teaching assistant conveys that the child has become 'almost forgotten', expressing that the school has to plan specific PSE lessons which she believes should be embedded in the overall ethos of the school. Nias (1997 & 1999) suggests that a 'culture of care' exists in primary schools where staff members take a principal role in child protection work, and ensure children feel safe and happy within the school

setting. The infrastructure of the school offers a valuable site for safeguarding children (Webb & Vulliamy, 2001), and the investment it makes in shaping how it responds to child neglect is recognised as of central importance to the internal organisation of the school, their systems, available resources, and overall success in this area.

Many staff express the size of the school to play a fundamental role in the organisation and place emphasis on working with child neglect in their everyday practice. Staff in smaller-sized schools speak about the smaller environments as being more conducive to delivering a culture of care for children (Nias, 1999). In the following extract an Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALENCo) highlights this idea when she talks about the benefit of working in a small secondary school and the strength which comes from knowing the families in her community well:

> *'It is a small secondary school, but it gives us the advantage of being caring and knowing our children well you know what I mean? I mean… we're a community school so we've taught parents, I mean… I've been teaching here twenty years now so you know, I've got my pupils coming back as parents you know.'* **ALENCo, DSP (Rural Authority secondary school)** *[12/216].*

Here the size of the school is recognised as significant in its ability to provide a more nurturing and caring response, meeting the needs of families and their children within community. The importance of the community school model is its desire to make schools more accessible to their communities. McCullock and Tett (2008) suggest that community schools strengthen the links between the family, school and community with the aim of more effectively protecting children. As previously discussed in chapter two of this thesis (on page 37), the 'community-focused school' model is commonly employed across Wales, with many schools providing services outside of the school day (Welsh Assembly Government, 2003). The model aims to improve partnership working within the community by offering pupils better access to specialist services, whilst reducing the impact of child poverty (National Assembly for Wales, 2001; Welsh Assembly Government, 2003).

Although there was variation amongst the six schools participating in the study, all three secondary schools demonstrated good organisation of safeguarding reporting processes, either at a structural level through the practice of meetings (single and multi-agency), or at an individual level in terms of staff opportunities to partake in safeguarding discussions. In the primary schools there was less opportunity to observe the infrastructure of the institutions, as head teachers responded to individual concerns of neglect from staff members as and when these arose. The two meetings observed in the primary schools were shorter in nature than those observed in secondary schools, increasingly top-down in design chaired by the head teacher, and were more general in nature covering a myriad of school-site issues. By comparison, the meetings in the secondary schools were focused upon specific areas of practice, such as early intervention using a TAF model or discussions around implementation of pastoral support.

Aside from the primary school in the Valleys Authority, the majority of staff across all the schools talked about the importance of structured meetings as spaces which generate discussion with their colleagues. In the following excerpt, a teacher speaks about their staff meeting as creating an opportunity to identify and share concerns about children they suspected may be living with neglect:

> *'We have staff meetings, and we…do discuss... in the staff meeting we have*
> *an opportunity to discuss any concerns that we might have got with pupils,*
> *that all the staff are aware, then…because we…sometimes you might see*
> *them [child] in a different situation out in the yard, when the…duty time or at*
> *lunchtime or perhaps covering classes, you know? Because sometimes the*
> *classes are put together, or different teachers go in. So we would discuss*
> *any... you know... minor concerns that we have about the pupils then'.*
> **Teacher & Additional Learning and Educational Needs Co-ordinator (ALENCo)**
> **(Rural Authority primary school)** *[07/197].*

The teacher expresses how the regular meetings offer occasions in which to raise any worries they have about a particular child experiencing neglect. She recognises how

sharing information on minor observations with colleagues about a child in a range of different settings in the school can help build a more comprehensive picture about the child's life (Thompson, 2016; Welsh Government, 2004). A number of school staff spoke about team meetings as structured spaces within the school in which they could raise and share worries about children with their colleagues. In the following extract, this point is expressed by a head teacher who speaks about 'causes for concern' which is a standing item on the agenda for each meeting:

> *'On our weekly staff meetings, we have "Causes for Concern", so any child that is on the radar – we use that term [laughs] – can be discussed with the staff. The staff, though, feel more comfortable actually coming in person and discussing that child face to face, because we're not a huge school. If you were a bigger school, you'd have to have a different system in place; but staff here will just come and say "Look, I'm worried about this child" or they'll go to their line manager … and then they'll bring it to me.* **Head Teacher, DSP (Urban Authority primary school)** *[16:390].*

In the above extract, the head teacher also talks about more informal routes whereby staff can share concerns with designated members of management, should they feel more comfortable relaying concerns about a child on a one-to-one basis rather than in a group. In the extract the head teacher connects the infrastructure of the school with its capacity to deliver better neglect-focused practice, stating *'if you were a bigger school, you would have to have a different system in place'.* Regular participation in opportunities to share information within the school, or externally with partners from other agencies supports staff in identifying child neglect and providing support at the earliest opportunity (Bandele, 2009). Webb & Vullimany (2001) argue that time can often be limited within staff meetings, which often cover a wide range of whole-school issues, leaving little time for staff to reflect upon their own attitudes and areas of knowledge they feel need developing. The challenge of time and capacity for staff is also highlighted as a challenge to effective safeguarding practice in schools by Richards (2017). The study into the experiences of designated safeguarding staff in schools in England recognised the impact of safeguarding duties upon staff with full-time

teaching commitments, reiterating the importance of embedding information sharing opportunities within the existing organisation of the school.

A large number of school staff also spoke about the level of expertise that exists within their school as being intrinsic to their capacity to respond to child neglect effectively. In the following extract, a teacher talks about using specific communication approaches within the classroom to draw out a child's feelings with the aim of increasing awareness about a child's experience of neglect. The teacher refers to the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) which is an initiative focusing upon the personal and social development of children in terms of their self-awareness, managing feelings, motivation, empathy and social skills (DFES, 2005). 'Talkabout' is a programme which is used to develop a child's social communication skills (Whitmarsh et al, 2010):

> *'[We] just have regular meetings; monitoring, again, you know... and how the child is feeling. We do a lot of 'Silver SEAL' and 'Talkabout' programmes here...So they get a chance to talk, you know, about their week; or we'd give them scenarios...'* **Teacher, DSP (Valleys Authority primary school)** *[03/322].*

Here, the teacher highlights the school's investment in two different communication strategies aimed at supporting the child to talk to staff about their daily lived experience of neglect. She refers to the school's investment in specific methods and approaches which broaden staff's professional understanding of the child's life. Moreover, the investment strengthens the quality of practice when identifying and responding to neglect in the classroom. Staff also express the advantages of drawing upon a range of school-based and external resources by working with local services to support children suspected of living with neglect. School staff speak about the importance of having access to different interventions in order to respond most effectively to a child or family's individual circumstances. This perspective is expressed by a pastoral lead from a secondary school below:

'Yeah, there's loads and loads of different things that we can put; we can put referrals into Families First for intervention before we'd move on to any further intervention. Yeah, … we've got a counsellor within the school...if we could get hold of Mum we might put a strategy in place then; can we offer Mum any help… unpick what some of the problems are. And we would put a little support package in place, and we'd put some targets in, for the next week or two, and then obviously if we still had concerns we could look to referring it in [to social services]'. **Pastoral Lead (Valleys Authority secondary school)** *[26/511].*

Here the pastoral lead talks about drawing upon the expertise of the resident school counsellor whilst additionally offering the child's mother some help. The extract illustrates the school staff member's focus upon responding to the family's needs holistically by implementing a school-based support package with the aim of monitoring the progress of the situation (Bandele, 2009). This point is further exemplified as follows:

'Well, we just have to rely on ourselves, and we have to develop good systems and avenues of support here in the school; as well as trying to engage with as many outside agencies as you can – so that's what we are trying to do at the moment – create a kind of directory of services; all the different agencies and people...as well as developing the resources within school.' **Assistant Head Teacher (DSP) (Urban Authority secondary school)** *[24:110].*

McCulloch & Tett (2008) state that inter-agency partnerships are the crucial element of the community school model, recommending that agencies work closely with one another in order to provide a constructive and unified response to meet the needs of their communities (Tett et al, 2003). Bryant and Milsom (2005) highlight the unique role of the school counsellor in that it allows school-based practitioners to work with pupils in a therapeutic context. Their position, training, and relationship with the child

can assist the early identification of indicators of neglect, or emerging clinical suspicions may instigate referrals to statutory services. In addition to school-based professionals, a number of school staff also spoke about utilising the knowledge and skills of external practitioners in their networks, who were working alongside the same families or with siblings of the child in local services.

Staff refer to drawing upon the expertise and skills of other professionals within the school to support their own capacity to respond to child neglect. Daniel (2005) suggests that health and education professionals are required to play a key part in identifying child neglect. In the following extract an ALENCo expresses the advantages of gaining a deeper understanding about the family from the local health visitor at the child's review which was held at the primary school's nursery facility:

> *'I would also say health visitors are an amazing resource, in terms of just the normal work that they are doing; but the pick-ups of problems in families – for us, it's a very useful tool…in the nursery – I have reviews with the class teacher, myself and the health visitor. Most of our families are with the local practice; and if they're not, she can talk to the health visitors of the other practices. And so we can say "Look, we're a bit worried about..." and she can say "Well I was in the home yesterday, and it's fine – or not fine" or "I'm concerned too" and actually the health visitor... are more than capable and willing to make referrals, because they're in the home….'* **Teacher & ALENCo DSP (Urban Authority primary school)** *[17/546].*

The above extract demonstrates the investment of school staff in their working relationships with colleagues within the school structure. The extract identifies the value of staff drawing upon wider information about the child or their younger siblings which has been gathered by the health visitor during a visit to the family at home. The school's inter-professional relationships appear to facilitate access to wider information about the child, in addition to the visible aspects of the child's

presentation during school, which offers a broader picture including their home environment about whether a child is experiencing neglect.

The small-sized secondary school in the Rural Authority was observed to demonstrate noticeably better inter-agency practice than the other schools in the study, having implemented fortnightly inter-agency meetings built upon the structure of the TAF model. The multi-agency environment allowed school staff to draw upon the expertise and professional experiences of a wide range of organisational partners through reflective discussion about concerns of child neglect. The advantages of working within the TAF model is demonstrated by a member of staff from the school:

> *'TAF is Teams Around Families. The service is excellent, which means support can immediately go in to work and we've got a …quite a high number of children that we have TAF'd. In our school…we have a TAF meeting once a fortnight, where external agencies come in….our one is when a number of children are talked about so we can decide what support they can be in. We sit around a table…and we make an action plan and involve people'*
> **Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator, DSP (Rural Authority secondary school)** *[12].*

In the extract, the Additional Learning and Educational Needs Coordinator (ALENCo) talks about external agencies coming in to the school, with the purpose of promoting school-based dialogue and to agree a plan of action that will support the family. Although the TAF model is commonly used within schools in Wales, its application varies within schools, depending on the interpretation of the model (as discussed in the chapter four of this thesis). During observation of the TAF meeting in the Rural Authority secondary school, a considerable range of professional expertise both from within the school, and from external partner agencies was observed.

This was not only in relation to current concerns held about a child, but also historic knowledge which was shared on the family's history and wider functioning. Information about the local community which was though to pose potential risks to all

vulnerable or neglected children in the school's local area, was consistently shared and reflected upon by practitioners as a multi-agency group. The meeting was administered by a clerk at the school who recorded discussions, circulated minutes, and assigned timescales to action points so as to monitor the progress of support to the child. During interviews, many staff at the school express how their established inter-agency relationships with colleagues were fundamental to the quality of the dialogue and subsequently the intervention agreed.

This point is reiterated by Thompson (2016:113) who emphasises the importance of professionals sharing information with one another to establish a full picture of a child's life. The author refers to 'jigsaw practices' as the interconnectedness or joining together of knowledge and information held by a range of professionals to establish the child's needs. Thompson suggests that school staff are limited in terms of the information they are party to, because of the 'private world of the child' and the invisibility of the child's life beyond the boundaries of the school environment (2016:121). Schools can however, build a sound picture in terms of the child's behaviour and presentation, accounts from their friends, and the school-based professionals who have contact with them on a regular basis.

That said, multi-disciplinary practice can also raise significant obstacles between organisations, particularly in the field of education (Haynes, 2015) when conflicting professional cultures, organisational aims, and budget cuts continue (Webb & Vulliamy, 2001). Buckley (2005) suggests that although multidisciplinary approaches to child neglect have long been promoted, the process itself can vary from the effective amalgamation of skills and perspectives amongst practitioners, to an ambiguous overarching term for something which in fact is empty and meaningless. For this reason, the significance of the partnership between schools and social services is explored and analysed in great detail in the following chapter of this thesis (chapter 6), where the differences between the two fields of responsibility are identified as potential barriers to effective practice.

Learning and Development Environments

The second factor presented for discussion is 'learning and development environments'. This section explores staff's perceptions of the environment created within the school and the influence this has upon their learning, knowledge and understanding of child neglect and their subsequent capacity to respond effectively to concerns and suspicions. Formal training courses delivered by the Local Authority, together with informal learning environments within the school setting, are both discussed. The supportive spaces in which staff members can access emotional support and guidance from the broader team are acknowledged as important for professional resilience and staff retention.

This factor considers the impact of safeguarding and neglect-specific training and learning opportunities upon the quality of practice school staff deliver when responding to child neglect in the school. The theme focuses upon formal training opportunities accessed through the regional safeguarding children's boards, and informal opportunities which draw upon the expertise of different school-based professionals or senior staff members within the school. Communities of practice are revealed as working effectively within the smaller-sized schools, providing chances for informal personal development in the area of child neglect practice. These opportunities manifest as regular inset or training days, whole-team practice discussions, access to more experienced colleagues or school-based professionals from different partner-agencies, and mentoring schemes between individual colleagues.

It is estimated that one in every six children will at some point in their lives experience severe maltreatment from their parents (Cawson, 2002). This means that training for school staff in child neglect plays a critical role in the awareness of, and ability to identify, indicators of neglect (Karadag et al, 2015) within the school setting. As previously discussed within the review of literature in this thesis, Walsh & Farrell (2008) suggest that the current level of safeguarding training and preparation presently received by teaching professionals is insufficient, and the lack of training or

levels of knowledge in detection methods often create barriers to reporting in schools (Abrahams et al, 1992). Teaching staff are reported to lack knowledge and understanding and hold a narrower perception of the broader picture of maltreatment, leaving them unprepared for identifying maltreatment in their roles (Hodgkinson & Baginsky, 2000; McKee & Dillenburger, 2009).

Unsurprisingly, considerable variance was evident in staff's knowledge and understanding of child neglect across the six participating schools. There were no strong patterns in the interview data to suggest that those with teaching or non-teaching roles possessed a stronger or weaker awareness and understanding of child neglect. Staff knowledge of child neglect was most commonly linked to previous practice or employment experience, interest in the subject and the development of professional expertise. Staff who held a DSP role (also known as a Designated Child Protection Officer or Safeguarding Lead) within the school, more commonly (though not consistently) expressed a broader understanding of children's safeguarding and the associated school-based reporting procedures (Welsh Government, 2015) as would be expected. This finding was consistent with the increased level of child protection training all DSPs receive from the local authority within their designated safeguarding roles. The different levels of training for school staff with DSP designations is a point that many staff talk about:

> *'So we have the designated child protection officers; they've received more intensive training. And we then receive as a whole staff training, regularly, through inset meetings on child protection – different aspects of child protection as well. This is my first year teaching the eldest cohort; and yeah, I'm a class teacher. I have the role of NQT mentor, so when we have newly-qualified teachers, I'm the mentor for them'.* **Class Teacher & Governor (Urban Authority primary school)** *[18/101].*

In the above extract, the staff member expresses the hierarchy of safeguarding training levels for different members of staff. She goes on to talk about the more informal school-based inset days which provide non-designated staff with additional training on child protection issues, and speaks about her role as a mentor for Newly

Qualified Teachers (NQT). Bandele (2009) describes the role of the DSP is to offer support and advice to all staff in schools, have knowledge of the safeguarding children system, identify children in need and at risk of significant harm, ensure all staff are aware of safeguarding issues and what to do if they are concerned, and access resources or refer cases to appropriate agencies when necessary (Guest, 2008; Welsh Government, 2015).

In addition to the recognition of formal DSP roles and training courses, many staff talk about drawing upon the expertise of their more experienced colleagues in order to develop their own practice around child neglect. Seeking opportunities to ask for advice or check understanding or processes with senior members of the staff within the school in complex cases where neglect is a concern, were also recognised as beneficial. This perspective is illustrated in the following extract from a pastoral manager who refers to the expertise of her more experienced colleagues:

> *'I'm the youngest of the team – and I'm the newest on the team – and the other ladies have been doing similar roles for years and years, so they are very good to speak to; and they do ...sort of know things a lot quicker than me, I've sort of got to sit and think for a few minutes, before I know what to do; whereas they will know what and where to go straightaway, if I need help with something. I've also got a Leader in Learning that I work in partnership with, like a Head of Year, basically I can approach him, and he's very good for ideas...and I never feel like I'm thinking "oh God, I don't know what to do and I've got nobody to ask"'.* **Pastoral Manager (Valleys Authority secondary school)** *[25/497].*

In the extract, the pastoral manager recognises the expertise available within the wider team, expressing that her colleagues have greater experience when responding to child neglect within the school setting. Many staff talked about seeking professional expertise and help from colleagues with the purpose of shaping and informing their own neglect practice. Specifically, the extract refers to seeking guidance from a 'Leader in Learning' who is felt to be approachable and 'very good for ideas'. Wenger

et al (2004: 4) describe 'communities of practice' as groups of people who share information, vision and advice, about a specific topic, and deepen their knowledge and understanding by interacting with each other on a regular basis.

These learning communities were commonly talked about by staff in the smaller-sized schools as providing opportunities for sharing a problem and deepening individual knowledge on child neglect. The informal culture of learning that many staff refer to in their interviews allowed them to connect with local pockets of expertise, share knowledge on neglect and participate in collective decision-making (Wenger et al, 2004). The presence of a community of practice is demonstrated in the following extract from a head teacher who expresses the use of reflective group discussion with the purpose of promoting staff's deeper understanding around neglect:

> *'Again, the experience and the staff, the staff being together and again in a small school it works well, us then talking about these difficult situations where things, do we go with this or not? Those kind of meetings where we have to decide what to do next, that gives them a deeper understanding. But they have to definitely have enough to begin to identify and at the beginning they're more likely to refer things to me'.* **Head Teacher (Valleys Authority primary school)** *[01/274].*

The extract emphases the small size of the school as a positive factor in the quality of the school's practice when identifying neglect. The head teacher identifies the small and intimate environment as conducive to facilitating reflective discussion amongst staff, and talks about the exchange of ideas around appropriate responses to the situation, whilst developing wider knowledge from each other's suggestions. The ability to access expertise and advice from more experienced colleagues is further echoed in the following extract where a teacher talks about seeking one-to-one confidential advice from the DSP about a specific child:

> *'I think some – maybe some – places are more... you know... 'closed off' than others; but here, if you have a question – if you want to know more – you can go to the child protection officer in confidence and they will speak to you*

about it if they can, you know? **Class Teacher & Governor (Urban Authority**
primary school) *[18/638].*

In the above extract, the teacher highlights the positive culture of learning within the school as being less closed off than other schools. She speaks about feeling able to approach the designated child protection officer with questions concerning child neglect, expressing her belief that these will be treated with care and responded to in a confidential manner. Hendry and Baginsky (2008) argue that for school staff to provide timely and suitable safeguarding action, appropriate knowledge and professional confidence are required. However, many school staff lack the confidence to act upon worries about a child, wanting further learning opportunities to develop their practice in this area (Baginsky, 2000; Birchall, 1992; Campbell & Wigglesworth, 1993).

School-based learning opportunities were also made available to staff in the small, rural primary school. In the following extract, the head teacher talks about disseminating awareness training which was obtained from the SSW employed by the local authority. In the extract the head teacher expresses the importance of all staff at the school attending the session, including dinner ladies and learning support assistants as well as teaching staff:

> *'She [SSW] goes out and does advice and guidance for schools as well. She*
> *does twilight sessions, or in-service training sessions for staff. So that's very*
> *good as well, in giving... you know... I think that's really important, I need to*
> *do it. I haven't had a chance to do it since I'm here, but I've got like a*
> *PowerPoint that's come from county, that I need to give to the staff, you*
> *know. Because I feel that is a real good thing as well, for the teachers, the*
> *LSAs [learning support assistants]; I've got the dinner ladies coming in to it;*
> *so they might pick something up, you know, that... but the attachment*
> *disorder, at least we've got some... they've got some information on that'.*
> **Head Teacher, DSP (Rural Authority primary school)** *[10/565].*

Professional knowledge, understanding and confidence (Hendry & Baginsky, 2008) in identifying maltreatment is not only vital, but fundamental to achieving more effective school-based responses to neglect through continued staff development (Guest, 2008). With this in mind, many staff express the need for additional school-based learning and training opportunities on neglect to support and develop their confidence in this area. Congruent with the findings from Haynes' (2015) study into tackling neglect in universal services, teachers felt specific training gave them the skills and confidence they needed to provide early help in schools for children experiencing neglect. The study reported that primary school teachers felt more strongly than secondary teachers that training had given them the skills and confidence to respond effectively to child neglect (Haynes, 2015).

In addition to the availability of formal and informal learning opportunities, many staff talked about the quality of environment the school created for emotional reflection and support. These spaces were acknowledged by a number of staff as being places where they felt they could access advice, guidance or professional support to counter the personal impact of working with neglect. A large number of staff from smaller schools talk about their work within a friendly and approachable team as offering an informal opportunity for support with difficult or complex cases. Similarly, a number of staff in the secondary schools refer to accessing emotional support but these are through more formalised systems, such as line managers, mentors, school-based counsellors, or the local authority's official counselling phone line.

As with the learning and development environments, the spaces staff identify are both formal and informal, confidential in nature and characterised by their ability to provide individuals with a safe and supportive setting. Guest (2008) suggests that DSPs need to promote a culture of schools as safe and secure organisations which offer staff sound training and supervision. In the following extracts, school staff highlight the support and guidance provided by the wider team. In the first extract an administrator in the rural primary school likens colleagues to a 'family' because of the support they provide to her role. She expresses confidence in being able to approach colleagues for support.

In the second extract, these channels of support are acknowledged as being available should difficulties arise with specific cases:

I find the staff very supportive here, and I could 100% approach people here for support. We are like a family here. We all get on really well and talk to each other, and if we have concerns the Chair of Governors is very good here and I know I would be supported with anything 100%.' **School Administrator (Rural Authority primary school)** *[06/99].*

'We've got a really good admin team, and I'm friendly with a couple more than others, so I'd probably mention it to one of them and say 'oh, you know this is, you know... really upsetting me or' I'd talk to them, umm... and I've got to be honest, I've got a really good relationship with the management, although they're male, they're very approachable, so I wouldn't hesitate if something was really niggling or really bothering me, I'd just go up, knock the door and you know... we're quite open and honest here.' **Administrator (Rural Authority secondary school)** *[13/352].*

The above extracts refer to the significance of relations with other colleagues within the team, and cites positive working relationships with the management as being beneficial. A number of staff speak about the depth and reassuring nature of the relationships they have with each another at school, and how they use these relationships to unburden worries about children they suspect are living with neglect. This perspective is illustrated in the following passage whereby a teacher talks about accessing support from her own professional networks, by 'offloading' and talking to the manager of the school-based counselling service:

'I'm fortunate because I liaise with the manager there quite... I will – when I'm talking about the children I'm referring to her – then, you know, sometimes I will offload to her; and that's helpful – it's informal – it's not formalised, because... but I'm fortunate because I've got a relationship with her, and...yes... I mean, I think... and just talking to each other, and

perhaps... but yeah, you do hold stuff, you do. **Class Teacher, DSP (Urban Authority primary school)** *[17/591].*

The opportunity to speak informally to colleagues and seek advice emerges once again, emphasising the significance of staff feeling able to approach managers through a formalised system or seek out specific colleagues for supportive discussions in the staff room. Many staff use these routes as opportunities to discuss complex cases, seek expert advice and knowledge, whilst simultaneously drawing informal professional support from them to counter the impact of working with child neglect. Bandele (2009) suggests that in addition to reporting duties, the role of the an effective DSP in school involves offering support and advice to all staff members, making certain they are aware of safeguarding procedures and what to do it they are worried about a child, whilst also ensuring everyone has access to relevant training opportunities.

Although staff knowledge and understanding of child neglect is of great importance, school staff often lack the time to keep up to date with areas of specialised safeguarding training in their already demanding educational roles, and, as identified by a recent examination of professional responses to child neglect, is often not consistently evident in practice (Ofsted, 2014). For this reason, staff training alone is not necessarily the solution to achieving a more effective and preventative response to child neglect within schools in Wales (Brandon et al, 2014). What the interview data do reveal, rather, is the value of small and informal learning environments in schools which aid staff communication, foster continued development of knowledge and expertise, and provide professional support and reflection in a relevant practice setting.

Relationships with Families

The third and final factor for discussion recognises the quality of relationships staff establish with families. Here, staff talk about their ability to positively engage families whilst simultaneously challenging what they perceive to be inadequate levels of care for a child. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key points from each of the three themes. Variation first emerges within the interview data, in terms of the impact of school staff's relationships with families. The majority of staff express the quality of their relationship with parents as being significant to the effectiveness of their practice when responding to child neglect in the school.

The proceeding discussion explores the staff's perceptions about the impact of their ongoing relationships with parents and the child's wider family members. Most commonly, staff recognise their interactions with, and broad knowledge of, families as being particularly advantageous in the limited setting of the school. Staff articulate the challenging and complex partnership with parents not simply to provide additional and useful information, but to offer a sound platform from which to challenge parenting which is considered inadequate for the child's needs. The relationships with families were also referred to as creating a more receptive environment in which school staff felt able to engage reluctant or potentially hostile families (Hughes & Owen, 2009) with the voluntary nature of school-based support and help (Haynes et al, 2015).

Tanner and Turney (2003) highlight the importance of families having long-term relationships with organisations. These relationships not only allow practitioners to understand the child's daily experience, but provide opportunities to gain deeper knowledge about the child's environment outside the school setting. Developing quality relationships with families in the school setting can also help ameliorate the difficult nature of challenging inadequate parenting whilst strengthening local networks and building links with the wider community (Webb & Vulliamy, 2001). Daniel et al (2011) suggest that relationships with families can also help respond to emotional difficulties whilst developing parenting ability. The authors go on to suggest that it is not

uncommon in practice for concerns to be held about one particular issue, and when a relationship is established with the family and a bond developed, a number of other issues can often come to the fore.

In terms of developing relationships with families, many school staff talk about the benefits of knowing and understanding the broader needs and challenges experienced in their communities. In the following extract, an ALENCo highlights the advantages of working in the same school for many years, which allows parents to get to know the staff very well, and staff to get to know the children and their families:

> *'I mean... I've been teaching here 20 years now so you know... I've got umm... I've got my pupils coming back as parents you know what I mean... so you know... I know sometimes it's not a good thing to stay in a school for a long period of time, but I've got to be honest in this school we have got quite a number of staff that have been here for twenty, thirty years you know what I mean.... Umm... we do have new blood coming in you know... umm... from time to time but we haven't got a high turnover of staff here. So parents know the staff you know... with children you know...'* **ALENCo, DSP (Rural Authority secondary school)** *[12/216].*

In the above extract, ALENCo talks about the extended length of time she has been employed at the school, expressing that a number of her colleagues are in a similar position. She identifies this as of mutual benefit to both staff and parents: staff in terms of their knowledge of families, and parents in terms of getting to know the school staff, which enables the development of trust and reciprocity over time. Roose et al (2013) suggest that the successful engagement of families with support is rooted to the quality of the relationship between the parents and the professional. Findings from The Welsh Neglect Project (Pithouse & Crowley, 2016; Stevens & Laing, 2015) highlight the importance of forming trusting and lasting relationships with parents, in order to engage in behaviour-changing interventions and to challenge parenting approaches.

Possessing wider knowledge about family history and functioning was also talked about by staff as being helpful in their practice when identifying child neglect. These aspects are a key side of the assessment triangle when gathering comprehensive information about a child's circumstances (Department of Health, 2000). Staff's familiarity and awareness of particular children and their families was perceived as being beneficial in the school setting. The following extract from an interview with the school patrol officer illustrates this perspective when she talks about knowing 'certain families':

> '[I go to] the headmistress about that; especially if you know it's a... a – a bit difficult, here – if you know they come from a... a certain family, that might have problems. Me personally, I wouldn't like to sort of ignore it; like I said before, if I'm in doubt, I go and say something; just... you know... because you just... you sort of get to know the different families, and the different children that might need a bit of help'. **School Patrol Officer (Rural Authority primary school)** [229].

In the extract, the staff member talks about drawing upon her knowledge of certain families in the community who may be experiencing problems. She describes applying her knowledge of specific children in the school to what she observes, and how her understanding about the families with which she works supports her decision to discuss concerns with the headmistress. A number of staff talk more specifically about the nature and depth of the individual relationships they hold with families, and how these are fundamental in their ability to respond effectively to concerns of child neglect in a school setting. Here a teaching assistant talks about the trust she has established in her role with the wider community:

> 'The parents will come in and say "oh, Mrs so and so, can you have a look he's got a couple of spots on his back? So they can come to us then, so it's a two way thing, I find the parents appear, because it's such a small community, they do see you as nurturing rather than, well I suppose in a bigger place they may have it that you was interfering, I don't sense that from the parents up here, I think it's a tight community and the parents do.' **Teaching Assistant (Valleys Authority primary school).** [04/261].

In the above extract the teaching assistant describes the relationship she has developed with the families in the community. She goes on to express her belief that parents feel able to come into school and approach particular staff members for advice. In the extract she refers to the small size of the school and how this creates a feeling of trustworthiness amongst parents conducive to a nurturing and approachable environment. Ferguson (2011) highlights the constructive qualities of relationship-based practice when working with families in the field of child protection. In light of the continued increase of bureaucracy in social work practice, and the duties of all partner agencies to comply with statutory processes as set out in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014), it is important not to overlook the significance of emotional connections and trusting relationships with families when intervening in safeguarding issues (Ferguson, 2011; Gardner, 2016).

Highlighting variance within the interview data once again, some staff expressed that relationships with families were not always beneficial to practice and could create additional barriers in their roles. This was predominantly the case when staff were asked to challenge parents. In the following extract, a teaching assistant describes seeing herself in the role of 'messenger' when she is charged with the duty of questioning a child's ongoing unauthorised absence from school. In the extract the teaching assistant recognises her existing relationship with the parent, both her own and the parents' personalities, and her knowledge of the child, all have a significant influence upon whether the nature of the exchange is positive or negative:

> *'It's not come from me, but I'm kind of the 'messenger' so it's quite hard; you don't want to break down that relationship with the parent...and you kind of get the brunt of it. So sometimes it can; sometimes it can build relationships, because... like... they understand that you're doing it because you care about the child. But it really does depend on the parent and different personalities, and the child as well, I guess.* **Teaching Assistant (Urban Authority secondary school)** *[30/370].*

Many school staff located in the smaller and rural schools spoke candidly about the impact their relationships with families had upon their practice, once they had raised sensitive issues with parents about the appropriate care and parenting of a child. Staff describe the effect of raising concerns with parents about the care of their child and the increase in tension and reluctance to engage or communicate as a consequence.   In the following extract, a deputy head teacher talks about how his relationship with the child's parents broke down after he discussed concerns of neglect with the parents:

> *'I have had parents that categorically don't agree, and nothing changes and they get really, for want of a better word – 'arsey' – and then we don't have a positive relationship, but then you just have to maintain your professionalism: you still go out and talk to them, you still inform them of lovely things [about the child] as well as any negatives, you still encourage them to come to parents' evening'.* **Deputy Head & Class Teacher (Valleys Authority primary school)** *[02/368].*

The extract demonstrates the difficulty many school staff said they experience after challenging parents about the level of care they are giving to their child. The deputy head talks about a significant change in the manner and tone of the relationship with parents as a direct result of raising concerns. He describes the response he receives when the parents do not agree with the issues he has raised. In the absence of any change made by the parents, the relationship between the staff member and family becomes damaged, often creating obstructions and barriers in communication between the school and family in the future. The teacher goes on to say that in spite of the strain in the relationship, he continues to practice in a professional manner, prioritising the child's needs, and attempting to continue to engage the parents in a progressive way. Haynes et al (2015:28) suggest that the positive engagement of families by universal services involves 'trust, honesty and compassion', necessitating the preservation of an ongoing and effective relationship between practitioners and parents to achieve the desired outcome for the child.

This perspective is highlighted by the Social Care Institute of Excellence's (SCIE) (2016), briefing paper entitled 'Incomplete Information Sharing by Schools'. The paper identifies that school staff face a number of barriers to sharing information about a child in child protection conferences due to the potential damage this may cause on their working relationship with parents. School staff felt that sharing negative or difficult information about a child, for the purposes of safeguarding, was reported as being particularly challenging, particularly when working with aggressive or hostile parents. This perspective is powerfully reiterated in the below extract from a head teacher who states the increasing sense of hostility he is subjected to when families have been referred to social services for concerns of neglect:

> *'And again, they will keep bringing it up, and even if it's gone, there are families I referred two or three times and social services have been involved, it's gone to child in need, woah...those parents really do then give it to you! Every opportunity, every meeting, you're going to get it. And that is difficult, they will refuse to meet with you they'll tell you you're not allowed to speak to their child because they say you made things up,...its quite stressful because we're trying to make sure that the child is safe...'* **Head Teacher, DSP (Valleys Authority primary school)** *[01/218].*

In the above extract, the head teacher talks about the huge impact on relationships with parents when a referral to social services is made by the school. He highlights the significance of making numerous referrals for statutory intervention for the same family, and how he perceives that their experiences of receiving statutory intervention at a CIN level further heighten the hostility he receives. He conveys how stressful the situation can become within the school setting, when families refuse to meet with staff members or forbid them to speak to their child during the school day, because they position them as responsible for the referral to social services. Briggs and Hawkins (1998) suggest that teachers are reluctant to report neglect because they are concerned about their ongoing relationship with families, being able to provide a positive school experience (Gilligan, 1998) and the perceived ramifications from parents and the community, inadvertently impacting upon the child's experience of school. Horwath (2007) describes a child's positive experience of school as having a lasting effect upon their

social and emotional development, which can further guard against aspects of social difficulty.

Another factor which staff perceive as having significant impact upon their relationships with families is their position or standing within the local community. In the smaller and rural schools many staff lived amongst the community they served, whereas in the larger schools staff members often commuted to the school from outside areas. In the following extract, a head teacher expresses the added 'closeness' that being positioned across both the school and community settings can bring to the depth of staff's relationships with families:

> *'I think it's because they have a different relationship with the children; and because they are…our midday supervisors are part of the community; they come from the community. A couple of them are mums of the children in the school…the children understand they are employed by the school, so they're a member of staff, but they can get quite close to them especially for the younger children who are playing games so they might disclose something to the midday supervisors; their role is vital in the school, as is everybody else's. So those relationships can form with any member of the staff if a child feels comfortable and has an issue'.* **Head Teacher, DSP (Urban Authority primary school)** *[16/110].*

The extract highlights the established networks staff in small sized schools often create in their supportive roles as learning support or teaching assistants, midday or school club supervisors, and school crossing patrols. Staff talk about how being a parent at the school themselves encouraged deeper networks within the community. School staff speak about the advantage of being able to draw upon wider knowledge about specific children and their families from outside the school premises, often knowing a number of generations within the same family. In the following extract this perception is demonstrated when a head teacher talks about the staff at his school who live within the community:

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'We do have a lot of the LSAs within the school that live in the community so that helps, they can kind of come in with a feel of a family. After a weekend, if you get, umm some referral from somebody, maybe the police or social services have said something to you, you can often get a feel from the staff – they will know things about a family, it's maybe three doors away...they will say "the police raided the house last night, he was arrested, there was definitely violence in the family..."'. **Head Teacher, DSP (Valleys Authority primary school).** *[01/394].*

Here, the head teacher reveals how staff who live in the community bring additional knowledge, awareness and sensitivity when they work with a family in the school setting. He goes on to say how he 'gets a feel from the staff' in terms of clarifying the nature and extent of events which have taken place outside of the school premises and over the weekend in the local community. Many staff speak about additional information as being pivotal in supporting their professional decision-making in cases of child neglect. This perspective is further reiterated in the following extract, where a teaching assistant talks about her knowledge of, and associations with, the families in her local community:

'So I know a lot of the families outside of school – I know of them outside school, so... yeah. And that really comes in handy, I think, sometimes; because when the children come into school, you don't always get a full reflection of, maybe what's happening; and sometimes I think my role is pretty good in that way, because I can sometimes give a more balanced argument. If something's occurring in school, you know, you can look at it from both sides, you know; from outside school and inside school; so I think it's pretty good. It comes in handy; has done lots of times.' **Teaching Assistant (Urban Authority secondary school)** *[20/20]*

In the extract the teaching assistant expresses the benefit of knowing families outside school. She speaks about not always getting a 'full reflection' of what is happening with the child by seeing them in the school alone. A number of support staff spoke about

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their positioning within the community reinforcing their ability to build a more comprehensive picture about children they suspected of living with neglect. The teaching assistant talks about her physical positioning in the community as enabling her to offer a more balanced viewpoint and allowing her to combine knowledge of a child from both inside and outside the school premises. By comparison, staff who do not live alongside local families, and as a result have less established relationships in the community, talk about the limits of only seeing the child within the school environment. Horwath and Tarr (2015) suggest that the visible signs of neglect are considerably narrower and more superficial than the range of indicators drawn from wider contextual information that can be drawn from a child's life beyond the school gate.

Concluding Comments

This chapter has examined the role of the school in promoting children's health and well-being and protecting them from neglect. The first part of the chapter began by introducing each of the six participating schools within the study. The discussion highlighted areas which staff felt were the schools' practice strengths when responding to child neglect. The second part of the chapter drew principally upon the qualitative data and explored the experiences of individual school staff from a range of roles. Overall, the smaller-sized schools were recognised as demonstrating good practice when working with issues of child neglect in their everyday roles. This was apparent in the nature and consistency of the practice, and the manner in which working with neglect was embedded in the schools' day to day organisation. Findings identified variation in practice amongst individual school staff, across three different aspects of practice: (i) proactive or reactive approaches, (ii) learning and development environments, and (iii) relationships with families.

The first factor which impacted upon staff's capacity to work with child neglect effectively, and where variance was identified, was in the approach taken by the school. Whether a proactive or reactive approach had been embedded into the infrastructure of the school. Schools which had implemented organisational strategies congruent with

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a proactive approach to working with neglect, demonstrated evidence of early and preventative practice in this area. Strategies included having a clear vision and ethos of safeguarding children throughout the school, the existence of 'neglect champions' at a strategic level who took responsibility for developing expertise on child neglect within the school, and a range of regular meetings which provided staff members with opportunities to share information with each other, and gain additional knowledge and expertise from colleagues in partner-agencies through the TAF model.

The second factor where variance was identified was in the learning and development environments created within the school. Analysis identified the existence of communities of practice in a number of schools which provided effective learning contexts where staff could draw upon the expertise of colleagues, or other school-based practitioners from different disciplines. The familiarity and intimacy which was expressed amongst staff within the smaller-sized schools created learning environments which fostered good communication. These learning environments offered many opportunities for advice, guidance, and informal professional development within the school-context when working with child neglect.

The third and final factor where variance was identified, was in the relationships staff felt they had with families. The discussion highlighted the nature of staff's relationships with the child's parents or carers, recognising this as fundamental to the quality of their practice. Having an established relationship with the family was expressed as hugely beneficial in that it provides wider information which would contribute to decisions about practice responses to child neglect. Staff members who lived within the local community spoke about drawing upon knowledge about the child's life and their family's functioning within the community. Jack and Gill (2003) highlight family and environmental factors as being the missing side of the assessment triangle (Department of Health, 2000), aspects which are usually invisible for staff beyond the boundary of the school premises. School staff can therefore only contribute to the well-being of their pupils within certain parameters, and consequently need effective professional relationships with other partner-agencies to ensure children are protected from neglect

(Fletcher-Campbell, 2008). With this in mind, the following chapter of this thesis examines the relationship between the school and social services in responding to child neglect through a range of inter-professional interactions and interventions.

6. Differences Between Professions

This is the third analysis chapter. The chapter explores the differences which arise between school staff and social workers when identifying and responding to child neglect. Although the discussion draws only upon interview and observation data gathered within schools, the analysis presents evidence of numerous differences which manifest between the two different professions when responding to child neglect. The discussion identifies five themes which emerge from the interviews undertaken with a wide range of staff in schools *(n=30).* (A schedule of interview participants, is included in appendix 8 of this thesis).

All five themes are connected by the overarching idea of difference between professions, and focus upon the inter-agency partnership which exists between the school system and statutory social work practice when responding to child neglect in a school setting. The first theme is concerned with the 'visibility of neglect' and the legitimation of school staff actually *seeing* neglect. In the second theme notions of professionalism and professional relationships are examined. Here, specific attention is given to interdisciplinary working in the midst of professional discourses, intervention thresholds, and the differing organisational terms in the two contexts.

In the third theme, ideas of power and stigma in statutory interventions are unpicked. Here a paradoxical situation emerges with warnings of statutory involvement being used as a method of encouraging reluctant families to consent to school-based support. The fourth theme builds upon notions of professional culture through the lens of 'rules and routines' in the education system and the principle of 'passing up' concerns of neglect through the appropriate lines of management. In the fifth and final theme, a crisis of confidence emerges, with school staff voicing a collective 'lack of professional confidence' in their ability to respond to neglect; a deficiency in neglect-specific training is identified as being particularly problematic.

Visibility of Neglect

A prominent theme that runs throughout the interview data is the 'visibility of neglect'. All staff spoke about how they were principally drawn to the observable presentation of the child in school when looking for the presence of neglect. Staff expressed how in the classroom they commonly noticed the absence of climate-appropriate or well-fitting clothing at school, saw dirt and grime on the child's body at the start of the week and spoke about actually being able to 'see' the child's hunger or distress. Staff talked about the visibility of such indicators of neglect on children at school in terms of their ability to 'see' different forms of neglect. The following extracts demonstrate staff observations of a number of visible indicators of neglect whilst the children were in the familiar setting of the school:

> 'In terms of their welfare and their health and physical needs being neglected, I see children who are hungry. And not just…you know…children who are visibly, very hungry in the morning…children who run up and grab food. Also when children are very, very grubby; I know children are generally going to be a little bit you know 'mucked up' …but some children who are very you know…visibly…around their neck.' **Class Teacher/Governor, (Urban Authority primary school)** [18/166].

> 'The common, the main things are things that you know…their dress, their unkempt appearance; usually if they haven't had a wash for a week or so and you'll get the huge 'tide marks' and things round here; sometimes their clothes are dirty – that's a good indicator that something is not quite right at home. They might come in hungry – a lot of time you can see a child is neglected.' **Head Teacher, DSP (Rural Authority primary school)** [10/294].

> 'If they [children] sometimes come in and it's not what they're eating, it's the way they're eating it…when they are wolfing it down, or they're like 'hoarding it' so nobody else can touch it, to get it in their mouth as fast as

they can, they're constantly asking – "can I have another one?" [Neglect is] whoever's looking after them not washing their clothes enough, not making sure they're clean to go to school…that's the main one that we notice'. Teaching Assistant/Breakfast Club Supervisor, (Urban Authority primary school) [19/189].

There was limited reference by staff to the issue of emotional neglect, but when mentioned, this was also in the context of staff being able to 'see' the emotions in the child's face and being able to observe their emotional vulnerability whilst at school or in lessons. The following extract from a police school liaison officer demonstrates this perception as he talked about 'seeing' a child's emotions from a distance and observing the significant change in the child's usual demeanour and behaviour in terms of suspecting the child was living with neglect:

'You can <u>see</u> her from fifty metres away, you can <u>see</u> by her face, <u>how</u> she's feeling; where she is; what's going <u>on</u> for her. You don't know them by name, but you'll notice…it's that change in demeanour, it's a change in clothing, a change in body language, a change in eye contact, how they say things.' Police School Liaison Officer, (Urban Authority secondary school) [22/85].

Staff also noticed indicators of emotional neglect on children within the classroom in the context of a child being significantly withdrawn and isolated, or crying and displaying unhappiness or anger. The following extract from an interview with a teaching assistant demonstrates these observations:

'It can be emotional [neglect], you can have a child who is upset, cries a lot, or sometimes may seem withdrawn and doesn't include themselves in things, a child who may be angry, could be angry because they are hungry…children come in and they're not clean, …or they've got the smell to them, scratching, little things like that - tired, falling asleep. So they can't concentrate, so again that can be lack of food, lack of sleep'. Teaching Assistant, (Rural Authority primary school) [08/60].

In the above extract, the TA specifically connects the visible emotions of the child with a suspected cause i.e. anger or tiredness, which is often attributed by staff to concerns of hunger or nutritional neglect, and withdrawal and aloneness in the classroom, attributed to potential concerns that a child is living with emotional neglect. Horwath & Tarr (2015) suggest that careful consideration is necessary in giving attention to how professionals appear to construct the child experiencing neglect, whether deliberately or not. Their study, funded by a Welsh Local Safeguarding Children Board, highlights the importance of understanding the views and experiences of the child in cases of neglect, identifying that the cause of the problem is seldom a single event.

Horwath & Tarr (2015) further caution practitioners to be consciously reflexive over the power of labelling children. How a child is labelled as 'neglected' obscures understanding about the child's experience of 'living with neglect' (2015; 1389). By focusing on little more than the observable indicators, practitioners are led to the construction of a 'neglected child' as a superficial gathering of physical signs without having meaningfully engaged with the child's daily experience of living with the impact of neglect (Horwath, 2016; Horwath & Tarr, 2015).

Despite the recommendation that practitioners need to focus less on observable indicators and more on the experience of neglect for the child (Horwath & Tarr, 2015), it is clear from the extracts that school staff continue to place considerable weight upon what they can 'see'. Many participants express considerable frustration at being unable to communicate their concerns clearly. They speak about the substantial difficulty in conveying concerns of neglect which they felt were rooted in professional intuition rather than evidence (Thompson, 2016). The previous extracts refer to staff's need to 'see' physical evidence of neglect on a child, which they articulated with clarity, with the purpose of gathering tangible proof that could validate and justify the thoughts and fears held. Staff also talk about the process of monitoring neglect over a period of time (Thompson, 2016), and gathering information in terms of building a picture about the child so as to legitimise their decision to refer to social services (Davies & Ward, 2012).

A number of participants shared their assumptions about how they expected social workers to respond and how this also informed their decision to refer to social services. Congruent with literature, participants speak about the struggle of effectively describing and conceptualising worries to external agencies when a child appears to be living with neglect. Neglect is discussed as being an extremely exasperating and challenging issue to define (Kesner & Robinson, 2002:229). This is exemplified in the quotations from teachers below:

> *'I think the difficulty is that we would say there is such a crossover between the physical/ emotional/sexual [abuse] and neglect. So do we refer for neglect mostly? Yes; and physical. Perhaps for you know a bruise or something like that. But [neglect] it's much harder to say prove, it's much harder to describe.'* **Teacher & Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator, DSP. (Urban Authority primary school)** *[17/92].*

> *'Neglect can be the kind of, what we would see as the smaller issues, although they're not, I know. But they are small issues – we get things like concerns about dirty ears, children saying they haven't had breakfast, packed lunches are small, head lice is a big one. We get things…like that you can't identify straight away as a kind of abuse. Physical [abuse] is quite easy, but these things are kind of bubbling along the bottom'* **Deputy Head Teacher, DSP (Valleys Authority primary school)** *[02/98].*

Here we can see how the co-occurrence of multiple adversities, combined with the complexity of what constitutes neglect lead to a belief that referrals for neglect alone are perceived as less likely to be accepted by social services. Furthermore, referrals to social services which also include evidence of physical abuse are felt to be much more likely to receive consideration than referrals citing observations or worries of neglect alone (Jonson-Reid et al, 2007; Tite, 1993). Staff commonly talk about their substantial frustration when making effective referrals to social services that were characterised by neglect. The following extract is from a head teacher who expresses the challenge of

assembling an inter-agency referral in the absence of 'physical evidence' of neglect on the child:

> '…and that's where some of the frustration lies; especially when you are working with families day in day out…you know actually that there is something the matter…but there is no physical evidence…and that's the cases that are really difficult…there is no physical evidence [of neglect] on the child.' **Head Teacher, DSP (Urban Authority primary school)** [16/233].

School staff's reliance on physical characteristics as evidence of neglect appeared to be a rational reaction to the systems within which they operate. In essence, the focus on physical characteristics was the dual product of lack of clarity about what constitutes neglect and their own expectations of engaging with social services. In addition to this, many school staff talk about the limitations of only 'seeing' the child exist and function within a school or classroom setting. The visibility of neglect was, as a result, referred to by staff as substantially narrower and more superficial (Horwath & Tarr, 2015) than the wider information social workers can access under their statutory powers and visits to the family home (Ferguson, 2011; Children Act, 1989). The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014) (Social Care Legislation in Wales, 2017b) sets out a legislative duty promoting co-operation between local authority social workers and a broad range of partner agencies to improve the well-being of children (Davies & Ward, 2012). Such legal powers are not shared by schools (Brown, 2011), a point which is exemplified in the following extract from a class teacher:

> 'I'm not in the home, I don't know; but I suppose I sit in meetings with the social worker who does go into the home – and other agencies - I think I do have a relatively good idea that it's more lack of awareness and understanding on the parents' behalf. But as a classroom teacher, when the only contact you have is maybe a phone call or a parents evening- I wouldn't have a clue.' **Special Needs Manager & Class Teacher, (Urban Authority secondary school)** [21/160].

The above extract illustrates the limited amount of contact the school staff feel they have with the child and their family outside of school and the lack of information about the home environment. This impacts upon school staff's knowledge of the child and their subsequent ability to make comprehensive professional judgements about whether, and to what extent, a child is living with neglect. This point is further reinforced in the following quotation from a learning support assistant who refers to specific colleagues at school who live within the local community. In her extract, she talks about the advantage of acquiring additional knowledge of children's lives from community sources, outside the school environment to which she was limited:

> *'…maybe there are other concerns then, you know, that they get to see outside of the school that we wouldn't necessarily know about, you know we only see and we only deal with the ones we see in school. But maybe they would have more information to add, you know, if you didn't have concerns'.*
> **Learning Support Assistant, (Valleys Authority primary school)** *[05/269].*

Despite daily school attendance, the inaccessibility of wider contextual knowledge about the child's life beyond the boundaries and scope of the school, was referred to by staff as considerably restricting their ability to gather information which could build evidence (Pithouse & Crowley, 2016) of a 'bigger picture' to more effectively safeguard the child (Thompson, 2016:133). As highlighted in the previous chapter, teachers are nevertheless some of the most consistent adults in a child's life, with the role of the school now recognised as being at the forefront of a child's overall safety and well-being (Brown, 2011; Daniel, 2008:7). Local authority social workers are by comparison known to function 'behind the scenes' with significant discretion (Witte et al, 2016), having sight of an array of data about the child, drawn from a broad range of agencies including health, education and the third sector.

Parton (2009) refers to the recent shift in the nature of the social worker, principally describing practitioners as 'information processors' concerned with assembling, sharing and observing electronic information about the child, as opposed to focusing upon the interpersonal aspects of their role (Witte et al 2016). The primary positioning of

computer information is transforming and shaping the contemporary operationalisation of the social work profession with children (Baines 2004a, 2004b; Garrett, 2005). In short, the nature of the task is changing to fit the parameters of the technology (Garrett, 1999), with social workers increasingly bound to their desks servicing complex bureaucracy and high levels of accountability (Ferguson, 2011; Munro, 2011a & 2011b; Rowe, 2012).

Witte et al's (2016) reference to the 'electronic turn' highlights the differences that exist between the everyday visibility of the child in the school setting and the acknowledged (in)visibility of the child in statutory social work practice (Ferguson, 2017). Unlike statutory social workers school staff do not have access to confidential information about a child from a range of different social care and health agencies, and are inevitably solely reliant upon visible types of child neglect evidence (Bandele, 2009; Thompson, 2016). In comparison, social workers are often diverted by complex relationships with resistant parents and tense home environments, imminent time limits, or insufficient support in their professional roles which would enable them to keep the child close and at the centre of their practice (Ferguson, 2017). Horwath (2016) suggests that when practitioners consider the impact of neglect upon a child, only partial knowledge is usually held, namely the knowledge that is available and observable within the school day, with school staff often not being aware of what life is like for the child outside the school.

Professional Relationships

The second part of this chapter explores the 'professional relationships' which exist between the school and social services. The theme considers the effect of difference in terms of professional culture, language, reciprocity, and clarity around agency thresholds for intervention. Primarily, most staff talk about the damaging impact of the social work profession's recruitment and retention problem on their daily roles (Munro, 2011b; Research In Practice, 2015). Many staff had been employed by the same school for at least three to four years, and were exasperated with not being able to contact the

child's allocated social worker, or not being advised or updated as to referral or case developments. School staff also talk about how frequently the child's allocated social worker changed, which they feel to be detrimental in establishing effective inter-agency relationships (Thompson, 2016). The following extracts are drawn from interviews with two managerial staff which illustrate this perspective:

> '*I mean, we'll phone up and that social worker doesn't work there anymore. Now I don't know whether they've left being a social worker or they've moved, or they've gone to a different Local Authority. But it seems to happen a lot. I can think of a number of cases where we've put in a referral at a real serious level, and within a three-month period a child has had four different social workers*'. **Assistant Head Teacher, DSP (Urban Authority secondary school).** *[24/338].*

> '*The sort of staffing crisis in social services doesn't help…you have social workers that move on, or who are overstretched, and as a result sometimes there can be breakdowns in information or in processes being actioned, where there's an interim social worker who doesn't know the child. Unfortunately the lack of resources can have a major, major influence on how efficiently the cases are dealt with*'. **Pastoral Manager (Valleys Authority secondary school)** *[26/294].*

A number of staff were exasperated by the existing staff retention issue in social services and the significant impact of a deficiency in social work resources, which they felt weakened the efficacy of their multi-agency working relationships, one of the biggest struggles encountered in work on child neglect (Haynes, 2015; Pithouse & Crowley, 2016). Zlotnik et al (2005) state that children's welfare is put at risk by statutory agencies' inability to successfully recruit and retain appropriate social work practitioners. In spite of significant resources and determination concentrated in this area, Baginsky (2013) suggests that operational issues continue to present themselves, particularly in the field of statutory child protection practice. Literature suggests the cause of the profession's retention problem to include heavy practitioner caseloads

(Lymbery, 1998; O'Reilly et al, 2011), poor management, poor salary and conditions, continuous cost-cutting (Balloch et al, 1999), low levels of training and support (Conrad & Kellar-Guenther, 2006), and dysfunctional organisations (Lawson et al, 2006; Lonne et al, 2012). Strolin et al (2006) suggest the plethora of such issues lead to an understanding of the problem as an accumulation of multiple adversities which all contrive to negatively impact on practitioner retention in the social work profession.

In light of the retention issues in the social work profession, school staff also speak about the advantages of their daily relationship with the child. They say that the consistency of seeing a child each day at school throughout the duration of a child's schooling, supports the early recognition of neglect (Angeles Cerezon et al, 2004; Davies & Ward, 2012).   In the interviews, many staff refer to the strategic and operational positioning of the education system in terms of safeguarding children (Guest, 2008), perceiving social services to have little time with the child and little understanding of the school's role. Davies and Ward (2012: 48) refer to schools as locations which offer opportunities for staff to be conscious and responsive to problems. Paradoxically, in light of heavy caseloads and increased managerial control (Lymbery, 1998), governed by detailed organisational procedures (Harris, 1998; O'Reilly et al, 2011), social work practitioners have significantly fewer opportunities to see the child, and a greater reduced chance to observe changes in demeanour and behaviour over a long period of time.

Some staff express irritation at social services not involving them sufficiently in safeguarding issues, showing annoyance that their ongoing familiarity and knowledge of the child are not adequately utilised despite an existing daily relationship with the child. Turnbull (2015) states that children living with neglect are not likely to seek support from statutory agencies. This means that schools and other staff in universal services are crucial in identifying and responding to neglect and well-positioned to instigate referrals to social services (Action for Children, 2013; NSPCC, 2015). The following interview data extracts from teachers participating in the study demonstrate the frustration felt towards social services, who they believe consistently failed to

acknowledge the school's expertise (Bradshaw, 2000) and knowledge of the child when a social issue arose:

> *'I found the relationship between schools and social services very difficult, in that there's little relationship there. We are with these children for six hours a day or more, five days a week, those children are in our care, yet in my experience we are not called upon or involved as much when there is a social issue'.* **Class Teacher & Governor (Urban Authority primary school)** *[18/358].*

Staff also express annoyance and offence in believing social workers are often positioned as 'professional experts' when undertaking visits to the child to investigate concerns of child neglect (Evetts, 2003; Lymbery, 1998). Dingwall & Lewis (1983; cited by Everts, 2003) suggest that professions often presume to inform society as to what is 'good and right for it', determining the manner in which they think about the presenting problems from their own perspectives. The following extract from a head teacher illustrates this perspective, and refers to social services' disregard for the school's established relationship with the child and their family and their daily accumulation of considerable knowledge about the community in which they reside:

> *'We have a greater depth of knowledge about a family and then somebody from social services goes along once, who doesn't know the area or the family, they make this judgement obviously on this one visit!'.* **Assistant Head Teacher, DSP (Urban Authority secondary school)** *[24/170].*

Effective child protection practice is fundamentally a multi-agency undertaking, reliant upon information about children being shared between professionals (Ferguson, 2011). Guest (2008) suggests that when schools encounter responses from social services that are felt to be unsupportive or obstructive, or offered feedback which fails to recognise the staff member's knowledge and expertise, there is a risk that the professional trust between agencies could be compromised. In the following extracts, school staff express their confusion in completing effective referrals to social services. They speak of following instructions to undertake inter-agency referrals which are later returned as

'no case to answer' or 'concerns unsubstantiated' (King & Scott 2012:1), and express frustration at the absence of feedback and communication from the agency (Berry, 2003) and their subsequent inability to reason the response given.

Howe (1992) suggests that social work practice can be characterised by practitioners' 'defensive need to follow regulations' with a focus upon routinised ways of working (Lymbery, 1998). These experiences can undermine the school's confidence in working in partnership with statutory agencies and, at worst, perpetuate beliefs about not making referrals of similar concern in the future (Guest, 2008). The following extract demonstrates the common perception amongst staff that social service responses are not only inconsistent, but lack feedback and communication about why they were not investigated:

> *'Sometimes you think "well, I was expecting that to come back again" and then you refer another one with more detail and you think "well that's okay, that one I've covered every angle there"- and it bounces back'* **Teaching Assistant (Urban Authority secondary school)** *[23/312].*

> *'And that's one of the criticisms, is that we don't get feedback on referrals. We only get feedback if they're [social services] picking it up. We don't get the letter to say "Thanks very much for your referral, but on this occasion we're not [intervening]".* **Head of Inclusion, DSP (Valleys Authority secondary school)** *[27/124].*

> *'I would phone them up and they'd [social services] say "right, fill in a form", but the forms are long and lengthy; and then you send them off and it comes back and they say " no case to answer", which I find quite frustrating'.* **Head Teacher (Rural Authority primary school)** *[10/64].*

Inter-agency communication and information sharing can often be problematic, with schools commonly reporting long delays from statutory agencies for feedback or updates on their referrals (Baginsky, 2000; Webster et al, 2005). Richards' (2017) study into the experiences of school staff in early help and child protection in England, highlights the limited quality and content of feedback provided by social workers to the staff member making the referral. The absence of clarification about why some cases met the social services' threshold for intervention and some cases did not, left school staff feeling uncertain and confused, with limited understanding about why decisions had been made.

In the study 'Tackling Child Neglect in Universal Services' in the UK, Haynes (2015) reports multi-agency cooperation and information sharing to be the most significant barriers for those with safeguarding responsibilities in schools (Bandele, 2009). In the interviews school staff frequently expressed their exasperation with the lack of professional consistency across statutory agencies. O'Reilly et al (2011) suggest that statutory child protection workers are carrying out their duties in an environment of substantially high staff turnover. This often results in amplified dependence upon newly-qualified practitioners in the workforce which could cause a level of practitioner inconsistency. Previous research evidences that professional decision-making in the social work profession can be influenced by circumstantial factors such as lack of information and resources (Kirkman & Melrose, 2014; Tupper et al, 2016; Ward et al, 2014).

School staff describe regularly phoning social services for advice and guidance prior to making a referral, and then feeling extremely confused by the disparity of responses they received for submitting equivalent concerns. Tupper et al (2016) suggest there are a number of common factors that influence the outcome of decision-making in social services. In their study, 'Decision-making in Children's Social Care', findings evidence that referrals received at the weekend were less likely to proceed to 'further action', than those received on a week-day. Also referrals received via email (as opposed to those through personal visits or telephone calls) were also less likely to proceed to

'further action'. The report also identified a correlation between the average team case load and the proportion of cases that proceeded to receiving services. In the following extract a head teacher exemplifies the confusion experienced by a number of school staff at the inconsistency in responses from social services, conveying social services as an organisation of 'many faces':

> 'What I did find [is] different social workers, depending on who picked it up, there were different levels of concern and support within that. You work with one family and you'd have any support that they needed, straight away. Whereas some others were dismissive - so it depends...it wasn't like a level playing field: there wasn't sort of consistency from social worker to social worker'. **Head Teacher, DSP (Rural Authority primary school)** [10/90].

School staff also speak about a variance between their own professional constructions of neglect and that held by social services. Staff talk about not possessing a shared understanding of the statutory thresholds for intervention in neglect (Richards, 2017), and the barrier they felt this created in the use of differing professional language and operational categories (Daniel et al, 2011:13). The following extract highlights the presence of differing agency perspectives in a multi-agency environment:

> 'Because the social worker sees things from a different aspect and perspective to the teacher'. **Head Teacher, DSP (Rural Authority primary school)** [10/554].

This point is further exemplified, where a teacher explains her application of social work language to a referral with the aim of giving it meaning within a social services context:

> 'At the time, luckily, I was living with a social worker, and she gave me advice on how to track it [neglect] and how to record it. There does need to be more than just a grubby child, and I guess this is where our definitions come from; where we as a society, you know, - so children's services act on certain things, they don't act on others. They are working to their own

definitions...which have come from wherever – you know '. **Class Teacher & Governor (Urban Authority primary school)** *[18/288].*

The above extract illustrates the communication barrier that exists between school staff and social work practitioners. Ferguson (2011) suggests that referrals which detail serious concerns about a child are not consistently interpreted by social services in the manner intended, often carrying less weight and capturing less attention (Tupper et al, 2016). This point was highlighted by a number of school staff who feel that social services understand their concerns as lower risk than they had intended.

School staff identify considerable variance between the broader definition of neglect (i.e. a child not having their basic needs met) and the tighter operational categories set by statutory agencies (Daniel, 2011). Conceptual definitions of child neglect are based upon an understanding of the nature of the problem, whereas operational meanings aim to measure the severity and chronicity of the presenting problem in order to unlock access to scarce resources (Tang, 2008). The disparity between agency understandings of neglect creates difficulties and tensions across organisational boundaries, particularly if professional relationships (fundamental to child protection) are not functioning effectively (Davies & Ward, 2012; Ferguson, 2011; Thompson, 2016).

Power of Social Services

Such professional boundaries create problems that can manifest themselves in a power-imbalance between the education system and statutory social work practice (Tett et al, 2003). The third part of this chapter examines the imbalanced nature and dynamic of roles in a multi-agency working environment (Ferguson, 2011). Here, school staff talk about their tendency to defer to social workers' expertise when responding to child neglect, perceiving statutory practitioners as authoritative and powerful 'agents of the

state' (Wilks, 2011). The extract below demonstrates this perspective, as a teacher expresses how she commonly seeks practice guidance from social services to inform her work with children experiencing neglect:

> *'I do know if I need advice on certain things it would be going straight to*
> *…not so much the social workers, but their bosses; just giving them a ring.*
> *"It's something I'm really, really concerned with" or "which way do I go*
> *here?" in a certain aspect; and the other thing would be to phone the school*
> *social worker to find out "right I've got this scenario…where am I going?"'*
> **Head Teacher (Rural Authority primary school)** *[10/539].*

School staff commonly speak about seeking advice from statutory practitioners to help guide the direction of practice with children in school. In the extract above, the head teacher makes reference to liaising with a 'school social worker' whose role was to provide general advice and guidance to a number of schools in the local authority. Social work practitioners are often seen by other agencies as 'professionalised' experts (Lymberry, 1998) in child neglect who hold substantial specialised knowledge. The following quotation exemplifies this belief:

> *'You know…on the whole, you'll agree with the social worker because they've*
> *done all the sort of… background work. They give you their report; so you*
> *tend to go with them, unless you feel…I don't think I have ever had to go*
> *against the social worker'.* **Head Teacher DSP (Rural Authority primary school)**
> *[10/270].*

In the extract the head teacher expresses how they never have had to 'go against' the judgement or opinion of a social worker, instead commonly conceding to the statutory practitioner's professional expertise and knowledge. This raises questions about the supposed power of social service practitioners, and their perceived role of 'expert' in the field of neglect (Lymberry, 1998). This is particularly relevant, given the paradoxical situation which emerges in terms of school staff's belief that they are better positioned to offer regular support, and that they are much more knowledgeable about the child's

daily lived experience than the social worker (as mentioned previously in part two of this chapter).

School staff also talk about the difference between their identity as an educator, compared to that of their statutory social work colleagues. The following extract from an assistant head teacher demonstrates the positioning of blame on the social worker when they talked about a child being placed in the care of the local authority. The teacher talks about how the family locates responsibility with the statutory powers of the social worker, despite the school being the agency that initially raised the concerns for the child and instigated the referral to social services:

> *'the two boys for example who were taken off their parents; they clearly blame the social worker for that not the school for putting in the referral, you know in the first instance, but it was the social worker that did the investigation and took them off, well, went to court to get the Court Order to get them off – and then the social worker's the one that actually picks them up and takes them round to the foster carer's house. I think the parents understand in that sense, like we're kind of the "middle man" in that we're not the police, we're not social services, we're here to provide an education'.*
> **Assistant Head Teacher, DSP (Urban Authority secondary school)** *[24/513].*

In the quotation, the teacher acknowledges that although it was the school who primarily made the referral to social services, it is the social work practitioners' state role which conveys power and authority to the family (Wilks, 2011). Although there is mutual accountability for both school staff and social workers for reporting safeguarding concerns to the standing authority (Welsh Government, 2008), the powers for statutory intervention are held by statutory social workers.

In the interviews a number of school staff express how they utilise the differences in their professional identity, disassociating themselves from social services in order to engage more positively in long-term relationships with families (Pithouse & Crowley,

2016). This perspective is prominent in the aforementioned extract whereby the teacher stated "we're the middle man…we're not social services". It can also be seen in the following extract where a pastoral manager framed the social worker as the evil character in the scenario to be feared (Winter 1992) and in contrast, school staff as the 'in-between or go-to people' that can help the child:

> *'Some students see social workers as the 'big bad wolf' because the social worker is the one that says "I'm sorry, we're whipping you away". And sometimes you can be that balancing factor…because you know you can say "well look, you know, person X is here to help you, they're not there to take you away!" And I think sometimes we – education- can be seen as that 'in-between' you know, 'go-to person' I think'.* **Pastoral Manager, (Valleys Authority secondary school)** *[26/232].*

In the above quotation, the pastoral manager expresses the distinction between how school staff see their safeguarding role compared to that of a social work practitioner. The extract refers to the school's mediating role in terms of safeguarding their students from neglect, by establishing ameliorating relationships both with and between families and social workers (Thompson, 2016), by disassociating the school' role from that of statutory services described as the 'big bad wolves'. A number of school staff also speak of the negative image they believe families have attached to statutory intervention, which Dumbrill (2006) suggests is influenced by parents' experiences of social workers using power 'over them'. The following extracts illustrate the stigma of social services which a number of staff talk about as significantly impacting upon families' engagement with statutory services:

> *'but we find in this school that there's a lot of children just on that border you know, that could benefit with a little more but because of the stigma of social services…'.* **Teaching Assistant (Rural Authority secondary school)** *[11/254].*

> *'And lots of families around here are a bit jumpy about social services involvement…so as soon as you make that phone call to them they pretty*

much like to keep you away, so that's another thing – we know a lot of
families with drugs, they don't like any official person coming near to their
houses'. **Head Teacher, DSP (Valleys Authority primary school)** *[01/361].*

In the next quotation a teacher expresses the common resistance she believes is felt by parents at the prospect of receiving statutory intervention. Throughout the interviews staff also talk about families' negative experiences of social services, which they feel are rooted in the fear of having their children removed from their care by the local authority:

'But yes; yes there are times when people say "I don't want social workers
involved" or "I don't want children's services involved; I've had them before
and they're no good, they don't help me" kind of thing. "I don't want them
[children] taken away" you know…and so on and so forth'. **Class Teacher &**
Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator, DSP (Urban Authority primary school)
[17/211].

The extract highlights the negative image and stigma surrounding social workers and social work intervention (Franklin, 1998; Galilee, 2016) and the common fear that working with statutory services results in children being removed from parents and placed in local authority care (Katz et al, 2007b). Wroe (1988) suggests that social work 'stories' only become interesting to society when significant failures in the system occur, and high profile cases of neglect such as the sad death of Dylan Seabridge who died from scurvy in South Wales (CYUSR Mid & West Wales Safeguarding Children's Board, 2015) are extensively covered by the media. The day-to-day multifaceted and often slow nature of social work and its successes are generally discordant with what society considers to be interesting and worthy of media coverage.

Pond (2011) identifies a common misbelief that statutory social workers have the legal powers to remove children from their homes when their safety and well-being is placed at risk, when in fact a practitioner must go through the family court to have such

recommendations endorsed. Moreover, Bray & Preston-Shoot (2009), suggest social work practitioners feel discomfort in exercising control and authority in practice, worrying about whether families will observe legally mandated court interventions (Pond, 2011). In spite of this, school staff suggested that social workers were criticised by the public and believed to be directly answerable for carrying out safeguarding processes. The aforementioned extract from a class teacher (on the previous page) was the only instance in the study where a member of school staff understood that the social worker did not possess definitive accountability for the decision to place a child in local authority care (Pond, 2011). This raises questions about whether school staff understand the limitations of statutory powers when social workers intervene in cases of child neglect.

Ironically, the negative image of social services (Galilee, 2016) appears to be further perpetuated by school staff in terms of their disassociation from social work practitioners. In the interviews, a number of school staff were keen to ensure parents clearly understood that school-based services were not in any way connected to statutory services. Many school staff also talk about drawing upon the method of telling parents they would refer matters to social services, should they not engage with the support being offered by the school. The schools' commission of statutory involvement is demonstrated in the following extract where a teacher draws upon the authority of social services as a mechanism to encourage families to engage with the school-based support:

> *'We had a Team Around the Child meeting with the family. More concerns were expressed and more 'threat' is the wrong word – it was 'suggested' that if they didn't attend the next set of appointments then a referral would be made'. **Class Teacher & Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator, DSP (Urban Authority primary school)** [17/370].*

In the following extract, a head teacher tells a parent that she will make a call to children's services if she feels the current situation for the child does not improve. The quotation illustrates how school staff use the leverage and power of involving social

services in their work with parents, by inferring statutory intervention would be the next inevitable stage:

> *'I also said that under my role as the Child Protection Officer in the school,*
> *that I would be picking up the phone to Children's Services if I felt that the*
> *child was at threat of neglect – at risk. And we did have a couple of*
> *[children] who went through a couple of months…a bit wary to say things; I*
> *mean we noticed it. But we have a counselling service in school, took a while*
> *to actually work with the parents to say, "there is no link to social services;*
> *this is completely independent service available for the children".* **Head**
> **Teacher, DSP (Urban Authority primary school)** *[16/291].*

In the extract the teacher went on to highlight the impact this approach had upon the families' ongoing relationship with the school, when parents became sceptical and mistrusting of school-based support. Statutory power can be used by practitioners to both encourage and undermine ethical practice with families in the child protection process (Thorpe, 2011). Smith (2011) states that the power dynamics present in multi-agency practice rest on the interaction between a number of aspects of practitioners' identity, the individuals the practitioner is working with those who influence the interventions (such as the school), and the standing authority. Here, the term 'power' is used in the sense of exerting force and having 'power over' families who neglect their children, with school staff drawing upon such power to instigate a referral for statutory investigation (Tew, 2006) should parents not comply with the school-based support that is offered to them.

Rules and Routines

The fourth part of this chapter focuses upon the culture of 'rules and routines'. The majority of school staff speak about the presence of a strong order of rules and routines within the school system. The discussion considers how the presence of policies and protocols within the school simplifies and speeds-up decision-making when staff work with concerns of child neglect, whilst also easing the pressures upon their daily roles

(Rowe, 2012). Rules and routines were particularly evident in relation to staff following organisational safeguarding procedures, specifically the process of notifying the DSP (also known as Designated Child Protection Officer or Teacher) about any concerns held about a child (Bandele, 2009). School staff talk about the process of 'passing up' concerns through the school's hierarchy, and the potential discomfort at the prospect of 'stepping outside' of prescribed institutional roles. The following extract exemplifies the school's operational structure of reporting safeguarding concerns:

> *'I don't make any referrals at all to agencies. If I've got any worries, if I'm dealing with a pupil X amount more than anyone else, I'll always refer down to the child protection officers and everything will go to those two members of staff. What I've been told is that if you've done that, you passed on the duty then to the Child Protection Officer, because what I've done is to keep it to myself and not doing that child the service....then they can add extra things onto it'.* **Class Teacher (Rural Authority secondary school)** *[15/162].*

The above quotation illustrates the process-led, ordered structure of safeguarding children within the educational setting (Welsh Government, 2015). It conveys the school's operational safeguarding system, which school staff refer to as a necessary structure that provides procedural guidance in the event of concerns about a child. The 'Keeping Learners Safe in Education' policy requires schools in Wales to appoint a Designated Senior Person (DSP) for Child Protection who holds lead responsibility for managing all safeguarding issues within the school (Welsh Government, 2015b). All staff talk about how they must contact the DSP directly with their concerns. The policy itself states that the person need not be a teacher but must be a senior member of the school's leadership with the authority to undertake the DSP role. Lipsky (1980, Rowe, 2012) refers to 'street-level bureaucrats' as individuals who develop processes and systems which help them in their work, often interpreting externally imposed rules or agency constrictions in ways which help them to achieve their objective.

A number of school staff also talk about the DSP having received additional training on how to recognise and identify the signs of abuse and neglect, as they take responsibility

for knowing when to make referrals to investigating agencies (Welsh Government, 2015). Staff speak about their awareness of two DSPs in their schools, often a 'Child Protection Officer' and a 'Deputy Child Protection Officer', occasionally one of each gender, which they approached with concerns about a child, in congruence with the school's safeguarding policy. The following extract from a class teacher further illustrates the evidence of this process in schools:

> *'There is a system; there has to be…you know…there has to be a system to follow – I understand, but if I were concerned – if any of us were really concerned about a child, and we didn't have a 'catalogue' or chronology, and in my experience I say to the child protection officer "I want children's services called" – nine times out of ten it will happen'.* **Class Teacher & Governor (Urban Authority primary school)** *[18/326].*

In the above quotation, the teacher talks about following a system of cataloguing and recording concerns about a child living with neglect. Even in the absence of a chronology, should the teacher have 'serious concerns', the extract suggests that the more direct route (outside of the system) was still to report the concerns to the child protection officer in the school, rather than informing social services directly. This reflects clear school-based guidance together with expected codes of behaviour, including a tiered reporting structure present within the school for staff members to follow (Bandele, 2009). In the next extract a teaching assistant went further to express the presence of a strict internal graded reporting system:

> *'…talking to a few TAs [teaching assistants] over the last few years, have not even known that you're not supposed to speak to anybody in between; that it's supposed to go straight to a child protection officer. You're not supposed to chat about it amongst yourselves, obviously I know that'.* **Senior Teaching Assistant (Urban Authority primary school)** *[20/214].*

The extract demonstrates the presence of structure in the school, referring to the rules surrounding systematic recording of information about the child and the subsequent deferring of concerns directly to the DSP for child protection. This point is further

illustrated in the two following extracts both of which are from teachers. In the second extract the class teacher highlights the importance of the reporting system and the fundamental requirement to follow school procedure even when a parent was a colleague on the school's board of governors:

'The safeguarding officer; we couldn't refer to social services without the Safeguarding Officer being involved'. **Reception Teacher (Rural Authority primary school)** *[07/171].*

'And so, when that child made the disclosure, I obviously took it to the child protection officer and it was a feeling of "oh gosh! This is going to be awkward" sort of thing. But at no point did we say "we won't follow procedure because it's this family", we followed procedure - as we always would do.' **Class Teacher & Governor (Urban Authority primary school)** *[18/427].*

School staff consistently refer to the hierarchical structure of the education system, frequently expressing the notion of 'passing on' or 'passing up' concerns about a child through the school's 'chain of command' to the DSP (Welsh Government, 2015). Staff are evidently focused upon the rules and regulations which surround their individual roles, particularly in regards to sharing information solely with the DSP. The following extract from a teaching assistant illustrates a sense of security in the school's structural hierarchy. She talks about the notion of 'passing on' her concerns about a child 'higher up' as 'doing her bit' within the constraints of her role:

'...and then it's passed on, higher up, to the child protection team. Well, I personally went with "go and tell someone". Tell someone and then I've done my bit: I've not left it, I'm not going to feel awful if something else happens, because I have voiced my concern. I think the procedure works well; and the 'passing it up' is what we call it. We 'pass it up' to the next person and then they deal with it. And then we're told "don't worry about it; it's done. You've done your bit; that's done"'. **Teaching Assistant (Urban Authority primary school)** *[19/185].*

As illustrated in the above extract, a number of staff speak about the comfort of knowing they had fulfilled their role in the school's reporting processes. Staff talk about how they were concerned with the satisfaction of the reporting requirements in their individual role, by passing information 'up' to the relevant person. This was consistent with the findings of Thompson's (2016) research into the sharing of information in multi-agency settings, with teachers recognising a need to carefully comply with appropriate reporting procedures in the school.

Some school staff went further, talking about a sense of powerlessness in terms of the restrictions placed upon their individual role within the school. The following extract demonstrates how a member of school staff expresses passing on concerns about neglect to the DSP. She speaks explicitly about meeting the expectations of the education service's safeguarding policy, and describes how she has a limited amount of power to do anything more:

> *'So I've spoken verbally to a member of staff that needed to know, pointed out that it's something that I've seen and it bothers me, I've emailed the Head of Year – what do they call them now – Pastoral Manager, just to say my concerns; so I know I have passed that on; and should anything happen to him, I've done my bit. That sounds awful – 'I've done my bit and that's OK' – it's not OK, but I've done what I should do; or feel I should do; because it's not in my power to go any further than that. If that sort of makes sense?'*
> **Attendance Officer (Valleys Authority secondary school)** *[28/140].*

She refers to the conflict between the policy guidelines of the school's hierarchical reporting process, and her ability to be more involved in the safeguarding process. Reference is made to primarily satisfying the policy limitations of her role, whilst she also expresses a sense of powerlessness to go beyond these duties. She states 'it's not in my power to go any further than that'. This point is further compounded when she talks about the school's reporting hierarchy being enforced by senior members of staff:

'I suppose it's the protocol – or the policy – you report it to that person and that person takes it further, and so on. If there's a child protection issue, I know the individual I have to go to and then it's out of my hands, once I've reported it. I think it's a little bit of a contentious issue in the sense of, I can almost hear senior management saying, "it isn't your role, to decide. If you're worried about that child, you pass the information on to the person who's responsible for child protection. They will decide."' **Attendance Officer (Valleys Authority secondary school)** *[28/223].*

There is a variance between the policy responses that govern children's safeguarding in the school system and social services. The inherent power of rules within the education system mediates against individual agency being exercised. It is therefore surprising to find a different approach being taken with social services, which places the responsibility for reporting concerns about children's safety and well-being upon the individual practitioner (Welsh Government, 2004 & 2008). Although this divergence in policy guidance highlights an important inter-disciplinary difference between two organisational structures whose aim is to work effectively with one another to safeguard children from neglect (Davies & Ward, 2012), the educational policy implementing the role of DSPs in schools also ensures that inappropriate referrals which do not meet statutory thresholds are rightly filtered-out before they are sent to social services.

Lack of Professional Confidence

The final part of this chapter explores the crisis of confidence amongst staff in their ability to recognise and respond to child neglect (Bandele, 2009; Hendry & Baginsky, 2008). Cawson (2002) suggests that one in six children will at some point experience maltreatment by their parents, whilst discrimination or bullying in school is the most common form of harm experienced by children in the United Kingdom. This figure again highlights the key role staff play in safeguarding children in their day-to-day roles in schools, and draws attention to the adequacy of training on safeguarding practice, and

more specifically, whether staff have the relevant skills, support and confidence to identify and respond to child neglect (Hendry & Baginsky, 2008).

Nearly all of the school staff talked of having regular generic level 1 child protection training since having commenced employment at the school (Children in Wales, 2008; Welsh Government, 2015). However, all school staff spoke about the lack of neglect-specific training they had received or which had been offered to them whilst being in their school-based roles. The majority of the qualified teaching staff also referred to the absence of neglect-specific training in their pre-service qualifications (Hodginson & Baginsky, 2000; McKee & Dillenburger, 2009), with a number of qualified education staff having gained limited safeguarding practice experience whilst on vocational placements. The following extracts illustrate the absence of relevant training as part of staff's pre-service qualifications:

> *'…no [training on neglect], at degree level. Its twenty odd years ago… we definitely did special needs and things, but I didn't feel as though when I started my first year that I was ready. I was quite, yeah, I was very naïve about what was happening out there'.* **Head Teacher, DSP (Valleys Authority primary school)** *[01/283].*

> *'We didn't learn masses during my degree, but with my placements I learnt my training for child protection.'* **Inclusion Worker (Urban Authority secondary school)** *[30/50].*

In the above extracts, both members of staff express feelings of being 'unprepared' in their ability to effectively deal with the issue of child neglect when beginning their careers. As previously discussed in the literature review in chapter two, research into teacher training in child abuse and neglect raises questions about how adequately teachers are prepared for the contribution they will make in identifying child neglect within the school setting (Abrahams et al, 1992; Hodgkinson & Baginsky, 2000; McKee & Dillenburger, 2009). Many staff also talk of feeling inexperienced in their roles within the school, not having received training in the matter of child neglect in their pre-service

qualifications. This point is supported by literature which suggests that newly-qualified teachers do not feel ready to respond to, or deal effectively with childhood trauma on entering professional practice due to the lack of training (Baginsky, 2001; Baginsky & Macpherson, 2005; Walsh et al, 2005).

In the first extract, the head teacher expresses that her pre-service training was 'twenty odd years ago' raising concerns about the present-day relevance of some school-staff's conceptualisations of neglect. As a social construct, neglect continues to move and change temporally through the effect of cultural and conceptual values (Garbarino et al, 1986; Scourfield, 2000). This is further exemplified in 2014 with the introduction of the Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act which recently removed the word 'persistent' from the definition of neglect, highlighting the shifting nature of statutory thresholds for intervention (Social Care Legislation in Wales, 2017b).

Hodgkinson & Baginsky (2000) suggest that superficial or merely satisfactory working knowledge of safeguarding procedures within school-centred training endangers the essential deeper understanding of child protection issues, leaving education staff feeling unready for practice in schools. The limited access to and consequentially, absence of, neglect-specific training for education staff is further exemplified by the following extract from a head teacher:

> *'That's run by the LSCBs [Local Children's Safeguarding Boards]; it can be quite difficult to actually get on those courses at the moment. I think the demand far outstrips the supply...it's first come first served... We've been lucky, I've been able to get my DCPTs [DSPs] onto the training as well, that's important, they, in my absence, are the person that staff would report any disclosures or fears, or concerns they have about children'.* **Head Teacher, DSP (Urban Authority primary school)** *[16/35].*

In the quotation, the head teacher states that neglect-specific courses provided for schools by the Local Authority are commonly difficult for management to access for

their staff. Sinclair Taylor and Hodgkinson (2001) argue that despite child neglect being a significant social issue for teaching professionals, the education profession has been slow in forming a discipline-specific knowledge base within schools. In the above extract, the head teacher speaks about the difficulty of accessing appropriate courses from the training providers, even for her two teachers who held DSP roles for child protection within the school. Bandele (2009) states that all school staff including administrative, kitchen, and other ancillary workers as well as teaching and support workers should have relevant and regular training in safeguarding.

McClare (1983) argues that it is imperative that all levels of education staff access specific information in order to develop their knowledge and understanding of child neglect, along with an awareness of appropriate reporting procedures within educational institutions. In the absence of professional training, a substantial number of school staff spoke about how they drew upon their own values and experiences. The following extracts demonstrate how staff relied upon their personal constructions of what they believed 'good enough' parenting to be (Horwath, 2005:73, 2013:7):

> *'In university we probably did it very, very briefly we could have had – gosh! – you know a seminar on it…but not as much as we should have…now being here [school] we've had level 1 training. I suppose I felt prepared [for dealing with neglect] in a sense, because I had my first child at 22, so I kind of have expectations of how children should be looked after – if that makes sense.'*
> **Class Teacher, DSP (Valleys Authority primary school)** *[03/37]*.

In the above quotation, the teacher expresses the inadequacy of neglect-specific training in her pre-service qualification, and goes on to talk about having accessed level 1 generic child protection training since her employment with the school. She states that her personal experiences of motherhood constructed her professional understanding of what she considered an appropriate and acceptable level of care for a child. In the interviews, a number of staff drew upon notions of lay knowledge as a mechanism for bridging a lack of understanding about neglect. School staff also talk about their own awareness of neglect and abuse, rather than their conceptualisation of

the problem. In the following extract, an administrator says she has a 'good awareness' of neglect, and felt prepared for her work because of her own experiences as a mother:

> *'Yes, I had a good awareness of abuse and neglect. I felt prepared for the role*
> *- being a mum makes a big difference in interacting with children'.* **School**
> **Administrator (Rural Authority primary school)** *[6/15].*

In the following extract, a teaching assistant expresses the need for more school-based neglect-specific training. She talks about how her construction of neglect was embedded in her personal experiences whilst growing up and therefore rooted to her own thoughts, feelings and actions. The extract highlights the connection between school staff's personal experiences of parenting and their subsequent construction of neglect in professional practice with families:

> *'I think we should have more insets [training days], so our evening meetings*
> *on a Thursday we should have more insets on neglect. Maybe I am talking*
> *from where I came from, as a child; you don't know what it's like until you*
> *are in it, and I think a lot of people I work with have come from very*
> *privileged backgrounds, and may not identify neglect as I would, as I saw it*
> *growing up. And just looking at the things that we should be looking for, and*
> *not to jump to any conclusions, because of course something could be*
> *something completely different to what you're thinking about and it might*
> *not be neglect'.* **Senior Teaching Assistant (Urban Authority primary school)**
> *[20/581].*

In the extract, the teaching assistant provides insight into the diverse construction of child neglect amongst school staff and its association with the idea of what individuals consider to be acceptable levels of parenting. Thompson (2006) argues that individual workers interacting with families have ideas and attitudes about specific groups in society which are shaped by experiences at the personal level. These attitudes have potential to create barriers, preventing unbiased and non-judgemental practice. In the interviews, some staff stated they had received limited school-based training and talked

about the desire to further improve their knowledge and skills. The following extract demonstrates this perspective:

'yeah…we sometimes …we've done a couple [training sessions] as lunchtime assistants; we've come in and we're coming in next Friday to do one…I find those quite interesting because you learn different things and it helps you to sort of …how you're dealing with sort of different sorts of children'.
Lunchtime Supervisor (Rural Authority primary school) *[9/83].*

In the quotation, the lunchtime supervisor talks about how the training helped her learn new things and deal with 'different sorts of children' in her role. Staff commonly reflect upon their own knowledge and confidence in working with children suspected of living with neglect, and the powerful role that their personal values and beliefs play (Thompson, 2016) in guiding the way they respond to particular children.   In their recent study into pre-service teachers' own identity and their attitude toward child maltreatment, corporal punishment, mandated reporting, and parental discipline techniques, Kesner et al (2016) identified an association between racial group, and ratings of abusiveness of parental discipline on children and young people. Teachers' racial identity has also been found to impact upon levels of reporting practice, with African American teachers reporting less maltreatment than other racial groups (Kenny, 2001). This suggests that teachers' cultural beliefs influence attitudes and beliefs about the appropriateness of maltreatment at some level.

Concluding Comments

The chapter has explored five common themes, each connected by the overarching narrative of 'unevenness and difference' which runs throughout the findings chapters of this thesis. This final analysis chapter has drawn upon interviews with school staff and discussed the differences which have emerged between the school system and social services when responding to child neglect. At the individual level, difference was evident in the practice of specific school staff; at the cultural level it manifested through discursive interpretations of professional responsibility; and at the structural level the

unevenness and difference presented itself in the organisational aims, purposes and the policy frameworks that govern practice within each agency. Although some instances of good quality practice were evident, the discussions were primarily drawn from the common majority which emphasised the challenging nature of the inter-agency partnership between schools and social services in the field of neglect.

The first theme discussed the 'visibility of neglect', highlighting staff's reliance upon visible forms of evidence on the child, in the absence of access to wider contextual knowledge and information. The theme focuses upon the organisational positioning which enables staff to connect and relate to children in close and familiar ways to keep them safe from harm (Ferguson, 2017). There was focus upon the need to gather tangible evidence of the problem, so as to support and legitimise referrals concerning neglect to social services. The second theme emphasised the significance of the relationship between the school and social services. Staff expressed different professional understandings of neglect to those used by the social work 'experts' (Evetts, 2003) in the statutory agency, with contrasting professional language and operational categories further compounding difficulties with inter-agency communication. Different professional functions were identified as contextualising uneven decision-making within each discourse; social work practitioners had significantly less contact with the child than the school, but instead a greater access to information about the child.

The third theme considered the power of social services. School staff conceptualised social workers as powerful 'agents of the state', positioning them as experts to whom they deferred for specialist knowledge of child neglect. The fourth theme explored the presence of rules and routines within the education system, identifying an internal graded reporting system for safeguarding concerns. Staff expressed working within the constraints of a strong order of organisational rules, identifying an important divergence between each policy response within its respective professional discourse. The fifth and final theme considered the crisis of confidence staff were experiencing in their professional capacity to recognise and respond to child neglect. Nearly all of the staff

cited the lack of neglect-specific training within pre-service qualification and/or current employment as being detrimental to confidently conceptualising and defining the problem.

The overall discussion has underlined themes where difference strongly emerged. Findings strongly suggest that inter-agency practice needs to be strengthened (Stevenson, 2005) across the education and social disciplines with the purpose of delivering more effective, early identification and prevention of neglect in schools (Haynes, 2015; NSPCC, 2015; Stevens & Laing, 2015). Specifically, focus needs to be placed upon the communicative interface where schools make, and social services receive, referrals about children suspected of living with neglect (Pithouse & Crowley, 2016). This area is one which is highlighted in Sidebotham et al's (2016) triennial analysis of Serious Case Reviews, referred to as a 'pressure point' where cases are 'stepped up' from universal services on the boundary into and out of the statutory services for child protection.

This discussion has identified a number of challenges which arise between school staff and social work practitioners and has highlighted the impact of difference in professional languages, the limitations of only seeing neglect within the school setting, the effect of individual values and beliefs in practice, and the importance of practitioners establishing trusting inter-agency relationships with local services (Haynes, 2015; Haynes et al, 2015; Laming, 2009; NSPCC, 2015). These challenges become particularly evident in the context of child neglect due to its definitional differences, conceptual complexity, and a myriad of associated and compounding factors (Stevenson, 2005). Although school staff might be aware of neglectful concerns, findings suggest they lack the knowledge of the extent of the impact of neglect on a child and the professional confidence, skills and language to effectively communicate their worries to statutory services (Brandon et al; 2014).

7. Conclusion

This thesis has investigated the role of schools in identifying and responding to child neglect. The final chapter of the thesis now summarises the findings of the research and is organised into five sections for discussion. The chapter begins by briefly returning to the aim and purpose of the study. The first, second and third sections, next consider the three research questions posed. In sequential order, findings to research questions are revisited and are arranged into four sections: (i) implications for social work, (ii) implications for schools, and (iii) implications for inter-agency practice, and (iv) implications for other professionals. The fifth part of the chapter acknowledges a number of limitations to the study. The sixth and final section outlines the implications for research into the school's role when responding to child neglect. It begins by identifying lessons for social services, then determines a number of directions for the development of this research in the future. The chapter concludes the thesis by offering key messages for national and international practice when responding to child neglect in mainstream schools.

It is widely acknowledged that safeguarding children is not the sole responsibility of social services (Baginsky, 2008; Brandon & Belderson, 2016; NSPCC, 2015 & 2016b; Taylor & Daniel, 2005; Welsh Government, 2016; Woodman, 2016). With this in mind, schools are pivotal sites for recognising and intervening in cases of child neglect at the earliest point possible within existing universal services (NSPCC, 2015; Stevens & Laing, 2015). At school children are seen for a number of hours each week, by a range of staff, and in a variety of school-based contexts.

This thesis offers new evidence about the nature and level of support mainstream schools in Wales currently provide to children who are living with neglect. The mixed methods study employed social work case file analysis within local authorities, semi-structured interviews with a range of school staff, and non-participant observation of school-based meetings. The aim of the research was to investigate the level of involvement of schools when responding to child neglect, by exploring the personal

experiences of a range of school staff when working with children in their everyday roles. The study has principally highlighted the complexity which exists within the inter-professional relationship between the school and social services, and the impact this has upon the effective delivery of preventative support to children within the school-setting.

This study has brought evidence to better understand the ways in which schools in Wales currently respond to the issue of child neglect. The results will hopefully inform future policy and practice in schools and improve the overall well-being of children who are suspected of living with neglect. The main focus of the thesis has been to answer three key research questions posed by the study: (i) what is the extent of involvement of mainstream primary and secondary schools in identifying and responding to child neglect in the child protection process? (ii) what are the experiences of school staff in different roles when responding to children and their parents when they are concerned that a child is experiencing child neglect? and (iii) what is the nature of the relationship between schools and social services in responding to child neglect? These questions have provided the overarching framework for the study's design and composition and are now returned to in sequence to present the conclusion to this thesis.

Implications for Social Work

Chapter four in the thesis was the first data analysis chapter. It answered the first research question posed by the study*: **What is the extent of involvement of mainstream primary and secondary schools in identifying and responding to child neglect in the child protection process?** The discussion drew upon the quantitative case file analysis of children's social work files *(n=119)* from the three participating local authorities in accordance with the study's sampling criteria. Substantial intricacy was identified in the data, resulting in three different levels of data: referral, child, and local authority. Largely, the discussion recognised the challenge of merging two multifaceted systems within one narrative, reflecting the messy reality of inter-agency practice between the school and social services in the field of child neglect.

The analysis highlighted the complexity which surrounds the conceptualisation of child neglect in the context of varying local authority thresholds. Divergence was acknowledged between the broader theoretical definitions of neglect, and the narrower operational and professional categories of statutory practice which exist in social services (Horwath, 2013), with the heavy procedural guidance of child protection described as the muddled reality of social work processes (Baginsky, 2008; Okitikpi, 2011). In the context of differing threshold levels for service intervention in child neglect, variance was identified in practice across the three local authorities participating in the study. These included differences in the age of the child when neglect was noticed by the school, the types of neglect that were identified, the under-reporting of children experiencing neglect from BAME backgrounds, and the levels of support and resources implemented by individual schools.

In addition to the variances in local authority practice, a number of difficulties also emerged in the nature and level of the case file data the study produced, during both data collection processes and data analysis. Firstly, the size of the available sample was significantly constrained by the number of files they had which met the study's sampling criteria. This was for two reasons: firstly the small population levels in the local authorities and secondly the focus upon only sampling referrals made by schools (which resulted in the child being placed upon the CPR under the category of 'neglect'). Cases which were receiving CIN support for concerns of neglect (at a lower service level) had been excluded from the sample. This had been done because no consistent decision-making threshold existed to routinely categorise cases, outside of the child protection process and registration on the CPR.

With no consistent organisational system or process of categorisation in place to classify the type of concern held (at the lower levels of service intervention), potential bias within the sample would have been substantially increased due to the variability of individual practitioner judgments about what constitutes child neglect. *A recommendation is consequently made to scale up future research in this field, by*

increasing the number of local authorities invited to participate in a larger-sized study in
the future, whilst maintaining the current sampling criteria. This would expand the study
in size, allowing greater generalisability of the findings, whilst maintaining the focus
upon cases which have met the statutory threshold level for 'significant harm' (The
Children Act, 1989).

During data analysis, high levels of missing case file data emerged on a number of
variables with regards to the child's characteristics: 'Religion' (46.2%), 'Child's Main
Language' (26.9%), and 'Whether the child was subject to a Statement of Educational
Need' (52.1%). This limited the level of statistical analysis made possible in the study, as
the variables could not be included in a predictor model as anticipated. Missing data on
'Child's Main Language' was found to be of particular concern, given the current policy
agenda for the promotion and facilitation of Welsh language in the country in
accordance with Welsh Language Measure 2011 (Law Wales, 2016). The Welsh
Minister's strategy highlights the importance of evaluation and research and aims to
build evidence about the Welsh language and its speakers as a basis for assessing the
effectiveness of interventions and development of Welsh language policy (Welsh
Government, 2017d:60). Moreover, the Welsh Language Commissioner's regulatory
framework emphasises the significance of measuring the performance of organisations
against language duties, whilst also reporting on the language experiences of Welsh
language users (WLC, 2016).

In addition to the high levels of missing case file data, the variable 'Ethnicity' was also
highlighted in terms of its inadequacy in the categorisation of diversity within the White
population. Given the lack of diversity in Wales at a national level, and the subsequent
prevalence of White British children in the reported sample (86.6%), understanding
whether there is a correlation between a child's ethnicity and the likelihood of them
experiencing neglect was problematic. *A recommendation is made for the enhanced*
collection of information on a more granular level within social services in terms of a
child's ethnicity. The current recording mechanisms within local authorities for ethnicity
do not adequately capture diversity, instead offering categorisations which are a mixture
of physical attributes (black or white) with a country or continent of heritage (Thoburn,

2016). Case file data capture could be greatly improved in local authorities by introducing additional categories of ethnicity within the White group, congruent with classifications set out in the most recent census of England and Wales (ONS, 2011), which would deepen knowledge and understanding of child neglect.

A strong need is acknowledged for more robust case file data in the field. Routinely collecting specific demographic data at a national level on every child's file would support the development of future research in this field. It would also allow more sophisticated data analysis techniques to be used in future studies, and subsequently the identification of emerging patterns within the data. The SSWB Act (2014) guidance introduced a National Minimum Core Data Set (NMCDS) to promote consistent recording practice across Wales when assessing children (Welsh Government, 2015c). Currently, the NMCDS requires specific data to be collected when a child's needs are deemed eligible for a support plan, however the amount of the information required is limited. *It is recommended that practitioners in social services are required to collect additional core data on children's electronic case files with the purpose of improving levels of recording practice, and subsequently data availability for research into child neglect within statutory practice. These variables would be 'flagged-up' on a child's electronic case-file and include 'religion', 'number of siblings', 'category of concern' (at all service intervention levels), 'whether the child was subjected to an SEN', and more extensive classifications within 'ethnicity'. As the variable 'preferred language' is already included in the common baseline information as a recording requirement within the NMCDS, practitioners should be encouraged to consistently record this data variable on every child's file.*

Implications for Schools

Chapter five in the thesis answered the second research question posed by the study: **What are the experiences of school staff in different roles when responding to children and their parents when they are concerned that a child is experiencing child neglect?** The discussion drew mainly upon the qualitative interviews undertaken with a range of staff

in the six participating schools (*n=30*). Exploration provided greater detail about the cultural variances which exist within individual schools when responding to concerns of child neglect. Thematic analysis revealed three main factors to be influential in the quality of the school's response to neglect: (i) proactive and reactive approaches, (ii) learning and training environments, and (iii) staff's relationships with families.

The smaller-sized schools demonstrated good practice more when identifying and responding to child neglect in their everyday roles. This was evident in the nature and consistency of the practice, and the manner in which it was embedded in the schools organisation. Intervening in child neglect at the earliest opportunity was recognised as a way to minimise the long-term effects of child neglect (Allen, 2011; Davies & Ward, 2012; Munro, 2011b), whilst also reducing the cost to the public purse of delivering reactive services (Browne, 2007; Haynes, 2015; Stevens & Laing, 2015). Schools were recognised as playing a crucial and valuable role at the forefront of early identification (Baginsky, 2008; Hendry & Baginsky, 2008; Watson et al, 2012; Webb & Vulliamy, 2001). The staff in the smaller schools talked candidly about the existence of overarching strategies and cultures which framed the way in which they could work proactively with other professionals, when working with neglect in their daily roles. These findings resonate with Widmark et al's (2011) study into collaborative barriers between health care, social services and schools, which identified a lack of clarity in agencies' cultures and structures as impacting upon professional interactions.

In terms of taking a proactive approach to child neglect, an overarching ethos of safeguarding within the school was articulated as a substantial strength of early identification and preventative practice. Schools where a strategic member of staff possessed a strong personal interest in the issue of child neglect, conveyed enthusiasm and motivation, which also created awareness and concern amongst members of the wider staff team. This approach embedded commitment to noticing neglect at the earliest opportunity, as suggested by Haynes et al (2015) in their study titled 'Thriving Communities: a framework for preventing and intervening early in child neglect'. Such neglect 'champions' offered expertise and knowledge to the wider staff

group, and were responsible for the allocation of resources and funding to support and engage particular families in the community where children were suspected of living with neglect. *It is recommended that schools recruit strategic staff who also demonstrate a commitment to developing expertise in child neglect and the promotion of children's well-being within the school-setting. Employing managerial staff who are able to respond to the wide prevalence of child neglect in Wales (Stats Wales, 2011a & 2017b), within a social model of practice (Widmark et al, 2011), would improve inter-agency responses to the problem.*

In addition to preventative frameworks in schools, communities of practice were identified as providing effective learning environments where staff had the opportunity to draw upon the expertise and knowledge of more experienced colleagues or school-based professionals from a discipline other than education. These 'communities of practice' (Wenger et al, 2004) encouraged staff members to develop their expertise in working with child neglect, gain deeper knowledge whilst in the field or 'on the job', and at the same time accessing support and guidance from other more experienced professionals familiar with the practice setting of the school. The intimacy which manifested within the smaller-sized schools created learning environments which fostered effective communication amongst team members on cases of child neglect. These learning environments offered many opportunities for advice, guidance, and informal professional development in the area of working with child neglect for staff within the school-context.

Although staff in schools need to continue to develop their knowledge and awareness of child neglect (Gwilym & Haynes, 2015; Haynes, 2015; Haynes et al, 2015), the issue is not simply a problem of inadequate training. As Haynes et al (2015) suggest, in their study into preventing neglect within universal services, school staff need to feel confident in recognising and responding to neglect in their daily roles. Whilst pre-service and post-qualifying training can provide staff with the knowledge to recognise the signs and symptoms of neglect and understand the impact of neglect upon a child's development, possessing the ability to confidently articulate concerns successfully to

other practitioners and within your individual practice setting, is much more of a challenge.

Communities of practice within schools offer useful environments which can provide staff with regular informal opportunities to discuss and reflect upon complex cases of neglect within their individual institutions. Multi-agency team meetings, the framework of the TAF model, and reflective discussions which are focused upon concerns about a child experiencing neglect, all present occasions for staff to discuss cases, ask questions, seek advice, and learn from their more experienced peers. Findings also suggested that one-to-one learning can facilitate staff development in this area of work, as reported in a number of secondary schools in the study. In some of the larger-sized schools, mentoring schemes had been implemented which linked experienced staff members with newly-qualified or newly-appointed staff at the school which encouraged the dissemination and exchange of expertise.

These schemes supported staff to develop their skills, knowledge of internal and external safeguarding processes, and cultivate their professional confidence in how to most effectively respond to the presenting issue of neglect within their individual institution. *It is recommended that Head Teachers are supported to develop effective learning communities within their schools. This approach intends to complement elements of formal safeguarding and child neglect training which are already in place. Learning communities offer supportive environments where staff can apply learning from training directly to their practice, create regular opportunities for staff to develop appropriate professional responses, whilst improving inter-professional interactions within the school-setting.*

In addition to prioritising preventative approaches and the development of communities of practice within schools, analysis also emphasised the significance of staff's relationships with families. Many school staff highlighted the nature of their relationships with parents or carers as being pivotal to the quality of their practice when working with child neglect. Having an established relationship with the family, together

with some knowledge of their history and wider family functioning, was reported as hugely beneficial for informing decision-making practice in cases of neglect. The knowledge of the local community provided a sound basis from which staff felt able to challenge care which they believed fell short of 'good enough' parenting (Horwath, 2005 & 2013). Relationships were referred to as a platform from which reluctant families could be engaged with school-based support (Hughes & Owen, 2009). These findings are reinforced by Haynes et al (2015) who suggest that all practitioners in universal services should build and develop relationships with children and families to understand and be able to respond effectively to concerns of child neglect.

Teaching or learning support assistants, who had worked at the school for many years or who had grown-up or lived within the local area for an extended period of time, held insightful knowledge about families and the communities they lived within. They all talked about drawing upon their knowledge of the community and the networks within it, to help inform professional judgements made by the school. Opportunities such as the supervision of breakfast or after-school clubs, or extra-curricular activities also enabled staff to develop relationships with parents over a period of time and away from the focus of academic attainment (Haynes et al, 2015; Tanner & Turney, 2003). In the primary school in the Valleys Authority, staff were observed 'meeting and greeting' parents at the school gate each morning, demonstrating one way in which staff were developing connections with parents in an informal environment, whilst also getting to know the children's wider families (Roose et al, 2013).

Gaining access to broader knowledge about families in the local community can support effective and timely responses to concerns of neglect. Schools are encouraged to draw upon the wider knowledge held about the local community to inform decisions when staff hold suspicions that a child is being neglected. *It is therefore recommended that staff members who live within the community should be provided with both formal and informal opportunities to provide insights into the lives of children whom the school is worried about. This could provide additional information which builds a more comprehensive picture of the child's life and their present needs (Davies & Ward, 2012;*

Thompson, 2016). Formal opportunities could take the form of one-to-one mentoring relationships between support staff and teaching staff, or attendance at multi-agency meetings, to share information. Informal opportunities would be made available through the implementation of communities of practice (as previously mentioned on page 176 of this thesis).

Implications for Inter-Agency Practice

Chapter seven in the thesis answered the third research question posed by the study: **What is the nature of the relationship between schools and social services in responding to child neglect?** The discussion drew upon school level interview and observation data to consider the way in which each profession responded to child neglect within their respective roles. Five themes emerged from the analysis of data: (i) the 'visibility of neglect' and the legitimation of school staff needing to *see* neglect on a child, (ii) professionalism and the professional relationships which exist across the agencies, (iii) the power held by social services and ideas of stigma in statutory interventions (iv) the existence of rules and routines in the school system, the culture of 'passing up' concerns of neglect through the appropriate lines of management, and (v) the lack of professional confidence school staff had in their ability to respond to neglect, with a lack of neglect-specific training and knowledge identified as problematic.

Analysis highlighted the different ways in which school staff and social work practitioners responded to child neglect within their professional discourses. Findings support the consensus in current literature which recommends the strengthening of the partnership between the school and social services in the field of neglect (Haynes et al, 2015; Pithouse & Crowley, 2016; Stevens & Laing, 2015; Stevenson, 2005). Analysis of data identified a divergence in safeguarding policy between the school and social care systems. 'Keeping Learners Safe' (Welsh Government, 2015b), the statutory safeguarding guidance for education in Wales, locates the responsibility for reporting concerns about a child with the DSP in the school. Conversely, 'Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004' (Welsh Assembly Government, 2006),

the statutory policy guidance for social care agencies, states that the individual holding concerns should raise these directly with social services. This variance in policy and process creates additional communication barriers between both organisations in practice, making the delivery of a co-ordinated inter-agency approach problematic.

Practice between schools and social services needs to be bridged to encourage a shared and preventative perspective which combines both social and education safeguarding models. *It is recommended that head teachers should be supported to cultivate understanding of the barriers which impede successful inter-agency collaboration with social services.* This could be achieved through cultivation of communities of practice (as previously mentioned on page 176 of this thesis), where school staff are encouraged to follow-up the referrals they make to their DSP within their respective institutions, or discuss these with more experienced practitioners or DSPs. This would foster communication between DSPs and the wider school staff team, develop individual staff's knowledge and expertise about child neglect, whilst also increasing understanding about the organisational response provided by social services. In turn this would feed forward in the form of knowledge development of child neglect amongst the wider staff team, and simultaneously improve their awareness of internal and external safeguarding processes and the statutory responses given for the concerns raised.

In terms of connecting practice between education and social safeguarding models, the role of the school social worker (SSW) in the Rural Authority was an area where particularly good practice was identified when working with issues of child neglect within the school setting. The role of the SSW provided an effective framework for early and preventative practice, linking a wide range of school staff with a practitioner in statutory services which enabled the prompt identification and intervention in cases of suspected neglect. Whilst the role of the SSW is still in its infancy in Wales, and as such yet to be evaluated, it encourages the exchange of professional knowledge and skills between school staff and qualified social work practitioners by creating a bridge between the two fields of professional responsibility. In the Rural Authority the role is

funded by the local authority and positioned within the education welfare service, allowing practitioners to work closely with and refer directly to child protection teams.

The SSW is a locality social worker whose remit is to support a number of schools within a catchment area by providing support to children to improve their overall well-being, whilst ensuring that they are regularly attending the school. The role also offers school staff advice and guidance in responding to child neglect, so that specific concerns can be discussed and recommended routes and interventions suggested. The SSW delivers aspects of safeguarding training and creates a dialogue about the content and clarity of referrals made by the school to social services. The role provides a professional relationship at the personal level between a range of school staff and social services, fostering professional trust and encouraging regular information sharing between agencies.

Many school staff in the Rural Authority reported the SSW's role as enhancing their relationship with and improving understanding of, social service departments. In the current climate of heavy social work caseloads (Lymbery, 1998), detailed governance procedures and a focus on bureaucratic demands (Goodman & Trowler, 2012; O'Reilly et al 2011), it is disingenuous to believe that the workloads of front-line child protection workers could be increased to include this work with schools. This is particularly so in the broader context of the national social work recruitment and retention problem (Munro, 2011b; Research In Practice, 2015; Zlotnik et al, 2005), when the profession's focus upon performance management easily overshadows the importance of direct work with families (Goodman & Trowler, 2012). As highlighted by Webb & Vulliamy's (2001) study into the primary school teacher's role in child protection, it is also naïve to suggest that teachers should be laden with additional social and welfare duties outside of the classroom in addition to extensive teaching responsibilities.

The gap in the interface between the two fields of responsibility requires bridging. This gap raises opportunities for early and preventative partnership work between schools and social service departments where two-way communication and feedback can be

developed to improve the overall safety and welfare of children. Unlike the SSW role in the United States (which is commonly employed and governed by the school itself), this study brings evidence to suggest the benefits of implementing a SSW team, employed by the local authority. This finding is echoed by Haynes et al's (2015) study into preventing and intervening early in child neglect, which recommends the employment of locality-based social workers to work directly with a group of schools, to support the relationship between universal and statutory services. *A recommendation of this study is to implement the role of the SSW in each local authority in Wales.*

The need to strengthen multi-agency practice across both agencies and disciplines was also a principal finding of the Welsh Neglect Project funded by the Welsh Government in 2013 (Pithouse & Crowley, 2016). Participants in the research emphasised inter-professional working as the most significant challenge to working with child neglect. The study recommended a number of ways to respond to these challenges, including the co-location of staff within the same organisation (Welsh Government, 2015) practitioner secondments across agencies, management of collective finances and resources, and creation of specific opportunities where professionals can meet across a range of disciplines and reflect upon cases where child neglect presents, and inter-agency training.

The importance of shared training and knowledge development in communities of practice is a finding of this thesis and is supported by the findings of the Children's Workforce Development Council's (CWDC) research into integrated working (2010). The CWDC study describes how separate organisational pre and post qualification training and development serves only to reinforce negative views about inter-agency practice. *It is therefore recommended that informal and formal opportunities for inter-professional collaboration are made available to school and social service staff to spend time in partner-organisation. Staff in both agencies should be supported to either visit or undertake secondment opportunities in their partner-agencies to develop knowledge and awareness of the other organisation's aims, terms, roles, approaches and methods of working with child neglect.*

Implications for Other Professionals

Findings of the research also offer important practice messages for other professionals outside of the school and social services partnership. Although the strengths of working together across professions and services to safeguard children from neglect is beyond dispute (Davies & Ward, 2012; Haynes, 2015; Stevenson, 2005), this study provides further evidence which emphasises the broader significance of effective inter-professional collaboration. While the implications of this research for inter-agency practice between the school and social workers have been outlined above, there are key messages that hold fundamental relevance to a broad range of agencies and practitioners working alongside the local authority in their duty to protect children from neglect. This section provides a discussion about the wider implications of this research for professionals beyond education and social work roles.

Sidebotham et al.'s (2014) recent triennial analysis of Serious Case Reviews (SCR) 'Pathways to Harm; pathways to protection' identifies a number of key issues and challenges for agencies working together in cases of child neglect or abuse. The report analyses 293 SCRs where a child has died or been seriously harmed, and child abuse or neglect were identified or alleged to be present. Each time a SCR is undertaken in the United Kingdom issues of poor inter-agency communication, poor collection or sharing of information, poor analysis of a child's circumstances, and the lack of resources are only some of the findings repeatedly identified (Hughes, 2009). Sidebotham et al.s' recent analysis of these cases recognised 'pressure points at the boundaries into and out of child protection services where cases are 'stepped up' from universal and targeted services and 'stepped down' from child protection and children in need' interventions (2014:11). These boundaries are the crucial points at which partner agencies including health, education, police and the voluntary sector, communicate and refer their concerns of suspected neglect to social services for investigation and support.

The review highlights inter-professional working between services as vital for effective safeguarding collaboration across agencies and identifies communication as an inescapable point where breakdown occurs. Findings of this research suggest successful inter-professional communication to require a clear knowledge of the systems and processes that govern other agencies, practitioner skills, organisational cultures which promote curiosity in the sharing of information between services, and a shared understanding of local authority thresholds and service intervention pathways (for escalation up, and de-escalation down the levels of provision illustrated in the diagram on page 35 of this thesis).

An inter-professional approach is needed to respond effectively to child neglect across services. Individual agencies bring their own perspectives of the child's circumstances to the collaborative process, but it is important to consider how these different perspectives can be harnessed to improve the not only the standard of practice and protection provided to the child, but the child's experience of the service (Community Care, 2009). Findings from this thesis suggest inter-agency training and learning opportunities which encourage broader exchanges of information about organisational aims, models of practice, and statutory responsibilities can build expertise, improve working relationships across agencies, and provide a more comprehensive picture of the child's needs (Davies & Ward, 2012). These findings are further supported by Widmark et al's (2011) study into the barriers to collaboration between health, social services and schools in Sweden, recommending the importance of practitioners from different organisations fully collaborating when working to support children and their families, so as to facilitate a comprehensive approach to service delivery.

Aside from inter-agency collaborations at the structural level, it is important not to disregard the key messages raised by this thesis for practice when working with neglect at the individual level. Whilst local authorities are known to play the lead role in safeguarding children, it is important to remember that it is everyone's responsibility to protect children from harm (Taylor & Daniel, 2005; Welsh Government, 2016). With this in mind, it is recommended that practitioners seek individual opportunities to build their

individual relationships with colleagues in a range of partner agencies. Undertaking visits to partner agency premises can help develop working relationships whilst also supporting the sharing of concerns about children. Spending time in other organisational settings breaks down inter-professional barriers whilst creating opportunities to discuss unpick differing perceptions and definitions of child neglect. *It is recommended that staff build personal relationships with colleagues in partner agencies and that the local authority's guidance document on threshold levels for service intervention is used as an inter-professional tool from which to ask questions about concerns held, and unpick the professional language used in each organisation.*

Limitations of the Study

There are a number of limitations to this study. Firstly, the sequence of data collection techniques undertaken within the two-phase explanatory design of the study influenced the type of data gathered. Collecting case file data from local authorities prior to undertaking in-depth qualitative interviews and non-participant observation, restricted the ability to select specific variables of interest based upon the thoughts, feelings and experiences of staff in schools. Should a two-phase exploratory study (Teater et al, 2017) have been under undertaken, findings from staff interviews could have informed the selection of variables from case files drawing upon the thematic analysis of qualitative data. That said, the approach taken in the study did offer clear strengths. Inferential statistics during the first phase permitted the selection of particular schools on the basis of their high level of referrals to social services for child neglect, and vignettes were constructed from string data draw from referral documents.

As previously mentioned, the second limitation of the study is its inability to capture comprehensive data from the total number of case files within the sample. Large amounts of missing data on certain variables made it impossible to identify patterns in the relationship between the child's characteristics and the likelihood of neglect occurring, as had been initially hoped during the design stages of the study. There was

also variance in terms of the type and level of data captured both within and across the three participating local authority child protection teams. As such, a need is identified for the provision of guidance to local authority teams on how to effectively and consistently gather relevant information about the child for use in future research.

Furthermore, a number of case files which met the study's sampling criteria did so on the basis that the child had been registered for the category of child neglect on the CPR in the past and subsequently deregistered when the child's circumstances improved. This raised a few instances whereby the date of the child's ICPC (where the child was registered under the category of neglect) predated the current referral made by the school and school-based support services, when files were being managed at a 'Child in Need' level of provision (now known as a child with care and support needs). This caused difficulty within the sample when attempts were made to calculate the duration of child protection provision using the date of the referral and date of ICPC. A small number of files had to be subsequently removed from the sample for this reason.

There were also substantial problems associated with data collection and data consistency during the social work case file analysis element of the study. The complexity of social work processes in child protection practice made it challenging to establish any clear patterns, particularly with regards to causality of neglect within the case file data. Referrals received into the statutory child protection system are duplicated to all sibling's files within a family for investigation. Consequentially, concerns about a child raised within a referral from the school were automatically replicated upon the file(s) of the child's siblings, and separate assessments were then undertaken on individual children. This introduced additional complexity to the analysis and created three different levels of case file data in the study: the individual child, the family (including siblings), and the local authority.

The third limitation of the study is its small case file sample size (*n=119*). The sampling process proved problematical, raising issues for future research in this field. Local authorities participating in this study did not routinely categorise concerns of abuse or

neglect at the point of accepting referrals from outside agencies. As a result, all local authorities were unable to provide case files under the sampling criteria which had not reached the threshold of significant harm for neglect and subsequently been registered on the CPR. This meant that only case files where the child was registered on the CPR could be included in the study's sample, as the statutory decision to place a child on the CPR offered a consistent threshold level for service intervention. Consequently, case files which had been, or were currently, managed and supported by social workers at a lower level such as CIN (Tier 3) were omitted from the sample, leaving only 119 files which met the study's sampling criteria across all of the local authorities. Files which were already archived and closed prior to the authorities' move to electronic case-management software systems were stored in hardcopy only and not recorded electronically. These files would have to be hand sampled directly from archives to establish whether they met the study's sampling criteria.

The fourth limitation to the study was my own identity as a researcher. As discussed in the methodology chapter of this thesis, I am a registered social worker with a background in child protection practice, experienced in working closely with schools in an early and preventative framework. Although my identity as a social worker was advantageous in gaining approval to access case files in the three participating local authorities, it is important to acknowledge that my professional experiences are likely to have influenced the design, analysis and subsequent interpretation of data within the study. In terms of the impact of social desirability bias, my identity and familiarity with the statutory child protection system had potential to cause social desirability bias (Grimm, 2010) within interviews where participants may have provided answers to questions that would be regarded more positively by a social worker.

Implications for Research

The study identified a number of issues for research in the field. Primarily it was difficult to combine two very complex and different systems within one research study, gathering data from both education and social care settings proved challenging. The

child's needs were often viewed from contrasting perspectives within each setting (Widmark et al, 2011), creating barriers to effective collaboration between the school and social services. Structural, regulatory and managerial frameworks also diverged within each field of responsibility and with the educational and social models of practice employed within each respective organisation. This resulted in territorial thinking and the development of distrust between partner agencies (Widmark et al, 2011). Discussions around the distinct roles of the social worker and the school were often at the forefront of interview dialogue, emerging from the distinct cultures that exist within each organisation (Baginsky, 2008).

There are a number of areas where the research could be developed. Focus could be placed upon in-depth analysis to investigate whether school staff's perceptions of child neglect are 'raced' or 'gendered', particularly in light of the under-reporting of child neglect in children from BAME backgrounds that was identified in the Urban Authority in chapter five, and the slightly higher representation of boys in the sample. In addition to this, the research could also be expanded to explore parents' perspectives of child neglect. Staff's relationships with families emerged as a strong theme in chapter six, where findings demonstrated that relationships with parents were perceived as particularly influential to their practice when responding to child neglect in the school setting. Understanding whether or not parents share school staff's perspectives in terms of their thoughts and feelings about their relations with staff, would reinforce the findings of this study. *Building upon the findings from this study, it is recommended that future research is undertaken with a range of school staff to investigate whether they are more or less likely to make referrals for child neglect due to cultural differences, i.e. are perceptions of school staff 'gendered' or 'raced'. It is also recommended that parent's perceptions of relationships with school staff are explored.*

Although one participant was a member of police staff, the study could have been further strengthened by the inclusion of a number of participants from partner agencies who were based at the school sites. Specifically investigating the role and contribution of health-related staff such as school nurses or school-based counsellors (Bryant & Milsom, 2005; Daniel, 2005; Daniel et al, 2010; Haynes et al, 2015; McGinnis, 2008)

would have been constructive in gaining a deeper and more extensive understanding about the barriers which exist in collaborative working between the school and social services (Taylor & Daniel, 2005; Widmark et al, 2011) from a health perspective. Hughes (2009) suggests that health visitors are the most important professional relationship in effectively safeguarding children, and are unique in that they provide a universal and non-stigmatising service (Gordon, 2004). Their role focuses upon health promotion and child development, and gives them regular contact with children and their families. Although Hughes refers specifically to health visitors, it can be said of all school-based heath staff who are distinctively positioned to recognise emerging family circumstances or difficulties which may increase the propensity for child neglect.

Even though the sampling criteria for interviewee roles included staff from the health sector, no health staff were identified by schools to participate in the study. Further exploration could have been undertaken with head teachers to actively promote the selection of health practitioners based within the schools and encourage their inclusion in the study. In this regard, Stevenson (2005) questions how health professionals can be supported to collect information which informs inter-agency concerns when working with cases of child neglect, specifically the recording of attendance at appointments and clinics. *It is recommended that future research is undertaken into the role of school-based health practitioners in working with issues of child neglect with a view to exploring a health-based perspective on inter-agency working when working with issues of child neglect within the school setting.*

Despite the review of literature in this thesis identifying a dearth of research around children's understandings of neglect (Daniel et al, 2010; Gorin, 2016), the child's voice remains absent from this research which is also a limitation of the study due to the small scale and restricted timescales of this doctorate. This could be remedied by developing the research further by undertaking 1:1 interviews or focus groups with pupils who have former experiences of neglect at each of the six schools participating in this study. Discussions would explore children's thoughts, feelings and understandings of the school's role in responding to their individual experiences of neglect, and

whether staff provided trusting and safe relationships in the school setting (Haynes et al, 2015). Interviews with children could also help identify the barriers which exist to accessing support and the challenges encountered when disclosing neglect to a familiar member of staff in a school environment. Knowledge development in this area could also contribute to the continued development of policy in schools for responding to incidents of neglect as mentioned earlier in this chapter. *It is recommended that research focusing upon children and young peoples' experiences of receiving support from the school when living with neglect should be undertaken.*

Finally, the study is not entirely balanced in terms of understanding whether social work practitioners share the thoughts, feelings and experiences identified by school staff when working in partnership in cases of child neglect. Although a small number of informal discussions were carried out with SSWs in the Rural Authority to understand the role and remit of the post, due to the small scale and limited timescales of this doctoral study, formal interviews were not undertaken. Findings of the research could be further reinforced by carrying out interviews with social work practitioners from within the three participating local authorities. There is also significant value in interviewing SSWs about their work in schools or undertaking an evaluation of the SSW scheme within Wales to support recommendations made by this research. This would provide the opportunity to triangulate the findings with existing data to understand whether inter-agency barriers identified by school staff are also shared by social work practitioners within social services and ameliorated by the bridging role of locality-based SSW. *It is recommended that research is undertaken with social work practitioners about their experiences of working with school staff when responding to child neglect in their statutory roles. An evaluation of the school social worker role is also proposed, to analyse and gather evidence about the strengths and limitations of this approach within the school-setting in Wales.*

Concluding Comments

This thesis has presented evidence about the nature and level of support which mainstream schools currently provide to children experiencing neglect. It has explored the thoughts, feelings and opinions of school staff within a range of roles, observed decision-making practice in schools, as well as the analysis of data from children's social work case files and offered interesting insights into current practice in Wales. Findings highlight the significance of the inter-agency partnership between schools and social services across the continuum of child neglect in delivery effective safeguarding practice. The research presents evidence on the school's role along the continuum of neglect, from the early identification of neglect, to the implementation of school-based support, through to the school staff's level of participation in the child protection process led by social services. This thesis has consequently identified a number of implications for social work and social policy which will improve the overall wellbeing of children. Findings are relevant for practice in schools and front-line social work with children and offer key recommendations for countering a number of barriers identified in the inter-agency partnership between the two fields of responsibility. Conclusions also offer broader messages for professionals working collaboratively to respond to child neglect beyond the school and social work roles, and for practice at a national and international level.

This thesis concludes the discussion by acknowledging the wider implications of the research for practice. Although the research was undertaken within local authorities in Wales, a number of key messages can be drawn from the findings of this thesis and transferred to practice contexts both in the United Kingdom and international settings. Findings emphasise the central and universal location of schools as key to effective safeguarding practice. Schools are positioned at the heart of the community, and provide a consistent and supportive environment throughout a child's life. The contact a child has with a range of staff for 5 days a week can nurture and develop positive relationships with adults in the school. Schools have the capacity to observe a child's development during a period of schooling, witness interactions between the child and their parents either end of the school day, and evidence of progression alongside their

peers. The school's position is also advantageous in terms of the expertise and wider knowledge they hold about the family. Findings from the thesis highlight the significance of staff knowing or teaching a number of past generations, offering a broader understanding and awareness of family circumstances and functioning when making decisions about the type and level of support a child may need. It is beyond dispute that the school's role is highly valuable, capable of providing rich insights which can facilitate the effective identification of child neglect as early as possible (Baginsky, 2008; Haynes, 2015).

As discussed earlier in chapter six of this thesis, Zlotnik et al (2005) suggest that a child's welfare is put at risk by statutory agencies' inability to successfully recruit and retain appropriate social work practitioners at a national level (Research In Practice, 2015). Findings of this thesis also reflect key messages in the Munro review of child protection practice (2011) to emphasise the growing body of evidence of the efficacy of early intervention and prevention when working with children and families, compared to reactive services. This is of particular significance when contextualised by the increasing budget cuts to local authority spending in the United Kingdom where 25% of early help and preventative services were cut in 2011-2012 (Munro, 2011). Consequently, this thesis recommends the prioritisation of school sites as universal settings for noticing children living with neglect, and the implementation of appropriate levels of help and support at the earliest stages possible. Effective mechanisms are needed in schools to support staff members to identify indicators of child neglect, alongside opportunities to work with social work expertise to discuss concerns with social services, in the context of statutory threshold levels for intervention.

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Appendices

1 - Examples of Role Categories for Interview Participants

	Category	Role
A	Management/Strategic Staff	Head Teacher Assistant/Deputy Head Teacher Senior Management/Leadership Team Deputy Head Teacher
B	Teaching Staff	Head of Year Subject Specific Teacher Class Teacher Newly Qualified Teacher Safeguarding Lead Officer SENCO
C	Pastoral Staff	School Counsellor School Nurse Education Welfare Officer School Social Worker Parenting or Family Support Worker Pastoral Support Worker
D	Education Support Staff	Teaching Assistant Nurture Assistant Sports Club Staff/ Sports Coaches Specialist Behaviour Teaching Assistant Education Mentor Librarian School Escorts Play Staff
E	Support Staff	Reception staff Administrators Canteen Staff/ Dinner staff Breakfast or After School Club staff Playground staff

2 - Case File Coding Schedule

Administrative Information		
Date File Completed (DD/MM/YY)	☐☐☐	01
Local Authority Code	☐☐	02

Case file open or closed
        00 Closed
        01 Open
	☐☐	03

Research Study Number	☐☐☐	04

Which Education Professionals are providing support to the child?
         00 No
         01 Yes
        -77 Indecipherable
        -88 Missing
        -99 Not yet input on system		

Educational Psychologist	☐☐	05
Education Welfare Officer	☐☐	06
Teacher	☐☐	07
Teaching Assistant	☐☐	08
Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Support	☐☐	09

Child Protection Lead Officer/Safeguarding Lead	☐☐	10
School Family Support/Parenting Worker	☐☐	11
School Nurse	☐☐	12
School Counsellor	☐☐	13
School Nurture Group	☐☐	14
Other professional	☐☐	15
String Variable: Which other professional?		16

Child Biographic Information

Gender
 	
    01 Male
    02 Female
 -77 Indecipherable
 -88 Missing
 -99 Not yet input on system
	☐☐	17

Date of birth	☐☐☐	18

Child's Ethnicity
 	
    01 White British
    02 White Irish
    03 Traveller
    03 Gypsy/Gypsy Roma
	☐☐	19

04 Any other white background 05 White and Black Caribbean 06 White and Black African 07 White and Asian 08 Any other mixed background 09 Indian 10 Pakistani 11 Bangladeshi 12 Any other Asian background 13 Caribbean 14 African 15 Any Other Black background 16 Chinese or Chinese British 17 Any other Ethnic background 18 Information refused 19 Information not obtained -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system		
Child's Religion 01 Christian 02 Buddhist 03 Hindu 04 Jewish 05 Muslim 06 Sikh 07 Another Religion 08 No religion 09 Agnostic 10 Atheist 11 Not stated -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐☐	20
Child's Main Language 01 English Only 02 Welsh Only 03 Bilingual including English or Welsh 04 Other (specify) -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐☐	21
String Variable/notes: Which other language?		22

Maltreatment

Category of Abuse on the Child protection register?

01 Neglect Only
02 Emotional Abuse Only
03 Physical Abuse Only
04 Sexual Abuse Only
05 Neglect and Physical Abuse
06 Neglect and Sexual Abuse
07 Physical and Sexual Abuse
08 Neglect, Physical and Sexual Abuse
-77 Indecipherable
-88 Missing
-99 Not yet input on system

23

Date of <u>most recent</u> registration on the Child Protection Register?

24

Does the child have any <u>previous</u> registrations on the Child protection register?

00 None
01 One
02 Two
03 Three
04 Four
05 Five
06 Six or more
-77 Indecipherable
-88 Missing
-99 Not yet input on system

25

Does the Child have sibling(s) also on the child protection register?

00 None
01 One sibling
02 two siblings
03 Three siblings
04 Four siblings
05 Five siblings
06 Six siblings
07 Seven siblings

26

08 Eight or more siblings -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system		

Is there anyone else at the address (not a sibling) also on the CP register?
 	
    00 No
    01 One other child
    02 two other children
    03 Three other children
    04 Four or more others
-77 Indecipherable
-88 Missing
-99 Not yet input on system
	☐ ☐	27

Child's Education

Type of Education
    00 None
    01 Mainstream Education
    02 Mainstream Education with school action
       or school action plus
    03 Mainstream Education with a Statement
    04 Special Education Day Provision
    05 Special Education Residential Provision
    06 Home Educated
    07 Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)
    08 No school Provision/Excluded
    09 Other (see notes)
-77 Indecipherable
-88 Missing
-99 Not yet input on system
	☐ ☐	28

STRING Variable/Notes: What other education provision?		29

		30
STRING Variable/Notes: **What is the name of the school?**		
STRING Variable/ Notes: **What other type of in-house support is the school providing for the child?**		31

Has the Child been subject to a Statement of Special Educational Need?
        00 No
        01 Yes
        02 Currently being assessed/referred
    -77 Indecipherable
    -88 Missing
    -99 Not yet input on system
	☐ ☐	32

Level of Involvement of Schools

Date of Most Recent Referral Document	☐ ☐ ☐	33

Initial Referral
 	
    Involvement of school at initial/contact referral?
    00 No
    01 Yes
    -77 Indecipherable
    -88 Missing
    -99 Not yet input on system
	☐ ☐	34

Was the school the referring agency?
    00 No
    01 Yes
    -77 Indecipherable
    -88 Missing
    -99 Not yet input on system
	☐ ☐	35

What was the role of the person making the referral? **STRING variable: Notes**		36

In the referral did the school identify what indicators of neglect had raised concerns? 00 No 01 Yes -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐ ☐	37
If so, what indicators of neglect were these?		
Medical Neglect: e.g. failure to seek appropriate medical attention, administer medication and treatments (including dental, optical, SAL, physiotherapy)	☐ ☐	38
Nutritional Neglect: e.g. inadequate calories for normal growth, either failure to thrive or obesity	☐ ☐	39
Emotional Neglect: e.g. unresponsiveness to basic emotional needs, hostile or indifferent parental behaviour, failure to interact, no physical or emotional affection	☐ ☐	40
Educational Neglect: e.g. school attendance, lateness, failure to provide a stimulating environment, supporting learning, ensuring AENs are met	☐ ☐	41
Physical Neglect: e.g. poor hygiene, smelly, dirty, poor home environment, inappropriate sleeping conditions	☐ ☐	42
Lack of supervision/parental guidance: e.g. failure to protect from physical harm or danger Child left unattended, abandonment/desertion, inadequate supervision for age	☐ ☐	43
Other:	☐ ☐	44
STRING variable: Indicators of neglect – OTHER or notes on indicators		45
Did the school provide early interventions prior to referral? 00 No 01 Yes -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing	☐ ☐	46

-99 Not yet input on system			

If so, what interventions were these?
00 No
01 Yes

Financial Support	☐ ☐		47
Food	☐ ☐		48
Clothing	☐ ☐		49
Practical Support	☐ ☐		50
Emotional Support	☐ ☐		51
Referral to other agency (excl. Social services)	☐ ☐		52
Other (see notes)	☐ ☐		53

String Variable: Notes (What other intervention?)

		54

Date of <u>Most Recent</u> Initial Assessment document *(Date authorised by Manager)*	☐ ☐ ☐		55

Initial Assessment

Involvement of school in initial assessment?

00 No
01 yes
02 Record Currently being updated
-77 Indecipherable
-88 Missing
-99 Not yet input on system

	☐ ☐		56

Were the child's educational needs mentioned in the Initial Assessment? 00 No 01 Yes -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐☐	57
Did the school contribute information to the assessment? 00 No 01 Yes -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐☐	58
Was the child visited in school as part of the assessment? 00 No 01 Yes -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐☐	59
Date of <u>Most Recent</u> Core Assessment Document *(Date authorised by Manager)*	☐☐☐	60
Core Assessment **Involvement of school in core assessment?** 00 No 01 yes -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐☐	61
Were the child's educational needs mentioned in the assessment? 00 no 01 yes -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐☐	62
Did the school contribute information to the core assessment? 00 no 01 yes -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐☐	63

Was the child visited in school as part of the assessment? 　00 No 　01 Yes -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐ ☐		64
Did the school raise additional concerns once the case was opened and assessed? 　00 No 　01 Yes -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐ ☐		65
Was the child visited in school as part of the assessment? 　00 No 　01 Yes -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐ ☐		66
Date of Initial Child Protection Conference	☐ ☐ ☐		67
Initial Child Protection Conference (Chair's Report) **Involvement of school in Initial Child Protection Conference?** 00 No 01 yes -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐ ☐		68
Was the school present at the Initial Child Protection Conference? 　00 no 　01 yes 　02 Apologies sent -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐ ☐		79
Did the school contribute a report to the ICPC? 　00 no 　01 yes -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing	☐ ☐		70

-99 Not yet input on system		
Did the school lead on an action(s) on the Child Protection Plan? 00 No 01 Yes -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐ ☐	71
String Variable/notes: What was this?		72
Was non-school attendance a contributing factor to CP registration? 00 No 01 Yes -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐ ☐	73
Were any of the following issues a contributing factor in the category of registration? *(Note: issues are already categorised by Local Authority)* 00 No 01 Yes -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system		
Domestic Abuse	☐ ☐	74
Mental Health	☐ ☐	75
Learning Disability	☐ ☐	76
Child Sexual Exploitation	☐ ☐	77
Substance Misuse	☐ ☐	78

Alcoholism	☐ ☐	79

Date of First Core Group *(date held)*	☐ ☐ ☐	80

First Core Group

Was the school invited to the first Core Group?
00 No
01 yes
-77 Indecipherable
-88 Missing
-99 Not yet input on system

☐ ☐	81

Was the school present at the first Core Group?
00 No
01 Yes
02 Apologies sent
-77 Indecipherable
-88 Missing
-99 Not yet input on system

☐ ☐	82

Did the school contribute a report to the first Core Group?
00 No
01 Yes
-77 Indecipherable
-88 Missing
-99 Not yet input on system

☐ ☐	83

Did the school lead on an action(s) at the Core Group on the Child Protection Plan?
00 No
01 Yes
-77 Indecipherable
-88 Missing
-99 Not yet input on system

☐ ☐	84

String Variable/notes: What was this?

	85

Date of Review Conference	☐ ☐ ☐	86
Review Child Protection Conference **Has the Review Conference taken place yet?** 00 No 01 Yes -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐ ☐	87
If so, what was the outcome of the Review Conference? 01 Remain on the Register 02 Remain on the Register and change category of abuse 03 Transfer to another Local Authority 04 De-Registration -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐ ☐	88
Was the school invited to the Review Conference? 00 No 01 Yes -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐ ☐	89
Was the school present at the review conference? 00 No 01 Yes 02 Apologies sent -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐ ☐	90
Did the school contribute a report to the Review Conference? 00 No 01 Yes -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐ ☐	91

			92
Did the school continue to lead on action(s) on the Child Protection Plan? 00 No 01 Yes -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐ ☐		

		93
String Variable/notes: What was/were this?		

			94
Was the same member of school staff involved throughout the Child Protection process? 00 No 01 Yes -77 Indecipherable -88 Missing -99 Not yet input on system	☐ ☐		

			95
If not, how many different members of school staff were involved in the statutory process? 00 Non-applicable 01 Two 02 Three 03 Four 04 Five or more	☐ ☐		

		96
STRING variable: Are there any other noteworthy observations?		

3 – Participant Information Sheet & Consent Form

Participant Information Sheet

'How do Schools in Wales Identify and Respond to Child Neglect?'

The Study

The aim of the study is to explore how child neglect is identified and responded to in schools in Wales. At school, children are seen for many hours each week by teaching and non-teaching staff. This provides schools with the opportunity to observe children with their peers on a daily basis, whilst also seeing the interactions the children have with their parents at the school gate. The study has received ethical approval from the Social Science Research Ethics Committee at Cardiff University.

This study will provide evidence on the type(s) and level of support that is offered by schools to children who are thought to be experiencing neglect. Interviews will be undertaken with a wide range of school staff in Wales. The interview will focus upon the individual staff member's experiences, feelings, and thoughts about child neglect. Participants will include those who see and support the children both inside and outside of the classroom: teaching and pastoral staff, management, health, support staff, administrators, before and after-school club and canteen staff.

The Researcher

Victoria Sharley is a second-year Welsh Government funded PhD Student situated within the Children's Social Care Research and Development Centre (CASCADE) in the School of Social Sciences at Cardiff University. Victoria is supervised by Professor Sally Power, Director of WISERD Education (Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research Data and Method) and Dr Thomas Slater, Lecturer in Social Work CASCADE, both at Cardiff University.

Participation

Participation in the study will involve a confidential interview with the Researcher. The interview will provide a chance to discuss your thoughts, feelings and experiences with a view to potentially informing future policy and practice. Confidentiality procedures will be adhered to by replacing each participant's name with a research study number. This number will be used to store the interview data on Cardiff University's secure server. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes to an hour and be audio recorded. Recordings will then be transcribed and any identifiable information will be removed. Recordings and transcripts will be kept safe and protected in accordance with principle 7 of the Data Protection Act (1998). Participation in the study is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time, and without reason. The Social Science Research Ethics Committee at Cardiff University can be contacted on 029 2087 9051.

Victoria Sharley, PhD Student can be contacted on 07977 983473 or at sharleyva@cardiff.ac.uk if you wish to discuss the research in more detail.

Dalen wybodaeth i'r rhai sy'n cymryd rhan

'Sut mae ysgolion yng Nghymru yn adnabod ac yn ymateb i achosion o esgeuluso plant?'

Yr astudiaeth

Nod yr astudiaeth yw pwyso a mesur sut mae ysgolion yng Nghymru yn adnabod ac yn ymateb i achosion o esgeuluso plant. Yn yr ysgol, mae'r staff addysgu a'r staff eraill yn gweld plant ysgol am lawer o oriau bob wythnos. Mae hyn yn rhoi cyfle i ysgolion arsylwi plant bob dydd gyda'u cyfoedion, a gweld sut mae plant a'u rhieni'n rhyngweithio wrth giât yr ysgol. Cafodd yr astudiaeth gymeradwyaeth foesegol gan Bwyllgor Moeseg Ymchwil y Gwyddorau Cymdeithasol ym Mhrifysgol Caerdydd.

Bydd yr astudiaeth hon yn rhoi tystiolaeth am y math o gefnogaeth a gynigir gan ysgolion i blant y credir eu bod yn dioddef esgeulustod, a lefel y gefnogaeth honno. Cynhelir cyfweliadau ag amrywiaeth eang o staff ysgol yng Nghymru. Bydd y cyfweliad yn canolbwyntio ar brofiadau, teimladau a syniadau'r aelod staff unigol am achosion o esgeuluso plant. Bydd y rheini a fydd yn cymryd rhan yn cynnwys unigolion sy'n gweld ac yn cefnogi'r plant yn yr ystafell ddosbarth a thu allan: staff addysgu a bugeiliol, tîm rheoli, iechyd, staff cefnogi, gweinyddwyr, staff y ffreutur a staff clybiau cyn ac ar ôl ysgol.

Yr ymchwilydd

Mae Victoria Sharley yn fyfyriwr PhD ail flwyddyn a ariennir gan Lywodraeth Cymru, yng Nghanolfan Ymchwil a Datblygu Gofal Cymdeithasol Plant (CASCADE) yn Ysgol y Gwyddorau Cymdeithasol ym Mhrifysgol Caerdydd. Mae Victoria yn cael ei goruchwylio gan yr Athro Sally Power, Cyfarwyddwr Addysg WISERD (Sefydliad Ymchwil Gymdeithasol ac Economaidd, Data a Dulliau Cymru), a Dr Thomas Slater, Darlithydd Gwaith Cymdeithasol CASCADE, ym Mhrifysgol Caerdydd.

Cymryd rhan

Bydd rhaid i chi gael cyfweliad cyfrinachol gyda'r ymchwilydd. Bydd y cyfweliad yn gyfle i drafod eich syniadau, eich teimladau a'ch profiadau, a'r bwriad yw llywio polisïau ac arferion yn y dyfodol, o bosibl. Cedwir at weithdrefnau cyfrinachedd drwy ddisodli enw pawb sy'n cymryd rhan â rhif astudiaeth ymchwil. Defnyddir y rhif hwn i storio data'r cyfweliadau ar weinydd diogel Prifysgol Caerdydd. Bydd y cyfweliad yn para rhwng 45 munud ac awr, a gwneir recordiad sain. Yna, bydd y recordiadau'n cael eu trawsgrifio, a bydd unrhyw wybodaeth a allai arwain at adnabod pobl yn cael ei dileu. Bydd recordiadau a thrawsgrifiadau'n cael eu cadw'n ddiogel a'u gwarchod yn unol ag egwyddor 7 y Ddeddf Diogelu Data (1998). Eich dewis chi fydd cymryd rhan yn yr astudiaeth, a gallwch ddewis tynnu'n ôl unrhyw bryd, heb reswm. Gellir cysylltu â Pwyllgor Moeseg Ymchwil y Gwyddorau Cymdeithasol ym Mhrifysgol Caerdydd drwy ffonio 029 2087 9051.

Gellir cysylltu â **Victoria Sharley**, myfyriwr PhD, drwy ffonio 07977 983473 neu ebostio sharleyva@caerdydd.ac.uk os hoffech drafod yr ymchwil yn fanylach.

Participant Consent Form

'How do Schools in Wales Identify and Respond to Child Neglect?'

By signing the Consent Form **I agree** to the following:

(1)   I have read and understood the participant information sheet;

(2)   I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my participation and am satisfied that these have been answered to allow me to make an informed decision on participation;

(3)   I agree to the interview being audio-recorded;

(4)   I agree to the data being stored under principle 7 of the Data Protection Act (1998) and retained in accordance with the School of Social Sciences guidelines;

(5)   I am taking part in the research voluntarily.

Participant's Signature _____

Date _____

Participant's Name (in block capitals) _____

Name of person obtaining consent: Victoria Sharley

Signature of person obtaining consent_____

Ffurflen Ganiatâd Cyfranogwyr

'Sut mae ysgolion yng Nghymru yn adnabod ac yn ymateb i achosion o esgeuluso plant?'

Drwy lofnodi'r Ffurflen Ganiatâd, **rwy'n cytuno** â'r canlynol:

(1)   Rwyf wedi darllen a deall y ddalen wybodaeth i'r rhai sy'n cymryd rhan;

(2)   Rwyf wedi cael y cyfle i ofyn cwestiynau am fy nghyfranogiad, ac rwy'n fodlon bod fy nghwestiynau wedi'u hateb, i ganiatáu i mi wneud penderfyniad gwybodus ynglŷn â chymryd rhan;

(3)   Rwy'n caniatáu i recordiad sain o'r cyfweliad gael ei wneud;

(4)   Rwy'n caniatáu i'r data gael ei storio o dan egwyddor 7 y Ddeddf Diogelu Data (1998) a'i gadw yn unol â chanllawiau Ysgol y Gwyddorau Cymdeithasol;

(5)   Rwy'n cymryd rhan yn y gwaith ymchwil yn wirfoddol.

Llofnod y sawl sy'n cymryd rhan _____

Dyddiad _____

Enw'r sawl sy'n cymryd rhan (mewn priflythrennau) _____

Enw'r unigolyn sy'n gofyn am ganiatâd: Victoria Sharley

Llofnod yr unigolyn sy'n gofyn am ganiatâd _____

4 – Schedule of Original and Recoded Variables

Variable	Label	Response	Frequency (miss)	% Miss Data	Median/ Mode/ Mean	Type /Variable	Notes
Type_of_Localauthority	Type of Local Authority	01 =Urban 02 =Rural 03 =Valleys	119 (0)	0%	Mode 3 Valleys	Categorical	
Gender	Child's Gender	01 =Male 02 =Female -99 =Not yet on system -88 =Missing -77=Indecipherable	119 (0)	0%	Mode 1 Male	Categorical	
Ethnicity	Child's Ethnicity	01 =White British 02 =White Irish 03 =Traveller 04 =Any other white background 05 =White and Black Caribbean	116 (3)	2.5%	Mode 1 White British	Categorical	**Remove from Model:** All responses other than 01 have <5 cell count so cannot use

		06 =White and Black African					
		07 =White and Asian					
		08=Any other mixed background					
		09 =Indian					
		10 =Pakistani					
		11 =Bangladeshi					
		12 =Any other Asian					
		13 =Caribbean					
		14 =African					
		15 =Any other Black background					
		16 =Chinese or Chinese English					
		17 =Any other ethnic background					
		18 =Information refused					
		19 =Information not obtained					
		-99 =Not yet on system					
		-88 =Missing					
		-77=Indecipherable					

CPR_Other_Registrations	Number of Previous Registrations on the Child Protection Register	00 =None 01 =1 02 =2 03 =3 04 =4 05 =5 06 =6 or more Previous regs -99 =Not yet on system -88 =Missing -77=Indecipherable	119 (0)	0%	Median 0 None	Categorical Ordinal	**Recode:** 03 + 04 + 05 + 06 or More instead to '3 or More' as cell count below 5 for these responses.
CPR_Other_Regs_Recode	Number of Previous Registrations on the Child Protection Register **Recoded**	00 =None 01 =1 02 =2 03 =3 or more previous regs -99 =Not yet on system -88 =Missing -77=Indecipherable	119 (0)	0%	Median 0 None	Categorical Ordinal	**All cell counts above 10**
CPR_Siblings_on_Register	Number of Siblings the Child has on the Child Protection Register	00 =0 01 =1 02 =2	119 (0)	0%	Mean 1.76	Quantitative Variable	**Recode:** 05 + 06 or More to '4 or More Siblings' due to cell count below 5 for

		03 =3					05 and 06 responses.
		04 =4					
		05 =5					
		06 =6					
		-99 =Not yet on system					
		-88 =Missing					
		-77=Indecipherable					
CPR_Siblings_on_Register_Recode	Number of Siblings the Child has on the Child protection register Recoded	00 =0 01 =1 02 =2 03 =3 04 =4 or More Siblings -99 =Not yet on system -88 =Missing -77=Indecipherable	119 (0)	0%	Mean 1.76	Quantitative Variable	**All cell counts above 12**
Type_Education	Type of Education the Child is Receiving	01 =Mainstream Education 02 =Mainstream Education with School Action or Action Plus 03 =Mainstream with a SEN	119 (0)	0%	Mode 1 Mainstream	Categorical	Manually recoded 02 to 01 as only a few and data collection method changed

		04 =Special Education Day Provision					**Recode:** 04 + 05 to 'Special Edu Prov',
		05 = Special Education Residential Provision					7+8+9 to 'Other or No Provision'
		06 =Home Education					
		07= Pupil Referral Unit					
		08 =No School Provision or Excluded					
		09 =Other					
		-99 =Not yet on system					
		-88 =Missing					
		-77=Indecipherable					
Type_Education_Re code	Type of Education the Child is Receiving Recoded	01 =Mainstream Education	119 (0)	0%	Mode 1 Mainstrea m	Categorical	All cell counts above 7
		02 =Mainstream Education with School Action or Action Plus					
		03 =Mainstream with a SEN					
		04 =Special Education Provision					
		05 = Home Education					
		06= Other or No Provision					
		-99 =Not yet on system					

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		-88 =Missing -77=Indecipherable					
Age_Child_Years_IR	Age of Child at Point of Referral	Date response -99 =Not yet on system -88 =Missing -77=Indecipherable	119 (0)	0%	Mean 9.6 Years	Continuous	Age 15 years has a cell count of 4. But leave.
Type_School_Attending_CPR	Type of School Child Attending at Time of Registration on CPR	01 =Primary School 02 =Secondary School -99 =Not yet on system -88 =Missing -77=Indecipherable	119 (0)	0%	Mode 1 Primary School	Categorical	
Open_closed	Case File Open or Closed	00=Closed 01=Open	119 (0)	0%	Mode 1 Open	Categorical	This is not relevant for data remove frm model.
Religion	Child's Religion	01 =Christian 02 =Buddhist 03 =Hindu 04 =Jewish 05 =Muslim 06 =Sikh 07 =Another religion	64 (55)	46.2%	Mode 8 No religion	Categorical	Missing Data is too high to use this variable in the model

		08 =No religion					
		09 =Agnostic					
		10 =Atheist					
		11 =Not Stated					
		-99 =Not yet on system					
		-88 =Missing					
		-77=Indecipherable					
Childs_Language	Child's Main Language	01 =English Only	87 (32)	26.9%	Mode 1 English Only	Categorical	Missing Data is too high to use this variable in the model
		02 =Welsh Only					
		03 =Bilingual inc. Eng or Welsh					
		04 =Other					
		-99 =Not yet on system					
		-88 =Missing					
		-77=Indecipherable					
SEN	Child Subject to a Statement of Education Needs	00 =No	57 (62)	52.1%	Mode 0 No	Categorical	Missing Data is too high to use this variable in the model
		01 =Yes					
		02 =Currently being assessed					
		-99 =Not yet on system					
		-88 =Missing					
		-77=Indecipherable					

IA_Additionalconcerns	Additional Concerns of Neglect Identified by Social services at First Assessment	00 =No 01 =Yes 02 =Currently being assessed -99 =Not yet on system -88 =Missing -77=Indecipherable	101 (18)	15.1%	Mode 01 Yes	Categorical	Recode for missing data to be 'no evidence of add concerns raised' =00
IA_Additionalconcerns_Recode	Evidence of Additional Concerns of Neglect Identified by Social services at First Assessment	00 =No 01 =Yes 02 =Currently being assessed -99 =Not yet on system -88 =No (evidence) -77=Indecipherable	119 (0)	0%	Mode 01 Yes	Categorical	
Dependent Variable Model (a) School_based_family support	Provision of School-Based Family Support	00 =No 01 =Yes -99 =Not yet on system -88 =Missing -77=Indecipherable	119 (0)	0%	Mode 0 No	Categorical	**Recoded:** Remove missing Data -88 to include with (00=No)
Dependent Variable Model (a) School_based_family support_Recode	Provision of School-Based Family Support Recoded	00 =No 01 =Yes -99 =Not yet on system	119 (0)	0%	Mode 0 No	Categorical	Manually recoded -88 to 00=No to accurately reflect question

		-88 =No -77=Indecipherable					
Dependent Variable Model (b)	Whether the School attended the Initial Child Protection Conference	00 = No 01 = Yes -99 =Not yet on system -88 =Missing -77=Indecipherable	110 (9)	7.6%	Mode 01 Yes	Categorical	**Recode missing data , -88** which is 'no indication of attendance' to go with No
Dependent Variable Model (b)	Whether the School attended the Initial Child Protection Conference	00 = No 01 = Yes -99 =Not yet on system -88 =No -77=Indecipherable	119 (0)	0%	Mode 01 Yes	Categorical	

5 - SREC Approval Letter for Phase 1 of the Study

Cardiff School of Social Sciences
Head of School Professor Amanda Coffey FAcSS
Ysgol Gwyddorau Cymdeithasol Caerdydd
Pennaeth yr Ysgol Yr Athro Amanda Coffey FAcSS

16th April 2015

Our ref: SREC/1480

Victoria Sharley
PhD Programme
SOCSI

Dear Victoria

Your project entitled *'Identifying and Responding to Child Neglect in Schools in Wales'* has been approved by the School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of Cardiff University at its meeting on 15th April 2015, subject to the following:

- Access to Case Files: You have indicated in Page 2 of your application, that this will be negotiated "with the data owners when access approval is sought". Please send an update to the Committee on what is agreed in relation to access, once you have this information.

If you need clarification concerning this, please contact me.

If you make any substantial changes with ethical implications to the project as it progresses you need to inform the SREC about the nature of these changes. Such changes could be: 1) changes in the type of participants recruited (e.g. inclusion of a group of potentially vulnerable participants), 2) changes to questionnaires, interview guides etc. (e.g. including new questions on sensitive issues), 3) changes to the way data are handled (e.g. sharing of non-anonymised data with other researchers).

In addition, if anything occurs in your project from which you think the SREC might usefully learn, then please do share this information with us.

All ongoing projects will be monitored every 12 months and it is a condition of continued approval that you complete the monitoring form.

Please inform the SREC when the project has ended.

Please use the SREC's project reference number above in any future correspondence.

Yours sincerely

Professor Adam Hedgecoe
Chair of School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

cc: C Perkins
        Supervisors: S Power
                       T Slater

6 – SREC Approval Letter for Phase 2 of the Study

Cardiff School of Social Sciences
Head of School Professor Amanda Coffey FAcSS
Ysgol Gwyddorau Cymdeithasol Caerdydd
Pennaeth yr Ysgol Yr Athro Amanda Coffey FAcSS

29th October 2015

Our ref: SREC/1480

Victoria Sharley
PhD Programme
SOCSI

Dear Victoria

The details of your access to case files in relation to your project entitled *'Identifying and Responding to Child Neglect in Schools in Wales'* have been approved by the School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of Cardiff University and you can commence this aspect of your project.

If you make any substantial changes with ethical implications to the project as it progresses you need to inform the SREC about the nature of these changes. Such changes could be: 1) changes in the type of participants recruited (e.g. inclusion of a group of potentially vulnerable participants), 2) changes to questionnaires, interview guides etc. (e.g. including new questions on sensitive issues), 3) changes to the way data are handled (e.g. sharing of non-anonymised data with other researchers).

In addition, if anything occurs in your project from which you think the SREC might usefully learn, then please do share this information with us.

All ongoing projects will be monitored every 12 months and it is a condition of continued approval that you complete the monitoring form.

Please inform the SREC when the project has ended.

Please use the SREC's project reference number above in any future correspondence.

Yours sincerely

Professor Adam Hedgecoe
Chair of School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

cc: C Perkins
        Supervisors: S Power
                       T Slater

7 – Testing Relationships and Building Models

<u>Table 1 – Univariate Analysis</u>

Variable	Freq. (%)
Type of Local Authority	*119 (100%)*
Urban	*41 (34.5%)*
Rural	*35 (29.4%)*
Valleys	*43 (36.1%)*
Child's Gender	*119 (100%)*
Male	*69 (58.0%)*
Female	*50 (42.0%)*
Number of Previous Registrations on the Child protection register	*119 (100%)*
None	*64 (53.8%)*
1	*35 (29.4%)*
2	*10 (8.4%)*
3 or More	*10 (8.4%)*
Number of Siblings on the Child protection register	*119 (100%)*
0	*20 (16.8%)*
1	*36 (30.3%)*
2	*27 (22.7%)*
3	*24 (20.2%)*
4 Or More	*12 (10.1%)*
Type of Education the Child is Receiving	*119 (100%)*
Mainstream Education	*92 (77.3%)*
Mainstream Education with a SEN	*14 (10.9%)*
Special Education Provision	*7 (5.9%)*
Other or No Provision	*7 (5.9%)*
Child's Age in Years at Point of Referral	*119 (100%)*
4	*10 (8.4%)*
5	*9 (7.6%)*
6	*11 (9.2%)*
7	*12 (10.1%)*
8	*8 (6.7%)*
9	*15 (12.6%)*
10	*16 (13.4%)*
11	*7 (5.9%)*
12	*11 (9.2%)*
13	*9 (7.6%)*
14	*7 (5.9%)*
15	*4 (3.4%)*
Type of School Child Attending at Date of Registration on Child protection register	*119 (100%)*
Primary School	*87 (73.1%)*
Secondary School	*32 (26.9%)*
Additional concerns of neglect identified by Social services at Initial Assessment	*119 (100%)*
No	*53 (44.5%)*
Yes	*66 (55.5%)*
Provision of School-Based Family Support	*119 (100%)*
No	*69 (58.0%)*
Yes	*50 (42.0%)*
Did School Attend Initial Child Protection Conference	*119 (100%)*
No	*21 (17.6%)*
Yes	*98 (82.4%)*

Table 2 - Illustrating Variables which have not been selected due to large amounts of missing data or very low cell counts

Variable	Freq. (%)	Missing Data (%)
Religion	*64 (53.8%)*	*55 (46.2%)*
Christian	*3 (2.5%)*	
No religion	*36 (30.3%)*	
Atheist	*1 (0.8%)*	
Not stated	*24 (20.2%)*	
Child's Main Language	*87 (73.1%)*	*32 (26.9%)*
English Only	*81 (68.1%)*	
Bilingual (including English or Welsh)	*6 (5%)*	
If Child Subject to a Statement of Educational Need (SEN)	*57 (47.9%)*	*62 (52.1%)*
No	*38 (31.9%)*	
Yes	*18 (15.1%)*	
Currently being assessed	*1 (0.8%)*	
Ethnicity	*116 (97.5%)*	*3 (2.5%)*
White British	*103 (86.6%)*	
Any Other White Background	*4 (3.4%)*	
White and Black Caribbean	*1 (0.8%)*	
Any other mixed background	*3 (2.5%)*	
Any other Asian background	*1 (0.8%)*	
African	*3 (2.5%)*	
Any other ethnic background	*1 (0.8%)*	

Bivariate Analysis

Table 3

Model 1- Cross tabulation of the Predictor Variables and *'whether School-based Support'* was provided –
Percentage by Independent Variable (row)

Predictor Variables	School-Based Support Provided	No School-Based Support Provided	Total
Type of Local Authority			
Urban	21 (51.2%)	20 (48.8%)	41
Rural	11 (31.4%)	24 (68.6%)	35
Valleys	18 (41.9%)	25 (58.1%)	43
Gender			
Male	28 (40.6%)	41 (59.4%)	69
Female	22 (44.0%)	28 (56.0%)	50
Type of School Child is Attending			
Primary School	37 (42.5%)	50 (57.5%)	87
Secondary School	13 (40.6%)	19 (59.4%)	32
Type of Education			
Mainstream Education	37 (40.2%)	55 (59.8%)	92
Mainstream with a Statement of Educational Need	7 (53.8%)	6 (46.2%)	13
Special Education Provision	3 (42.9%)	4 (57.1%)	7
Other or No Provision	3 (42.9%)	4 (57.1%)	7
Type of Education (recode)			
Mainstream Education	44 (41.9%)	61 (58.1%)	105
Other	6 (42.9%)	8 (57.1%)	14
Additional Concerns raised of Neglect Identified by Social services: First Assessment			
No	18 (34.0%)	35 (66.0%)	53
Yes	32 (48.5%)	34 (51.5%)	66
Number of Siblings on the Child protection register			
None	12 (60.0%)	8 (40.0%)	20
One	14 (38.9%)	22 (61.1%)	36
Two	10 (37.0%)	17 (63.0%)	27
Three	10 (41.7%)	14 (58.3%)	24
Four or More	4 (33.3%)	8 (66.7%)	12
Number of times previously registered on the CPR			
None	30 (46.9%)	34 (53.1%)	64
One	12 (34.3%)	23 (65.7%)	35
Two or More	12 (60.0%)	8 (40.0%)	20

Table 4

Model 1- Cross tabulation of the Predictor Variables and *'whether School-based Support'* was provided – Percentage by Dependent Variable (column)

Predictor Variables	School-Based Support Provided	No School-Based Support Provided	Total
Type of Local Authority			
Urban	21 (42.0%)	20 (29.0%)	41
Rural	11 (22.0%)	24 (34.8%)	35
Valleys	18 (36.0%)	25 (36.2%)	43
Gender			
Male	28 (56.0%)	41 (59.4%)	69
Female	22 (44.0%)	28 (40.6%)	50
Type of School Child is Attending			
Primary School	37 (74.0%)	50 (72.5%)	87
Secondary School	13 (26.0%)	19 (27.5%)	32
Type of Education			
Mainstream Education	37 (74.0%)	55 (79.7%)	92
Mainstream with a Statement of	7 (14.0%)	6 (8.7%)	13
Educational Need	3 (6.0%)	4 (5.8%)	7
Special Education Provision	3 (6.0%)	4 (5.8%)	7
Other or No Provision			
Type of Education (recode)			
Mainstream Education	44 (88.0%)	61 (88.4%)	105
Other	6 (12.0%)	8 (11.6%)	14
Additional Concerns raised of Neglect Identified by Social services: First Assessment			
No	18 (36.0%)	35 (50.7%)	53
Yes	32 (64.0%)	34 (49.3%)	66
Number of Siblings on the Child protection register			
None	12 (24.0%)	8 (11.6%)	20
One	14 (28.0%)	22 (31.9%)	36
Two	10 (20.0%)	17 (24.6%)	27
Three	10 (20.0%)	14 (20.3%)	24
Four or more	4 (08.0%)	8 (11.6%)	12
Number of times previously registered on the CPR			
None	30 (60%)	34 (49.3%)	64
One	12 (24%)	23 (33.3%)	35
Two or more	8 (16%)	12 (17.4%)	20

Model 1 – Model Coefficients *'whether School-based Support'* was provided to the Child. *(p=<0.05)*

Predictor Variable	P value sig.	Chi Square X^2
Type of Local Authority	0.219	3.036[a]
Gender	0.709	0.139[a]
Type of School Attending	0.852	0.035[a]
Type of Education	0.832	0.873[a]
Type of Education Recode	0.946	0.005[a]
Additional Concerns Raised of Neglect	0.111	2.545[a]
Number of Siblings on the Child protection register	0.486	3.477[a]
Number of times previously registered on the CPR	0.470	1.512[a]

Independent samples t-test was run for '**Age of Child'** [interval variable, normally distributed] against dependent variable (whether school-based support was provided).   t (1.242) = -1.37; p>0.05 (not statistically significant). Equal variances assumed. [Mean age of child for Yes; 9.52 years, Mean age of child for No; 8.72 years]

<u>Model 1 [Whether school-based support was provided]</u> Interpretation:

- Overall, out of the cases where school-based support was provided to the child, slightly more boys in the sample received support (56%, *n=28*) compared to the amount of girls (44%, *n=22*). This could be reflective of the higher frequencies of boys in the sample overall which potentially skews the data. When the data is split by independent variable (row) out of all the girls in the sample who received school-based support, it is 44% who received support (and 56% who didn't) compared to 40.6% of boys who received support (59.4% who didn't).

- When the data is split by **Local Authority category** (by IV, row), the majority of school-based support which was provided to children within the Urban Authority (51.1%, *n=21*), compared to 41.9% (*n=18*) to the Valleys, and 31.4% (*n=11)* to the Rural Authority. This could be reflective of a greater availability of resources or third sector agencies within a more densely populated urban area. The Urban and Valleys categories have similar frequencies, although the Valleys category has less support provided. When the data is split by Dependent Variable (column) (although this provides little useful insight), the majority of support was provided to cases within the Urban Authority (42%) compared to (36%) Valleys or (22%) Rural Authority, but it is important to note the higher frequency of case files within the Urban Authority which could potentially skew the data.

- Out of the total school-based support delivered, 74% was provided by **primary schools** compared to 26% provided to secondary schools. This is not surprising given that the sample included many more children of primary school age (*n=37)* than secondary school age *(n=13)* which potentially skews the data. However, when the data is split by independent variable (row) the percentage of school-based support provided by each type of school is actually quite similar (42.5% primary, 40.6% secondary school).

- Out of the total school-based support delivered, the highest proportion 74% (*n=37*) was offered to children who were in **mainstream education**, with 14% (*n=7*) provided to children in mainstream education with a Statement of Educational Need. This is not surprising given the fact that the majority of children are schooled within mainstream education, which is representative of the general population.
  [N.B. Four cells in the cross tabs are lower than a count of 5 for this variable. The variable was originally recoded to account for this, but when the data is split again by DV this becomes problematic it the ability to determine whether the relationship between type of education and 'whether school-based support was provided', is statistically significant. The homogeneous nature of this variable means that it is unlikely that any sufficiently robust findings might have been identified]. When the variable is recoded into two categories either 'mainstream education' or 'other education', out of all the school-based support provided, the highest proportion of those receiving school-based support was children in mainstream education (88%, *n=44*), compared to children in other educational provision (12%, *n=6*). This is not surprising given the higher representation of children in the sample and population that attend mainstream education. However, when data is split by independent variable (row), type of education had little impact upon whether the child received school-based support or not, with 42.9% of children in 'other' education received support, compared to 41.9% of children in mainstream education. It is important to remember that non-school based provision was not the focus of the sample, so it is unlikely that these cases would have been referred in by schools.

- Out of the cases where school-based support was being provided to the child (*n=50)*, 64% of cases had **additional concerns of neglect identified** by Social services during the Initial Assessment. This could suggest that school-based support was provided to cases where neglect was subsequently confirmed by Social services as being pervasive or chronic, or that schools are referring cases that meet specific criteria.

- Out of the school-based support provided to a child experiencing neglect, **the number of siblings** a child had, had limited impact upon whether or not they received support. However, of all the school-based support provided to children in the sample (n=50) the highest proportion of those receiving school-based support had one sibling (28%, *n=14*) followed by those children without siblings (24%, *n=12*), then children with two (%, *n=10*), or three siblings (20%, *n=10*), four or more siblings (0.8%, *n=4*). It is important to note that the overwhelming majority of children in the sample that did receive support (*n=50)* did have siblings *n= 38).*
  However when the data are split by independent variable, 60% of children with no siblings received the most school-based support, followed by children with three siblings 41.7%, two siblings 37%, one siblings 38.9%, and four siblings 33.3%. Children with one sibling were slightly more likely to receive school-based support (28%) than those without a sibling (24%), or those with two siblings (20%) three siblings (20%) or four or more siblings (8%). Due to the relatively small frequencies within the sample, it is necessary to be cautious in making claims about this data, however further research into children without siblings, could investigate this relationship further.

- Out of all of the cases where school-based support had been provided to the child, the highest proportion of support was received by children who had not previously been registered on the CPR (60%, *n=30),* followed by those with one prior registration (24%, *n=12)*, and those with two or more prior registrations (16%, *n=8).* This suggests that the children who are registered for the first time are more likely to receive school-based support than those with previous registrations. This could suggest that schools are less inclined to continue to focus support on children where this has not been effective in the past, or that resources are directed towards children who are not yet registered on the CPR with Social services. When the data is split by independent variable (row), 60% of children with two or more registrations received school-based support, compared to those with no siblings (46.9%) and one sibling (34.3%) receiving support.

- There were no significant relationships between any of the independent variables and dependent variables in this bivariate analysis.

- The result of the independent samples t-test also showed no significant relationship between the age of child and whether school-based support was provided. The mean age of child for cases where support was provided was 9.52 years, and for case where school-based support was not provided was 8.72 years old.

H0 – There is no difference between the predictor variable and whether a child receives school-based support.

H1 – There is a difference between the predictor variable and whether a child receives school-based support.

Some expected relationships between variables:
o   Children in urban authorities are more likely to received school-based support due to an increased range of resources and third sector agencies
o   Children with more siblings are more likely to receive school-based support
o   Children outside of mainstream education are more likely to receive school-based support
o   Where additional concerns of neglect were identified during Initial Assessment by Social services children are more likely to have received school-based support.

- Children in primary schools are more likely to receive school-based support than those in secondary schools due to the nurturing nature and smaller size of the school
- Children who had been previously registered on the child protection register are less likely to receive school-based resources and support, in favour or re-referrals to Social services.

Chi-square does not report a statistically significant association between any of the predictor variables listed in the table above and the dependent variable 'Whether School-based Support' was provided to the child at the 5% level. Accept H0 – that there is no statistically significant relationship between the predictor variables and dependent variable (model 1). This means it is not possible to run a regression model.

Bivariate Analysis Model 2:

Table 5 Model 2: Cross-tabulation of the Predictor Variables and '*whether the School Attended the Child's ICPC*' by Independent Variable (row)

Predictor Variables	School Attended the Initial Child Protection Conference	School Did Not Attend the Initial Child Protection Conference	Total
Type of Local Authority			
Urban	34 (82.9%)	7 (17.1%)	41
Rural	26 (74.3%)	9 (25.7%)	35
Valleys	38 (88.4%)	5 (11.6%)	43
Gender			
Male	57 (82.6%)	12 (17.4%)	69
Female	41 (82.0%)	9 (18.0%)	50
Type of School Child is Attending			
Primary School	72 (82.8%)	15 (17.2%)	87
Secondary School	26 (81.2%)	6 (18.8%)	32
Type of Education			
Mainstream Education	77 (83.7%)	15 (16.3%)	92
Mainstream with a SEN	11 (84.6%)	2 (15.4%)	13
Special Education Provision	5 (71.4%)	2 (28.6%)	7
Other or No Provision	5 (71.4%)	2 (28.6%)	7
Type of Education (recode)			
Mainstream Education	88 (83.8%)	17 (16.2%)	105
Other	10 (71.4%)	4 (28.6%)	14
Additional Concerns raised of Neglect Identified by Social services: First Assessment			
No	44 (83.0%)	9 (17.0%)	53
Yes	54 (81.8%)	12 (18.2%)	66
Number of Siblings on the Child protection register			
None	13 (65.0%)	7 (35.0%)	20
One	30 (83.3%)	6 (16.7%)	36
Two	23 (85.2%)	4 (14.8%)	27
Three	21 (87.5%)	3 (12.5%)	24
Four or More	11 (91.7%)	1 (08.3%)	12
Number of times previously registered on the CPR			
None	53 (82.8%)	11 (17.2%)	64
One	26 (74.3%)	9 (25.7%)	35
Two or More	19 (95.0%)	1 (05.0%)	20

Table 6

Model 2 – Cross-tabulation of the Predictor Variables and '*whether the School Attended the Child's ICPC*' by dependent variable (column)

Predictor Variables	School Attended the Initial Child Protection Conference	School Did Not Attend the Initial Child Protection Conference	Total
Type of Local Authority			
Urban	34 (34.7%)	7 (33.3%)	41
Rural	26 (26.5%)	9 (42.9%)	35
Valleys	38 (38.8%)	5 (23.8%)	43
Gender			
Male	57 (58.2%)	12 (57.1%)	69
Female	41 (41.8%)	9 (42.9%)	50
Type of School Child is Attending			
Primary School	72 (73.5%)	15 (71.4%)	87
Secondary School	26 (26.5%)	6 (28.6%)	32
Type of Education			
Mainstream Education	77 (78.6%)	15 (71.4%)	92
Mainstream with a Statement of Educational Need	11 (11.2%)	2 (9.5%)	13
Special Education Provision	5 (5.1%)	2 (9.5%)	7
Other or No Provision	5 (5.1%)	2 (9.5%)	7
Type of Education			
Mainstream Education	88 (89.8%)	17 (81.0%)	105
Other or No Provision	10 (10.2%)	4 (19.0%)	14
Additional Concerns raised of Neglect Identified by Social services: First Assessment			
No	44 (44.9%)	9 (42.9%)	53
Yes	54 (55.1%)	12 (57.1%)	66
Number of Siblings on the Child protection register			
None	13 (13.3%)	7 (33.3%)	20
One	30 (30.6%)	6 (28.6%)	36
Two	23 (23.5%)	4 (19.0%)	27
Three	21 (21.4%)	3 (14.3%)	24
Four or More	11 (11.2%)	1 (04.8%)	12
Number of times previously registered on the Child protection register			
None	53 (54.1%)	11 (52.4%)	64
One	26 (26.5%)	9 (42.9%)	35
Two or More	19 (19.4%)	1 (04.8%)	20

Model 2a – Model Coefficients '*whether the School Attended the Child's Initial Child Protection Conference'. (p=<0.05).*

Predictor Variable	P value sig	Chi Square X^2
Type of Local Authority	0.266	2.649[a]
Gender	0.931	0.007[a]
Type of School Attending	0.848	0.037[a]
Type of Education	0.727	1.310[a]
Type of Education Recode	0.254	1.303[a]

Additional Concerns Raised of Neglect	0.864	0.029[a]
Number of Siblings on the Child protection register	0.242	5.471[a]
Number of times previously registered on the CPR	0.151	3.778[a]

Independent samples t-test was run for '**Age of Child'** [interval variable, normally distributed] against dependent variable (whether school attended ICPC): t (0.80) = -0.17; p>0.05 (not statistically significant)   [Mean age of child for Yes: 9.08, Mean age of child for No; 8.95 years]

Model 2 [Whether the School attended the ICPC] Interpretation

- Out of the cases where the school attended the Initial Child Protection Conference, the **gender** split between boys (82.6%, *n=57)* and girls (82.0%, *n=41)* is almost the same. However, due to the higher frequency of boys in the sample, the data when split by dependent variable, illustrates slightly more boys (58.2%, *n=57*) had the school present at their conference in the sample compared to the amount of girls (41.8%*, n=41*).

- When the data is split by independent variable [which accounts for frequency disparity], the schools were most likely to attend the Initial Child Protection Conference were from within the Valleys Authority (88.4%, n=38), compared to the urban (82.9%, n=34) or the Rural Authority (74.3%, n=26). This could be reflection of a much smaller population density in the Valleys, which would make attending more meetings possible, or a smaller and more accessible geographic area. The Rural Authority category was around 14% less likely to be present at the child's Initial Child Protection Conference than the other categories, which could suggest the practice challenges of working in an expansive and rural region. However, when the data is analysed by dependent variable, the Valleys Authority (38.8%) remains the most likely area in which schools attend the child's Child Protection Conference compared to the urban (34.7%) and the rural authorities (26.5%), though this is skewed by the higher frequencies in both the Urban and Valley's.

- Out of the cases where the school attended the Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC), 73.5% were attended by primary school staff compared to 26.5% which were attended by secondary school staff. This is not surprising given that the sample included many more children of primary school age (n=87) than secondary school age (n=32), however when analysed by independent variable (row) 82.8% of primary school staff successfully attended the child's ICPC, and 81.2% of secondary school staff attended the child's ICPC.

- Out of the total cases where the school attended the child's ICPC, 78.6% were for children who were in mainstream education, with 11.2% for children in mainstream education with a Statement of Educational Need. This is not surprising given the fact that the majority of children attend mainstream education, which is representative of the general population of Wales. *[N.B. Four cells in the cross tabs are lower than a count of 5 for this variable. The variable was originally recoded to account for this, but when the data is split again by DV this becomes problematic it the ability to determine whether the relationship between type of education and 'whether school-based support was provided', is statistically significant. The homogeneous nature of this variable means that it is unlikely that any sufficiently robust findings might have been identified].* When the variable is recoded into two categories either 'mainstream education' or 'other education', out of all the cases where the school attended the ICPC, the highest proportion of children with the school in attendance at the ICPC were those in mainstream education (89.8%, *n=88*), compared to children in 'other' educational provision (10.2%, *n=10*). This is not surprising given the higher representation of children in the sample and population

who receive mainstream education. However, when data is split by independent variable (row), type of education had much less impact upon whether the school attended the ICPC or not, with 71.4% of children in 'other' educational provision having the school present, compared to 83.7% of children in mainstream education.

- Out of the cases where the school attended the child's ICPC, 55.1% of cases had additional concerns of neglect identified by Social services during the Initial Assessment, compared to 44.9% of cases which Social services did not identify additional concerns of neglect during assessment. However, when the data is analysed by independent variable (table 5), 81.8% of cases had additional concerns of neglect raised by Social services during the Initial Assessment, compared to 83% of cases which did not. This suggests that the subsequent identification of additional concerns about neglect by Social services, does not appear to be important in terms of determining whether the schools attends the child's Conference or not.

- Out of the cases in the sample where the school attended the child's ICPC, the number of siblings a child has increases the likelihood of the school attending the Initial Child Protection Conference. When data is analysed by independent variable (table 5), the school is most likely to attend the ICPC if the child has four or more siblings (91.7%), followed by three siblings (87.5%), then two siblings (85.2%), then one sibling (83.3%), then no siblings (65%). These figures account for the disparity in frequencies within this variable. However, when the data is analysed by dependent variable (table 6), figures illustrate that children with one sibling are considerably more likely (30.6%, *n=30)* to have the school present at their Conference. This is because the higher frequency of children in the sample is reflected by the number of cases with only one sibling (*n=30)*, than those with two siblings (23.5%, n=23), three siblings (21.4%, n=21), no siblings 13.3%, n=13) or four or more siblings (11.2%, n=11) which potentially skews the data.

- Children who were registered on the Child protection register for the first time were more likely to have the school attend their Initial Child Protection Conference, than children who had been previously registered.   This can been seen as 51.4% (n=53) of children who had not previously been registered had the school attend their ICPC, compared those children who had been registered once before (26.5%, n=26) and those who had been registered two or more times (19.4%, n=19) (table 6). It is important to note the impact of the higher frequencies for the category of 'No previous registrations' on the data, and the fact that the majority of children in the Child Protection process are not registered more than once. However, when the data is analysed by independent variable (table 5), figures illustrate that the school attended 95% of Conferences for cases that had been registered two or more times, compared to 82.8% of conferences for cases that had not been registered before, and 74.3% of conferences for cases that had been registered once before. This could suggest that schools prioritise the attendance at conferences where concerns of neglect are persistent and chronic, or when agencies have seen little improvement in the level of risk posed to the child, or where the conference is the first child protection intervention for the child.

- There was no statistically significant relationship between any of the independent variables and whether the school attended the child's ICPC in the bivariate analysis.

- The result of the independent samples t-test also showed no significant relationship between the age of child and whether the school attended the child's ICPC. The mean age of child for cases where support was provided was 9.08 years, and for case where school-based support was not provided was 8.95 years old.

H0 – There is no difference between the predictor variables and whether the School attended the child's Initial Child Protection Conference.

H1 – There is a difference between the predictor variables and whether the School attended the child's Initial Child Protection Conference. Some expected relationships between variables:

- o Children in urban or Valleys' authorities are more likely have the school present at their ICPCs due more accessible meeting locations within the city or in smaller schools or villages in the Valleys, compared to expansive rural areas.
- o Children with more siblings are more likely to have the school present at their ICPC if the concerns are held about more than one child in the family who attends the school.
- o Children in mainstream education are more likely to have the school present at the conference than those in specialist or other/no provision. This would be because mainstream schools are potentially more likely to have specific child protection staffing roles or officers who can prioritise attendance over their daily duties.
- o Children in secondary schools are more likely to have the school attend the ICPC on the basis of greater staff resources in often larger schools, and specific CP staff roles, rather than in primary schools who often have the role included in their daily duties.
- o Children who have been registered on the CPR before are more likely to have the school attend their Conference, with staff responding more effectively to ongoing and pervasive issues of neglect in specific families.

Chi-square does not report a statistically significant association between any of the predictor variables listed above and 'whether the School attended the child's Initial Child Protection Conference' at the 5% level. Reject H1 and accept H0 – there is no statistically significant relationship between the predictor variables and dependent variable (model 2). This means that it is not possible to run a regression model as hoped.

8 – Schedule of Interview Participants

No.	Gender	Role	DSP	Level of Experience
P 01	Male	Head Teacher & Designated CP Lead (Primary)	Yes	>20 years
P 02	Female	Deputy Head Teacher & Class Teacher (Primary)		>5 years
P 03	Female	Class Teacher & Deputy CP Officer (Primary)	Yes	>5 years
P 04	Female	Teaching Assistant (Primary)		>10 years
P 05	Female	Teaching Assistant (Primary)		<5 years
P 06	Female	School Administrator (Primary)		<5 years
P 07	Female	ALENCo (Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator) (Primary)		>15 years
P 08	Female	Teaching Assistant Level 3 (Primary)		>5 years
P 09	Female	Support Staff, School Crossing Patrol (Primary)		>10 years
P 10	Female	Head Teacher (Primary)	Yes	>20 years
S 11	Female	Teaching Assistant (Secondary)		>10 years
S 12	Female	Additional Needs Co-ordinator ALENCo (Secondary)	Yes	>20 years
S 13	Female	Administrator (Secondary)		>10 years
S 14	Female	Inclusion/ Pupil Support Manager (Secondary)		>10 years
S 15	Male	Head of Pupil Progress & Class Teacher (Secondary)		>25 years
P 16	Female	Head Teacher (Primary)	Yes	>25 years
P 17	Female	Class Teacher & ALNCo (Primary)	Yes	>25 years
P 18	Female	Class Teacher & Governor (Primary)		>5 years
P 19	Female	Teaching Assistant & Breakfast Club Supervisor (Primary)		>10 years
P 20	Female	Senior Teaching Assistant (Secondary)		>15 years
S 21	Female	Special Educational Needs Unit Manager (Secondary)		>5 years
S 22	Male	Police Liaison Officer (Secondary)		>5 years
S 23	Male	Teaching Assistant (Inclusion & Well-being) (Secondary)		>10 years
S 24	Male	Assistant Head Teacher/ Child Protection Officer (Secondary)	Yes	>15 years
S 25	Female	Pastoral Manager (Secondary)		>5 years

S 26	Female	Options Co-Ordinator & Pastoral Lead (Secondary)		>15 years
S 27	Female	Director of Care & Inclusion (Secondary)	Yes	>20 years
S 28	Female	Attendance Officer (Secondary)		>5 years
S 29	Male	Learning Support Assistant (Secondary)		>5 years
S 30	Female	Pupil Reception (Inclusion & Well-being) (Secondary)		<1 year

9 - Interview Schedule

1. Introduction

- Introduce self and talk about the study
- Highlight the purpose of the study – two sides of education and social services
- Highlight the interest in understanding participants' thoughts feelings and experiences
- Contribute/inform future policy and practice
- Answer any outstanding questions the participant has
- Obtain informed consent and provide with a participant information sheet on the study

2. General Information

- Ask about participant's current role and length of service
- What training (professional qualification or informally) has the participant had if any?
- Background and experience in role

What is your current role and how long have you been doing it?
What role did you do before?
Can you tell me a bit about your previous experience and background?
Could you tell me about a typical day in your current role?

3. Understandings of a Child's Basic Needs
What do you think a child needs to thrive/flourish?
What type of basic needs do you often see being overlooked in families?
What is your understanding of child neglect?
What are the common indicators you might see if a child is being neglected?
What is your experience of working with neglect?
What factors do you use to make sense of it? OR what indicators might you observe on a child?
[They may, or may not, provide a specific definition]
Can you tell me about a time when you have been worried that a child was experiencing neglect?

4. Role Perceptions

- School Policy and Process
- Responsibility to report neglect
- Contact with outside agencies

Can you talk to me about what you would do if you thought a child was being neglected?
Whose responsibility would it be to offer support to the child?
What contact do you have with other agencies in terms of safeguarding referrals or questions?
What contact do you have with other roles within the school?
Is there a designated person in the school who deals with such concerns about neglect?

5. Professional Support

- Professional support available
- Informal support from colleagues

Who would you talk to if you had worries about a child being neglected?
What is your experience of receiving guidance and support from designated colleagues?
How involved are you with multi-agency referrals or discussions?
(if or) When you have made a referral do you know if this has been progressed?
Is there someone for you to 'debrief' or discuss the situation with informally for your own well-being?

6. Relationships

- Talking to the child
- Engaging with Parents
- The lasting impact of making a referral

If you had concerns about a child what would you do?
Would you talk to the child and explain the worries you held?
Would you speak to the child's parents?
Can you tell me about an experience where you have shared your concerns with the parents?
How do you think this changed the nature of your relationship with the parents?
In what way do you think this could be ameliorated/avoided?

10 – Interview Vignette A

Scenario A (for use with classroom staff)

'Jenny is regularly late into school and has been absent for a few days last week. You are aware that Jenny did not complete her homework from last week and she is looking sad and withdrawn in class. Colleagues have told you that they have struggled to make contact with her Mother in the past to raise concerns about Jenny's uniform being incomplete and their lack of engagement with parents' evening.'

Senario A (i'w ddefnyddio â staff ystafell ddosbarth)

'Mae Jenny yn aml yn hwyr i'r ysgol, ac roedd yn absennol am ychydig ddiwrnodau yr wythnos ddiwethaf. Rydych yn ymwybodol na wnaeth Jenny ei gwaith cartref yr wythnos ddiwethaf. Mae'n edrych yn drist yn y dosbarth, ac mae wedi mynd i'w chragen. Mae eich cydweithwyr wedi dweud wrthych eu bod wedi cael trafferth cysylltu â'i mam yn y gorffennol i godi pryderon am wisg ysgol Jenny, a diffyg ymgysylltiad ei rhieni â'r noson rieni.'

11 – Interview Vignette B

Scenario B (for use with non-classroom staff)

'Jenny was absent from school at the end of last week, she has not provided a written note from her parent to explain why. Today Jenny arrived at school unaccompanied and looking unkempt. She did not have her school jumper with her. You speak to Jenny and she tells you she is hungry and hasn't eaten since last night. Later that day a teacher comments that her parents did not engage with the recent parents' evening'

Senario B (i'w ddefnyddio gyda staff nad ydynt yn yr ystafell ddosbarth)

'Roedd Jenny yn absennol o'r ysgol ddiwedd yr wythnos ddiwethaf, ac nid yw hi wedi rhoi nodyn ysgrifenedig gan ei rhiant yn esbonio pam. Heddiw, cyrhaeddodd Jenny yr ysgol ar ei phen ei hun, ac roedd hi'n edrych yn flêr. Nad oedd ei siwmper ysgol ganddi. Rydych chi'n siarad â Jenny ac mae hi'n dweud wrthych ei bod yn llwglyd, a heb fwyta ers neithiwr. Yn ddiweddarach y diwrnod hwnnw, mae athro'n dweud na wnaeth rhieni Jenny ymgysylltu â'r noson rieni yn ddiweddar'

12 – Interview Vignette C

Scenario C (for use with classroom staff)

'David has not brought his glasses to school with him for the third time this week. He is struggling to read the information on the board in class. You have left a message with his Father on the home phone about bringing his glasses into school. Today you have offered David additional support with the work in class, but his behaviour is now being disruptive to other pupils.'

Senario C (i'w ddefnyddio â staff ystafell ddosbarth)

'Nid yw David wedi dod â'i sbectol i'r ysgol am y trydydd tro yr wythnos hon. Mae'n ei chael yn anodd darllen y wybodaeth ar y bwrdd yn y dosbarth. Rydych chi wedi gadael neges i'w dad ar ffôn y cartref ynglŷn â dod â'i sbectol i'r ysgol. Heddiw, rydych wedi cynnig cymorth ychwanegol i David gyda gwaith dosbarth, ond erbyn hyn, mae ei ymddygiad yn tarfu ar y disgyblion eraill.'

13 – Interview Vignette D

Scenario D (for use with non-classroom staff)

'David often comes to school without wearing his glasses. Colleagues tell you that they have attempted to contact his Father to discuss this with him. Canteen staff have reported that David was messing about in the canteen at lunchtime. When you speak to David, you notice that he has head lice. The school nurse confirms that he missed his last routine appointment.'

Senario D (i'w ddefnyddio gyda staff nad ydynt yn yr ystafell ddosbarth)

'Mae David yn aml yn dod i'r ysgol heb ei sbectol. Mae eich cydweithwyr yn dweud wrthych eu bod wedi ceisio cysylltu â'i dad i drafod hyn gydag ef. Mae staff y ffreutur wedi rhoi gwybod bod David wedi bod yn creu trafferth yn y ffreutur amser cinio. Wrth siarad â David, rydych yn sylwi bod ganddo lau pen. Mae nyrs yr ysgol yn cadarnhau ei fod wedi colli ei apwyntiad diwethaf.'

The Social services and Well-being Wales Act (2014)

"Neglect" ("*esgeulustod*") means a failure to meet a person's basic physical, emotional, social or psychological needs, which is likely to result in an impairment of the person's well-being (for example, an impairment of the person's health or, in the case of a child, an impairment of the child's development).

Deddf Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol a Llesiant (Cymru) 2014

Ystyr "esgeulustod" ("neglect") yw methiant i ddiwallu anghenion corfforol, emosiynol, cymdeithasol neu seicolegol sylfaenol person, sy'n debygol o arwain at amharu ar lesiant y person (er enghraifft, amharu ar iechyd y person neu, yn achos plentyn, amharu ar ddatblygiad y plentyn).

15 – Interview Vignette: Definition of Child Neglect (b)

The All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008)

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or caregiver failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. In addition, neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse.

Canllawiau Amddiffyn Plant Cymru Gyfan (2008)

Esgeulustod yw methiant cyson i fodloni anghenion corfforol a/neu seicolegol sylfaenol plentyn sy'n debygol o arwain at nam difrifol i iechyd neu ddatblygiad y plentyn. Gall olygu methiant rhiant neu ofalwr i ddarparu digon o fwyd, cysgod neu ddillad, methiant i amddiffyn plentyn rhag niwed corfforol neu berygl, neu fethiant i sicrhau mynediad i ofal neu driniaeth feddygol addas. Gall hefyd gynnwys esgeuluso anghenion emosiynol sylfaenol plentyn, neu fethu ag ymateb iddyn nhw. Gall esgeuluso ddigwydd hefyd yn ystod beichiogrwydd pan mae mam yn camddefnyddio sylweddau.

16 – Variable Definitions for the Case File Data Sample:

Type of Local Authority

Each case file was allocated a category of local authority to identify its geographical location and statutory organisation: Urban, Rural or Valleys Authority. This was for the purpose of understanding whether regional practice differences occurred between local authority areas. The mode for the variable 'local authority category' is 'Valleys'.

Gender

The categorical variable of the child's gender, male or female was recorded. The mode for the variable 'Gender' is 'male'.

Ethnicity

The categorical variable of 'Ethnicity' collected data about the child's ethnicity. Ethnic group categories are congruent with the categories applied by Welsh Government and are follows: 'White British', 'White Irish', 'Traveller', 'Gypsy/Gypsy Roma', 'Any Other White Background', 'White and Black Caribbean', 'White and Black African', 'White and Asian', 'Any Other Mixed Background', 'Indian', 'Pakistani', 'Bangladeshi', 'Any Other Asian Background', 'Caribbean', 'African', 'Any Other Black Background', 'Chinese or Chinese British', 'Any Other Ethnic Background', 'Information Refused', 'Information Not Obtained'. The mode for this variable is 'White British'.

Number of Previous Registrations on the CPR

The categorical variable 'Number of Previous Registrations on The CPR' collected data about the number of times a child had been (previously) registered on the CPR. The categories for this variable are: 'none', 'one', 'two or more times'. The median for this variable is 'None'.

Number of Siblings on the CPR

The categorical variable recorded the number of siblings a child had who were also registered on the CPR: 'none', 'one', 'two', 'three', 'four or more'. The mean is 1 sibling.

Type of Education

The categorical variable 'type of education' records the education the child is receiving. Categories are; 'mainstream education', 'mainstream education with a Statement of Educational Needs', 'Special Provision', 'Home Education', 'Other or No Provision'. The mode for the categorical variable is 'Mainstream Education'.

Child's Age in Years

The continuous variable 'child's age in Years' is the child's age at the date of the referral (made by the school to social services). The variable was calculated by using the child's date of birth and the date that the school completed the referral form. The mean for this variable is 9.6 years old. The category of '15 years old' has a cell count of 4. No data sat within the categories of '16 years' or '17 years'. This was because the compulsory school age for children in Wales is 4-16 years old.

Type of School Child Attending

This categorical variable was calculated by using the child's date of birth and the date of registration on the CPR for Neglect. Children who were registered on the CPR before the start of the September term were coded as attending Primary School, and children registered after the September term were coded as attending Secondary School. The variable has two categories; Primary School or Secondary School. The mode is 'Primary School'.

Additional Concerns of Neglect (Identified by Social Services at Initial Assessment)

The categorical variable identifies whether any concerns of neglect (in addition to those already stated in the school's referral form), were raised by social services within the Initial Assessment document. There are three variable categories: 'Yes', 'No', and 'currently being assessed'. The mode for this variable is 'Yes' (additional concerns of neglect were identified following assessment by social services).

Provision of School-based Family Support

The categorical variable 'provision of school-based family support' has two categories; 'yes' and 'no'. The mode for this variable is 'no', school based-support was not provided. The variable is defined across a range of support which was offered by the school to the family. This included practical support, referrals and signposting to other agencies, emotional support, provision of clothing, food, and financial support. The data were collected from across all seven selected documents. This means that the school may have provided support to the child before they made their referral to social services in terms of preventative efforts, during the time that the child's was being supported by social services in a more complimentary manner, or in some cases both.

Whether School Attended the Initial Child Protection Conference

The categorical variable has two categories; 'No' and 'Yes'. The mode for the variable is 'Yes' the school did attend the child's ICPC. The variable is defined by whether there was evidence in the ICPC minutes that a representative from the child's school was present during the multi-agency meeting.

17 – Example of Coded Interview Transcript

Interview Transcript File Number: 2CFP 17   Duration: 67.56   Date of Interview: 10/03/16

KEY :

V = Vicky (Researcher)
P17 = Participant 17

191	P17:	So sometimes we will – depending on how well we know the parent, as well, and at what…
192		you know… if they've been in the system previously; if it's a… we had 2 little sisters who said
193		"Mummy was crying in the morning, and we were rushed down the stairs" and then one of
194		the little girls said "Yes, she pushed us" so then we talked… this was a one-off, never before
195		known a problem with the family, so we talked to the family and then there'd been some
196		family incident and the mother was crying, and so on and so forth; and it was plausible. And
197		we said "Right, ok; if you're struggling, come and see us" and that kind of thing. Is this the
198		kind of thing you're…?
199	V:	**Yeah, can you…**
200	P17:	Yeah, sorry.
201	V:	**That's all right. I guess there's 2 things I'm really interested in there…**
202	P17:	*[?? Oh good – 20.41]*
203	V:	**And one is; do the relationships with you and the parents change when you have to raise**
204		**concerns with them?**
205	P17:	Hmm. Yes, so… yeah. Sometimes yes; there can be defensiveness, of course. Most of the
206		time, they – I don't use that in any statistical way, but – *most* of the families that we deal
207		with, where *we* raise a concern, we know the families well enough – and they have already
208		come to us, perhaps, and asked for help – or cried for help – or burst into the school office in
209		floods of tears, or something like that. So it's usually as part of an ongoing good relationship.
210		But I think that's because we are… we've got staff members here who know the community
211		quite well. But yes; yes, there are times when people say "I don't want social workers
212		involved" or "I don't want children's services involved; I've had them before and they're no
213		good, they don't help me" kind of thing. "I don't want them taken away" you know… and so
214		on and so forth. So yes; I know, historically – this was before this present head teacher –
215		my… when I was just a – I say "just a" – just a class teacher here, there was a family and
216		there was a conference; and everybody recommended that the children went on the child
217		protection register, and the family took them to another school. And I think it was a case

Key:

Underlined red text =   Relationships with between schools and families

Highlighted yellow txt = Power and stigma of social services

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