Doctorate in Educational Psychology (DEdPsy)

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Supporting Children and Young People Affected by Domestic Abuse: A Multiagency Perspective of Response in the School System.

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Abstract

Children and young people who experience domestic abuse, are at greater risk of a range of negative outcomes in adult life. Yet, all children and young people have the right to protection from violence and abuse, access to appropriate social, emotional and educational opportunities, and the right to access meaningful recoveries from harm. Despite this, there is a paucity of research exploring the mechanisms in place to support them. In Wales, an emphasis is placed on multiagency response to domestic abuse and there is growing interest in the role of schools in prevention and intervention for children and young people.

A mixed-methods design was subsequently adopted, to explore professionals' views on the response to domestic abuse, with a grounding in the school system. Questionnaires were completed by 36 schools in Wales and a series of focus groups were held with children and young people's workers from specialist domestic abuse settings, school staff and social work staff. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis; four overarching themes were developed.

The findings illustrate, that whilst there are a variety of interventions and support available to children and young people, effective response is impacted on by the systems in place to respond to it. It is argued that current practice contributes to the maintenance of the issue, requiring radical consideration, if meaningful change is to take place for children, young people and their families. Implications for practice are discussed, including the role of the Educational Psychologist.

Acknowledgments

Firstly, I would like to say a huge thank you to all the professionals who took part in this research. Their voices have been an invaluable insight into how children and young people are being supported, but more importantly, they have demonstrated just how tirelessly frontline staff are working to achieve this. I hope I can honour their undeniable hard work and reflect their experiences, so that it brings about the change they desperately want.

To Gemma, thank you for slowing me down and reigning me in. Without your guidance this wouldn't have been possible… certainly not in the time frame! Maybe someday, we can work on something again together.

To my fellow TEPs and the university team. I have thoroughly enjoyed every aspect of my learning and development over the past three years. You have made the experience unforgettable. I look forward to the next part of our journeys together and will never stop seeking your wisdom.

Thank you to my family for tolerating my highs and lows and always showing me love and support to get me through. You mean the world to me. I can't wait to repay you – bring on all the celebrations in the summer.

But most of all, I would like to thank my wonderful and supportive husband Alex. You knew me better than I knew myself and helped me find my way back to this path. I absolutely couldn't have done this without you. You have been, and always are, my rock. I love you.

Summary

This thesis consists of three parts: a literature review; an empirical paper; and a critical appraisal. It aims to explore the current response to children and young people affected by domestic abuse, with a grounding in the school system and educational psychology. It seeks to better understand the approaches and interventions being used by frontline staff and hopes to explore their views in relation to the strengths and challenges they face in meeting children and young people's needs.

Part One: Major literature Review

Part one provides a detailed review of the literature around support and interventions used for children and young people in response to domestic abuse in the UK.

Firstly, the concept of domestic abuse is considered and the legislative context in which it operates. Consideration is given to the ways in which domestic abuse can be experienced by children and young people and the impact it can have on them. Finally, an exploration of existing literature on response to domestic abuse within the school system (in the UK) is discussed, including research regarding educational psychology involvement.

Part Two: Empirical Paper

Part two is made up of the empirical paper, which seeks to present the current study. It begins with a brief overview of relevant literature, followed by a rationale for the study and the research questions. A detailed methodology is presented, including research design and ethical considerations. Results, following descriptive statistics and a thematic analysis, are discussed and considered in relation to implications for future research and educational psychology practice. Strengths and limitations of the study are also explored.

Part Three: Critical appraisal

Part three provides a critical review of the study's contribution to knowledge and understanding. It offers a reflective and reflexive account of the researcher's journey of conducting the study, including a consideration of the decisions made throughout the process, methodology, key learning points and philosophical underpinnings.

Contents

Part One: Major Literature Review (10,030 words)

Part Two: Major Empirical Paper (6,954)

Part Three: Major Critical Appraisal (reflective summary) (4,660)

List of tables

List of Figures

Appendices

List of abbreviations

ADHD ……. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

ACEs……. Adverse Childhood Experiences

ALNCo ……..…… Additional learning Needs Coordinator

CAS……..Care and Support

CP ……..…Child Protection

CYP ……..……Children and young people

ELSA……Emotional Literacy Support Assistant

EP ……. Educational Psychologist

EPS ……. Educational Psychology Service

IWM ……..…….Internal Working Model

LA ……. Local Authority

PRISMA ……..Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses

PSE ……Personal Social Education

RSE ……..…… Relationships and Sexuality Education

TEP……..…Trainee Educational Psychologist

UK ……..……United Kingdom

WG ……Welsh Government

Part One: Major Literature Review

Word count: (10, 228 words)

1. STRUCTURE OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Introduction

The following literature review explores the matter of domestic abuse in relation to children and young people (CYP). First, it examines the concept of domestic abuse as it is currently understood and sets out the legislative context in which it operates. As many policy areas are devolved to each nation by central government (including education, health and social care), it would be beyond the scope of the literature review to consider the legal frameworks in all four nations. Instead, particular attention is given to the Welsh context (the country in which the thesis is being undertaken). Following this, consideration is given to the ways in which domestic abuse can be experienced by CYP and the impact it can have on them (immediate and future). A synthesis of literature focusing on response to domestic abuse within the school system is subsequently discussed, exploring research undertaken across the UK; this also explores current involvement from Educational Psychologists (EPs).

1.2 Search strategy

The Welsh Government (WG) website, Home Office briefings, Office for National Statistics (ONS) and national charity publications were used to better understand the contextual factors surrounding domestic abuse in relation to CYP.

A subsequent search for relevant literature was conducted from online databases, to explore the response to domestic abuse within the school system. These searches were undertaken between September 2020 – November 2020. Databases included in the

search were APA Psycinfo, ASSIA (Applied Social Sciences Index & Abstracts), ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) and the British Education Index; all of which, were purposely selected for their coverage of social science, education, and psychology disciplines. Journal articles were initially identified from their titles and abstracts using a combination of keywords and search terms, shown in Table 1 below. The Psychology of Education Review and the Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP) Debate magazine were also searched manually.

Table 1

Terms used in the literature search

Search terms	
	'domestic abuse', 'domestic violence' OR 'family violence'
AND	'intervent*', 'prevent*', 'respon*' OR 'support*'
AND	'educat*', 'school*', 'nursery' OR 'teacher'
The asterisk (*) acts as the truncation character used to search for additional letters after the word (e.g., respon**d** or respon**se**)	

Additional searches for relevant articles, such as unpublished doctoral theses (grey literature) were completed using the search engine Google Scholar, database WorldCat and through backward chaining of references within relevant articles, to limit publication bias.

1.3 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Research regarding response to domestic abuse was included if it had been conducted in the UK between 2010 - 2020, as the aims were to establish current professional response to knowledge of CYP affected by domestic abuse. Research was therefore excluded if it was conducted outside of the UK, due to the myriad of cultural differences in schooling, safeguarding practices and availability of support around the world. Additionally, literature was chosen if it focused on CYP of nursery school age up to compulsory school age (16 years old in Wales). Whilst it is acknowledged that there is a statutory safeguarding responsibility for young people under the age of 18, and that EPs work with CYP from birth up to the age of 25 (Additional Learning Needs and Education

Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018), this is a relatively recent change to the EP role, resulting in post-16 work currently in a state of transition (Apter et al., 2018). Thus, it was felt that focusing on established practice would help to develop a greater understanding of response, on which future practice could be developed.

1.4 Transparency and reporting

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) (Moher et al., 2009) model was used to clearly demonstrate the search strategy for exploring current response to domestic abuse in the school system (Appendix A). A total of 19 qualitative articles were identified as relevant (see Table 13 in Appendix A for a summary of the research papers reviewed). Due to the scope of topics found within these articles, a narrative approach was taken, and a synthesis of information is subsequently provided (Siddaway et al*.,* 2019).

2. CONTEXT OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

2.1 Definition and terminology

Domestic abuse, also known as domestic violence, intimate partner violence and family violence, has been defined by central government as:

> *Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional*
>
> (Home Office, 2013, p.2)

The term domestic abuse is subsequently adopted throughout the thesis to reflect the fact that for many individuals, physical violence may not be present in their experience of abuse. Coercive and controlling behaviour for example, is described as repeated acts of behaviour that lead to feelings of isolation, guilt, humiliation, dependency and/or fear (Home Office, 2013). Despite not having been formally included in the policy definition, prior to the update in 2013, Robinson et al. (2018) point out that it has been a clear feature in the discourse around domestic abuse since the 1970's. They suggest there is a lack of understanding about the term and the way in which the behaviour

manifests, which leads to a distinct lack of recognition of the abuse, both from professionals and the general public alike. It is important to note, that much of the research around CYP's experiences of domestic abuse, have been associated with their exposure to physical incidents, and lacks exploration around their experiences within the broader policy definition in which domestic abuse exists (Katz, 2016).

2.2 Prevalence

The most recent figures on prevalence rates for domestic abuse come from the Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2020). These show that in England and Wales alone, 1.6 million women and 757, 000 men (aged 16 – 74 years old) were recorded to experience domestic abuse between March 2019 and March 2020. Furthermore, increased reports of domestic abuse were recorded during Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, resulting in a 25% increase in calls to the UK national charity Refuge (2020) and a 49% increase to Wales's national helpline Live Fear Free (Welsh Women's Aid, 2020). With the estimated cost for a single victim around £35,000 per year, the economic and social implications of domestic abuse are therefore clearly overwhelming (Oliver et al., 2019). Yet this does not reflect the true extent of the issue, with many individuals often remaining hidden victims and failing to present within the criminal justice system or to specialist services (Parker, 2015). Moreover, this figure does not reveal the numbers of CYP affected; estimated to be around 18,487 CYP in Wales between 2017 – 2018 (Welsh Women's Aid, 2019). In addition, approximately 16% of adults in a national survey in Wales, reported that they had experienced domestic abuse as a child (Bellis et al., 2015; Bellis et al., 2018); it is unclear how many, if any, accessed specialist support.

The ONS (2019) report increasing numbers of referrals to social services and specialist agencies, however current estimates by Welsh Women's Aid (2019) suggest that 14,224 CYP received no specialist support between 2017-2018. Additionally, they report a significant degree of understaffing of CYPs workers within specialist services. A lack of ring-fenced funding has also impacted on social services ability to provide support (National Assembly for Wales, 2016), despite the most recent census report suggesting that over a quarter of children receiving Care and Support (CAS), in the year ending March 2020, were in relation to caregiver domestic abuse (StatsWales, 2021).

2.3 Impact of domestic abuse on children and young people

The lack of focused support for CYP is surprising, particularly given the wealth of research documenting the impact of domestic abuse on CYP across the age ranges (Stanley et al., 2015; Welsh Women's Aid, 2019). Largely explored through the use of quantitative methods, such as questionnaires or behavioural observations (Callaghan et al., 2017), research indicates that CYP are at increased risk of actual harm, have poorer mental health and educational outcomes, and are more likely to encounter intergenerational patterns of abuse (CADDA, 2014; CAFCAS Cymru, 2019; UNICEF, 2006).

Moreover, CYP are increasingly recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right (Callaghan et al., 2018), despite this not being acknowledged in the policy definition. Where previously they were seen as passive bystanders, research by Callaghan et al. (2018) drew attention to alternative ways of constructing CYPs roles in the discourse of domestic abuse. Callaghan et al. (2018) interviewed 21 CYP (aged 8-18), recruited from specialist domestic abuse services, focusing on their lived experiences of facing DA in their homes. Their research suggested that the CYP they interviewed, demonstrated a distinct awareness of the dynamics brought about by domestic abuse (Callaghan et al., 2018). They also recognised the challenges it posed within the family unit and employed a range of strategies in an attempt to navigate agency in response to it. Callaghan et al. (2018) emphasise how this shows that CYP do not merely observe or witness domestic abuse, but instead are immersed in the dynamics of it, and subsequently are victims too.

Further weight is given to this argument, through research by Katz (2016), which describes how 15 CYP (aged 10-20) reported frequently being prevented from accessing friends, family and community-based activities, as a result of coercive and controlling behaviour within their homes.

In addition to this, Thornton (2014) notes the impact that domestic abuse can have on younger children, in her small-scale study exploring the experiences of eight children (aged 5 -9) and five of their mothers (aged 24 – 42). Thornton (2014) highlights that

whilst young children may be unable to articulate their experiences verbally, by not finding ways to help them express difficult experiences, they may be harmed in a different way. Based on findings from other researchers (e.g., Moore, 1994; Van der Kolk, 2005), Thornton (2014) subsequently sought the use of creative and indirect methods, to help the children in her study reflect their experiences of living with domestic abuse. Thornton (2014) used eight drawing prompts from the Story Stem Assessment Profile (SSAP) (Hodges et al., 2004), a Kinetic Family Drawing (Burns & Kaufman, 1972) and a Human Figure Drawing (Koppitz, 1968), to explore the children's declarative and non-declarative memories. Thornton (2014) combined this information with transcript data from semi-structured interviews, conducted with the five mothers. Using grounded theory to analyse the data, Thornton (2014) developed a theoretical model, demonstrating the emotional impact for CYP and the influence on family dynamics (such as decreased emotional availability of the caregiver and reduced ability to provide emotional containment for their children), resulting from domestic abuse in the home. Thornton's model suggests that these experiences further impacted on children's coping responses and consequently their capacity to process emotions. Whilst acknowledging the small sample size and interpretive nature of the research, it emphasises the importance of considering all CYP who experience domestic abuse, regardless of age, as victims.

McKee and Mason (2015) support this notion, advocating for the delivery of preventative education in the early years. They draw attention to the significant and long-term impacts that domestic abuse can have on CYP and note the reduced cognitive and communicative abilities of younger children, to make sense of their experiences and seek help.

Swanston et al. (2014) highlight how children as young as eight, could articulate their experiences of domestic abuse in their qualitative study, exploring the understanding and perceptions of domestic abuse in five school-aged children and their mothers. Although only a small sample size, the research demonstrated how CYP perceived their home lives to be normal, until offered an opportunity to reflect on their experiences (Swanston et al., 2014). When given this opportunity, they were able to articulate their

worries, fear, attempts to predict threatening behaviour, and protectiveness over the abused parent and siblings.

Furthermore, Lloyd (2018) recently completed a review of the literature surrounding the impacts of DA on CYP. She notes that age, duration of the experience, and individual context, all play a role in the way CYP process their experiences and respond to them. An array of internalising (e.g., anxiety, withdrawal, play regression) and externalising (e.g., aggression, self-harm, risk-taking) behaviours were identified, demonstrating the variety of ways in which the experiences of domestic abuse can manifest in CYP. These individual differences suggest that interventions may need to be varied but stress the importance of finding safe and meaningful ways for CYP to make sense of their experiences.

2.4 Adverse Childhood Experiences

Domestic abuse is considered to be an Adverse Childhood Experience, or ACE. The term has gained traction over the past decade, both in the fields of public health and medicine, as well as education. Initially coined by Felitti et al. (1998), the phrase relates to a range of stressors, and often traumatic events, experienced by CYP which are outside of their control. In their original study, which focused on the experiences of child abuse (physical, emotional, sexual and neglect) and household dysfunction (caregiver mental illness, incarceration, interpersonal violence, substance misuse and divorce), Felitti et al. (1998) found that ACEs had a major impact on later adult health risk behaviours. Subsequent ACEs research, of which there has been an abundance globally (Asmussen et al., 2020; Couper & Mackie, 2016), has also begun to explore the impact of other childhood factors, such as poverty or being 'looked after', and community level adversity, such as racism, bullying and homelessness (Bullock, 2019).

In Wales, national surveys have been completed to explore the prevalence of ACEs and their correlation with adverse adult health outcomes (Bellis et al., 2015; Bellis et al. 2018). The results of these, consistently demonstrated that approximately half of the adult population in Wales, reported experiencing one ACE, and around 13-14% reported experiencing four or more. This is also consistent with findings in wider UK research

(Bellis et al., 2014). Furthermore, the research showed that individuals reporting a higher number of ACEs, were shown to experience a range of negative health and well-being outcomes in later adult life, suggestive of a cumulative effect (Bellis et al., 2015; Bellis et al. 2018). Ultimately, the ACEs research suggests that childhood adversity places people at increased risk of experiencing physical and emotional health difficulties as adults.

2.5 Trauma – complex and relational

Work by Van der Kolk (2005; 2014) can help us to understand why ACEs have such an impact on CYPs development. He describes how CYP's brains mature in the context of their social environment; dependent on early caregiver attachment and attunement, to support their capacity to integrate information and regulate their responses (Van der Kolk, 2005; 2014). Van der Kolk (2005) explains that when CYPs stress responses are activated (as typically occurs when they are hungry, in pain, worried or scared), they often rely on their caregivers to modulate their levels of arousal; yet CYP, particularly very young children, often do not have access to the resources they need to self-regulate themselves. Van der Kolk (2014) suggests that if a child or young person's level of stress is chronic and cannot, or does not get resolved, they can become overwhelmed and remain in a heightened state of arousal, with an increased sense of perceived threat. Thinking about domestic abuse, the source of pain or fear, and the source of comfort, are often the same thing (Swanston et al., 2014). Van der Kolk (2014) would suggest that the body therefore continues to stay a state of heightened arousal, as the child or young person is unable to regain a sense of safety. Van der Kolk (2005; 2014) describes how regularly operating under high levels of stress, leaves little time to engage in activities freely, calmly or enthusiastically, as the brain is constantly in survival mode. In the absence of adaptive regulation, Van der Kolk points out that CYP subsequently utilise maladaptive coping behaviours, as solutions to the extreme experience of distress or discomfort.

In addition to this, Treisman (2016) draws attention to a child or young person's experiences of relationships, as forming the basis for future relationship patterns or internal working models (IWMs). Bowlby (1969) first introduced the concept of the IWM

through his research into attachment. He proposed that the everyday interactions with primary caregivers, form the basis of a child's experience of security and subsequently affect the way they view themselves, others, and the relationship between the two (Bowlby, 1988). Thus, IWMs are beliefs and mental representations of relationships, shaped by early childhood experiences and interactions (Bowlby, 1969; 1988). Therefore, when a child or young person experiences conflicting messages, such as the caregiver being there to protect them, but also creating environments which feel invalidating or unsafe, Treisman (2016) describes how feelings such as threat, disconnection and fear, may align with feelings of love and intimacy. As a result, she suggests that complex IWMs may be formed and CYP consequently struggle to feel safe in the context of intimate relationships. Treisman (2016) refers to this as "relational trauma" (p. 17). This may go some way to explaining why the issues of domestic abuse are often bound in intergenerational cycles.

2.6 The Bio-Ecological Model of child development

Bronfenbrenner's (2005) bio-ecological model (see Figure 1) offers a theoretical perspective, which acknowledges the interplay between interrelationships and environmental systems, in shaping child development. Known in its earlier form as the ecological model, Bronfenbrenner posits that there are five systems of interaction:

- ***The microsystem****:* made up of the immediate environment in which a child or young person lives, including their family, home, school and friends.
- ***The mesosystem***: referring to the relationships and interactions between the people and settings in the mircrosystem, for example the home-school link.
- ***The exosystem***: relating to the links between the child or young person and the wider social settings around them, such as family friends, community services, a caregiver's place of employment, social services or school governors. These interactions often occur infrequently or indirectly.
- ***The macrosystem****:* consisting of the broader political discourses and cultural and social context, that indirectly influence the child or young person.

- ***The chronosystem***: involving the cumulative experiences of a child or young person over time. It includes specific life events, including important transitions and when they occur in a person's life. It also includes sociohistorical conditions.

In more recent adaptations, Bronfenbrenner has also drawn attention to the role of the 1) Process, 2) Person, 3) Context and 4) Time. Process, more specifically referred to as proximal processes, is of particular importance. They are described as the

> *interaction between organism and environment… that operate over time and are posited as the primary mechanisms producing development*
>
> (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p.795).

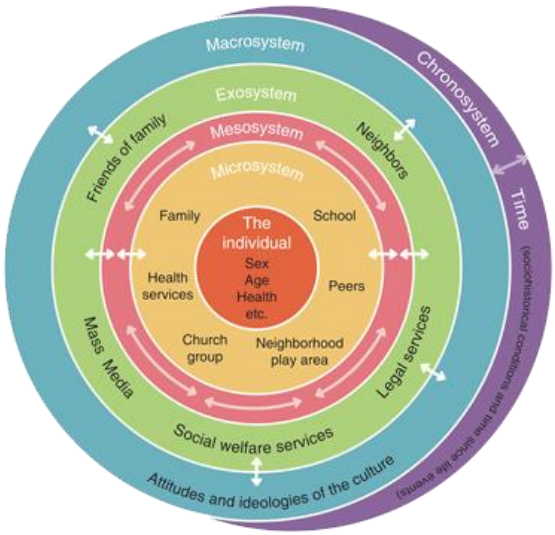
They are said to involve frequent interactions, which are influenced in both directions. Whilst Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) highlight the involvement of proximal processes as more important than contextual processes, they also suggest that they result in positive interactions for child development. Mercon-Vargas et al. (2020) however, argue that they should also be considered in relation to their ability to produce adverse outcomes, referring to these as inverse proximal processes. They suggest that a lack of reciprocity in caregiver relationships, or frequent negative interactions, combined with reduced access to supportive contextual processes (such as living in poverty or not accessing school) can equally create dysfunctional processes in child development, leading to greater risks of adverse outcomes.

With this model in mind, domestic abuse cannot be viewed solely in relation to the individual (be that the adult, child or young person). Whilst domestic abuse occurs within the context of interpersonal relationships, at the level of the microsystem, it is argued that it is influenced by the political and societal discourse that surrounds it and the criminal justice perspective that often responds to it (macrolevel). As a result, it frequently occurs out of sight of most people, remaining hidden from schools and other agencies, unless attention is drawn to the needs of CYP or the adults responsible for them. This in turn may impact on the interactions between systems at the mesosystem level, due to the need for agencies to respond based on their professional remit and legislative agendas (for example, social services need to respond to child protection). In

addition to this, the chronosystem needs to be considered, as the timing, context and sociohistorical circumstance in which domestic abuse occurs, can shape how CYP experience it and also how services respond to it.

Individual-level work is therefore unlikely to create the biggest change to the intergenerational cycle of domestic abuse. Therefore, seeking to better understand the response to domestic abuse within the context of the whole system, may help to better inform support, through identification of good practice and potential barriers.

Figure 1
Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model of child development (Isotis, 2021)



2.7 Protective factors

Importantly, emerging evidence suggests that resilience and external protective factors such as access to positive adult relationships, friendships and community engagement play a key role in CYPs coping responses when faced with adversity, mitigating some of the negative effects of ACEs, including mental illness and poor educational outcomes (Bellis et al., 2017; Bellis et al., 2018; Gartland et al., 2019). Van der Kolk (2005; 2014) and Treisman (2016) share this view, emphasising a need for relational and mind-body approaches to support reparation and regulation in recovery. Thinking about CYP and the bio-ecological model, opens the possibility of building on existing support systems, such as family, schools and communities, to enable prevention and intervention work. Within the context of domestic abuse however, these protective factors may be more

difficult for CYP to access. The very nature of domestic abuse often leads to isolation from friends and family, relational dissonance between family members, reduced emotional availability from caregivers (Cort & Cline, 2017; Thornton, 2014) and difficulties for the child or young person to access school or community services (Katz, 2016). It may therefore need more thought from professional agencies, as to how to address the social and economic inequalities these CYP face (Callaghan et al., 2018).

One step towards achieving this, is Wales's motivation to work towards becoming the first ACE aware nation, as part of a broader aim to securing an ACE-free future (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, 2020).

3. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

In addition to this, there is a range of legislation in Wales, which strengthen the duties placed on professionals to respond to the needs of CYP experiencing domestic abuse. Those most pertinent, are explored in more detail below.

3.1 Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015

In 2015, Wales became the first of the four nations to issue specific legislation relating to domestic abuse; this came in the form of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) (Wales) Act 2015. It aimed to develop a strategic approach to improve public service response, ensure the provision of information about educational provision to promote the purposes of the Act, created the role of National Adviser to encourage collaborative working and ensures that Welsh Ministers produce an annual report to illustrate national indicators and outline progress made in relation to the Acts objectives. Moreover, Central Government recently published the Domestic Abuse Bill 2020, which amongst other duties, aims to broaden the legal definition of domestic abuse, ensure shelter for victims fleeing domestic abuse and creates the position of Domestic Abuse Commissioner to advocate for victims and their families. Although aspects of the Bill will be managed differently in Wales (due to devolution), the Bill strengthens the legal position of Welsh services to respond to issues of domestic abuse.

3.2 United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC) 1989 and Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011

Whilst the creation of domestic abuse legislation is an important development in responding to the growing social and judicial concerns domestic abuse poses, there are some more fundamental principles that also need to be considered with respects to CYPs rights.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989 was ratified in the UK in 1991 and was embraced by the National Assembly for Wales, as the foundation for policy making, in 2004. Wales became the first nation to formally integrate it into policy and practice, through the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011, which places a duty on Welsh Ministers to pay due regard to the UNCRC when considering decisions that involve children. Articles of specific importance when considering the impact of domestic abuse on CYP are highlighted in Table 2.

Table 2

UNCRC Articles Related to Domestic Abuse

Article	Overview	In practice
Article 3	Best interests of the child or young person	All decisions regarding a child or young person must be carried out in their best interests, with due regard to their well-being.
Article 6	Right to life, survival and development	Governments must ensure everything is done to protect and preserve a child or young person's life.
Article 9	Separation from parents	Every effort should be made to keep a child or young person with their parents, except in the case of abuse or neglect. In these instances, contact with parents should be respected, unless it is not in the best interest of the child or young person to do so.
Article 12	Right to express views, feelings and wishes	The views of a child or young person must be taken into consideration in any matter relating to them.
Article 19	Right to protection from violence, abuse and neglect	All children and young people should be protected from violence, abuse and harm. Implementation of this is expected at a legal, administrative social and educational level.

Article 28	Right to an education	A range of accessible educational opportunities should be made available to all children and young people.
Article 31	Right to play, rest and engage in leisure activities	Children and young people should have access to appropriate recreational and leisure opportunities.
Article 39	Right to appropriate physical and psychological recovery	If a child or young person has experienced abuse or any form of harm, they should be provided with opportunities to engage in meaningful and respectful approaches to recovery.

3.3. Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014

Another important piece of legislation in Wales is the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. This allows social services to respond to incidents of domestic abuse through the offer of care and support (CAS) and enacting child protection (CP) procedures (should a child be identified as at risk of harm). It also places an emphasis on local authorities to ensure preventative services, to help reduce the need for CAS and to promote the wellbeing of CYP and their families. A duty is therefore placed on local authorities to ensure that appropriate domestic abuse services are available. Furthermore, there is an expectation that all services work together, collaboratively, to meet the wellbeing outcomes of the Act.

3.4 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

In addition, The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out the expectations for all public services to work together towards seven well-being goals:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales.

The Act places a duty on public services to take action towards each goal, which includes responding to domestic abuse, through prevention, collaboration and long-term planning.

4 CURRENT RESPONSE WITHIN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

An important aspect of the legislation is the focus on preventative work and multi-agency response, particularly in relation to the role of education. A priority of Welsh Government is to ensure that schools become psychologically informed and understand the context around child development, trauma and readiness to learn (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, 2020). As a result, the ACE Support Hub was created and free training was made available to schools. Furthermore, the Good Practice Guide was created by Welsh Government (2015) in conjunction with Welsh Women's Aid, which outlines ways schools can develop a whole school response to combatting issues of domestic abuse, through the curriculum and collaboration with specialist services. The Welsh Government (2016) also developed guidance for school governors around policy development, training and available support. However, the introduction of legislation and its subsequent guidance, conflicted with Welsh curriculum reforms (Donaldson, 2015) resulting in delays to implementation.

In 2017, Estyn completed a review of healthy relationships work within schools and noted: a) relationship education varied widely across the nation; b) not enough emphasis was placed on personal social education (PSE) lessons, through which healthy relationship education is currently taught; and c) many schools steered away from explicit teaching about domestic abuse and violence against women, fearing it was not age appropriate (Esytn, 2017). From 2022, schools will have a statutory responsibility to deliver Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), which will be expected to include information about domestic abuse (WG, 2019). It currently remains unclear as to how it will be covered, due to flexibility in-line with the new curriculum, however, an RSE working group has been established to fully consider this area of learning.

A greater emphasis is, and will continue to be, placed on schools to respond with whole school approaches and targeted interventions (WG, 2018), yet little research has been completed to better understand how this is managed on a practical level.

4.1 Children and young people's perspectives

There are few studies, in the UK, that have explored CYP's voice in relation to their understanding of domestic abuse, educational experiences or their recoveries. In large part, this is due to complications around the ethics of interviewing CYP regarding such a sensitive topic, for fear that it will cause unnecessary distress for them (Callaghan et al., 2018). Nonetheless, as Thornton (2014) points out, listening to the voices of those with lived experience, is essential to informing the processes designed to support them; she argues that failing to do so could be classed as harming them in a different way.

As part of Chesnutt 's (2018) doctoral thesis, she explored the educational experiences of children affected by domestic abuse. She conducted a two-phase research study, the first of which focused on children's lived experiences. Seven children from Key Stage 2 (aged 7-11) were recruited for the study. Participation involved four separate sessions in order to build rapport and sensitively explore the children's views, which included drawing a map of their school, completion of a walking interview and creation of a photobook. Her findings indicated that the children valued safety and emotional support in school, which was largely seen to stem from the positive relationships they had with staff. Family and friendships were also seen as important to the children. Notably, the children viewed the research sessions as fun and did not want them to end. Chesnutt (2018) noted that through taking time to develop a relationship with them, listening and using creative methods of exploration, it may have offered the children the emotional support they described needing from school.

Similarly, Beetham et al. (2019) interviewed four children (aged 7-10) following their participation in a domestic abuse programme facilitated by a specialist domestic abuse service. Using creative and child-led methods, the researchers explored children's experiences of the intervention. Thematic narrative analysis was used to unpick the

small stories conveyed by participants, in order to find meaning in the experiences they expressed. Four key themes were established, focusing on agency, fun, choice and relationships. The findings emphasised how the children had valued spending time with other children in safe spaces. They appreciated the opportunity to take part in fun activities, which focused on them as children first and domestic abuse survivors second. Having choice in their participation on the programme was an important feature, despite initial worries about the newness and unknown participants. Relationships were central to both their experience of domestic abuse and recovery, and all of the children were reported to have benefited from the friendships they formed throughout the programme. Whilst the research only explored the views of four children, it offers a useful and practical insight into the ways in which teachers were able to support the CYP in their school.

Interestingly, however, when exploring the views and experiences of older children on the topic of teenage partner violence, Griffiths (2019) found that CYP reported schools were not always equipped to understand, educate or respond to their needs. Griffiths explored the views of 310 CYP aged 14-15 (Year 10) and 16-18 (Year 12), using a mixed methods design, comprising questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. She found the CYP did not have a clear understanding about what constituted healthy or unhealthy relationship behaviours and that adults had even less awareness of what this looked like in teenage relationships. Participants highlighted that preventative education in schools was often single event sessions and suggested that they needed more frequent sessions exploring domestic abuse in the context of society today, reflecting current issues, concerns and stereotypes, including the issue of social media. Participants also highlighted the prevalence of female to male violence in teenage relationships, which is an important consideration, given the highly gendered nature of domestic abuse in the adult population (ONS, 2020). In addition to acknowledging that more research needs to explore the distinct issue of teenager partner violence as a form of domestic abuse, Griffiths' study demonstrates that CYP and the adults that support them, do not always understand the complex dynamics of domestic abuse or have the available resources to cope with it.

Domestic abuse sometimes results in victims fleeing their homes in search of safety and refuge. As a result, some CYP may need to access refuge provision or sheltered accommodation. In addition to this, the changes to the Government definition of domestic abuse in 2013, resulted in the broadening of the age range to include 16 – 17-year-olds, both in the form of adult to caregiver violence and also teenage partner violence (Home Office, 2013). This has meant that young people are able to access refuge independently if needed. In a recent exploration of young people's educational experiences whilst accommodated in refuge, Bracewell et al. (2020) describe how the needs of young people were often disrupted and overlooked. Using creative participatory methods, including walking-talks, prompt cards, worksheets and an 'ideal refuge' drawing (developed by four CYP in a pilot study), 20 teenage participants (aged 13 – 18) were interviewed in repeat face-to-face sessions. The views of 25 staff members were also obtained via telephone interviews, although Bracewell et al. (2020) note that these participants were not necessarily from the same refuges as the young people, which may have impacted on the comparison of themes between groups. Overall, findings suggested that many of the young people were required to leave their old school when entering refuge, which was seen to disrupt their educational trajectory and impacted on the social support systems they previously relied on. Some were placed in alternative educational provision, which did not seem to suit the needs of the young people, instead acting as a holding ground until other longer-term solutions could be found. For others, long periods of time were spent without access to educational opportunities at all. Furthermore, many young people did not have direct access to resources such as laptops or desk space, in order to complete their schoolwork, and communication between school and refuge was inconsistent. Bracewell et al. (2020) discussed how many of the young people struggled to find their independence within the boundaries and restrictions of the refuge.

This is an important piece of research, as adolescence (typically considered to be between 13 – 18 years old) is a formative period, critical to identity formation and sense of self (Blakemore, 2018). Bracewell et al.'s (2020) findings suggest that, for some young people, even when they are considered to be in a place of safety, their rights as young people continue to be ruptured and access to protective factors continue to be difficult

to obtain. Links between educational provisions and 'home' (wherever that might be at a given point in time) need to be secured in order for young people to reach their full learning potential, whilst maintaining their right to safety and friends.

4.2 Teachers' perspectives

There is a small but growing body of literature focusing on teachers' perspectives on supporting CYP who have experienced domestic abuse. Interestingly, all three of the studies (four articles) that were found on this topic through the search strategy, were completed by EPs. Ellis (2012) initially conducted research in this area due to the absence of literature available on the topic; later updating her systematic literature review to report on five further studies, none of which, however, were completed in the UK. In her original research, Ellis (2012) completed a mixed methodological study, comprising questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with primary school teachers. In total, 165 questionnaire responses were obtained, and eight teachers took part in the semi-structured interviews. The results were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics and thematic analysis. Ellis (2018) later explored the findings from the same participant pool through the lens of the psychological principle's 'containment' (Bion, 1984) and 'denial' (Hinshelwood, 1991). Ellis (2012; 2018) found teachers expressed strong emotions as a result of their role in supporting CYP, describing feelings of both helplessness and vulnerability, yet struggling to either access or accept help. A tension was found between what teachers thought they should know and what they wanted to know, with some reporting a sense of increased risk to their own safety, due to their knowledge of the domestic abuse (Ellis, 2012; 2018). Teachers highlighted the importance of their relationships with CYP in recognising and responding to concerns, but noted difficulties with attendance, punctuality, and duration of schooling which were outside of their control (Ellis, 2012; 2018). Teacher confidence was viewed to increase, with increased awareness of clear reporting processes and access to training sessions (Ellis, 2012; 2018).

Interestingly, similar findings were noted in Dalton's (2019) doctoral thesis research. Using semi-structured interviews, Dalton (2019) gained the views of six primary school teachers, reflecting their responses through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

(Smith et al., 2009). Her results also captured 1) the emotional impacts felt by teachers; 2) the importance of the relationships (with CYP and families) in identification of concerns and provision of support, and; 3) feelings of helplessness and frustration due to processes and social services thresholds.

Both Ellis (2012; 2018) and Dalton (2019) highlight a clear need for teachers to access safe spaces, to reflect on and make sense of the issues regarding CYP's experiences of domestic abuse. They suggest that EPs are well placed to offer supervision and training sessions to accommodate this.

Chesnutt (2018) drew similar conclusions in her doctoral research (also described in the previous section), highlighting how teachers rarely experience opportunities to talk about their feelings, frustrations, and processes, despite supporting some extremely complex and vulnerable CYP. The teachers in Chesnutt's (2018) study were directly linked to the participants interviewed in Phase 1 of her research. Chesnutt (2018) sought to share the experiences of the children with their teachers and subsequently drew comparisons regarding perceptions of supportive learning environments. This was completed using focus groups and soft systems methodology (Checkland, 1989, 2000); methods that Chesnutt (2108) describes as generating opportunities for reflective systemic work. Further findings highlighted the importance of safe spaces for CYP, encouraging opportunities for play and friendships, and developing mechanisms for collaborative work with families.

4.3 Educational programmes about domestic abuse

Educational programmes are commonly developed to address domestic abuse at a preventative level and are often delivered in school settings. However, these programmes are regularly created by third-sector agencies and take years of implementation and evaluation in order to measure their effectiveness (Stanley et al., 2015). In addition, the reporting measures used by most services, have been criticised for not providing adequate enough information, to allow a clear picture of impact to be

assessed; as a result, there is a limited evidence base for their overall effectiveness (McKee & Mason, 2015; Stanley et al., 2015).

In an attempt to redress this, Fox, Gadd and Sim (2014) developed the Attitudes to Domestic Violence (ADV) scale. They report using the measure in three separate studies, so as to test its psychometric properties, concluding that,

> *Although the measures of goodness of fit from the factor analysis are lower than the ideal benchmarks, the consistently high loadings of all items on a single factor suggest that the scale can be used as a single summative index. In addition, the scale demonstrates good internal consistency and reproducibility over time; the coefficients obtained were both notably higher than recommended threshold* (p. 2520).

The measure is subsequently reported to have been used in four published articles (Fox et al., 2014; Fox et al., 2016; Fox, Hale & Gadd, 2014; Gadd et al., 2014), which appear to report on the outcomes found in the Boys to Men project (Fox et al., 2014; Fox et al., 2016) and the REaDAPt project (Fox, Hale & Gadd, 2014; Gadd et al., 2014). However, it is difficult to clearly ascertain if this is the case from reading the articles in isolation. This is due to a number of inconsistencies and omissions in the reporting of the data, provided by the authors across the four papers. For example, the Boys to Men project is clearly identified in Fox et al's (2014) paper, which states:

> *We report here on the Boys to Men research project, a multi-method project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), involving a survey of 1200 young people, 13 focus groups and 30 in-depth interviews with young men affected by domestic abuse.*
>
> (Fox et al., 2014, p. 512)

Yet later they report:

> *In total, 1143 year 9 pupils (aged 13-14 years) took part in the research. The pupils were drawn from 13 schools across Staffordshire, seven of which received the programme (intervention group) and six of which did not (control group)*
>
> (Fox et al., 2014, p. 514)

However, in the research reported by Fox et al. (2016), a total of 1203 year 9 pupils are reported to have taken part in the research. The authors do not mention the Boys to Men project explicitly, however they seem to be reporting on the evaluation of the Relationships without Fear programme, also reported as the programme under investigation in Fox et al's. (2014) paper. Both papers state that "Parental consent was sought using the 'opt-out' method" and "19 children were opted out of the research by their parents" "(16 males and 3 females) and 28 participants opted themselves out (17 males and 11 females)" (Fox et al., 2014, p.514; Fox et al., 2016, p. 219). This suggests that the data collected, was part of the same overall project and that 60 participants did not complete the pre-test survey on experiences (reported in Fox et al's., 2014 paper), however continued to complete data on pre- and post-measures in respects of the educational programme (reported in Fox et al., 2016).

As part of the REaDAPt project, Gadd et al. (2014) report on an evaluation of preventative education programmes across the UK, France and Spain. The UK based programme under evaluation was the Relationships without Fear programme, delivered in Staffordshire, which is also the programme discussed in the papers previously outlined. The Fox, Hale and Gadd (2014) paper reports on the UK findings from this project. Interestingly, Fox et al. (2016) report that the research presented in their paper, reports on the first evaluation of a preventative domestic abuse education programme, using pre, post and follow up measures. The REaDAPt project attempted to use this model of evaluation, using the same tools, however they received incomplete data at the 3-month follow up. As all the papers report on the same preventative programme, the results from across the papers are reported together, for ease of understanding.

Findings from the Boy to Men project (obtained at the pre-test stage, Fox et al., 2014) suggested that 45% of the pupils who reported having been on a date, experienced at least one type of abuse (emotional/controlling behaviours – 38%; physical abuse – 17%; sexual abuse – 14%). In addition to this, 34% of pupils reported having 'witnessed' domestic abuse in their own homes. Further findings suggested that 25% of pupils reported perpetrating some form of abuse themselves.

The ADV scale found that there were some important gender differences, although these did not relate significantly to perpetration, which was broadly found to occur at similar rates across genders. Girls did, however, demonstrate an increased rate in their experience of sexual violence (17.6% for girls and 10.6% for boys) and also in their awareness of domestic abuse within the home, for both physical abuse (26.8% for girls and 20.3% for boys) and coercive control (33.7% for girls and 21.6% for boys). Boys also reported that they were less likely to engage in help-seeking behaviour if they were in an abusive relationship (67.5% of girls and 33% boys). Generally, CYP recognised that hitting was not appropriate, however some reported that in certain contexts it would be appropriate. It is worth noting that the Boys to Men project was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to explore why some young men become perpetrators of domestic abuse and others do not, and what can be done to reduce this. Therefore, gender was a large focus of the research undertaken.

In response to the Relationships without Fear programme itself, Fox et al. (2016) explored the pre, post and 3-month follow up scores on the ADV, amongst participants in an intervention and control group. They found improvements in both the attitudes and help-seeking behaviours of CYP between the pre- and post-measures, when compared with controls. However, only sustained improvements in attitudes were found at the 3-month follow up; help seeking behaviours did not remain improved.
Similar findings were identified by Gadd et al. (2014) in the pre- and post-measures (3-month follow up data was insufficient for analysis), of 1076 secondary school pupils across the UK, France and Spain sample.

Additionally, focus group data from Fox, Hale and Gadd (2014) revealed the programme content was considered by many as too rigid, with clear differences between participants as to how they wanted the content presented. Participants also reported times of distress and discomfort at both the nature of the content and the delivery of it. Moreover, the gendered nature of the programme resulted in many young boys disengaging, referring to it as “sexist” (Fox, Hale & Gadd, 2014, p. 35; Gadd et al., 2014, p. 474). This is an important finding, because whilst the government definition of domestic abuse maintains that domestic abuse can be experienced by any gender,

statistics clearly demonstrate that women are disproportionately affected (ONS, 2020). In addition to this, many educational programmes are developed and often delivered by third-sector domestic abuse agencies, who often maintain a gendered perspective on the topic (Stanley et al., 2015). Furthermore, Fox, Hale and Gadd (2014) found that facilitators often felt CYP needed to learn about the gendered nature of domestic abuse.

This view is backed by Lee et al. (2016) who advocate for an emphasis on gender-unequal socio-contexts in whole school approaches to domestic abuse. Directing their research through the lens of a feminist sociology, the authors conducted a mixed methods study exploring the outcomes from a whole school approach facilitated by a domestic abuse project in Nottingham between 2010 – 2012. They used pre- and post-questionnaire data from 762 secondary school students and qualitative data from interviews with 13 female students and two male students (Lee et al., 2016). Whilst overall, they report evidence of attitudinal change amongst participants, the authors note their concern that some of the female participants still felt women and girls could 'sometimes' be responsible for domestic abuse (Lee et al., 2016, p. 579). Additionally, they report a positive outcome as being the increased number of students reporting that "violence is rooted in a desire of men to control their girlfriends" (p.579).

Whilst it is important to acknowledge the sociohistorical context, and indeed, much of the support available regarding the issue of domestic abuse is in large part due to the feminist movement (Lee et al., 2016), labelling boys as perpetrators when similar (Fox, Hale & Hadd, 2014) or low (Rogers et al., 2019) rates of perpetration have been found across genders at this age, could be seen as unethical. Moreover, when thinking about CYPs lived experiences and the influence of wider cultural beliefs and ideologies at the macrosystem level (Bronfenbrenner, 2005), the way the topic of domestic abuse is approached will inevitably shape how CYP make sense of the material and inform their level of acceptability of the behaviour in the future.

Stanley et al. (2015) found similar considerations about gender and language sensitivities, in their mixed methods review of school-based intervention programmes (which included the Fox, Hale and Gadd (2014) study, but not the other three). Their

review included an online mapping survey of relevant provisions, systematic literature review, and consultations with CYP (in the UK) and professionals responsible for the development, delivery and evaluation of intervention programmes (across the world). Overall, they also found that school-based intervention programmes did not change behaviour but could demonstrate improvements in knowledge and attitudes (Stanley et al., 2015). However, implementation of these in the UK was impacted on by the limited capacity of specialist services to deliver programmes, teacher confidence to deliver the content, and a lack of mandatory requirement to do so (Stanley et al., 2015). In addition to this, they found that UK based interventions rarely considered the diverse needs of CYP, such as sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or race, with CYP emphasising a need for the content to be directly relatable to them (Stanley et al., 2015). Additionally, consensus from all forms of consultation was that content should be non-blaming of boys and structured through positive messages (Stanley et al., 2015).

Rogers et al. (2019) take this notion further, promoting the use of social norming approaches in the education of CYP about domestic abuse. These approaches aim to respond to social justice issues through identifying what people believe to be the norm within a specific group, before addressing the perceptions and challenging the misconceptions of them (Cislaghi & Heise, 2018). Social norming approaches assume that people conform to social norms, even when those norms are misperceived, suggesting that correcting the misperceptions allows people to act in line with their own beliefs instead of the perceived beliefs of the group (Berkowitz, 2012). Rogers et al. (2019) suggest that social norming approaches avoid focusing on perceived problem behaviours at a societal level and instead focus on targeting norms within a specified group or community, acknowledging the influences specific to that group. This approach was undertaken in the Change Up programme and evaluated by Rogers et al. (2019), which explored relationship behaviours in 174 secondary school pupils aged 13–14-years-old. Results showed that the views of CYP did not align with societal discourse around domestic abuse, with the majority of participants reporting never having experienced it and not finding it acceptable but demonstrating a tolerance/acceptability toward female to male violence (Rogers et al., 2019). The programme was also found to successfully impact on attitudes and behaviour change.

The results of the above studies demonstrate some thought-provoking perspectives on the running of preventative education programmes for CYP. For example, they suggest the need to ensure programmes seek to build understanding about healthy relationships over time, not just through one-off sessions. They also suggest that caution needs to be taken as to the content of the programme, particularly when thinking about an overly gendered emphasis of domestic abuse and subsequent engagement of boys and CYP from minority groups. Sensitivity and relatability are therefore paramount in terms of content and delivery, if CYP are to see the benefit of engaging in future programmes.

4.4 Multiagency response

In addition to the preventative education of CYP, legislation promotes multiagency response in both prevention and intervention for domestic abuse; yet there is little research into the effectiveness of this in practice. Cleaver et al. (2019) recently completed a review of UK multiagency response between 2005 – 2016; they found 22 articles on the topic from ten electronic databases and searches of grey literature. Cleaver et al's (2019) criteria for multiagency response consisted of one or more agency, therefore many of the articles were not applicable to this review, as they were related to practice with adults not CYP (*n* = 13). Of the remaining nine papers, two were not grounded in the school system or educational psychology, instead focusing solely on involvement with social services, domestic abuse agencies and/or the police, and two were outside of the date inclusion criteria for the appraisal. As a result, these papers are not explored in detail, however a summary of Cleaver et al's (2019) findings are provided, so as to extend the perspective of the current research appraisal. Furthermore, of the five papers considered to be relevant, three have already been discussed (Fox, Hale & Gadd, 2014; Fox et al., 2016; Stanley et al., 2015) and one, which is assumed to be another version of the REaDAPt research (published under different names), is no longer accessible to read. Only one study (Clark and Wydall, 2013) therefore remains to be discussed; this is explored in more detail below.

Clark and Wydall (2013) explored a range of practitioners' perceptions of CYP's experiences of support in a rural area of Wales. They completed 54 semi-structured interviews, two focus groups and five family case studies, examining the strategic issues and operational functions concerning support. Participants were drawn from the police, probation, social services, health, education, third-sector charity domestic abuse services and housing. Using thematic analysis, the data collected was developed into three overarching themes: 1) practitioners' perceptions of children's experiences of domestic abuse; 2) responding to the needs of children, and; 3) developing effective working practices (Clarke & Wydall, 2013, p. 184). Their results showed that despite practitioners demonstrating an awareness of the needs of CYP, a number of barriers impacted on their ability to respond to them effectively. Participants reported processes were often prioritised over the direct wellbeing of CYP and their families, stemming from an emphasis on risk management and child protection (Clarke & Wydall, 2013). In addition, some CYP were reported to miss out on opportunities for specialist support due to the requirement for parental consent, which was not always given (Clarke & Wydall, 2013). Whole-family support was identified as important to successful recovery, with a focus on also engaging the offender to address behaviour more directly (Clarke & Wydall, 2013). Schools were recognised as safe spaces, and teachers (although noting limited time to carry out individual pastoral support) felt they could support CYP through the invitation of external agency involvement (Clarke & Wydall, 2013).

A limitation of the study is its focus on demographic rurality. Issues regarding access and availability of service provision in rural areas of Wales have been noted as a key area of concern (Welsh Government, 2016). Focusing only on rural areas may therefore have limited the generalisability of the findings to more densely populated areas of Wales. Furthermore, Clark and Wydall (2013) discuss completing five family case studies as part of the research. They purposely selected an area of high deprivation, offering their rationale as being based on the acknowledgment that domestic abuse is reportedly higher in areas of lower socioeconomic demographics. Whilst they were understandably seeking to increase opportunities for participant recruitment (given the rural area the study was undertaken in), this may have biased the perspectives,

restricting opportunities for other victims' voices to have been heard. That said, the findings offer a unique perspective on how CYP in Wales are currently accessing support and the barriers to achieving this from the voices of multiple professionals and those with lived experiences. Further research, in more populated areas of Wales, may strengthen the research findings if similar results are found.

Overall, Cleaver et al.'s (2019) systematic review found that there was an emphasis on school-based intervention programmes, despite differing professional views on what these aimed to achieve (teachers sought for more attitudinal change, whilst domestic abuse workers targeted behaviour change). Furthermore, Cleaver et al. (2019) note the sharing of information was found to be an issue between professionals, particularly in relation to police incident reports and how much information was received by social services. Police were reported to omit information about CYP and the seriousness of incidents, consequently creating concerns about risk identification and management (see Stanley et al. (2010) for further information). This is important, because without evidence of harm to CYP, social services may be unable to support a child or young person, absent of consent from caregivers. Furthermore, police reports form the basis of the intervention from Operation Encompass, which is a national charity that shares information about domestic abuse incidents following police involvement, with schools via the designated safeguarding lead (Operation Encompass, 2021). Cleaver et al. (2019) report that the identification of concerns and subsequent engagement of families, was found to play a key role in how effective early intervention support was for CYP and their families. This often relied on having sufficient information sharing protocols in place, which was not always found to be consistent. Another potentially important aspect of their review, is the issue of professional roles and remits; the review demonstrated that often services were unable to work holistically and instead narrowly focused on one person or area of concern (Cleaver et al., 2019). Similarly, training opportunities were described as occurring in professional siloes, limiting opportunities for multiagency perspectives to be taken into consideration or explored (Cleaver et al., 2019).

4.5 The role of Educational Psychology

There is a paucity of research exploring EP role and/or involvement in relation to domestic abuse. The search strategy did however yield six published pieces of research and two unpublished doctoral theses by EP's. Four of these included the previously discussed research exploring teachers' perspectives (Chesnutt, 2018; Dalton, 2019; Ellis, 2012; 2018) and one was Griffiths' (2014) exploration of teenage partner violence. One did not consider response to domestic abuse, instead it focused on the impacts of domestic abuse on CYP (Thornton, 2014); this was therefore discussed in the context setting section of the review. The remaining two papers considered EP's conceptualisations of domestic abuse and their role in response to it (Gallagher, 2014), including the role of EPs in the mother-child dyad (Cort & Cline, 2014).

Gallagher's (2014) research explored the views of five EPs in relation to domestic abuse. She found that the EPs she interviewed, perceived domestic abuse as being more suited to "front line workers" such as social care staff (p.58) and they struggled to see a role for themselves outside that of child protection. She highlighted that participants reported a lack of confidence, training, and perception of their ability to bring about change. Whilst acknowledging the small sample size, Gallagher (2014) drew attention to the challenges her findings pose in terms of educational psychology practice, particularly in recognising and responding to the needs of CYP, through missed opportunities to construct and explore relevant hypotheses. She suggests that EPs are well placed to support CYP experiencing domestic abuse, through supporting school staff, completing individual work with the child or young person and championing pupil voice (Gallagher, 2014).

Further to this, Cort and Cline (2014) suggest that EPs are well placed to draw on psychological theories and frameworks that promote resilience, and support victims to think about identity, role and recovery in parent-child interactions. Their research, which explored the parenting experiences of seven mothers whilst in abusive relationships, found mothers experienced themselves as failing their children despite a desperate desire to be strong and fight for them (Cort & Cline, 2014). They found domestic abuse undermined their role as a mother, through disempowering them and

reducing their capacity to be emotionally available caregivers (Cort & Cline, 2014). Cort and Cline (2014) emphasise the importance of working with victims to reduce the perception of self-attributed blame and to encourage strengths-based coping strategies. They suggest this could be achieved through EPs use of narrative approaches, personal construct psychology and cognitive behavioural techniques.

EPs are typically employed by local authorities to work with CYP in schools, however it is clear within the wider literature that taking a joint systems approach (Dowling & Osborne, 2003), and working collaboratively with schools and home, can strengthen outcomes for CYP (McGuiggan, 2021). This may be particularly important when thinking about CYP experiencing domestic abuse, where difficulties occur within the context of their interpersonal relationships at the microlevel system and impact on their experiences in the wider systemic context. Current literature suggests there may be a role for EPs at the level of the individual, family, and school.

5 RESEARCH RATIONALE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Children and young people are citizens of the world in their own right. They are legally entitled to support and guidance from the adults around them, to ensure they grow to be healthy, confident, thriving adults. For some, the experience of domestic abuse prevents these opportunities from being fulfilled. Without increased recognition of CYP as victims of domestic abuse, and an appropriate understanding about how to support them and their families, the cycle of abuse is likely to continue. It is essential that CYPs needs are responded to, and protective factors are available to them, in order to buffer the effects of adversity.

Yet, the literature review has highlighted that CYP often fail to receive the support they need when they are experiencing domestic abuse (Bracewell et al., 2020; Griffiths, 2019; Stanley et al., 2015). This is further exacerbated by issues around practitioner confidence to respond to need (Dalton, 2019; Ellis, 2012; 2018; Fox et al., 2014; Gallagher, 2014) and challenges with collaborative working in multiagency response (Clarke & Wydall, 2013; Cleaver et al., 2019). Furthermore, questions have been raised

as to the availability and effectiveness of school-based interventions (Fox et al., 2014; Stanley et al., 2015) and resources to meet need in schools (Chestnutt, 2018). Clarke and Wydall's (2013) research, exploring practitioner views and response, has begun to unpick these issues. However, the research reports on practitioner perceptions in only one rural area of Wales, and accounts for practice before the implementation of several crucial legislative changes. It therefore seems important to build on this information, in order to gain a greater understanding of current practice, before thinking more widely about areas for development and the role of educational psychology.

The purpose of the research is therefore to explore the current response to CYP affected by domestic abuse, with a grounding in the school system. It seeks to better understand the approaches and interventions being used by frontline staff and hopes to explore their views in relation to the strengths and challenges they face in meeting the needs of CYP.

This research therefore seeks to explore the following questions:

- How are CYP currently being supported in relation to domestic abuse?
- What are the challenges and where are the gaps?
- How effective do professionals in the school system perceive this support to be?
- What is the perceived role of the EP, in relation to domestic abuse (current and future possibilities)?

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Part Two: Empirical Paper

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1. ABSTRACT

Children and young people who experience domestic abuse, are at greater risk of a range of negative outcomes in adult life. Yet, all children and young people have the right to protection from violence and abuse, access to appropriate social, emotional and educational opportunities, and the right to access meaningful recoveries from harm. Despite this, there is a paucity of research exploring the mechanisms in place to support them. In Wales, an emphasis is placed on multiagency response to domestic abuse and there is growing interest in the role of schools in prevention and intervention for children and young people.

A mixed-methods design was subsequently adopted, to explore professionals' views on the response to domestic abuse, with a grounding in the school system. Questionnaires were completed by 36 schools in Wales and a series of focus groups were held with children and young people's workers from specialist domestic abuse settings, school staff and social work staff. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis; four overarching themes were developed.

The findings illustrate, that whilst there are a variety of interventions and support available to children and young people, effective response is impacted on by the systems in place to respond to it. It is argued that current practice contributes to the maintenance of the issue, requiring radical consideration, if meaningful change is to take place for children, young people and their families. Implications for practice are discussed, including the role of the educational psychologist.

2. SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE

2.1. Current context

The literature into childhood adversity, attachment and life-span development theories suggests that social context, environment, and relationships are central to the developing brain and later social and emotional outcomes for CYP (Treisman, 2016; 2021; Van der Kolk, 2005; 2014). Feelings of safety, validation and emotional containment are subsequently cited as necessary prerequisites for healthy development in childhood (Treisman, 2016; 2021; Van der Kolk, 2005; 2014). Yet, domestic abuse has been found to mitigate some of these experiences for CYP, through evoking feelings of worry, fear and mistrust (Callaghan et al., 2018; Swanston et al., 2014; Thornton, 2014). Furthermore, the long-term impacts can be far reaching, with research suggesting that CYP are at increased risk of actual harm, have poorer mental health outcomes and are more likely to encounter intergenerational patterns of abuse (CADDA, 2014; CAFCAS Cymru, 2019; UNICEF, 2006). CYP are also found to have reduced access to friends, family, community-based activities, and educational opportunities (Bracewell et al., 2020; Katz, 2016).

A review of the literature exploring response to domestic abuse within the school system, found that educational programmes are commonly developed to address domestic abuse at a preventative level and are often delivered in school settings (Fox et al., 2014; Fox et al., 2016; Fox, Hale & Gadd, 2014; Gadd et al., 2014). However, these programmes are regularly created by third-sector agencies and take years of implementation and evaluation in order to measure their effectiveness (Stanley et al., 2015). Moreover, the delivery of healthy relationships work within schools varies widely across the nation and many schools steer away from explicit teaching of domestic abuse, fearing it is not age appropriate (Esytn, 2017). Teachers have also been found to lack confidence, and struggle with the emotional complexity that arises from supporting CYP who experience domestic abuse (Dalton, 2019; Ellis, 2012; 2018; Ellis, 2021). In addition to this, difficulties are reported with collaborative working and information sharing between professionals in multiagency response (Clarke & Wydall, 2013; Cleaver et al., 2019).

This occurs despite the legal and political backdrop, which aims to protect the rights of CYP and help them flourish. In Wales, the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of a Child 1989 has been embraced by the National Assembly for Wales, as the foundation for all policy making, placing a duty on Welsh Ministers to pay due regard to the rights of CYP when considering any decisions made about them. A further duty is placed on services to work together to protect CYP from harm (Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014) and to improve public response to domestic abuse (Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) (Wales) Act 2015). An important aspect of the legislation is the focus on preventative work and multi-agency response, particularly in relation to the role of education. Furthermore, a priority of Welsh Government is to ensure that schools become psychologically informed and understand the context around child development, trauma, and readiness to learn (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, 2020).

Emerging evidence suggests resilience and external protective factors, such as access to positive adult relationships, friendships and community engagement, play a key role in CYPs coping responses when faced with adversity (Bellis et al., 2017; Bellis et al., 2018; Gartland et al*.,* 2019). This opens up the possibility of building on existing support systems, such as family, schools and communities, to enable prevention and intervention work. Current literature suggests there may be a role for EPs within this context (Cort & Cline, 2014; Gallagher, 2014; McGuiggan, 2021), but a better understanding of current response is needed to determine how EPs might be best placed to support CYP.

2.2. Research rationale and research questions

This research therefore seeks to explore the following questions:

- How are CYP currently being supported in relation to domestic abuse?
- What are the challenges and where are the gaps?
- How effective do professionals in the school system perceive this support to be?
- What is the perceived role of the EP, in relation to domestic abuse (current and future possibilities)?

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Ontology and epistemology

The research is rooted in a critical realist paradigm, recognising the multi-layered complexity of reality, as shaped by culture, social agency, and historical and political context (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Critical realism holds the ontological position of realism, with the epistemological position of constructionism; claiming that whilst there is an objective truth, it is not tangible and cannot be fully observed due to the way it is perceived by those who experience it (Bhaskar, 1975). Instead, a social phenomenon is better understood in relation to the context in which it is experienced (Fletcher, 2017).

In subscribing to this view, the researcher acknowledges that participants hold their own 'reality' as to the availability of support, effectiveness of intervention and overall response to CYP affected by domestic abuse. The empirical reality may therefore differ from the real and actual reality under observation (Fletcher, 2017). The research design is chosen to reflect this, in an attempt to more fully understand the wider experience of 'reality' from the perspective of the participants.

3.2. Research design

In keeping with the researchers ontological and epistemological stance, a mixed-methods design was adopted to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. This included an online questionnaire (Phase 1) (Appendix B) and a series of focus groups with three separate professional groups: domestic abuse workers, school staff and social work staff (Phase 2).

Phase 1: The questionnaire was developed on Qualtrics^{XM} via a Cardiff University account. It comprised 31 questions, with participants being directed through a minimum of 21 questions and a maximum of 25 questions, depending on the responses given. The aim of the questionnaire was to gather information about school response to domestic abuse from those charged with formal safeguarding responsibilities in the school. The rationale was to establish a baseline understanding about the processes and systems in place. Questions were developed using the Welsh Governments Good Practice Guide (WG, 2015) as reference.

Phase 2: Focus groups were chosen with the intentions of generating opportunities for participants to explore each other's views and extend dialogue on topic areas, through stimulation of discussion and allowing opportunities for reflection (Guest et al., 2017). Three professional groups were identified as important to the research due to their distinct contribution of support for CYP, as highlighted in the Good Practice Guide (WG, 2015). This also provided an opportunity for triangulation (Yardley, 2008).

3.3. Participant information and recruitment

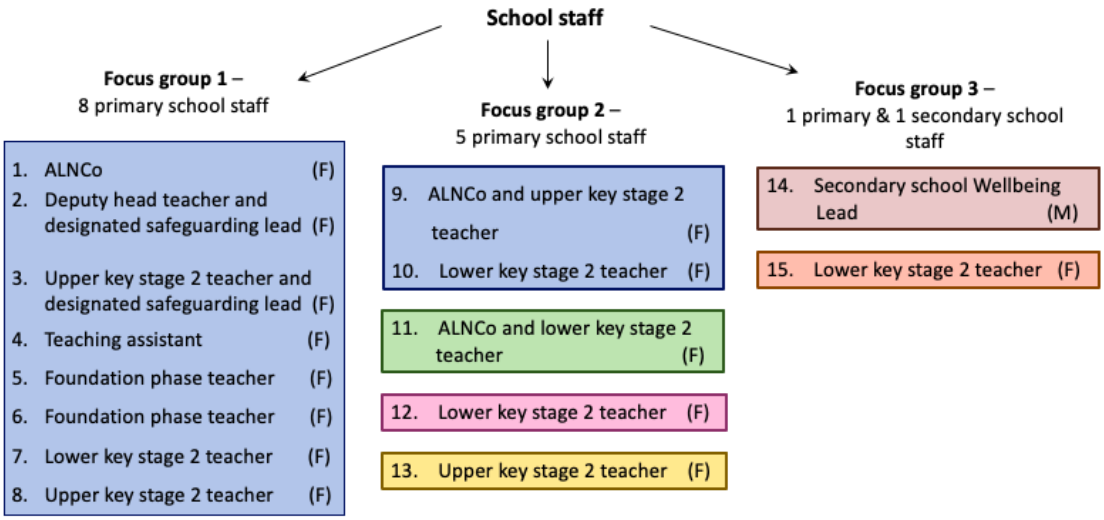
Phase 1: Participants were recruited through purposive sampling of school staff with safeguarding responsibilities, across two local authorities (LAs) in Wales. The LAs were chosen due to the distinctiveness of demographics, capturing the country's mix of urban and rural areas. Gatekeeper approval was initially sought via the Local Authority Principal Educational Psychologist and Head of Education (Appendix C). Following this, a link to a Qualtrics^{XM} questionnaire was emailed (Appendix D) to all maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools, via the school headteacher or office email address. The initial emails were sent in August 2020 and re-sent during the October half term break. In total, 219 schools were sent the email and 36 questionnaires were returned. In total, 27 participants were recruited from one LA and nine from another. Participants all held a position of safeguarding responsibility, in addition to being either: a head teacher (31 of the participants; two also held a dual role of Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo) and class teacher); deputy head teacher (2); assistant head teacher (4) or; specialist teacher of a resource base (1). Of these, 26 people worked in primary schools (one identifying from an infant school), seven in secondary schools, one in a pupil referral unit, one in a faith school and one in a special school. Participants identified varying degrees of experience within their roles, with ten stating '*up to 5 years'*, seven between '*5 - 10 years'* and nineteen with '*10+ years'* experience.

Phase 2: Participants were initially recruited through purposive sampling via their individual gatekeepers: either domestic abuse charity managers from services across Wales (Appendix E), head teachers from LAs in Phase 1 (Appendix F) or Children's Services managers (Appendix G) recruited through convenience sampling from four

Welsh LAs. Prospective participants were asked to contact the researcher via email if interested in the study. Following receipt of informal consent, participants were invited to a focus group on a specified time and date. Additional participants for school staff and social workers, were subsequently recruited through 'snowball sampling', following word of mouth from the participants and their prospective services. This resulted in recruitment of participants outside the original LAs approached. Participant information for each of the three groups can be found in Figure's 2, 3 and 4 below (note that each colour represents a different LA; participants were recruited from nine LAs in total).

Figure 2

School staff composition



(Note: F represents female and M represents male and different colours represent individual local authorities)

Only one participant was recruited from a secondary school, there had been more interest but two did not attend their arranged focus group and one was unable to make any of the focus group sessions proposed. Finding appropriate times to complete the focus group sessions was difficult for this group, due to their varied teaching timetables and limited opportunities for free periods, particularly when considering times that all participants could be free at the same time. Evening sessions were subsequently offered but this did not increase the number of staff who attended.

Figure 3

Child and young people's worker composition

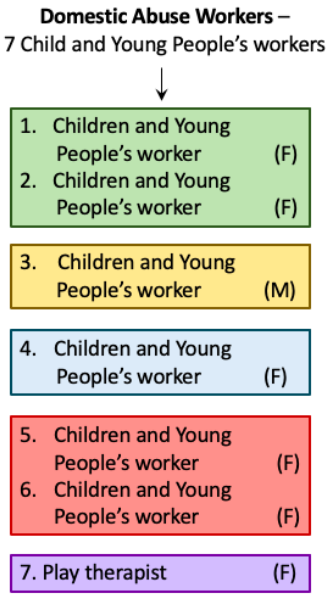
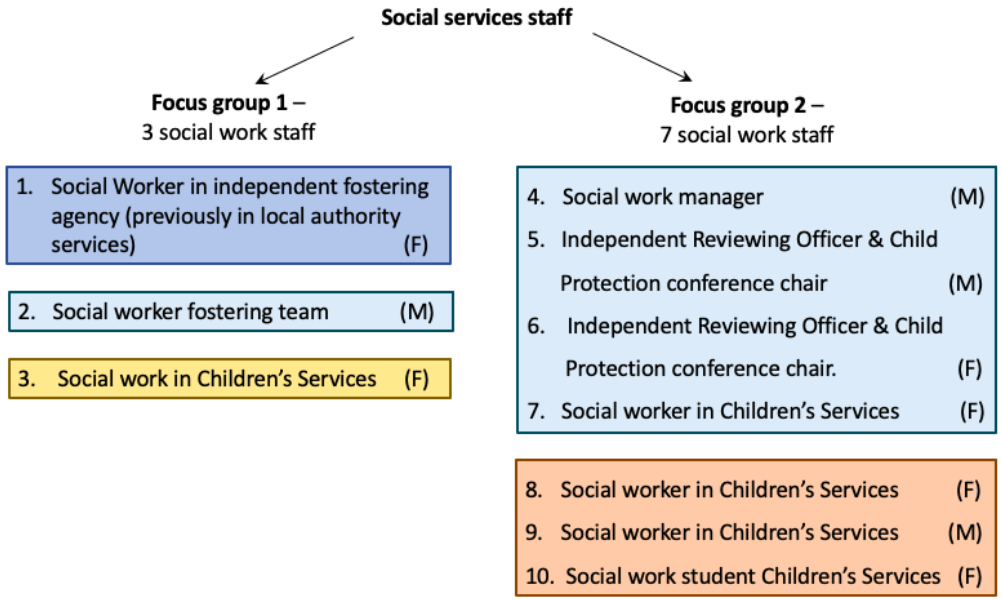


Figure 4

Social work staff composition



3.4 Data collection and analysis

Phase 1: Qualitative and quantitative data were collected from online questionnaires via Qualtrics^{XM} and used for descriptive statistics.

Phase 2: Participants were individually invited to attend a virtual focus group via the online platform Zoom. The focus groups were video recorded to allow for later transcription of verbal and (visible) non-verbal responses (such as the raise hands feature, nodding and shaking of heads). The chat function was also encouraged in an attempt to buffer any technological difficulties that might be experienced (such as over-speaking and poor internet connection). This also provided further opportunities for participants to agree/disagree or respond to comments being made by other participants as they spoke. An interview schedule (Appendix G) was used to stimulate conversation in the focus groups, comprising open ended questions in relation to 1) current understanding and experiences of domestic abuse, 2) available support, 3) multiagency working, and 4) the role of psychology. Polls were also developed on the platform to gather comparative descriptive statistics.

Focus groups were later transcribed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) orthographic transcription system (adapted from Jefferson, 2004) and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2020), as guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006; 2020) six-step (recursive) process (shown in Figure 5). Inductive thematic analysis was adopted to study meaning in participant responses, which was explored at both the semantic and latent level. It is acknowledged that elements of theory and research will also have influenced the analysis, through completion of the literature review and due to the researchers own interests in the field of inquiry. Braun and Clarke (2020) note that thematic analysis sits on a continuum of induction and deduction and that the two are not necessarily in opposition to each other. They suggest that no research can remain purely inductive in nature as the researcher cannot sit separately to the research itself; emphasising that they are influenced by their own realities and experiences, thus impacting on the questions asked of participants and the interpretations drawn from the data. Reflexive thematic analysis subsequently assumes a flexible and theoretically driven interpretation of the data, as guided by the underlying philosophical positioning

of the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2019). It is therefore acknowledged that a different researcher may have come to different conclusions. In an attempt to increase the trustworthiness of the qualitative analysis, another trainee educational psychologist (TEP) coded one of the focus group transcripts independently and these were discussed to explore similarities and differences; similar codes were identified through this method of researcher triangulation (Nowell et al., 2017; Yardley, 2008). Peer debrief with the TEP was also completed at the level of theme development.

Figure 5
Braun & Clarke's (2006) six-step process for thematic analysis (adapted in 2020)

3.5 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was sought and granted by Cardiff University School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee (Appendix I). Steps were taken to ensure that no harm came to participants at any point during the research; these are outlined in Table 3 below.

Table 3
Ethical considerations

Ethical consideration	How this was addressed	
	Phase 1	Phase 2
Informed consent	Participants were sent a link to the questionnaire via the school email address. An information sheet and informed consent form were presented at the beginning of the questionnaire (Appendix B) and participants were unable to proceed to the questions without confirming consent.	Following gatekeeper approval, prospective participants were provided with an information sheet and consent form via email (Appendix J and K). Participants were asked to return completed consent forms to the researcher prior to participation in the focus group. Where participants did not return a completed consent form, but continued to engage with the process, the researcher ensured participants were reminded of their rights at the beginning of the focus group and verbal consent to proceed was obtained.
Confidentiality and anonymity	No identifying information was requested on the questionnaires; they remained anonymous throughout.	Due to the nature of focus groups confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. This was highlighted to participants in the invite email (Appendix L) which drew attention to the importance of remaining confidential in their discussions and recognising the need not to discuss focus group discussions with individuals outside of the focus groups. Data remained confidential until point of transcription when all identifying information was anonymised.
Right to withdraw	Participants were made aware at the beginning of the questionnaire of their right to withdraw participation up until the point of their data submission. Forced responses were required from participants only when their answer resulted in a decision point for the next question. All qualitative responses were optional.	At the beginning and end of the focus group, participants were reminded of their right to withdraw. They were reminded that they had two weeks to inform the researcher of their decision to withdraw participation following completion of the focus group, as the video recording would still be available; following this all data would be transcribed and anonymised.
Risk of harm and debrief	A debrief form was included at the end of the questionnaire reminding participants of their rights (Appendix B). Their data was not submitted until they had fully read through the debrief from and clicked to confirm they still wanted to proceed with participation.	Participants were provided with a debrief form following participation. (Appendix N). This included a summary of their involvement and a reminder about how their personal data would be used. Contact information was again provided so that participants could contact the research should they have any questions or concerns.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Phase 1: Descriptive statistics

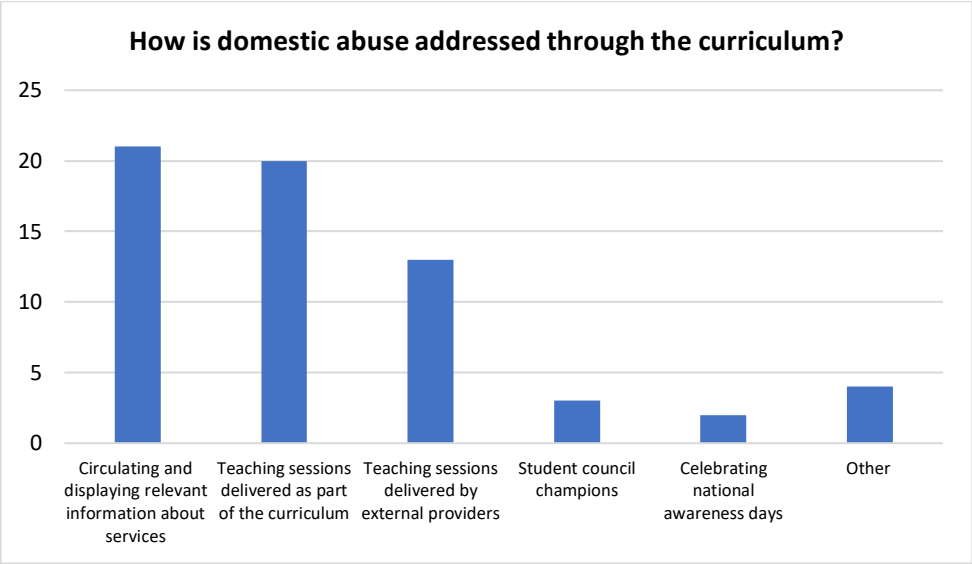
Questionnaire data from Phase 1 is discussed below, supplemented by a series of visual aids.

4.1.1 Domestic abuse and the curriculum

Respondents were asked if they addressed the issue of domestic abuse through the curriculum. Overall, 30/36 answered with either yes (10) or a little (20); the remaining six respondents stated that they did not address domestic abuse at all. A range of methods were identified as being used within schools to explore the topic of domestic abuse (see Figure 6). Teaching sessions were most frequently delivered as part of the curriculum, but were also delivered via outside agencies, including Hafan Cymru/Spectrum Project, NSPCC, Barnardo's and the Police. The category 'other' was described as: individual signposting with pupils and families, counselling sessions in school, Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) sessions, fund raising for local third sector domestic abuse services and the whole school adoption of restorative approaches.

Figure 6

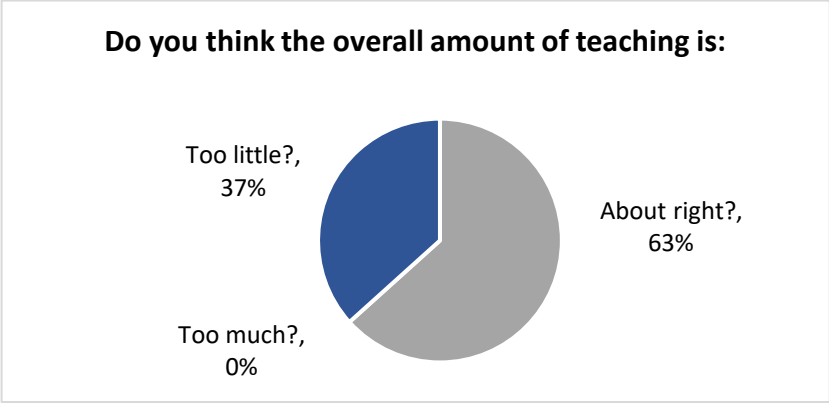
Methods used to address domestic abuse throughout the curriculum



Around two-thirds of respondents felt that the overall amount of teaching on the topic of domestic abuse was adequate, whilst one-third felt they didn't cover it enough (see Figure 7).

Figure 7

Staff perception of amount of time allocated to domestic abuse in the curriculum



When asked about the challenges schools faced in responding to domestic abuse through the curriculum, a range of difficulties were raised. These included:

- The sensitive subject matter
- Concerns about CYPs age, their baseline understanding about domestic abuse and the risks of making things worse (e.g., frightening CYP, making them worried or retraumatising them)
- Little available guidance as to how to appropriately address the issue
- Fitting the topic into the curriculum due to time-constraints and competing priorities
- Consideration as to whether a whole school approach would be disproportionate to the number of learners affected

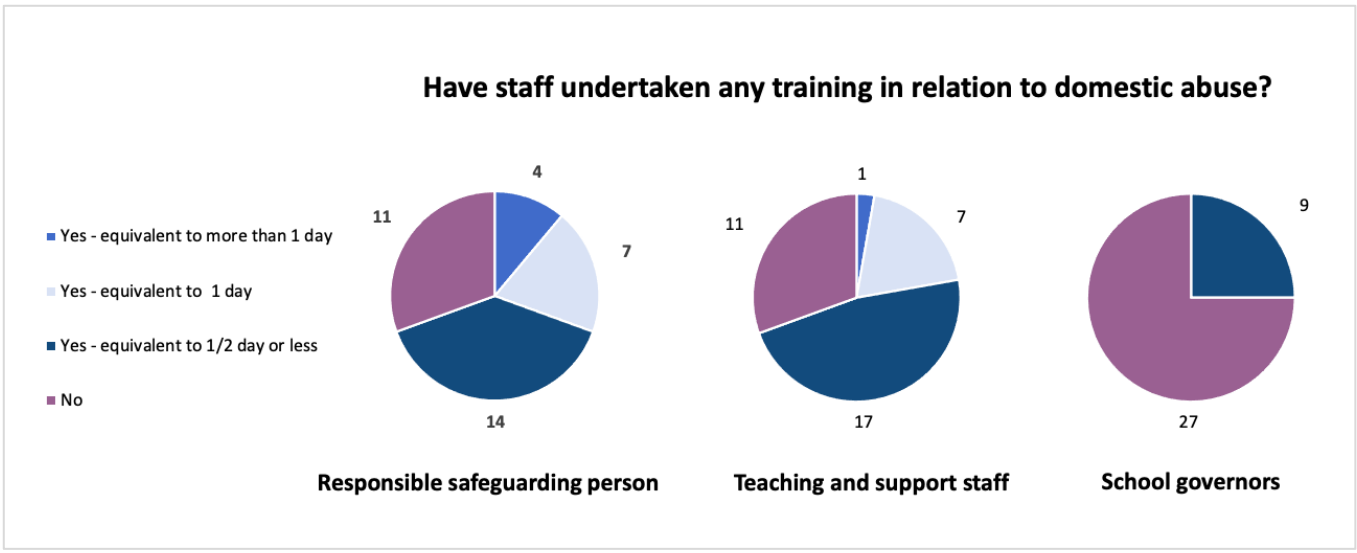
Similar responses were given by respondents who stated that they did not address the issue of domestic abuse, with one respondent highlighting that it was not required of them.

4.1.2 Training and access to information about domestic abuse

Overwhelmingly, 70% of the respondents reported undertaking no training on domestic abuse, or equivalent to less than half a day, despite holding positions of safeguarding responsibility. Similarly, this applied to 78% of respondents, when related to teaching and support staff in their schools. Interestingly, nine reported that school governors had undertaken training, which equated to less than half a day (see Figure 8).

Figure 8

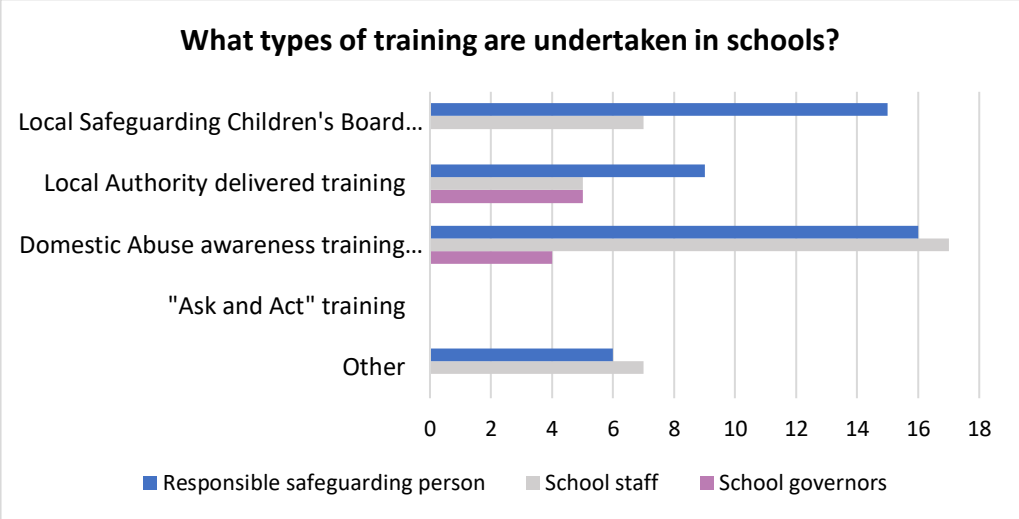
Amount of training undertaken in schools



The main methods of training accessed in schools (see Figure 9) included eLearning modules and Local Safeguarding Children's Board (Wales) training. Other forms of training were also accessed through Local Authority offers and specialist providers such as Hafan and Safe As. The Welsh Governments Ask and Act training (Welsh Government, 2017) was not reported to have been undertaken by any of the three groups explored.

Figure 9

Types of training undertaken in schools



When asked why staff had not undertaken training, responses included:

- A lack of awareness about the training available to staff
- Time constraints
- No statutory requirement for staff to undertake training
- Domestic abuse not being a high enough priority for schools
- Domestic abuse training not being offered as part of the school governors training menu

Interestingly, over a third of respondents (36%) reported being unsure where to go to access information about domestic abuse. The remainder of respondents felt confident that they knew where they could go, listing a variety of methods, including: The Police helpline, LA family gateway, Mind hub, Wales safeguarding app, LA Safeguarding team/ Multi-Agency Safeguarding Team and a range of specialist providers/charities such as Safe As, BAWSO, RISE and Llamau.

Only one respondent stated that their school had a specific policy around domestic abuse in place; 27 participants (75%) reported that this was included as part of another policy, whilst eight participants (22%) stated that they did not include domestic abuse

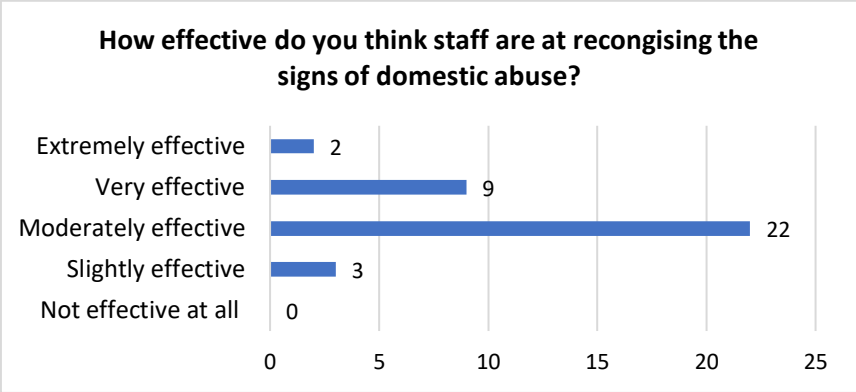
as part of any school policy. Those that did not include it, noted that it was not a requirement/mandatory to do so.

4.1.3 Identification, Response and Support in Schools

Overall, 61% of participants felt that staff were "moderately effective" at recognising the signs of domestic abuse and 25% felt staff were "very effective" (see Figure 10).

Figure 10

Perception of staff effectiveness at recognising signs of domestic abuse

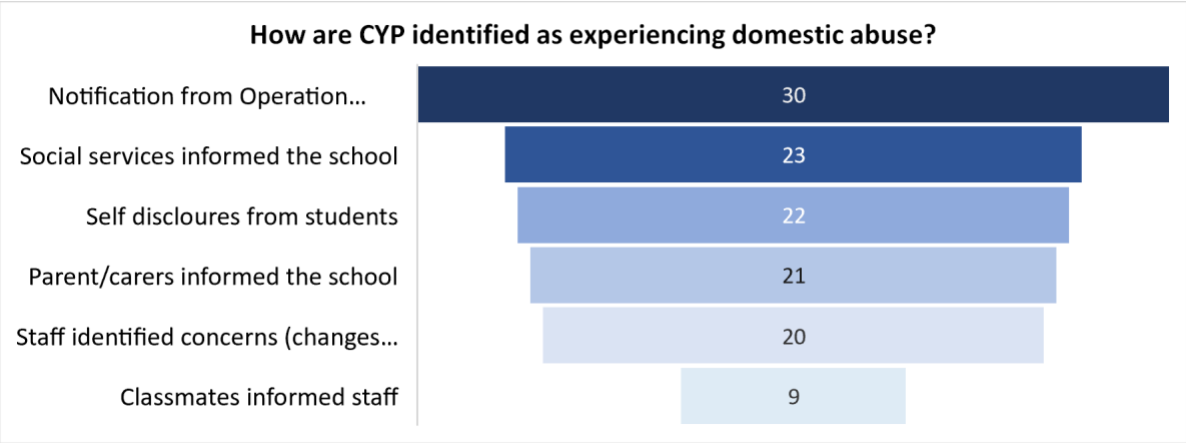


In total, 32 respondents stated that they had CYP in their school affected by domestic abuse. Respondents noted a range of methods had been used to identify them (shown in Figure 11), with 94% having received notifications from Operation Encompass. This suggests that schools receive an early awareness of concerns, as the charity aims to notify schools before school starts the following day (or after the weekend) so that appropriate support can be put in place (Operation Encompass, 2021). Interestingly, three respondents noted that this was the only route they had received information about CYP's experiences of domestic abuse.

Other methods of identification (reported at similar levels amongst respondents) included learning about CYP through social services, self-disclosures and parent/carers and through staff noticing changes in CYP. A small number stated concerns had been raised by CYPs classmates.

Figure 11

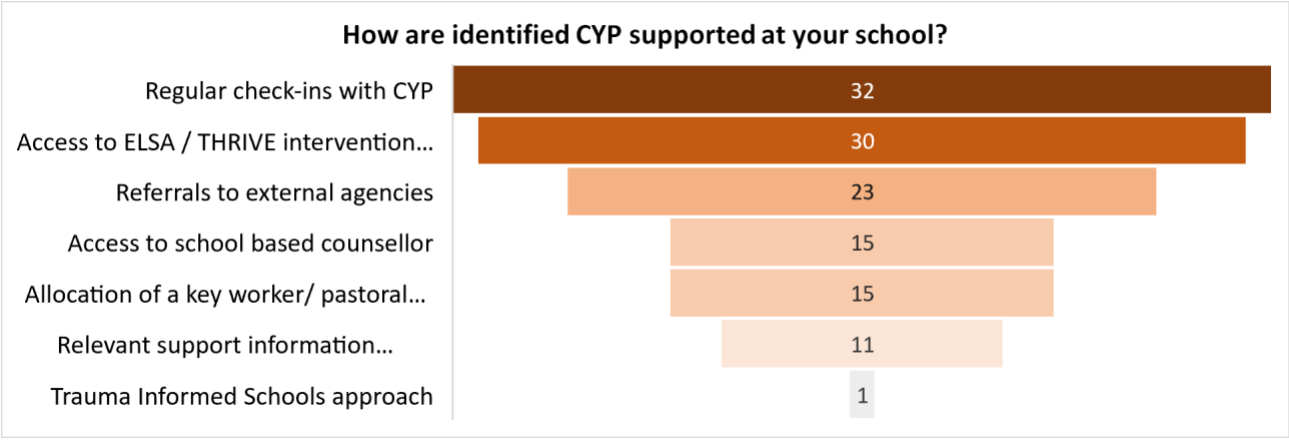
Methods for identifying children and young people



The primary methods of intervention for CYP were reported to be through the provision of school-based support such as regular check-ins with CYP (100% of respondents) and access to emotional literacy interventions (94% of respondents). Almost three quarters of respondents also reported seeking external agency support (72%). Interestingly, less than half of the respondents (47%) noted the allocation of an identified key-adult/pastoral support worker in school, suggesting that 'check-ins' may occur through informal processes. School-based counselling was offered with the same frequency and providing CYP with relevant information was reported by 34% of respondents. In addition, one respondent reported using a whole school approach through Trauma Informed Schools (see Figure 12).

Figure 12

Methods for supporting children and young people



Notably, 83% of participants felt that more was needed for their school to adequately support CYP. They suggested that this might include:

- Increased access to specialist support/ more funding to enhance existing school provisions (e.g., play therapy, ELSA, Thrive, counselling)
- Continuity of support from social services
- Centrally provided training for all staff
- Access to resources (that could be adapted to suit the individual needs of CYP)
- Early intervention (particularly for young children)
- Support for children in care to help them understand that their situation is not their fault
- Access to multiagency support

Respondents who said they did not feel more needed to be done, noted this was either due to not having CYP affected by domestic abuse in their school, or they felt their current school mechanisms manage the needs of CYP.

4.2 Phase 2: Descriptive statistics from focus group data

Four polls were launched over the Zoom platform, to discern descriptive statistics related to confidence and effectiveness of response by professionals. The results of these are compared below.

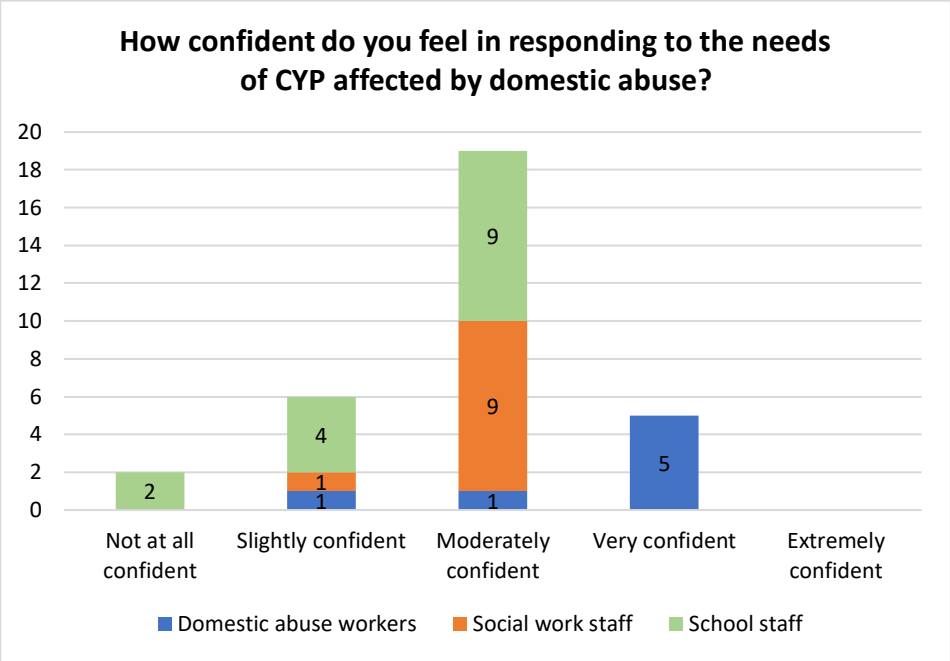
4.2.1 How confident do professionals feel in responding to the needs of children and young people?

Overall, 59% of the participants rated their confidence as moderate, accounting for the majority of school staff and all but one social work staff participant. The lowest confidence levels were seen amongst school staff, with 40% of the group averse to describing their ability to respond to CYPs needs as anything more than slightly confident. Two school staff reported that they were 'not at all' confident in their ability to support CYP.

90% of social work staff felt moderately confident that they were able to meet the needs of CYP. Domestic abuse workers claimed the highest confidence of all the professional groups, with over two thirds of the group rating very high confidence in their own abilities (see Figure 13).

Figure 13

Confidence of professionals



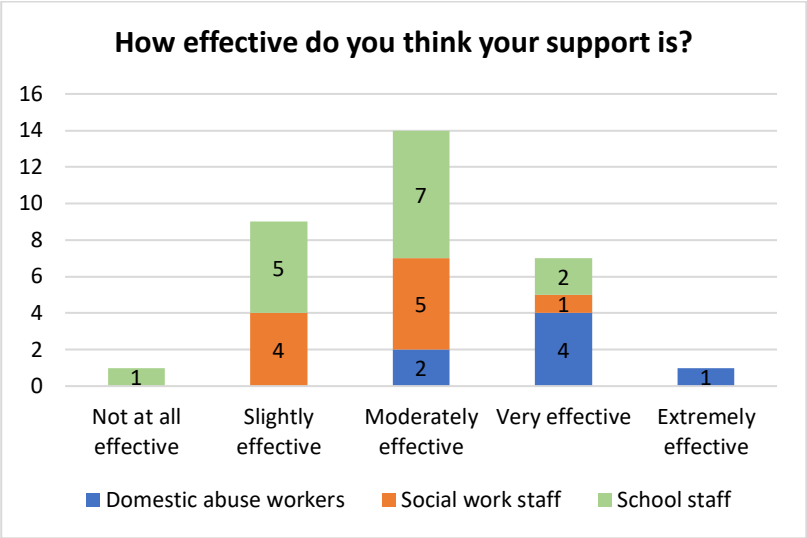
4.2.2 How effective do professionals perceive their support to be?

Domestic abuse workers rated the effectiveness of their work the highest of all professional groups with 71% claiming a more than moderate level of support being provided. They felt this was linked to regularly evaluating their own practice, due to working in a results-based accountability funding approach. The ability to consistently provide the support (due to lack of resources and limited staff capacity) was reported as preventing them from rating themselves higher.

On average, social work staff rated their effectiveness of response slightly higher than their confidence to respond. Whilst, on the whole, school staff rated themselves lower.

Figure 14

Perceived effectiveness of support

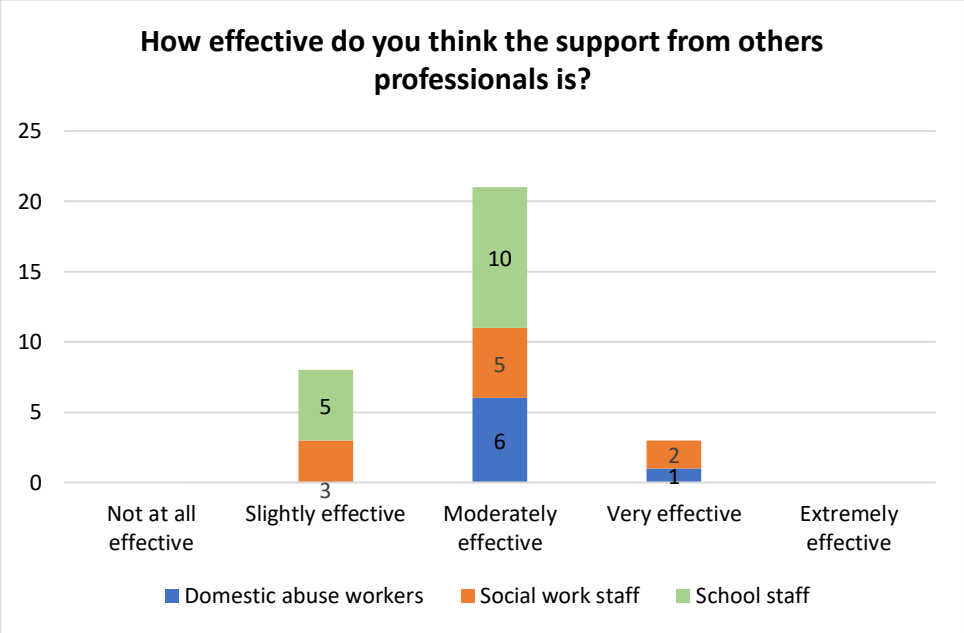


4.2.3 How effective do professionals perceive the support of others is?

90% of participants viewed the support of others as having only a slight or moderate effect, with only three participants rating higher than this. Domestic abuse workers reported that this was due to varying levels of engagement with schools.

Figure 15

Perceived effectiveness of external support



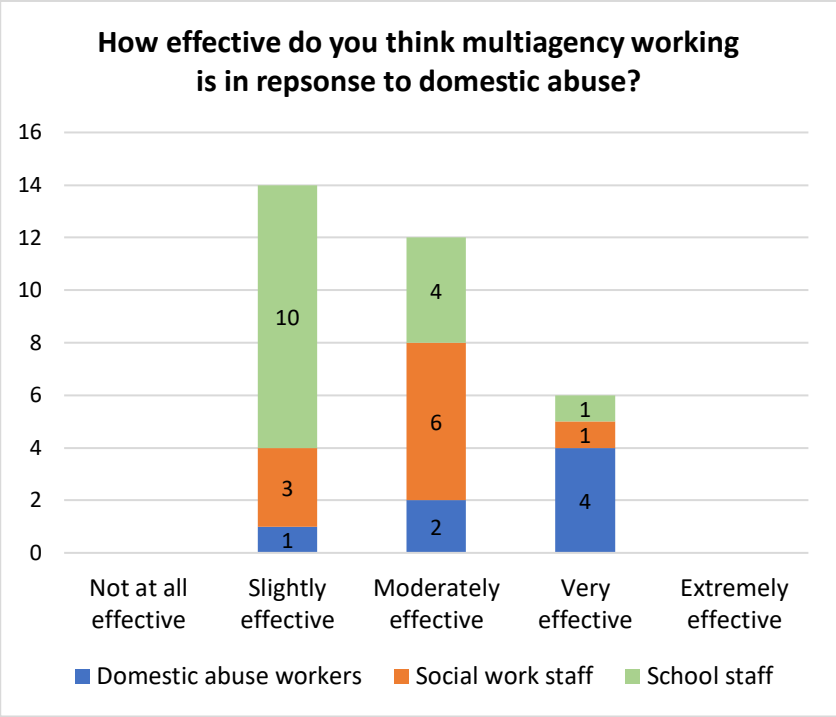
4.2.4 How effective do professionals perceive multiagency working to be in response to domestic abuse?

Overall, 81% of participants viewed multiagency working to be only moderately or slightly effective in practice. Surprisingly, but perhaps most importantly, 67% of school staff rated this as only slightly effective, expressing regularly being left out of multiagency work, due to concerns being held with a more senior member of staff.

One social worker rated multiagency working as 'very effective', noting that this was due to vast improvements in response over the years. Interestingly, the slightly higher ratings from domestic abuse workers resulted from Covid-19 restrictions increasing virtual means of interactions, making is easier, and more likely, that they would be invited to attend meetings.

Figure 16

Perceived effectiveness of multiagency response



4.3 Phase 2: Qualitative analysis of focus group data

An analysis of the focus group responses was completed using reflexive thematic analysis (see Appendix Q for a step-by-step of the process undertaken). The transcripts from each professional group were coded separately (see Appendix O for examples) and the shared meaning between groups was explored jointly. The aim of this was to preserve the unique experiences brought by each professional group, whilst considering the shared themes in achieving effective support for CYP. This resulted in the development of four overarching themes, comprised of 11 subthemes. These are presented in a Thematic Map (Figure 17) and explored in more detail in table format below.

4.4 Thematic map

Figure 17

Thematic map

4.5 Exploration of themes

Table 4

Theme 1: We need to fit the pieces together to see the bigger picture

We need to fit the pieces together to see the bigger picture		
Participants identified domestic abuse as being a complex process that affects children, young people and their families differently. It was described as being better understood as a spectrum of unhealthy and harmful relationship behaviours, resulting in long-term consequences for children and young people, often occurring in intergenerational cycles. There was a strong sense that multiple perspectives were needed to consider the needs of the child or young person fully, with participants noting concerns that concentrating on one explanation too narrowly could restrict a wider understanding of children and young people's needs and subsequent support options.		
Subtheme	**Description of subtheme**	**Illustrative quotes**
Domestic abuse does not stop at the 'incident' or disclosure	Participants identified that the experience of domestic abuse could not be narrowed down to a simple explanation, response or presentation. They spoke about a spectrum of changes in behaviour and mood and described the far-reaching consequences for children and young people, which often resulted in ongoing challenges over the life cycle. The repeated patterns of entrenched relationship behaviours were described as becoming normalised for children, young people and their families, resulting in intergenerational cycles of abuse. Response was	***Domestic abuse worker 3 (p.3-4):*** *"I think that it's not always immediate as well, so even though children can develop anxiety and stuff, sometimes they might come across as being quite resilient and they won't show any effects straight away and it might be that they develop mental health issues later on, like when they become a teenager or a young adult as well and I think it impacts their concept of what a healthy relationship is and it's often like a cycle isn't it, so they're more likely to engage in unhealthy relationships as they get older as well"* ***Social work staff 8 (p.31):*** *"…where domestic abuse has been present and you know the impact is evident throughout their teenage-hood and into their adulthood and that they potentially are at risk of mimicking that behaviour and then subconsciously becoming a perpetrator themselves and it's really important that they can have that early intervention themselves, so that we can recognise it and we can work to try and eliminate it as best we can at an early stage, so that it's not continued throughout their adulthood and their life course"*

	consequently described as needing to consider the longer-term implications within the wider system, focusing on early intervention and preventative support.	***School staff 10 (p.33):*** *"...I just feel that if they [CYP] are experiencing these issues at home it's not something that going to be necessarily fixed in half a term and I feel that if that's all we're offering these children are we really going to help?"* ***Social work staff 4 (p.35):*** *"…there's different types of support depending on where you are within it as well, so for us children actually living with the family, we work with both children and families, and essentially we want to know what are their individual and collective life stories…"*
We're just one piece of the puzzle	Woking together was emphasised as key to unpicking needs, making sense of individual situations and supporting change. Whilst it was considered to be working better than ever before, it was widely acknowledged that multidisciplinary practice varied and needed improvement. Professionals were described as often working in siloes and having different thresholds, preventing a cohesive and holistic response from taking place.	***School staff 9 (p.41):*** *"... I feel a little bit out of depth in making these decisions for those children and I think it's a lot of responsibility for sort of one person rather than all these agencies… I think they could have a bigger involvement on how we support these children … I sometimes feel that we're only one part of it but we have so much responsibility and we can't control or change what's happening outside of the school gates…"* **Domestic abuse worker 6 (p.7)** *"…like it doesn't matter what we do or if the support we offer is really great, if the parent doesn't access anything or doesn't make any changes then the long-term effectiveness of our support, if they're going back into that environment or things haven't changed at home, will impact on how effective it can be*" ***Social work staff 9 (p.55):*** *"…in terms of the interventions that are out there, they seem to be prescriptive in nature, you know there's a set programme for 'perpetrators' or 'victims' or the children affected, but actually it's about coming together and helping to put together a bespoke package of support that supports that individual's family ..."*

(Note: Illustrative quotes are taken from transcripts, which were submitted as three separate documents, pertaining to either domestic abuse workers, school staff or social work staff. The page numbers, denoted as "p.", therefore correspond with the page numbers of the respective transcript.)

Table 5

Theme 2: A shared understanding is a necessary part of sense-making

Theme 2: A shared understanding is a necessary part of sense-making		
A lack of collective understanding about the nature of domestic abuse and the professional response to it, was seen as contributing to challenges in providing effective support for children, young people and their families. Participant discussions reflected the need for a shared understanding in order to bring about increased recognition of concerns and meaningful change.		
Subtheme	**Description of subtheme**	**Illustrative quotes**
Language and labels shape response	The way individuals and agencies construct the concept of domestic abuse was thought to impact on engagement with services and the delivery of support. Families were described as often not viewing their behaviour as 'domestic abuse' or 'domestic violence' which was seen as subsequently impacting on the likelihood that they would identify their experiences as a concern. Additional issues were noted in relation to a desire from parents and often schools, to access medical diagnoses of neurodevelopmental and/or mental health conditions for children and young people, at the detriment of considering alternative explanations, such as the response to traumatic experiences. This, in part, was linked to the family's need to	***Social work staff 4 (p.31):*** *"…there's something interesting to be said about the language that we use to describe it as well though, I think for me, the experience of the families who we work with, generally wouldn't use the language of domestic violence or domestic abuse, they would maybe use the language of 'we argue' and 'we fight' and maybe don't necessarily understand the impact that it does have on their children"* ***Social work staff 6 (p.31):*** *"Yeah the language is key isn't it because unless we can agree on a shared idea of what's okay then we can't agree on a shared understanding about what's not …"* ***Domestic abuse worker 6: (p.25):*** *"Yeah… if there is a DV [domestic violence] history then being aware if any work has been done before we diagnose a child, because I mean it is a barrier when you're meeting with a parent and you have to say 'it could be because of what has happened' and like they don't want to take that responsibility, they don't want to hear that, it's a guilt then and it's not about that for us, it's about helping them to understand…"* ***Social work staff 5 (p.57):*** *"…those conversations are often very difficult with parents who are looking for a fix, a magic bullet, maybe they want CAMHS [child and adolescent mental health services] to sort it out, maybe they want medication*

	remove self-blame but was also noted, by one school staff member, as possibly being linked to a lack of clear care pathways for children and young people experiencing domestic abuse.	*to be prescribed because there is something wrong with this child, they must have ADHD or something like that"* ***School staff 15 (p.66):*** *"…I think probably the school will think they can get more support if they go down the route of ASD, there's more readily available support, funding, whatever that might be, rather than finding the source which could be trickier for the school to access"*
Confusion over roles and responsibilities	A lack of clarity about the roles, remits and duties of professionals was described as occurring amongst professionals and families. This in turn was seen to impact on understanding and expectations about what others should or could be doing, resulting in frustration, inappropriate referrals and/or a lack of engagement with wider services. In addition to this, the perception of child protection and the role of social services were described as being bound in historic stereotypes and expectations, further inciting fear and a reluctance for families to engage with processes. Educational psychologists were referred to a 'diagnosing' Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autism.	***Domestic abuse worker 2 (p.19):*** *"...I think when they [social services] are referring to [domestic abuse] services they sometimes just refer ... but sometimes we can't do effective work with children because maybe mum and dad are together, so we then have to explain that we can give support but if we talk to the child about domestic abuse then it can put the child in danger..."* ***Social work staff 7 (p.37):"*** *I think they [specialist domestic abuse service] do groups but I'm not really sure what the support looks like as I've never referred in before [now]…"* ***Social work staff 8 (p.47):*** *"...another challenge we have now is that the police update school [Operation Encompass] on any incident that might have happened and sometimes the parents are coming to us saying 'you have no right to tell the school' and blaming us as social services but it's actually what the police have to do as part of this new measure, so that's another big challenge where you know the relationship is already fraught because they already don't trust you because you're social services and then an incident happens and they're told by the school first, so you're constantly chasing your tail and trying to build that rapport and in an already difficult dynamic"*

Misconceptions about domestic abuse lead to missed opportunities	Domestic abuse workers spoke of the misconceptions about domestic abuse having a direct impact on response and resulting in children often not being identified. They referenced times where they had been told that domestic abuse was not an issue in some schools and one domestic abuse worker explained that a General Practitioner (GP) had also held this belief. This was seen as a naïve perception, contradicting current evidence and statistics. A focus on the physical incident model was thought to further impact on the lack of identification of concerns. Social workers referred to misconceptions from the perspective of the family and the lack of recognition about the impact domestic abuse has on children and young people.	**School staff 2 (p.1):** *"…I am the allocated child protection officer for our school and even though we've had a lot of cases around child protection, domestic violence isn't an issue that has come up that we're aware of, you know I know it's quite naïve to say it's not something that happens but it's not something I've actually dealt with first-hand in the school"* ***Domestic abuse worker 2 (p.15):*** *"…when I was in [Local Authority service] and I was ringing the schools, one school that was in sort of the more affluent area, was like 'oh no we don't get domestic abuse here' um but funnily enough about a month later social services did refer from that particular area, so I think that there's a misconception about it being a socioeconomic problem when it's not, it's classless"* ***Domestic abuse worker 5 (p.15):"...****I've had that too that 'we don't have it [domestic abuse] in our schools' 'we don't make referrals to you' 'we don't need to know about you'…"* ***Social work staff 9 (p.33):*** *"Yeah and I think those are discussions [Participant 5] that we have a lot in our team and with families and often the argument is 'oh but the children are upstairs and we're downstairs' or 'they're not in the same room'"* ***Social work staff 2 (p.4):*** *"I think it can be very difficult at times, a lot of foster carers, certainly the ones maybe who are new, don't always understand why [their behaviour is challenging] [they] say 'well if they're in a stable foster care placement then everything's alright now' um and you know what I say to them is for example 'if he's 10 years old then he's had potentially 10 years of being exposed to x and y, putting them in foster placement doesn't solve everything, they still need wrap around care"*

Table 6

Theme 3: Professionals are working in the dark

Theme 3: Professionals are working in the dark		
Despite acknowledgment that all professionals have a duty to report safeguarding concerns, there appeared to be a hierarchy of information sharing, resulting in professionals not having all of the relevant information to support children and young people. There was an overwhelming sense that schools were fundamental sources of support to children and young people experiencing domestic abuse and a recognition that they were the people seeing children and young people the most frequently (outside of family members) however they were also acknowledged as often being the least informed.		
Subtheme	**Description of subtheme**	**Illustrative quotes**
Information sharing is hierarchical	Confidentiality and a need for consent to share information was seen as having a direct impact on professional awareness of concerns and their subsequent response to it. There appeared to be a wariness to share sensitive information without consent with schools, despite them working most frequently and closely with children and young people. A lack of feedback and understanding of need was reported to impact on the effectiveness of school response, with school staff concerned about saying or doing the 'wrong thing' and missing subtle information from children and young people, that might be important in terms of safeguarding.	***School staff 7 (p.13):*** *"I suppose it's similar to what [Participant 4] is saying, we don't get told anything we just get told the bare minimum… but if we'd known that before things could have been put in place to have helped that child... "* ***School staff 11 (p.31):*** *"Mmm yeah you can find children slip through the net then can't you, because that child could have said something quite significant to you but because you might not have known the full picture, that might not have registered perhaps"* ***School staff 15 (p.50):*** *"Yeah I think there's sort of a stigma around domestic abuse and sort of safeguarding as it should be hush-hush, it's personal and you shouldn't know about it …"* ***Social work staff 8 (p.54):*** *"So again, it depends on whether parents have given us consent, so at the beginning of our intervention we need to get them to sign to say they allow us to liaise with health, uh police, uh school, and not all families agree, so it's only when it's major risk that we have to and then again it goes back to the point of are we betraying that family but it's because the children are at significant risk so we have to do it"*

		School staff 2 (p.9): *"I know as a designated person for child protection the information we receive back is really limited but the information that we can give to the teachers that have heard the disclosure, is maybe a little bit more limited again and its really frustrating because you're a massive part of the jigsaw but you can't make it all come together nicely, so I think it's really frustrating"*
CYPs needs are often hidden	School and social work staff reported often not knowing if a child or young person was affected by domestic abuse, affecting early identification and response. This was linked to the normalisation of children and young people's experiences of healthy relationship behaviours and also to the secretive nature of domestic abuse more generally. The distinct lack of 'proof' to evidence concerns resulted in many children and young people's needs not being validated. Whilst domestic abuse workers often had more knowledge of domestic abuse, the limits of confidentiality resulted in wider professionals remaining unaware of the environmental and relational circumstances, affecting assessment of needs and provision of wider intervention.	***School staff 10 p.4:*** *"…I feel um it's harder to get proof or evidence because where I work the children they are very very savvy and they're not willing to talk about it or they don't admit that anything is going on"* ***Social work staff 4 (p.35):*** *"...the systems we operate within push couples apart and force them into situations where they are not allowed to have contact with each other, so then they do it in secret, in a way that we can't manage and we can't see, and then the children are often colluding in that which makes it even more difficult to monitor and manage support..."* ***Social work staff 7 (p.37):"*** *…it's a tough one because you don't really know what actually goes on, you might have a police report or a GP report but there's probably far more that goes on behind closed doors that you'll ever actually know about"* ***Domestic abuse worker 6 (p.30:)"...****if they are not child protection or they don't have Team Around the Family involved then we don't have to tell the school that mum is accessing domestic abuse support or that the child has received some support, so you wouldn't even be aware of it..."*

Table 7

Theme 4: Systemic inequalities maintain the problem

Theme 4: Systemic inequalities maintain the problem		
Government agendas and legislation promoting response to domestic abuse, were acknowledged by participants but they were seen as not translating into practice. Tokenistic processes and a lack of professional prioritisation and statutory training, were seen as central to this, reducing the likelihood of meaningful engagement. Participants also described how inconsistent funding streams, time-constraints and understaffing resulted in inequitable support for children, young people and their families.		
Subtheme	**Description of subtheme**	**Illustrative quotes**
Conflicts between policy, prioritisation and practice	Participants acknowledged their legal duty to safeguard children and young people and they emphasised a clear desire to work collaboratively to achieve this, however they described challenges related to time-constraints, differing professional thresholds and varying levels of engagement. Health professionals in particular, were highlighted as not prioritising time to engage with child protection processes whilst policing agendas were seen to restrict family openness about the truth of their situations. In addition to this, children and young people were discussed as being recognised as victims legally and politically, yet participants noted	***School staff 2 (p.9):*** *"… you're dependent on other people and the information gets passed on and on and on all the time, and you know I worry all the time, 'does the information get passed on correctly?', 'does this information get viewed as CAS [care and support] because it hasn't been passed on correctly?", so I know there are loads of things that are going on in the world that are horrendous but you know, it might be smaller than something else, but it's still massive in that child's life, but it's not deemed massive all the time, so for me I find it really frustrating and it angers me"* ***Social work staff 3 (p.17):*** *"…we're trying to collaborate with health, in particular health visitors, to see if they can coordinate visits with us and alternate these visits. The response that I've had is that it's not part of their job and it's not part of their role, whereas … you know, for me, the Social Services and Wellbeing Wales Act is everyone's responsibility to safeguard the child not just children's services responsibility… "* ***Social work staff 8 (p.54):*** *"…there's core groups and things which takes that multiagency approach, where everybody is aware of you know, the conference for arguments sake, the date of the initial core group, and not everybody can always*

	the lack of significance given to them in practice.	*make it because you know their availability and other emergencies, so it's really, really important but it doesn't always work"* ***Social worker 5 (p.45):*** *"I think that's an important point as well about the different roles and certainly the process in child protection conference, where a parent might begin to make a disclosure in the conference and the parent has actually had a warning from the police who is present in conference, that you know, that even though they're not being formally interviewed, they're not in court, there is a police officer present and anything they do ay might be used against them and at point they shut up fairly quickly"* ***Domestic abuse worker 6 (p.23):*** *"…when you have [a child or young person], when you're not invited to things or you have to chase stuff and you need to keep reminding [social services] that you are working with a family, then that kind of thing doesn't help children because their voice isn't being heard, because you might be the only one who is directly working with the child except for school, who might have a different view…"*
Tensions around the quality of support and availability of support	Overall, whilst a range of strategies and interventions were described by participant's (see Table 8 for examples) the availability and accessibility of these varied significantly between local authorities. All professional groups identified that effective interventions required ongoing and in-depth work, but that due to time-constraints (often linked to funding and role remit) interventions were instead	***Domestic abuse worker 4 (p.6-7):*** *"…I know that often it can be a kind of postcode lottery in terms of what support is available and where you can get it from…"* ***Domestic abuse worker 2 (p.9):*** *"…but you haven't got the resources and you've got such a massive list, you know you might have 50-60 children waiting on the waiting list for support and you've got to get through the waiting list to help, so it's basically like a conveyer belt of children needing support and once you've finished one there's another one and another one and another one, so that's challenging"* ***Domestic abuse worker 1 (p.7):"*** *I totally agree with you [Participant 4] – we are not able to offer group work due to the lack of funding at present"*

	brief and unlikely to fully support the children and young people. Participants expressed frustration at the lack of equity and emphasised a constant battle to secure appropriate interventions and support for children and young people.	***School staff 2 (p.22):*** *"…the programme ELSA, it's a fantastic, amazing programme, but you've got, well in our school, we've got one TA [teaching assistant] who's trained in it but actually everything that ELSA stands for every single member of staff should be trained in ELSA"* ***Social worker 2 (p.8):*** *"I think for me because I work in local authority there are finite resources, any specialist services that are needed, the childcare social worker obviously has to put in a request for those and they have to be considered at high levels and a lot of the time that support isn't available because they can't justify the financial cost, and early support services have basically gone… it's crazy really because when these children leave care they are probably going to be service users themselves going through life, as are their children and it's not really looking at the long-term factor there"* ***Social work staff 5 (p.43-44):*** *"...staying on the child protection register in and of itself it isn't abusive you know but we shouldn't be having children on the child protection register if they don't need to be and if we're identifying that a service is required but we're unable to provide it then that's a serious issue and it is happening"*
Explicit teaching of domestic abuse is limited	All professional groups noted limited statutory opportunities for training specifically around domestic abuse, despite an expectation to identify and respond to need. There was a recognition that domestic abuse was different to child abuse and that needs varied significantly amongst children and young people. Teachers	***Domestic abuse worker 1 (p.18):*** *"…in other places [school staff] don't have any training and they don't have any understanding about coercive control and what that means, so they'll only see a child who is dirty or potentially neglected or appears visibly to be affected"* ***Domestic abuse worker 7 (p.15):*** *"teachers do not have enough training"*

	reported not knowing what to say to children and young people about domestic abuse, due to a lack of training and knowledge about the issue. This lack of confidence was viewed to impact on their delivery of healthy relationship work within the curriculum, impacting on children and young people's access to alternative knowledge about healthy relationships and domestic abuse. Participants recognised the importance of upskilling and empowering parents, carers and professionals through training. Although, it was also acknowledged that training alone would not prepare individuals for the complexity of domestic abuse in practice.	***School staff 6 (p.7):*** *"Um I think personally as a teacher who is really quite new to the profession, I would struggle to know how to deal with children who were the victims of, or had been witness to, domestic abuse at home, um so yeah for me it would be about being educated in that before I would feel confident to support, to look after those children, aside from the sort of pastoral support that I give as a teacher anyway"* ***School staff 7 (p.2):"...****Um I would say that I think it's quite a difficult one, I don't think I've ever really talked to children about what is a healthy or unhealthy…"* ***School staff 3 (p.4):*** *"I wouldn't know where to start, or how to phrase things. I'd be afraid that I might say the 'wrong' thing"* ***Social work staff 1 (p.2):"...****we know the impact of adverse childhood trauma on children but I think especially for newly qualified social workers there's minimal training …we would do the consolidation training which is basically just a day of domestic abuse training really ..."*
Bureaucratic and tokenistic processes hinder meaningful engagement	Engagement with services and interventions was reported to often reflect a 'tick box' exercise and not fully consider a holistic view of needs. This related to the formal sharing of information and the processes in place to support individuals affected,	***Domestic abuse worker 2 (p.25):*** *"… it feels forced most of the time when they [referrals] come from social services, so the children and young people don't participate as fully as when they actually want the support …it's more of a tick box…"* ***School staff 11 (p.38):*** *"…I do feel involved because obviously as ALNCo and class teacher I kind of get to see both sides of it, but I do feel that when we get everyone*

	including multiagency meetings, child protection plans and the assignment of a social worker. At a child protection level, emphasis was placed on how the adult victims were expected to make meaningful changes despite not always having access to appropriate support to enable them to do this, resulting in them disengaging or failing to make meaningful changes.	*around the table, it's sometimes just about going through the motions rather than to actually get to kind of the real issue"* ***Domestic abuse worker 6 (p.24): "…****if a child is referred to loads of services then it's like duplicating loads of work for children, so like they'll say we've referred them to CAFCASS [children and family court advisory support services], we've referred then to you, we've referred them to ELSA, and I mean how many things do you want a child to have instead of thinking about what's best for a family and not overwhelming them, so something so well-meaning, 'we're going to put everything in for a family' can be a barrier in a way, because then they don't engage with anybody or they find it too much"* ***Domestic abuse worker 6 (p.20):*** *"...I mean a lot of children we have in our area they don't know who their social worker is and they might have changed so many times and then when we talk to them about their social worker as 'this persons a key person to you and you need to talk to them if you don't feel safe' and they're like 'well I don't even know who that person is' ...."* ***Social worker 3 (p.26):*** *"I feel like from every core group the recommendations you have from every initial conference you have, or review conference, some parents would bloody come out with like 20 outcomes to meet and you know this is overwhelming, we're literally setting them up to fail like straight away"*

5 DISCUSSION

This exploratory study has drawn on a range of perspectives from professionals working with CYP in the school system. The aim was to better understand how CYP affected by domestic abuse are supported, and how effective the response is perceived to be.

The results from the descriptive statistics and thematic analysis, combined with the information collated in the literature review, are subsequently explored in relation to each research question in turn. Implications for practice, including the role of the EP, are then considered.

5.1 Research Question 1: How are CYP being supported in relation to domestic abuse?

Participant responses indicated that a variety of strategies are currently being used to support CYP who have been identified as experiencing domestic abuse. These are primarily centred around targeting social-emotional needs, adopting relational approaches and encouraging behaviour regulation strategies. Domestic abuse workers in particular made reference to trauma-informed approaches. These methods are consistent with recommendations from Van der Kolk (2005; 2014) and Treisman (2016; 2021).

Whilst the strategies and interventions described were not used in all local authorities, it may be useful to consider the range of approaches adopted by practitioners as a whole, so as to inform a toolbox of ideas from current practice. The approaches discussed by participants are subsequently outlined in Table 8.

Table 8

Strategies and interventions available to children and young people

Systems level	Strategies and interventions
Individual support for children and young people	• Use of ELSA and/or Thrive sessions to explore emotional literacy development • (School-based) counselling • Play therapy • Access to a therapy dog • Art therapy

	• Access to a temporary time out card • Access to a key/trusted adult • Life story work • Safe spaces for CYP to access
Group support for children and young people	• ELSA and Thrive group interventions • The S.T.A.R. (Safety, Trust and Respect) programme
Whole school level	• Internal processes to keep staff notified and aware of any concerns and the actions being taken in response to them (e.g., messages attached to pupil timetables and safeguarding messages during staff briefings) • Designated safeguarding leads • Ensuring good working relationships with CYP, their families and wider communities • Consistency and routine within the structure of the school day • Scheduling wellbeing time into the school day (e.g., self-regulation time in the morning to settle all CYP to learn, including opportunities for yoga or other mind-body activities) • Delivery of whole class programmes to encourage healthy relationship behaviours through the curriculum, including KiVa Antibullying Programme ®, SEAL (Social Emotional Aspects of Learning programme) and PSE • Use of NSPCC/Spectrum sessions to provide healthy relationship lessons across the key-stages • Whole staff training around domestic abuse • Access to the school nurse • Use of local authority specialist services for additional support (e.g., behaviour support) • Operation Encompass to notify schools of any incidents that may have occurred over the weekend or night before
Family support	• Training around adverse childhood experiences • Direct support to explore alternate ways of responding to difficulties

	• Supervision and upskilling of foster carers • Independent foster carers have access to psychology input and therapeutic parenting for carers • Use of safety planning with families to acknowledge risks and plan forward • Use of the Trauma Recovery Model (Skuse & Matthew, 2015)
Local authority and wider services	• Educational Psychologists offer consultation, training and advice via Looked After Children's teams and/or school clusters • Early help services • Behaviour support services • Clinical psychologists • 'Ask and Act' training • Professionals trained in trauma-informed approaches

5.2 Research Question 2: What are the challenges and where are the gaps?

Many of the findings from this research (and subsequently the challenges and gaps) are consistent with those seen in the wider literature, including:

- The perceived normalisation of domestic abuse amongst CYP and their families (Swanston et al., 2014) resulting in a reduced likelihood that concerns will be raised, and early intervention and support put in place. This subsequently added to school staffs concerns about being able to evidence and escalate concerns, due to lack of proof.
- The lack of confidence by professionals to respond to need (Dalton, 2019; Ellis, 2012; 2018; Gallagher, 2014; Stanley et al., 2015), in part due to a lack of training for frontline workers. This was reported despite Welsh Government (2015) emphasising the importance of early intervention and preventative practice through education for CYP, their families and the professionals working with them.
- Inconsistencies in the sharing of information (Clarke & Wydall, 2013; Cleaver et al., 2019), resulting in school staff (in particular) reporting difficulties monitoring and tracking concerns effectively. A key tension appeared to be professionals understanding of what was and was not confidential in this context, resulting in the continuation of hidden concerns.

- Inconsistent responses to healthy relationship education in schools, and concerns about the age appropriateness of content for learners (Estyn, 2017). Teacher confidence impacted on the delivery of this within the curriculum, however funding and commissioning impacted on whether domestic abuse workers were able to deliver this as part of their offer to schools (Stanley et al., 2015).
- Ineffective multiagency practices, often compounded by professionals being unclear about each other's roles and remits, in turn affecting referral processes and arguably levels of frustration at systemic processes (Cleaver et al., 2019; Hyman, 2008). Hester (2011) conceptualises these difficulties in the metaphor of the 'three plants model', in which she relates to the issues of response between three areas of work: 'victim/perpetrator' work, child safeguarding and child contact arrangements. Hester (2011) offers the idea of each area of work having its own culture, language, rules and expectations, thus creating dissonance between the need to work collaboratively and the desire to achieve one's own outcomes. Whilst Hester (2011) does not explicitly refer to the role of education within this analogy, the premise remains the same.

In addition to this, findings from this study also highlighted:

- Limited access to ongoing, in-depth work with CYP and their families, despite acknowledgment that CYPs needs cannot be fully met through time-limited involvement. This was largely associated with staff capacity, funding and provision of services.
- Differences in the language and terminology used amongst professionals and families, including the use of the terms victim and perpetrator, and diagnostic labels (such as ADHD or Autism) versus developmental trauma formulations. This was seen to subsequently impact on the way issues are perceived and responded to.
- Processes were perceived as setting families up to fail, perpetuating the likelihood that instances of domestic abuse remain hidden. This in part, was linked to the differing professional agendas, but in large part was associated with bureaucratic and tokenistic processes, placing greater meaning on identifying concerns rather than creating opportunities for meaningful change.

5.3 Research Question 3: How effective do professionals in the school system perceive this support to be?

Overall, moderate levels of effectiveness were highlighted by professionals in relation to the support on offer to CYP. Generally, the participants self-reported ratings were slightly higher than those offered for the work of others, although by and large, participants felt that school staff were integral to effective response. School staff however, suggested that they were often unaware about the nature of the work being completed by outside professionals, and therefore they were uncertain about whether this work was effective or not. The assumption was that external agencies must be effective, because they were still being funded. This is interesting given that the evaluation of the effectiveness of most third-sector programmes is largely unmoderated, with services independently seeking opportunities for evaluation as part of their funding bids (Fox et al., 2016). Moreover, programmes are rarely evaluated to explore whether changes are sustained in the long term (Stanley et al., 2015). MaKee and Mason (2015) argue that due to the impact domestic abuse has on CYP, even minimal evidence of effectiveness should warrant the running of programmes. However, for long-term changes to be made for such a social and economic problem, it is concerning that such little attention is paid to the content, delivery and long-term outcomes of such programmes, especially when there are clear inconsistencies and/or omissions in the reporting of findings (see literature review).

5.4 Research Question 4: What is the perceived role of the EP, in relation to domestic abuse (current and future possibilities)?

Overall, participants had not really considered the role of psychology within the support on offer to CYP. Some social work staff noted existing links with clinical psychologists, in particular when CYP were accessing looked after child placements, but in terms of earlier intervention or support this was not typically evident. One participant within social services, however, managed a local authority service for families experiencing domestic abuse. This participant described the employment of EPs in the role of 'practitioner psychologists' forming part of a larger multiagency team response. The EPs in this team were valued for their ability to bring new perspectives to the family situation and contribute toward a shared understanding of need. An Independent Reviewing Officer reported benefiting from the EPs ability to synthesise and make sense of complex issues through their feedback at child

protection conferences. Whilst another referred to EPs as “the glue” that holds “a lot of the other bits of the jigsaw together” (social work staff 6, p.56).

School staff saw the EP role as helping to unpick need and build capacity in staff to manage and respond to CYP, although limitations to this were highlighted as EP’s not being able to offer frequent or comprehensive support to schools.

Domestic abuse workers demonstrated misperceptions in their understanding about the EP role, describing EPs as being able to diagnose conditions such as ADHD or Autism, and subsequently emphasising a need for EPs to be trained in trauma to be able to differentiate between presenting symptoms. Despite this, participants suggested EPs might be able to assist in the delivery of training to other professionals and families.

5.5 Implications for practice

A lack of mandatory training and the hidden nature of domestic abuse makes it particularly difficult for professionals to identify and respond to concerns. However, there is a statutory duty placed on them to ensure CYP are protected from harm. Strikingly high numbers of responsible safeguarding leads, in this research, were found not to have accessed any training in relation to domestic abuse, or equivalent to just half a day. Similarly, specific training in domestic abuse is not currently offered in social work or teacher training. Upskilling and educating frontline professionals must be prioritised.

Participants highlighted a lack of appropriate services, limited resources, and reduced staff capacity to enable effective support for CYP and their families. This was particularly evident in the higher-end casework, involving more entrenched and harmful family dynamics, where attention was drawn to CYP remaining on child protection plans because of the systemic failings. This knowledge of the inadequate response to domestic abuse for CYP as a result of the systems in place to support them, is woefully inappropriate, if not unethical. Radical consideration of the current processes is needed, to ensure that they are not tokenistic and instead are offering CYP opportunities for meaningful change.

It is striking to see that professionals continue to struggle with issues around confidentiality and knowing what they can and cannot share, despite it being necessary to monitor concerns and prevent risk. School staff were identified as being the least informed of all professionals in issues of child safeguarding, despite having the most frequent contact with CYP. It is therefore unsurprising that they do not feel confident when responding to CYPs needs. If information is not being shared, staff are likely to miss subtle signs and comments, that could otherwise alert them to increased risks or vulnerabilities with the CYP they support. Moreover, the challenges associated with information sharing inhibit best practice in multiagency working and further push professionals to work in siloes, instead of working together to develop a shared understanding and response to need. Better systems need to be established for the effective sharing of information so that frontline staff can fully support CYP and promote wellbeing.

Participant responses suggest that domestic abuse is viewed as a spectrum of unhealthy and harmful relationship behaviours, which inevitably impacts on how professionals construct and respond to the concerns they are observing. If we are to consider that on one end of the spectrum sits challenging interpersonal difficulties within families, and at the other end sits entrenched and dangerous behaviours, at what point do professionals consider there is a risk to CYP? Acknowledging the context within which CYP develop (Treisman, 2016; Van der Kolk, 2005; 2014) and the detrimental impacts that occur without reparation and repair (Treisman, 2021), it would seem imperative that professionals intervene early, so as to minimise incidents of reactive response when behaviours become a significant concern, and arguably more entrenched. However, this involves developing a shared understanding of the issue and, as social work staff 6 points out, “unless we can agree on a shared idea of what’s okay then we can’t agree on a shared understanding about what’s not …" (p.31). Differing professional thresholds for the acceptability of behaviour, and the language used to describe it, therefore need to be revised and made uniform, to ensure the greatest acknowledgment and acceptance of the issues. Burr (1995; 2015) describes how language has the power to shape and change the discourses around us and subsequently the way society constructs particular issues. In the case of domestic abuse, the deficit labels used to refer to individuals, and their behaviours, within relationships, may lend to the avoidance of those affected to seek support. Likewise, if we view the situation of domestic abuse simply as

victim/perpetrator it may prevent us from considering the underlying needs of all individuals involved in the experience, and subsequently the opportunities to bring about change. The suggestion to avoid deficit language is not to undermine the traumatic and devastating impacts that domestic abuse has on the abused person, however it is to raise awareness of the risks of pathologizing CYP and their families (Burr, 1995; 2015). If we consider that at some point the CYP we see as victims, may become 'perpetrators' themselves, at what point, has that child or young person gone from developing person to perpetrator/offender? When do we begin to empathise less with their experience of the world as vulnerable or disadvantaged and instead see them as the problem? Tresiman (2021) highlights the importance of using person-first language in all areas of work, to ensure that the person is not lost behind their behaviour.

Furthermore, with relationship education in schools so inconsistent, and school staff openly expressing a lack of confidence to deliver the content, how are these CYP accessing the opportunities to better make sense of their relationships? How are we supporting them to scaffold their relationships in a safe and meaningful way? Careful consideration is needed as to how curriculum reforms will affect the way this information is given to CYP. It is clearly important that teachers are a) fully supported to understand the messages they are expected to deliver; b) supported to maximise engagement of CYP in the learning of sensitive issues, and; c) able to confidently respond to instances of disclosure.

5.6 Implications for Educational Psychologists

The literature review highlights that domestic abuse does not currently feature as an area of significant attention for EPs in their everyday practice (Gallagher, 2015). However, it is argued that EPs are well placed to link their knowledge of child development, systems thinking and psychological theories and frameworks, to help make sense of the complex issue of domestic abuse.

Furthermore, whilst a child or young person experiencing domestic abuse may not necessarily require direct EP involvement, EPs may be well placed to:

- Help schools on a journey towards becoming more trauma-informed and trauma responsive (Treisman, 2021).

- Facilitate training and awareness raising of domestic abuse, whilst being mindful of the limits of their own knowledge and competencies in the area (British Psychological Society, 2018).
- Offer reflective spaces (such as supervision) to help reduce the emotional load on practitioners (Dalton, 2019; Ellis, 2012; 2018; Ellis, 2020; Treisman, 2021).
- Encourage the use of creative and empowering methods to help CYP make sense of their experiences, such as techniques found within narrative therapy (Morgan, 2000) which are non-blaming and view people as separate to their problems (Cort & Cline, 2014; Treisman, 2021).
- Facilitate opportunities for developing multiagency working, though offering group consultation (Evan, 2005) underpinned by psychological understandings of team cohesiveness (Lecionni, 2002; Peck, 1998; Tuckmann, 1965) and role identity and positioning (Matthews & Singh, 2005).

In addition to this:

- It is important that EPs consider asking questions about family dynamics during assessment and direct work with CYP, to encourage greater understanding about possible hypotheses and to contribute towards a more cognisant formulation of strength and needs.
- EPs should promote and model person-first language (Treisman, 2021) to challenge stereotypes, deficits and labels, that may act to reinforce the hidden nature of domestic abuse through shame, defensiveness or embarrassment.
- EPs should seek opportunities to develop their role in family work. Whilst they are often positioned within the school system, McGuiggan (2021) argues greater outcomes can be achieved through joint systems work, particularly when considering the needs of vulnerable CYP, such as those experiencing domestic abuse.
- There is considerable scope within the training of EPs to teach about domestic abuse on programme curriculums. Whilst psychology cannot solve the issue of domestic abuse, it may go some way to unpicking the complex and systemic processes which serve to maintain it.

5.7 Validity and trustworthiness of the data

Phase 1

The questions for the questionnaire in Phase 1 were compiled using the Good Practice Guide (WG, 2015) recommendations for professional response to domestic abuse, in order to ensure that they remained targeted and meaningful to the study. The questions were structured and revised during supervision sessions and piloted by third year TEPs, to check the response requirements (such as skip logics and forced responses) worked effectively. Qualtrics^{XM} also generates an intelligibility score to determine how user-friendly the questionnaire is (the questionnaire was rated 'fair') and provides respondents with information about predicted response time, to encourage survey completion.

Phase 2

Demonstrating rigour and credibility in qualitative research is different to that of quantitative research and requires the application of different principles, for the process to meaningfully reflect the knowledge produced (Yardley, 2017). Yardley (2008) describes four overarching criteria for assessing validity in qualitative research: sensitivity to context; commitment and rigour; transparency and coherence, and; impact and importance. Table 9 outlines the attempts made to address each criterion, so as to increase trustworthiness of the research process and subsequent findings.

Table 9

Demonstration of research validity

Dimension of quality assurance	How this was met
Sensitivity to context	• Completion of a literature review, focusing on the sociocultural context in relation to domestic abuse and children and young people • Ethical considerations were fully explored (pages 61 - 62) and approval for the research was obtained from Cardiff University School of Psychology Research Ethics committee

	• Three professional groups were included in Phase 2, which included a diverse number of participants, reflecting a range of perspectives in relation to the research questions • Use of open-ended questions and multiple methods of data collection (e.g., focus group discussions, chat functions and polls) to increase opportunities for participants to express their views • Coding of transcript data was completed individually for each professional group, to preserve their unique perspectives, before applying thematic analysis to the whole data set to better understand the shared meaning of responses
Commitment and rigour	• Options for appropriate methodology (given Covid-19 restrictions) were explored to ensure the topic was approached sensitively (see Braun & Clarke, 2013) • Options for the appropriate analytic approach were considered fully through supervision and exploration of the literature for recommended best practice (Braun & Clarke, 2020b) • A journal was used to maintain a record of the research activities undertaken, which helped to form the information provided in Part 3 • Regular supervision was engaged with to explore decision points within the research • Initial noticing's were recorded on the transcript data during the familiarisation stage, coding is recorded and time-stamped for evidence of prolonged and meaningful consideration of the data and theme development is outlined in a separate excel spreadsheet (see Appendices O & P)
Transparency and coherence	• A clear description of what was done and why is provided in the methodology section • Full transcripts are available for consideration separate to the thesis, examples of coding and theme development are outlined in Appendices O and P and participant quotes are recorded in the results section, to demonstrate evidence of the researcher's analytic journey and clear reporting of the knowledge produced (Braun & Clarke, 2019)

	• A critical appraisal of the research process (Part 3), demonstrating the research process and researcher reflexivity
Impact and importance	• Implications for practice and implications for educational psychologists are explored, in order to demonstrate the importance of the research findings to real-world applications

5.8 Strengths and limitations

The perceived strengths and limitations of the study are outlined in Table 10 below.

Table 10

Perceived strengths and limitations

Strengths	Limitations
The research was explorative in nature and offered a unique perspective.	The research focused broadly on primary and secondary school experiences.
Domestic Abuse Workers in Phase 2 came from a range of local authorities from the North to the South of the country, demonstrating a good cross-section of Wales, thus increasing the generalisability of the findings.	Low numbers of secondary school participants reduce the extent to which the results are generalisable to the secondary school population. Social workers were recruited from four local authorities in Wales. Whilst these were chosen due to their population sizes and mix of rural, suburban and urban demographics, it may limit the generalisability of the findings.
Covid-19 government restrictions resulted in a change to the data collection methods, resulting in virtual focus groups taking place. This increased opportunities to explore issues with participants from a number of LAs in Wales, and in a range of roles, which might otherwise have been practically too difficult to pursue.	These same restrictions resulted in focus groups taking place online, which may have impacted on the researcher and participants ability to read non-verbal body language and engage in organic interactions. This may also have hindered contributions from some participants, notably participant x and y who on reflection said very little during the course of the focus group. Also, complications with technology meant that a number of participants were unable to speak due to internet connectivity, relying on email correspondence instead. Individual interviews may have generated deeper individual responses as a result.

Coding at the inductive thematic analysis level can be considered subjective, the research aimed to control for this through collaboration with an independent researcher (another TEP)	
	The research has been undertaken as part of the requirements to complete a Doctoral level qualification. Research may therefore be considered a secondary skill of the researcher, who demonstrates an evolving understanding of conducting research, completing focus groups and using thematic analysis.

6. CONCLUSION

The findings from this research, have demonstrated that response to CYP experiencing domestic abuse, is inconsistent at best and unethical at worst. CYP have a right in law to protection from violence and abuse, access to appropriate social, emotional and educational opportunities, and the right to access meaningful recoveries from harm (UNCRC 1989) Yet, participants in this study, and previous research suggests that this is not always happening. In part, the complex dynamics involved in domestic abuse make identification difficult, which therefore effects opportunity for intervention. However, this appears to be further impacted on by issues of language and terminology, differing professional constructs, and insufficient resources to meet need. Without access to effective and equitable support, it is argued that the rights of CYP are being violated. Radical consideration of the current system is needed to ensure CYPs needs are being met and that they are given ample opportunity to flourish. EPs are well placed to offer CYP, their families, schools and wider professionals support to help unpick and make sense of their experiences and encourage ways forward.

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Part Three: Critical Appraisal

Word count: (4, 840 words)

1. INTRODUCTION

The critical appraisal offers an opportunity to consider the research process more fully and to explore the role of the researcher within it. It provides a space to think critically about the decisions that were made during the process and how these impacted on the outcomes and subsequent knowledge it produced. Furthermore, it gives the researcher a chance to reflect on the impact of the process on their professional development, both as a researcher and as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP). The critical appraisal will subsequently be written in the first-person to exemplify the reflexive nature of the research process, acknowledging and accounting for the researcher's involvement in the development of knowledges (Langley & Klag, 2019; Willig, 2017). It is discussed in two parts; Part A: Contribution to knowledge and Part B: Critical account of the research practitioner.

2. PART A: CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

2.1 Development of the research

For a number of years prior to joining the Doctorate in Educational Psychology training course at Cardiff University, I worked as a family support practitioner in early intervention services. Throughout this work, the project regularly encountered issues of domestic abuse and family relationship breakdown and we observed the impact that these had on the children and young people (CYP) living within the family units. As a voluntary service however, families would frequently disengage from support if concerns were raised in

relation to safeguarding or child protection (CP). Furthermore, if the concerns were not considered to meet threshold for support from social services at the CP level, and the family continued to disengage from non-statutory support services, the family (and therefore the CYP) often would not access any support in relation to the difficulties they faced. Ethically this made me feel very uncomfortable. Whilst I acknowledged the rights of the adults to choose how they lived and whether they wanted to seek support or not, I wondered how/if the CYP's voices were being heard in relation to this and whether their rights were being breached if not.

When I began undertaking casework as part of the programmes course requirements, the issue of domestic abuse became a prominent feature again and subsequently the consideration as a topic for my doctoral thesis research. The University placement programme requires us to undertake a number of ongoing and in-depth pieces of casework throughout the duration of the course. Of those that I had completed, and in addition to the conversations I had in supervision and with other qualified EPs, the impact of domestic abuse on the learning, emotional health and wellbeing of CYP became apparent in the context of the school system. That said, this was not always explicit in the referral information from schools or in parent/carers and wider professional hypotheses about the presenting needs of the CYP. I noted that 'symptoms' or surface level difficulties often formed the basis of concerns and only through opportunities to engage in regular interactions with families and schools, did the underlying relational and environmental factors become apparent. Furthermore, I observed that the delivery of services, not just from EP services, but from a range of CYP services (e.g., behaviour support, family support, youth offending etc) were often set up in such a way that they lent themselves to reactive, time-limited responses, absent of opportunity to delve deeper into the underlying and maintaining mechanisms of concern and repeatedly treating the home, school and community as separate systems.

The teachings on the Cardiff University programme are offered through the Constructionist Model of Informed and Reasoned Action (COMOIRA) framework (Gameson & Rhydderch, 2008), which is rooted in social constructionism and systems thinking. It is designed to help us think more broadly about presenting issues and the psychology that can help us to inform change. Over the years, through using and embedding COMOIRA in my practice, it has helped

me to think about the importance of taking a meta-perspective when considering my involvement with CYP and their families. In negotiating my position as a TEP, with increased opportunity for in-depth casework, and acknowledging my likely time-constrained involvement when qualified, I wondered how effectively I would be able to support these CYP in the future. Again, it presented me with an ethical dilemma; I wondered where I stood in relation to the knowledge I had of the impact and likely outcomes for CYP affected by domestic abuse and the minimal opportunities to respond to this knowledge. I wondered what support there was for CYP, how other services operated in relation to it and whether psychologists should be taking a more active role in supporting CYP, their families and schools.

2.2 Review of the literature

2.2.1 Challenges in refining the literature search

I found the exploration of relevant literature to be one of the most time-consuming and tricky exercises of the whole research process. This in part, was due to my lack of clear direction and focus in the topic area at the beginning. I knew the research was going to be exploratory, and I wanted to give scope to the subject matter in order to capture a broad range of multiagency perspectives. However, this, combined with the wealth of research on domestic abuse across a large number of professional sectors world-wide, resulted in my initial literature search yielding over 7,100 articles. Refining the search by date reduced this to around 5,500 articles, which again was deemed too many to sift through. Using supervision to explore my objectives was particularly helpful in refocusing the aims of the literature review and considering what might be helpful to the EP community. Focusing initially on EP involvement and finding a sparsity of information about the EP role and domestic abuse, I began to consider how CYP are currently supported and by which key agencies. This led to an important feature of the literature review - its consideration and inclusion of the legislative and contextual factors that influence the response to domestic abuse within the school system. Considering my position and future aims, I wanted to ensure that I narrowed the literature focus so that it could provide meaningful change to those I work with. Therefore, I decided that it should explore current response to CYP affected by domestic abuse (research undertaken within the past 10 years) concentrating on UK-wide

practice. The application of which, would be considered in relation to the Welsh context, where I hope to disseminate findings and begin to influence change within current practice.

Throughout this process I was interested in multidisciplinary response, in order to encourage systemic thinking around practice. Consideration was given to relevant professional groups and after reviewing the Good Practice Guide (WG, 2015) developed by Welsh Government and Welsh Women's Aid, it was felt that there was an emphasis on third sector agencies, school staff and social workers, as key professionals within the school system response. As such, health related research was eliminated from the literature review, which included information regarding health visitor response. It is acknowledged that health visitors may be considered a key professional agency in work around domestic abuse in the early years, however given the often specialist role this work takes within the context of educational practice, it was felt to be beyond the scope of the current literature review.

I had initially intended to complete a systematic literature review, as this is often considered the 'gold standard' for literature reviews and reporting on evidence-based practice (Clegg, 2005). As such, I chose to use PRISMA for reporting my search strategy. However, due to the scope of topics found within the 19 articles identified, a narrative approach was taken. Reflecting on the use of systematic versus narrative reviews, Clegg (2005) notes the looseness of the term 'evidence-base', suggesting that many systematic reviews explore methods but often lack exploration and critique of ontological and epistemological positions of the research. Clegg (2005) highlights that this may not be helpful for front-line workers, who may instead, benefit from real world applications of practice. Furthermore, Clegg (2005) suggests the drive for evidence-base is typically influenced by money/funding not theory or practitioner knowledge and therefore fits more with a positivist ontology, not a critical realist perspective as was taken in this research. I hope that by taking a narrative approach, it has helped to synthesise the relevant publications into useful and practical information for practitioners.

2.2.2 Gaps in the literature

Given the overwhelming amount of research conducted in the field of domestic abuse, there is a paucity of research in relation to the response to CYP. Of the research that is available, a small section focused on the voices of primary school staff, with secondary school staff experiences remaining an area of limited understanding. A small proportion of the literature was undertaken by EPs, with suggestions made as to the potential role within the profession. That said, this is by no means clear cut and as Gallagher (2014) points out, an area in which professional understanding and confidence is lacking.

I was surprised by the lack of evidence-based research exploring the effectiveness of preventative education programmes for CYP in schools, particularly as these are promoted in the Good Practice Guide (WG, 2015). As part of my training, we are reminded of the importance of our actions being informed and reasoned. As such, we are expected to seek out current research and good practice to help us formulate concerns and consider the best ways to approach them. Without a clear understanding of what works with CYP and why, the expectation that by telling CYP what we 'know' to be 'right' presents as problematic.

2.3 Contribution of research findings to existing knowledge

The relevance of findings, both from the literature review and the research itself, drew attention to the inequitable response for CYP when they experience domestic abuse. It surprised me how open the participants were in terms of the difficulties they faced in meeting needs, but I also found it validating of my own personal experiences of working with CYP in this context. It strikes me that the results reflect the wider systemic failings in response to childhood adversity and strengthens the existing research in this area.

My research may further contribute to the empirical literature, to encourage a move away from the discourse around the impact of domestic abuse and instead encourage thinking about promoting change through the radical consideration of the current system.

2.4 Dissemination of findings

Danermark (2019) highlights the need to move from epistemology (how we investigate the world) to ontology (how we view the world) when considering dissemination of research. However, he notes the challenges in achieving this when 'real level' difficulties are identified at a research level (discussed further in Part B, Figure 18), which might subsequently challenge the ontological assumptions of those we seek to inform. The findings from this research comprise a multiagency perspective and took the approach of seeking shared meaning so as to offer a shared ontology. Bhasker (1975) emphasises that all research merely mirrors the reality of the phenomena studied at that time and therefore the findings of research should be reflected as a snapshot of 'reality' portrayed by participants at the time of exploration.

That said, the findings of such research, are argued by Danermark (2019) to be integral to successful real-world intervention. Consequently, dissemination of the findings from this research will involve:

- The sharing of a written summary of the research findings with all participants and the relevant gatekeepers though which they were recruited. They will also be offered a pdf copy of the full thesis in order to fully consider the findings and possible implications for their practice.
- Attendance at third sector agency and specialist team meetings. Through discussions with services within my current placement authority, I have been asked if I will attend their team meetings to share my findings with staff members. I think this is an important aspect of dissemination, as it will link into the multiagency working that I will be a part of. It will be important for me to consider how this could be developed to maximise wider professional response.

- Publication of the research may also be an important process in further disseminating the results. This might allow for broader audiences to be reached, encouraging the consideration of domestic abuse and CYPs needs more widely.

3. PART B: CRITICAL ACCOUNT OF THE RESEARCH PRACTITIONER

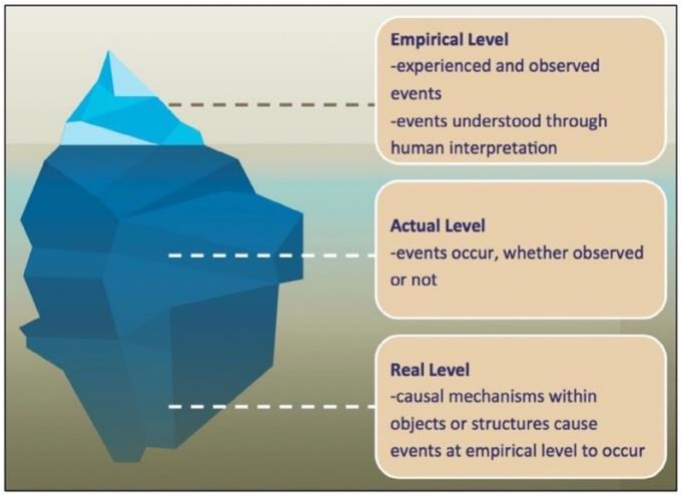
3.1 Philosophical stance

Despite being introduced to qualitative research during my undergraduate and master level degrees, neither actively encouraged undertaking it for my research projects nor did they explore the notions of ontology and epistemology to shape my research. As a result, my previous research has always adopted a positivist paradigm, seeking to demonstrate 'the truth'. Having had the opportunity to explore alternative paradigms and constructions of truth has not only shaped me as a researcher but also as a practitioner. It has helped me to develop a greater appreciation for the complexity around change and the need to consider the rights 'tools' for the 'job'.

When considering the perception of domestic abuse amongst differing professional groups, I acknowledged that their constructs may be different dependent on the political agendas that shaped their roles. Subsequently, I assumed that this might impact on their response to domestic abuse. As such, I recognised that there would not be a 'one size fits all' approach to intervention and support. With this in mind, I considered a social constructionist ontology and epistemology, which posits that people experience their own truths and develop their own world view based on their experiences, all of which are equally valid (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Gamerson & Rhydderch, 2008). However, this view suggests that there is no 'true reality' to be found and that everybody's constructs of their realities are equally true. Whilst this was an important perspective to consider in relation to participants views around confidence and effectiveness of support (their perceptions and values), it was felt that it did not fully account for the underlying structures and mechanisms that were operating at an interdisciplinary level (Danermark, 2019). Instead, the research adopted a critical realist paradigm, which posits that there are three realms of reality: empirical, actual and real (Bhaskar, 1975) (see Figure 18).

Figure 18

An iceberg metaphor for critical realism ontology (Fletcher, 2017)



3.2 Methodology

Ontology and epistemology are key determinants of the methodological approach that is chosen to examine a phenomenon (Willig, 2017). In adopting a critical realist paradigm, it was important to objectively capture a range of participant views about their 'realities' of support, in order to explore the empirical reality as compared to the real and actual reality under observation (Fletcher, 2017).

3.2.1 Data collection and procedure

In order to achieve this, a mixed-methods approach was utilised to collect both quantitative and qualitative information, split over two phases.

Phase 1

Questionnaires were initially developed in order to gather descriptive information (Phase 1), which was hoped to generate data that could be used to guide the focus group interview schedule in Phase 2. The questionnaires were sent to two local authorities (LAs), whose gatekeeper responses varied considerably and therefore impacted on the date's that questionnaires were able to be released. This, in part, was due to Covid-19 restrictions (discussed in more detail in Table 11), however it also made me think about the relevance of my research to others and subsequently the priority that was given to it. Saleh and Bista

(2017) explored the factors effecting online survey response rates with graduate students and found that higher return rates were correlated with participant interest in the topic. Whilst domestic abuse is an important area of focus to me, the apparent lack of literature suggests that it may not be an important area of focus within education. Or, indeed, schools may not have the cognitive and emotional capacity to cope with the demanding topic and instead rely on organisation defences to protect themselves from becoming too overwhelmed by the potential realities of domestic abuse in their schools. Research by Ellis (2020) explored designated safeguarding leads involvement with safeguarding responsibilities, noting the tendency to respond to the overwhelming emotional load with organisational defences (De Board, 2006), such as a focus on internal systems and policies. (Ellis, 2021). It is important to acknowledge that the questionnaire link was sent to Safeguarding Leads at a time of heightened stress, as schools were preparing and responding to new working environments during a global pandemic. It is likely that my research was not a priority to many, who, understandably, had other areas of focus at the time. Burr (1995; 2015) talks about the importance of cultural and historic specificity and how social processes and social action affect how we construct and respond to knowledge, and subsequently prioritise it. Given the rise in reported incidents of domestic abuse during the pandemic, it is possible that response rates may be higher when participants are not living through the experiences and instead can reflect on them when schools return to normal.

In addition to this, the questionnaires were emailed out to schools with an embedded link within the email to access the questionnaire. Saleh and Bista (2017) further identified that the people in their sample were more likely to respond to online questionnaires if: they were already familiar with the person sending them the survey, if they received a reward for doing so and if they received a reminder email. Email checking habits and the time in the academic year that emails were sent out were also reported to affect response rates. As a result of this information, I felt it pertinent to send a reminder email (during the half-term period when schools were less busy) and I also asked other EPs to mention my research at their schools visits, to encourage familiarity.

Whilst only a small number of completed questionnaires were received, the number of these did increase after the follow-up email prompt.

Phase 2

For Phase 2, focus groups were chosen as the method of data collection. An alternative approach would have been to use semi-structured interviews. However, it was important to me that participants had an opportunity to explore and share their thoughts freely, and that their responses were not restricted, due to the artificial set up of a one-to-one interview. It was therefore felt that focus groups might encourage more naturalistic conversations to occur between participants, thus increasing ecological validity (Willig, 2017).

Due to government restrictions, however, focus groups had to move to an online platform. This was unexpected and required some adjustments in order to pre-empt potential technical difficulties and create a safe space for participants to talk (see Table 11). An advantage to this was that it increased the opportunity to recruit participants from a wider geographical pool. My original aim had been to recruit from across two (diverse) LAs, however utilising virtual methods enabled me to recruit from a total of nine LA's across Wales. This, it is felt, helped to increase the generalisability of the findings.

The recommended size of focus groups varies across the literature, but generally three – eight participants has been deemed optimal (Abrams & Gaiser, 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2013). Whilst no focus group exceeded eight, one ran with only two participants. This occurred as a result of participants not turning up on the day, a common difficulty encountered in focus group recruitment (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Interestingly, it was the larger focus groups which were felt to be more difficult to run. In hindsight, smaller numbers would have been preferable, particularly where clear power differentials occurred (such as in the social workers focus group where there was a student social worker). That said, in these situations higher numbers of participants than were actually desired had been recruited, to account for expected non-attendance; a recommended strategy to buffer dropout rates (Willig, 2017).

Despite attempts to eliminate the dominant voice, such as asking different participants for their views, facilitating a simultaneous chat function, use of polls and offering follow up emails to provide additional opportunities to elicit views, some participants contributed very little to the focus groups. Being new to facilitating online focus groups, I found it difficult to

actively monitor the contributions of all participants and keep the flow of conversations (both in real time and via the alterative chat functions, including emails) in order to maintain the smooth running of the focus groups. Despite this, I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of conducting focus groups and felt they offered a valuable method of data collection, that might not have been captured through the use of individual interviews. I felt that the focus groups allowed for greater scope for participants to reflect together and engage in more nuanced conversations, which strengthened my understanding about the topics of agreement and drew attention to their subtitle differences in opinions. If I were to do this again, I would utilise the support of another facilitator to help with the administrative tasks during the running of the focus groups, to allow me more time to consider participants active involvement and give opportunities to return to topic areas, which might have been more quickly overlooked than others.

3.2.2 Participant selection

Three separate professional groups were recruited for the study in Phase 2; the breadth of professional roles within these groups were also diverse. It is acknowledged that this may be considered both a strength and limitation of the study. Similar to the research conducted by Clarke and Wydall (2013), the opportunity to consider multidisciplinary perspectives helps us to think about the current experiences of a range of professionals in practice and demonstrated the challenges they faced in role identity, professional agendas and remits. However, it could be argued that it also dilutes the quality of the findings and reduces their applicability. That said, the decision to include teaching assistants to school leaders, and social work students to independent reviewing officers, was made based on the volunteer participants that presented themselves. As the research was exploratory in nature, I did not want to eliminate the voices of professionals who had shown interest and felt that prioritising one over the other would bias the line of inquiry. I made the decision to keep professional groups together for the focus groups, rather than mixing them, so as to capture the broader perspectives within each professional domain, hoping to draw on their collective experiences.

An interesting observation that occurred after the focus groups took place, were from some of the comments made by participants following their debrief letter. Many commented on

how they have really valued to opportunity to explore the issues and think about them with their peers. One even suggested during the focus group that opportunities like this should be offered more regularly to encourage wider thinking around the topic. This made me think about the concept of equifinality in systems thinking and that by providing the opportunity to these participants to engage in discussions about domestic abuse, it may evoke some level of change or social action (albeit small).

3.2.3 Complications with Covid-19

Covid-19 lockdown restrictions were announced shortly after receiving initial ethical approval for the project. This posed a dilemma for data collection, as face-to-face focus groups were unable to go ahead. I used supervision to explore the pros and cons of waiting to complete these in person versus conducting them virtually. At the time it was considered preferable to wait to see if I could access participants in person, but sensible to make an amendment to the ethics panel, to cover all eventualities. This proved fortunate given the length of time restrictions remained in place.

Complications experienced in relation to Covid-19 are outlined in Table 11 below. Ways in which these were overcome are discussed and the implications (both positive and negative) are described.

Table 11

Complications in relation to Covid-19

Complication	How this was managed	Implications
Delays to data collection, including waiting times for the resubmissions of the ethics proposals (final approval received on 09.04.2020) and concerns from LAs that school should not have any more pressure placed on them (e.g., asked to take part in research)	Email requests were sent out as soon as was authorised to do so and a follow up email was sent two months later.	The delay to requests for participants may have resulted in low response rates in Phase 1 due to time-limitations and more pressing concerns for schools at the time. Similarly, had emails been able to go to schools before the

resulting in them pushing back the dates to make contact with them.		summer holidays I may have been able to recruit more secondary school staff in Phase 2 of the research, through offering focus group sessions during the school holidays.
Direct access to participants was restricted.	Following ethical approval (sought via an amendment to the original proposal), participants were invited to take part in online focus groups using the platform Zoom.	This increased the reach of the participant pool, allowing for a larger geographical distance to be covered, which was deemed too impractical when focus groups were designed to take place in person.
Ensuring a safe and equitable space for participants to contribute their views (using an online platform).	An email was sent to all participants highlighting giving an overview of the how the technology would be used. Chat functions, polls and opportunities to email or phone in responses were provided to offer multiple methods for collecting participant views. Participants were informed of their right to anonymity (through use of a pseudonym).	It is unclear how comfortable or familiar participants were with the technology prior to use. Technical difficulties persisted for a number of participants (For example, internet dropping out, being unable to see or access the chat function, not seeing all participants at the same time on a screen) which may have hindered the extent to which they could participate.

3.3 Data analysis

Descriptive statistics were collated from the questionnaires in Phase 1 and qualitative responses were included in the thematic analysis in Phase 2 (school staff responses). When considering an appropriate method of qualitative analysis, thematic analysis was viewed as a suitable fit both within a critical realist paradigm and in relation to the method of data collection (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Thematic analysis is described by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013, 2020) as a flexible approach to data analysis, which seeks to combine researcher creativity, theory and reflection to make sense of the data that is presented. It comprises a range of approaches broadly divided into three versions: 'coding reliability', 'codebook' and 'reflexive'. A reflexive approach was adopted using Braun and Clarke's six-stage process of thematic analysis (Figure 5) to guide my exploration of the data. I found this iterative process useful when thinking about how I made sense of the data, as it offers the opportunity to continually revisit, recode and restructure the interpretations made.

A noteworthy reflection from my process is that I utilised the support of another TEP in order to review the codes and themes, so as to avoid biasing my personal interpretations – arguably similar to a coding reliability approach. Braun and Clarke (2020) would suggest that this is an unnecessary and potentially misled decision point in reflexive thematic analysis, as they note that the researcher sits paramount to the research itself and that their existing knowledge and ontological and epistemological assumptions, lend to the outcomes produced. They suggest that attempts to avoid biased thinking is in direct contrast to the fundamentals of reflexive thematic analysis.

In part, I agree, and I recognise that the other aspects of my research process (as outlined in section *4.6 Validity and trustworthiness of the data,* and through this critical appraisal) demonstrate my defence for the decisions I took. However, I argue that involving other's perspectives allowed me to think more critically, and therefore more fully, about the data that I was presented with. It helped me, as a novice researcher, to consider the decisions I was making and reflect on why I was making them. Furthermore, the decision aligns firmly with my ontological and epistemological assumptions of critical realism.

One of the difficulties I found within thematic analysis was the refining of codes to themes and subthemes. I chose to code each professional group separately and looked for shared meaning throughout the data sets. Reflexive thematic analysis seeks to explore *themes* (as opposed to *topics*) which are described as having "*shared meaning with a central organising concept*" (Braun & Clarke, 2020, p. 15). Initially I struggled with this aspect of the process, arguably falling victim to the common error of presenting discussion *topics* and subsequently presenting too many sub-themes. Yet, the very process of reflexive thematic analysis, I learnt, is engaging with this struggle and repeatedly returning to the data at each of the six-stages to review, refine and redefine my interpretations. Thematic analysis is time-consuming and recursive, but through this process I was able to strengthen my sense-making of the data and as a result, the knowledge it produced.

3.4 Researcher versus Educational Psychologist

A key challenge I faced in terms of conducting the research was recognising and responding to my urge to jump into the role of EP. Whilst this was not typically a concern with larger focus groups (whose conversations more naturally occurred between group members), in smaller groups or pairs, I felt that my presence and natural curiosity in the topic, may have influenced discussions, through non-verbal communications to reassure the participants that they were being listened to. I therefore needed to more actively consider my contributions and manage the dissonance I felt between being a TEP, whilst trying to remain as objective as possible in the research.

Langley and Klag (2019) discuss this paradox in relation to four dimensions of authorial choice: visibility, voice, stance and reflexivity. They highlight the inevitable influence the researcher has upon research outcomes and the importance in being clear about the contributions we have made within our research, in order to build trustworthiness and reliability. Willig (2017) refers to this in terms of personal and epistemological reflexivity, suggesting that in order to better understand the phenomenon under study we must also seek to understand our role in making sense of it. This critical appraisal and the use of appendices, to demonstrate the research journey, goes someway to offering transparency and opens the reader up to the possibility of different lenses through which the research could have been presented.

Importantly, the research process has strengthened my interest in the field of inquiry and encouraged me to seek opportunities to promote EP involvement around the issue of DA. I would value the opportunity to complete further research on the topic, in order to contribute towards a wider understanding of CYPs needs and their access to educational and relational support. That said, I am most looking forward to seeking opportunities to develop practical and informed methods of support as a qualified EP. I will strive to increase the presence of psychology in the response to domestic abuse, so as to encourage acknowledgement of its complex and cyclical presentation and consider alternative approaches to managing the impacts that it has on CYP, their families and the wider community in which it occurs.

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Appendix A - Search strategy

Table 12

Initial database search including terms and exclusion data

Database	Search Terms	Total results	Exclusion 2010 - 2020	Exclusion peer reviewed
APA Psycinfo	(domestic violence OR domestic abuse) AND (interven* OR prevent* or respon* OR support*) AND (educat* OR school* OR nursery OR teacher)	874	381	297
ASSIA	(TI("domestic abuse") OR TI("domestic violence") OR TI("family violence") OR AB("family violence") OR AB("domestic violence") OR AB("domestic abuse")) AND (TI(school*) OR AB(school*) OR TI(teacher) OR AB(teacher) OR AB(educat*) OR TI(educat*) OR TI(nursery) OR AB(nursery)) AND (TI(interven*) OR AB(interven*) OR TI(respon*) OR AB(respon*) OR AB(support*) OR TI(support*) OR AB(prevent*) OR TI(prevent*))	308	207	207
ERIC	(("domestic abuse") OR ("domestic violence") OR ("family violence")) AND ((intervent*) OR (prevent*) OR (respon*) OR (support*)) AND ((educat*) OR (school*) OR (nursery) OR (teacher))	859	255	203
British Education Index	(("domestic abuse") OR ("domestic violence") OR ("family violence")) AND ((intervent*) OR (prevent*) OR (respon*) OR (support*)) AND ((educat*) OR (school*) OR (nursery) OR (teacher))	49	46	46
			889	**753**

Figure 19

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) Flow diagram

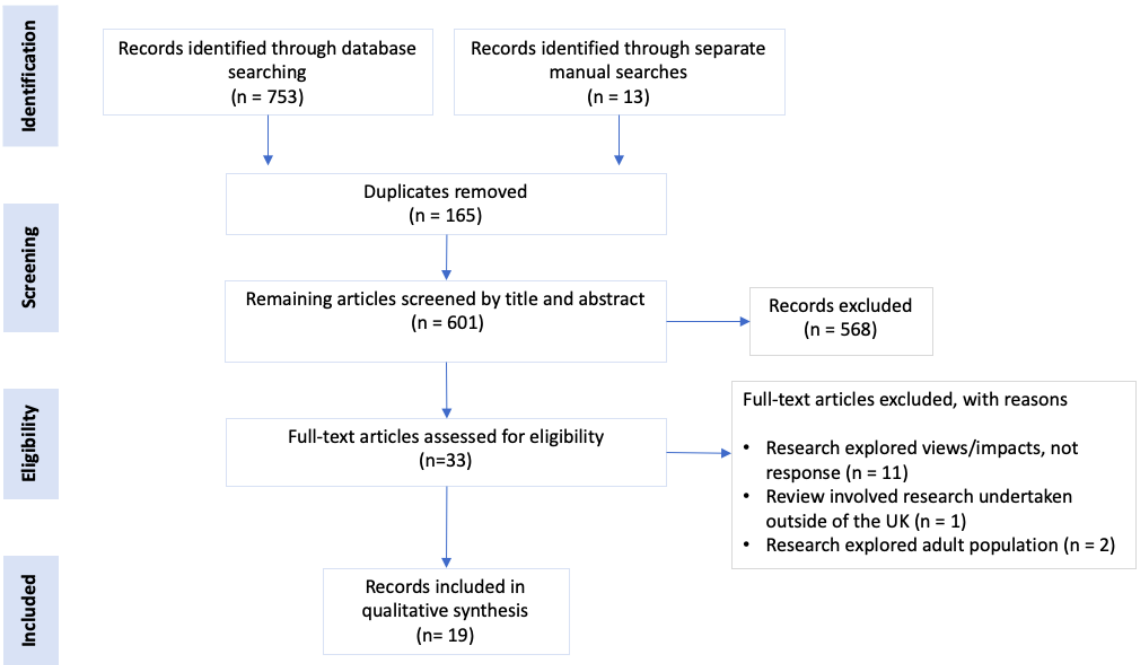

Table 13

Summary table of the 19 research papers identified in the search strategy

Authors	Title	Year	Publication type/ journal	Vol	Page #	Outline	Design and methodology	Participant Info	Findings
Beetham, T., Gabriel, L. & James, H.	Young children's narrations of relational recovery: a school-based group for children who have experienced domestic violence	2019	Journal of Family Violence	34	565 - 575	An exploration of the experiences of CYP after completion of a 10-week domestic abuse programme.	Thematic narrative analysis using a small story approach.	Four CYP aged 7 – 10 years old.	Four themes were identified around agency and choice; fun; intersecting identities, and; relational recoveries. These impacted CYPs experiences of domestic abuse and the way they recovered from their experience.
Bracewell, K., Larkins, C., Radford, L. & Stanley, N.	Educational opportunities and obstacles for teenagers living in domestic violence refuges	2020	Child Abuse Review	29	130 - 143	Reporting on teenager's experiences of education whilst living in refuge.	Single semi-structured telephone interviews were completed with staff and face-to-face repeat interviews (using participatory methods) were undertaken with 20 teenagers, with 64 interviews conducted in total.	25 staff members across the 20 organisations including children's workers, adult support workers and managers. 20 teenagers in refuge aged 13-18 (mean age 15) with over half the participants having lived in two or more refuges or alternate accommodations prior to participation in the research.	Refuge was found to impact on school access and educational attainment, through regular disruption and loss of continuity. Limited joint working was found between school and refuge further affecting access to educational opportunities. School was found to offer a sense of belongingness, build self-esteem, and provided social networks for CYP.

Chesnutt, S-J.	Linking the past to the future: An exploration of the educational experiences of children who have lived with domestic abuse	2018	Unpublished Doctoral Thesis	/	/	A two-phased research study exploring children's educational experiences and teachers' perceptions of domestic abuse.	Visual methods (maps/ photos/ photobook) and walking interviews were used to explore the children's experiences and analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Focus groups were used with teachers, discussing the findings from phase 1 and using soft systems methodology to explore teachers' perceptions. These were analysed using thematic analysis.	Nine children (aged 7 – 11 years) in Key Stage 2 who had previously experienced domestic abuse were recruited for phase 1 and 10 teachers and four ALNCo's from the same schools were recruited for phase 2.	Six themes were found in relation to children's educational experiences. These included play, learning, identity, relationships, feeling safe and linking the past to the future. Teachers acknowledged children's needs however found barriers to supporting them, such as it being impractical for CYP to leave lessons for interventions, finding it difficult to transfer theory into the classroom and top-down processes impacting on funding and policy development.
Clarke, A. & Wydall, S.	From 'Rights to Action': practitioners' perceptions of the needs of children experiencing domestic violence	2013	Child and Family Social Work	20	181 - 190	An exploration of practitioner's views and response to CYP experiencing domestic abuse.	A multi-method design was adopted involving 54 semi-structured interviews and two focus groups with professionals (each with eight participants), and five individual case studies with mothers.	Professionals were recruited from social services, health, education, police, probation, housing, domestic abuse services and third-sector agencies in a rural area of Wales. Mothers were recruited from a	Practitioners recognised CYPs needs in relation to their experience of domestic abuse, however noted barriers in meeting needs and in involving CYP in their response. This was reported to be due to competing operational policies, stereotyped professional perceptions and CYPs reluctance to share information.

								socially deprived area of Wales.	
Cleaver, K., Maras, P., Oram, C. & McCallum, K.	A review of UK based multi-agency approaches to early intervention in domestic abuse: Lessons to be learnt from existing evaluation studies	2019	Aggression and Violent Behavior	46	140 - 155	A review of 22 published evaluations exploring multiagency domestic abuse interventions in the UK between 2005 – 2016.	A search of 10 electronic databases using the search terms “domestic abuse or domestic violence,” AND “multi-agency or inter-professional or interagency working,” AND “early intervention,” AND “evaluation” was completed.	Agencies varied between evaluations and included: statutory services (e.g., police, social services, schools, housing, probation, primary care trusts) and third sector services (e.g., specialist domestic abuse projects and advocacy services).	A central emphasis was placed on school-based interventions which typically aimed to raise awareness of domestic abuse and bring about attitudinal change and help-seeking behaviours. Differences were found between teacher’s expectations of outcomes and those of domestic abuse sector professionals. Some studies showed boys disengages where content was focused too heavily on males as perpetrators. Overall, programmes were generally found to increase knowledge and help-seeking behaviours, but these were not always maintained, or followed up. Multiagency working had pros and cons, in some instances serious omissions were made in information sharing between the police and social workers. Good working relationships were seen as central to effective practice.

Cort, L. & Cline, T.	Exploring the impact of domestic abuse on the mother tole: how can educational psychologists contribute to this area?	2014	Educational Psychology in Practice	33(2)	167 - 179	Exploration of how the experience of domestic abuse impacts on women's views of themselves as a parent in the context of the mother-child dyad.	Semi-structured interviews were conducted and analysed using IPA	Seven women (aged between 26 – 55 years old) with at least one child and known to local voluntary domestic abuse services.	Nine superordinate themes were identified which demonstrated two poles of a related dialect. Domestic abuse was seen to undermine the mother role, affecting social opportunities, the mother-child relationship itself and created judgements of the self. Yet mothers also reflected on themselves as protective, supportive and strong, demonstrating personal empowerment through surviving the abuse. A role for psychological theory was suggested to support future assessment and intervention with mothers.
Dalton, P.	Hearing Teachers' experiences of working with children and young people who are exposed to domestic abuse	2019	Unpublished doctoral thesis	/	/	Exploring teachers experiences of working with children living with domestic abuse.	Individual interviews conducted with teachers, analysed using IPA.	Six teachers (both males and female) from primary and secondary schools were recruited. All held additional responsibilities such as pastoral support, ALNCo role or safeguarding.	Teachers acknowledged the need for trusting relationships with CYPs and families, and prioritised safeguarding as a central priority. They emphasised a need for 'safe spaces' and 'checking in' with CYP. Knowing their CYP enabled them to better recognise when something wasn't right and participants expressed relief at disclosures being made, as they felt they could then begin a process to support. They also noted frustration at the length of

									time to support (social services) and the emotional impact on them as teachers. The author suggested a need for 'safe spaces'.
Ellis, G.	The impact on teachers of supporting children exposed to domestic abuse	2012	Educational & Child Psychology	29 (4)	109 - 120	An exploration of the impact on primary school teachers supporting CYP affected by domestic abuse.	A two-phase mixed-methods design was employed using questionnaires (n = 165) and semi-structured interviews (n = 8). Descriptive and inferential statistics were obtained, and qualitative data was analysed using Thematic Analysis.	Primary school teachers were recruited form one local authority in England. Questionnaire data was collected from across 26 schools and interview data was collected teachers in four schools.	Teacher confidence to recognise and respond to instances of domestic abuse was found to show small improvement following training. Four themes were identified in the thematic analysis. These related to the difficulties and feelings staff felt towards the family; the emotional impact brought about by knowledge of a child's experience of domestic abuse; teachers' uncertainty about what they need to know, and; the need for procedural knowledge and supportive other's within the school system.
Ellis, G.	Containment and denial: raising awareness of unconscious present when teachers are working with children and families where there is domestic abuse.	2018	Educational Psychology in Practice	34(4)	412 - 429	Findings from the above research study were presented through the lens of the psychological principle's 'containment' and 'denial'.	As above	As above	As above

Fox, C. L., Corr, M-L., Gadd, D. & Butler, I.	Young teenager' experiences of domestic abuse	2014	Journal of Youth Studies	17(4)	510 - 526	An evaluation of a school-based domestic abuse prevention educational programme	Questionnaires were used to explore children's experiences as victims, witnesses, and perpetrators of domestic abuse. 13 focus groups and 30 in-depth interviews were completed with young men accessing the Boys to Men research project.	1143 children (541 males and 568 females) aged 13–14-years-old from across 13 schools in Staffordshire (West Midlands). Seven received the intervention programme and six schools were used as control groups.	45% of pupils experienced domestic abuse in their own relationships and 25% reported perpetrating it. 34% reported witnessing it in their own families. No gender differences were found between being te victim of physical or emotional abuse. Girls, however, were more likely to be victims of sexual abuse. Boys were less likely to seek help if victimised by a boyfriend or girlfriend.
Fox, C. L., Corr, M-L., Gadd, D. & Sim, J.	Evaluating the effectiveness of domestic abuse prevention education: Are certain children more receptive to the messages conveyed?	2016	Legal and Criminological Psychology	21	212 - 227	Evaluation of effectiveness of the six-week Relationships Without Fear (RwF) programme	Questionnaires were used following the completion of a six week education programme (Pre, post and at 3 month follow up).	1203 children (572 males and 596 females) aged 13 - 14 years were recruited. These were taken from across seven schools where the intervention was being used and participants were then matched with children from six schools not receiving the intervention.	Evidence that CYP who took part in the intervention group showed improved attitudes, (expressing less tolerance of domestic abuse behaviours) when compared with CYP in the control group. These attitude changes were maintained at 3-month follow-up and did not differ between males and females or experience of domestic abuse.

Fox, C. L., Hale, R. & Gadd, D.	Domestic abuse prevention education: listening to the views of young people	2014	Sex Education	14(1)	28 - 41	A report on the UK findings of a two-year project funded by the EU Daphne III, evaluating domestic abuse prevention education programmes delivered in the UK, France and Spain.	Five focus groups were completed to evaluate the RwF programme in the West Midlands. Data was analysed using Thematic Analysis.	Focus groups were conducted with 32 CYP aged 10-11 years (primary school) and 13-14 years (secondary school).	Four themes were developed through analysis of the data. This reflected CYPs need for varied activities, active participation and programme flexibility; the difficulty in managing pupils' opinions; the programme is 'sexist' and; the limitations of raised awareness. On balance, the research showed that teachers were best placed to deliver interventions due to the existing relationships with pupils, however the importance of good quality training and continued collaboration with specialist agencies was recommended.
Gadd, D., Fox, C. L. & Hale, R.	Preliminary steps towards a more preventative approach to eliminating violence against women in Europe.	2014	European Journal of Criminology	11(4)	464 - 480	A report on the two-year project funded by the EU Daphne III, evaluating domestic abuse prevention education programmes delivered in the UK, France and Spain.	Questionnaire data, administered pre- and post- intervention, were completed, and analysed using mixed ANOVAs. Focus groups discussions with a sample group of students were analysed using Thematic Analysis.	1076 secondary school students from England, France and Spain were recruited. This included 5 English secondary schools (three intervention and two control group), 20 Spanish interventions schools and four French	The English RwF programme and the Spanish intervention programme were both found to demonstrate effective attitudinal change towards domestic abuse. Whilst improvements were also found in the French intervention, these were not statistically significant. Focus group data noted concerns about engaging boys in programmes about domestic abuse, due to an over emphasis on gender, a lack of teacher confidence

								intervention schools. Seven focus groups, with 51 young people were completed across the three intervention sites.	and experience to deliver the content and a dislike of some of the activities involved in the programme. Conclusions were made as to the importance of engaging young people in the programme content in a realistic and meaningful way, acknowledging the limitations of delivering sensitive content in a small-time frame to heterogeneous groups.
Gallagher, C.	Educational psychologists' conceptualisation of domestic violence	2014	Educational & Child Psychology	31(3)	55 - 63	Exploration of how educational psychologists conceptualise domestic abuse and their role working with children, schools and families	Semi-structured questionnaires	Five educational psychologists	EPs did not report significant involvement in work with domestic abuse and perceived it to be better suited to other professionals, such as social workers. They suggested feelings of powerlessness in providing support due to time-constraints. EPs questioned what their role might look like, suggesting therapeutic support, training, referrals to outside agencies and upskilling schools.

Griffiths, A.	Domestic violence in teenage intimate relationships: young people's views on awareness, prevention, intervention and regaining one's sense of wellbeing	2019	Educational & Child Psychology	36(1)	11 - 26	Explored CYP's attitudes towards domestic abuse, within teenage relationships. Looking to identify their views on healthy/unhealthy behaviours, available support, and opportunities to improve coping and self-esteem.	A mixed methods approach was taken, using questionnaires to provide descriptive statistics and three semi-structured interviews analysed using Thematic Analysis.	310 CYP (161 girls and 149 boys) aged 14-15 (Year 10) and 16-18 (Year 12) from four schools. Plus, an additional four participants in their 20 – 30's who had prior experience of domestic abuse during their teenage years. Two boys and one girl took part in the interviews.	The findings showed there is a lack of awareness and understanding about teenage partner violence amongst adults and the young people themselves. Young people noted they were not always sure what constituted healthy or unhealthy relationship behaviours. Adults were described as not being equipped to support young people and education in schools was not found to meet their needs. Young people felt they wanted opportunities to talk about concerns, through counselling and self-esteem building.
Lee, D., Allwood, R., Weinstein, M. & Sullivan, K.	Interviewer: 'Are women and girls ever responsible for the domestic violence they encounter?' Student: 'No, well, unless they did something really, really bad …	2014	Journal of Gender Studies	25(5)	571 - 585	A feminist sociological analysis of a Whole School Approach to the prevention of domestic abuse.	A mixed-methods design using questionnaires with pupil and teachers, and in-depth interviews with 15 pupils were used.	762 pupils and 96 teachers from across three Nottingham secondary schools between 2010 – 2012. 13 girls and three boys (from years 9, 10 and 11) took part in the interviews.	Data gathered suggested evidence that engagement in whole school approaches led to changes in knowledge and awareness amongst young people. However, some attitudes towards whether men's violence toward women is ever justified appeared resistant to change. it is argued that whole school approaches towards relationship behaviours should be delivered as part of the curriculum.

Lloyd, M.	Domestic violence and education: Examining the impact of domestic violence on young children, children, and young people and the potential role of schools	2018	Frontiers in Psychology	9: 2094	/	A review of the literature surrounding impact and response to domestic abuse in schools and school aged CYP.	An article providing a narrative exploration of research in the UK.	/	Research exploring domestic abuse in the context of education is limited. There is a need to explore schools' engagement with multiagency working and to gain their views on professional learning and training in relation to domestic abuse.
Rogers, M., Rumley, T. & Lovatt, G.	The Change Up project: Using social norming theory with young people to address domestic abuse and promote healthy relationships.	2018	Journal of Family Violence	34	507 - 519	The presentation of a secondary analysis of data, collected during a pilot project, *Change Up*, using a social norming approach to address domestic abuse with young people in the UK between 2015 – 2016.	Surveys delivered pre- and post- intervention comprising 30 (mostly) closed questions. Qualitative data from feedback cards as part of the intervention, which involved four workshops (across two schools) and a poster campaign. Results were analysed using secondary narrative analysis.	174 pupils (88 females, 77 males, 11 preferred not to say) aged 13–14 in two secondary schools took part in the baseline survey. 120 of the same pupils took part in the workshops and poster campaign (due to absences from school) and 171 pupils (88 females, 76 males, 7 preferred not to say) took part in the repeat survey.	The Change Up programme helped CYP to increase their knowledge about domestic abuse and consider their own safety in relationships. Changes were seen in relation to attitudes towards the use of violence and retaliation behaviours. Gender differences were seen in relation to attitudes towards physical violence, however on the whole prevalence data suggests that the sample group reported lower experiences of domestic abuse than the literature suggests.

Stanley, N., Miller, J., Farrelly, N., Hollinghurst, S. & Downe, S.	Preventing domestic abuse for children and young people: A review of school-based interventions	2015	Children and Youth Services Review	59	120 - 131	A review of school-based interventions between 1990 - 2014	A mixed methods review was completed comprising a systematic literature search, consultation with stakeholders (including young people and experts in the field and research policy), cost/benefit analysis and mapping survey.	46 documents and 18 independently conducted evaluations were reviewed. Nine consultations took place over an 18-month period with 18 young people aged 15 – 19 and, separately, professionals. 16 individual telephone interviews took place with international experts. Transcripts were analysed using Thematic Analysis.	Most papers included in the systematic review failed to demonstrate behaviour change following specific preventative interventions for domestic abuse. The review raised questions as to how programmes are being theorised and evaluated. Furthermore, programmes are developed by third sectored domestic abuse agencies and often delivered by schools. The focus of outcomes subsequently differed, with schools focusing more on attitudinal change and domestic abuse services focusing more on behaviour change. Programmes were noted not to take into consideration the diverse needs of CYP, including sexual orientation, race, gender identity or disability.

Appendix B – Phase 1 Online questionnaire

In 2015, the Welsh Government and Welsh Women's Aid produced a Good Practice Guide (WG, 2015) outlining key principles towards tackling domestic abuse through schools and further education institutions with whole education approaches. The document aims to provide suggestions and examples of good practice to a range of professionals including local authorities, school staff, safeguarding leads and specialist agencies (WG, 2015). The recommendations from this document focus on:

- Access to training and learning for all individuals regarding domestic abuse
- The knowledge and practice of child protection procedures, and the inclusion of domestic abuse policies
- The provision of safe spaces for CYP and staff
- Partnership working with specialist agencies
- Awareness raising and links with the wider community
- The development of comprehensive prevention programmes

(WG, 2015)

To explore how schools currently identify, respond to, measure and work to prevent issues of domestic abuse, these principles guided the initial development of the questionnaire. Questions were generated and revised during supervision sessions to best capture information pertaining to the above recommendations, allowing scope for further elaboration or comment from respondents using open questions, 'other (please specify)' options and free text boxes. The finalised questionnaire can be found below.

School of Psychology, Cardiff University **Information Sheet and Consent Form**

Supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse: A multi-agency perspective of prevention and intervention

Purpose of the research: This research aims to explore the current support available to children and young people affected by domestic abuse. It seeks to better understand preventative approaches and interventions being used by frontline staff and explore their views in relation to the strengths and challenges they face in meeting children and young people's needs.

There are a series of questions and an opportunity for you to provide further information if you wish to. Please remember that the more information you give, the more detailed findings will be.

The following research is being carried out as part of the course requirements for completion of the Doctorate in Educational Psychology at Cardiff University. This research is being supervised by Gemma Ellis and has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Cardiff University's School of Psychology.

- I understand that my participation in this research will involve completing a questionnaire about current support for children and young people affected by domestic abuse in my school. This will take approximately 10 minutes of my time.
- I understand that participation in this study is voluntary and I can withdraw during the completion of the questionnaire at any time without giving a reason.
- I understand that I am free to ask questions at any time. I am free to discuss my concerns with the researcher, Nia Carr-Jones, or the supervisor, Gemma Ellis.
- I understand that at the end of the study I will be provided with additional information and feedback about the purpose of the study.

- I understand that the research information I provide will be held anonymously so that it will be impossible to trace this information back to me individually.
- I understand that because of the anonymity of my response it will not be possible to withdraw my responses after submitting the questionnaire and that my I.P. address will not be collected by the questionnaire software, QualtricsXM.

Please indicate your consent to participate in the study below.

Thank you,
Nia Carr-Jones (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

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Q1. Which local authority do you work in?

Q2. What type of setting best describes your school?

- Primary School
- Secondary School
- Special School
- Pupil Referral Unit
- Faith School
- Nursery school
- Other (please specify) _____

Q3. What best describes your current role? (In addition to your safeguarding responsibilities).

- Head Teacher
- Deputy Head Teacher
- Assistant Head Teacher
- Senior Leader
- Head of Year
- ALNCo
- Class Teacher
- Dual role (please specify) _____
- Other (please specify) _____

Q4. How much experience do you have in your role?

- Up to 5 years
- 5 - 10 years

- 10 + years

Q5. Do you address domestic abuse in your curriculum?

- Yes
- A little
- Not at all

CONDITIONS If "yes" is selected, skip to: How do you do this?
If "A little" is selected, skip to: How do you do this?
If "Not at all" is selected, skip to: Why don't you address it through the curriculum?

Q6a. How do you do this? (tick all that apply)

- Circulating and displaying relevant information about services e.g. NSPCC, Women's Aid, BAWSO etc
- Student council champions
- Teaching sessions delivered as part of the curriculum
- Teaching sessions delivered by external providers (please specify providers)
- Celebrating national awareness days e.g. National Stalking Awareness Week, Forced Marriage Awareness Week (please state those promoted)
- Other (please specify) _____

Q6b. Do you feel the overall amount of teaching you do about domestic abuse is:

- Too much
- About right
- Too little

Q6c. What are the challenges? (please explain) _____

Q7a. Why don't you address it through the curriculum? (please explain) _____

Q7b. Do you think you should?

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

Q8. Have ***you*** undertaken training in relation to domestic abuse?

- Yes – equivalent to more than 1 day
- Yes – equivalent to 1 day
- Yes – equivalent to a ½ day or less
- No

CONDITIONS If "Yes - equivalent to more than 1 day" is selected, skip to: What type of training was this?
If "Yes – equivalent to 1 day" is selected, skip to: What type of training was this?
If "Yes – equivalent to a ½ day or less" is selected, skip to: What type of training was this?

Q9. Why not? (please state) _____

Q10. What type of training was this? (tick all that apply)

- Local Safeguarding Children's Board (Wales) training
- Local Authority Delivered training

- Domestic Abuse awareness training (eLearning)
- "Ask and Act" training
- Other (please specify) _____

Q11. Have ***teaching and support staff*** undertaken training in relation to domestic abuse?

- Yes – equivalent to more than 1 day
- Yes – equivalent to 1 day
- Yes – equivalent to a ½ day or less
- No

CONDITIONS If "Yes - equivalent to more than 1 day" is selected, skip to: What type of training was this?

If "Yes – equivalent to 1 day" is selected, skip to: What type of training was this?
If "Yes – equivalent to a ½ day or less" is selected, skip to: What type of training was this?

Q12. Why not? (please state) _____

Q13. What type of training was this? (tick all that apply)

- Local Safeguarding Children's Board (Wales) training
- Local Authority Delivered training
- Domestic Abuse awareness training (eLearning)
- "Ask and Act" training
- Other (please specify) _____

Q14. Have ***school governors*** undertaken training in relation to domestic abuse?

- Yes – equivalent to more than 1 day
- Yes – equivalent to 1 day
- Yes – equivalent to a ½ day or less
- No

CONDITIONS If "Yes - equivalent to more than 1 day" is selected, skip to: What type of training was this?

If "Yes – equivalent to 1 day" is selected, skip to: What type of training was this?
If "Yes – equivalent to a ½ day or less" is selected, skip to: What type of training was this?

Q15. Why not? (please state) _____

Q16. What type of training was this? (tick all that apply)

- Local Safeguarding Children's Board (Wales) training
- Local Authority Delivered training
- Domestic Abuse awareness training (eLearning)
- "Ask and Act" training
- Other (please specify) _____

Q17. How effective do you think staff are at recognising the signs and symptoms of domestic abuse?

	Not effective at all	Slightly effective	Moderately effective	Very effective	Extremely effective
Please rate on this scale					

Q18. Are any children and young people affected by domestic abuse in your school?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

CONDITIONS If "No" is selected, skip to: Does your school have a specific policy around domestic abuse?

If "Unsure" is selected, skip to: Does your school have a specific policy around domestic abuse?

Q19. How were these children and young people identified as experiencing domestic abuse? (tick all that apply)

- Self-disclosures from students
- Classmates informed staff
- Staff identified concerns
- Parent/carers informed the school
- Social services informed the school
- Notification from Operation Encompass
- Other (please specify) _____

Q20. How are identified children supported in your school? (tick all that apply)

- Regular check-ins with the child/young person
- Allocation of a key worker/ pastoral support worker
- Access to Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA)/ THRIVE interventions etc
- Access to school-based counsellor
- Relevant helpline/support services information provided
- Referrals to external agencies e.g., play therapy, behaviour support, youth intervention services (please specify) _____
- Other (please specify) _____

Q21. How effective do you think the support given to identified children is?

	Not effective at all	Slightly effective	Moderately effective	Very effective	Extremely effective
Please rate on this scale					

Q22. Does your school have a specific policy around domestic abuse?

- Yes
- Yes – it is covered as part of another policy
- No (please indicate why not) _____

Q23. Do you know where to go to access ***information*** about supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse?

- Yes (please state where) _____
- Unsure
- No

Q24. Do you know where to go to access ***support*** about supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse?

- Yes (please state where) _____
- Unsure
- No

Q25. Do you think more is needed for your school to be able to adequately support children and young people affected by domestic abuse?

- Yes
- No

CONDITIONS If "No" is selected, skip to: Why not?

Q26. What might this look like? (please specify) _____

CONDITIONS If "What might this look like?" is displayed, skip to: Is there any additional information you would like us to know?

Q27. Why not? (please state) _____

Q28. Is there any additional information you would like us to know? (please state) _____

This is the end of the questionnaire - please click to the next page for your response to be recorded.

Debrief form

Thank you for your participation in this study.

I hope that the information gathered will contribute towards a wider understanding of how schools respond to knowledge of domestic abuse and the challenges they may face in meeting children and young people's needs in relation to this. The information you have provided will not be traceable to you or your school and all information will be published anonymously. The personal data will be processed in accordance with GDPR regulations (see privacy statement below).
The findings will be written up and submitted to Cardiff University as part of my doctoral thesis and may be used in future presentations or publications.

If you would like a summary of the findings this can be made available to you. You are free to discuss any concerns or queries with the researcher, Nia Carr-Jones, or the supervisor, Gemma Ellis.

Researcher:
Nia Carr-Jones
School of Psychology,
Cardiff University,
Tower Building,
30 Park Place,
Cardiff,
CF10 3AT
Email: Adams-JonesN@cardiff.ac.uk

Research Supervisor:
Gemma Ellis
School of Psychology,
Cardiff University,
Tower Building,
30 Park Place,
Cardiff,
CF10 3AT
Email: EllisG6@cardiff.ac.uk

Cardiff University's Research Ethics Committee:
School of Psychology, Cardiff University, Tower Building, 30 Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3AT
Tel: +44 (0)29 2087 0360, Email: psychethics@cardiff.ac.uk

Privacy Notice:

The information provided will be held in compliance with GDPR regulations. Cardiff University is the data controller and Matt Cooper is the data protection officer (inforequest@cardiff.ac.uk). The lawful basis for processing this information is public interest. This information is being collected by Nia Carr-Jones.

The information on the consent form will be held securely and separately from the research information. Only the researcher will have access to this form and it will be destroyed after 10 years.

The research information you provide will be used for the purposes of research only and will be stored securely. Only Nia Carr-Jones will have access to this information. The data will be confidentially stored using online questionnaire software and may be kept for a minimum of 10 years by Cardiff University once the study has been completed (as recommended by the Medical Research Council)

Appendix C – Gatekeeper letter to Principal Educational Psychologist and Head of Education

Doctorate in Education Psychology
70 Park Place,
Cardiff,
CF10 3AT

[Date]

Dear [Name],

Re: Thesis proposal - Supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse: A multi-agency perspective of prevention and intervention

I am a student on the Doctorate in Educational Psychology programme in the School of Psychology, Cardiff University. As partial fulfilment of my course requirements, I am required to carry out a piece of research to form my thesis. I am looking to explore current support for children and young people affected by domestic abuse and hope to do this across two local authorities. I am writing to enquire whether you would grant permission for this research to be undertaken in your local authority (LA).

There will be two phases to my research; the first will involve asking school safeguarding leads to complete an online questionnaire about the current support within their school. This will produce descriptive statistics and provide contextual information about current practices in schools. The second part seeks to complete focus groups with teachers, social workers and children and young people's workers in domestic abuse agencies. Each professional group will engage in a separate focus group. Information from these focus groups will then be transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis, so as to identify themes within, and between, the professional groups. All information will be anonymised, and participants and settings will not be identifiable in any write up of the research or future publication.

In light of the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Bill (2020), it is hoped that the data gained through the research, will give a clearer understanding of the current practices, support mechanisms and challenges in this area of work, and offer potential implications for future practice in Wales.

Ethical approval has been granted by the School of Psychology ethics committee at Cardiff University. I will also be closely supervised by Dr Kyla Honey (Professional Tutor) throughout the duration of the research; her contact details are outlined below should you wish to speak with her about this.

If you are happy for the research to be undertaken, please let me know via my email address outlined below. Many thanks in advance for your consideration of this project. Please let me know if you require further information.

Regards,
Nia Carr-Jones

Nia Carr-Jones
Trainee Educational Psychologist
Doctorate in Educational Psychology
70 Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3AT
Adams-JonesN@cardiff.ac.uk

Dr Gemma Ellis
Professional Tutor
Doctorate in Educational Psychology
70 Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3AT
EllisG6@cardiff.ac.uk

Appendix D – Email to Schools (Phase 1 recruitment)

[Email subject] REQUEST FOR PARTICIPANTS (*Phase 1*): Supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse: A multi-agency perspective of prevention and intervention.

FAO: Safeguarding Lead,

My name is Nia Carr-Jones and I am a second year Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP), currently completing the Doctorate in Educational Psychology (DEdPsy) at Cardiff University.

As partial fulfilment of my course requirements, I am completing a piece of research for my thesis, exploring current support for children and young people affected by domestic abuse. The research has two parts; the first involves gathering quantitative data via an online questionnaire, which I hope to be completed by yourself as a designated safeguarding lead. This will produce descriptive statistics and provide contextual information about current practices in schools. The second part seeks to explore the views of frontline staff in more depth. This will involve three separate focus groups for teaching staff, social workers, and children and young people's workers from domestic abuse services. Head teachers will be contacted shortly in order to recruit teaching staff for this phase.

In light of the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Bill (2020), it is hoped that the data gained through the research, will give a clearer understanding of the current practices, support mechanisms and challenges in this area of work, and offer potential implications for future practice. The more responses I have, the more likely the data will be reflective of the current situation. If you would be kind enough to participate in the first phase of my research, I would be incredibly grateful.

- The questionnaire will take approximately ten minutes to complete and can be accessed via the web link below.
- All responses will be recorded anonymously and cannot be linked back to respondents.
- Participation is voluntary and you are under no obligation to take part.
- Findings will be written up as a doctoral thesis and shared with the university. Your data will not be used for any other reason, except in the instance of publication.

Please click on the link below to access the questionnaire.

[----------web link---------]

If you have any questions regarding the research or questionnaire, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me or my research supervisor.

Kind regards,
Nia Carr-Jones
Trainee Educational Psychologist

Nia Carr-Jones
Trainee Educational Psychologist
Doctorate in Educational Psychology
70 Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3AT
Adams-JonesN@cardiff.ac.uk

Dr Gemma Ellis
Professional Tutor
Doctorate in Educational Psychology
70 Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3AT
EllisG6@cardiff.ac.uk

The project has been reviewed and ethically approved by the School for Research Ethics Committee (SREC). If you have any concerns about the project, please contact the Secretary for complaints.

Secretary of the Ethics Committee
School of Psychology, Cardiff University, Tower Building, 70 Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3AT
Tel: 029 2087 0360 psychethics@cardiff.ac.uk

Appendix E: Gatekeeper letter to Manager of Domestic Abuse Service

Doctorate in Education Psychology
70 Park Place,
Cardiff,
CF10 3AT

[Date]

Dear [Manager]

Re: Thesis proposal - Supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse: A multi-agency perspective of prevention and intervention

I am a student on the Doctorate in Educational Psychology programme in the School of Psychology, Cardiff University. As partial fulfilment of my course requirements, I am required to carry out a piece of research to form my thesis. I am looking to explore current support for children and young people affected by domestic abuse and hope to do this across two local authorities. I am writing to enquire whether you would grant permission for this research to be undertaken with Children and Young People's Workers in your Domestic Abuse Service.

There will be two phases to my research; the first involved asking school safeguarding leads to complete an online questionnaire about the current support within their school. This will produce descriptive statistics and provide contextual information about current practices in schools. The second part seeks to complete focus groups with teachers, social workers and children and young people's workers in domestic abuse agencies. Each professional group will engage in a separate focus group. Information from these focus groups will then be transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis, so as to identify themes within, and between, the professional groups. All information will be anonymised, and participants and settings will not be identifiable in any write up of the research or future publication.

In light of the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Bill (2020), it is hoped that the data gained through the research, will give a clearer understanding of the current practices, support mechanisms and challenges in this area of work, and offer potential implications for future practice in Wales.

Ethical approval has been granted by the School of Psychology ethics committee at Cardiff University. I will also be closely supervised by Dr Gemma Elis (Professional Tutor) throughout the duration of the research; her contact details are outlined below should you wish to speak with her about this.

If you are happy for the research to be undertaken, I would ask that you please forward this to your Children and Young People's Worker(s), and they can email me directly for further information. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. Many thanks in advance for your consideration of this project.

Kind regards,
Nia Carr-Jones

Nia Carr-Jones
Trainee Educational Psychologist
Doctorate in Educational Psychology
70 Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3AT
Adams-JonesN@cardiff.ac.uk

Dr Gemma Ellis
Professional Tutor
Doctorate in Educational Psychology
70 Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3AT
EllisG6@cardiff.ac.uk

Appendix F: Email to Head Teachers (Phase 2 recruitment)

[Email subject] REQUEST FOR PARTICIPANTS (*Phase 2*): Supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse: A multi-agency perspective of prevention and intervention

FAO: Head Teacher,

My name is Nia Carr-Jones and I am a second year Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP), currently completing the Doctorate in Educational Psychology (DEdPsy) at Cardiff University.

As partial fulfilment of my course requirements, I am completing a piece of research for my thesis, exploring current support for children and young people affected by domestic abuse. The research has two parts; the first involved gathering quantitative data via an online questionnaire, which has been given to safeguarding leads in schools (you may have received/completed this yourself already). This will produce descriptive statistics and provide contextual information about current practices in schools. The second part seeks to explore the views of frontline staff in more depth. This will involve three separate focus groups for teaching staff, social workers, and children and young people's workers from domestic abuse services.

For phase 2 I need to recruit a small number of teaching staff who would be prepared to engage in a focus group. This will explore topics such as:

- Methods of identification and support
- Individual contributions
- Perceived role of wider professionals
- Challenges and future hopes

I would be grateful if you could forward this email to members of your staff team or discuss this research in your staff meeting. Any volunteers can contact me directly on this email address. I have attached copies of the information sheet and a consent form to complete and send back to me. I will then correspond with them separately to arrange the focus group.

If you have any questions regarding the research or questionnaire, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me or my research supervisor.

Kind regards,
Nia Carr-Jones
Trainee Educational Psychologist

Nia Carr-Jones
Trainee Educational Psychologist
Doctorate in Educational Psychology
70 Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3AT
Adams-JonesN@cardiff.ac.uk

Dr Gemma Ellis
Professional Tutor
Doctorate in Educational Psychology
70 Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3AT
EllisG6@cardiff.ac.uk

The project has been reviewed and ethically approved by the School for Research Ethics Committee (SREC) and agreed by the Head of Education in your local authority. If you have any concerns about the project, please contact the School for Research Ethics Committee (SREC) secretary for complaints.

Secretary of the Ethics Committee
School of Psychology, Cardiff University, Tower Building, 70 Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3AT
Tel: 029 2087 0360 psychethics@cardiff.ac.uk

Appendix G: Gatekeeper letter to Head of Children's Services

Doctorate in Education Psychology
70 Park Place,
Cardiff,
CF10 3AT

[Date]

Dear [Head of Children's Services]

Re: Thesis proposal - Supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse: A multi-agency perspective of prevention and intervention

I am a student on the Doctorate in Educational Psychology programme in the School of Psychology, Cardiff University. As partial fulfilment of my course requirements, I am required to carry out a piece of research to form my thesis. I am looking to explore current support for children and young people affected by domestic abuse and hope to do this across two local authorities. I am writing to enquire whether you would grant permission for this research to be undertaken with social workers in your local authority (LA).

There will be two phases to my research; the first will involve asking school safeguarding leads to complete an online questionnaire about the current support within their school. This will produce descriptive statistics and provide contextual information about current practices in schools. The second part seeks to complete focus groups with teachers, social workers and children and young people's workers in domestic abuse agencies. Each professional group will engage in a separate focus group. Information from these focus groups will then be transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis, so as to identify themes within, and between, the professional groups. All information will be anonymised, and participants and settings will not be identifiable in any write up of the research or future publication.

In light of the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Bill (2020), it is hoped that the data gained through the research, will give a clearer understanding of the current practices, support mechanisms and challenges in this area of work, and offer potential implications for future practice in Wales.

Ethical approval has been granted by the School of Psychology ethics committee at Cardiff University. I will also be closely supervised by Dr Gemma Ellis (Professional Tutor) throughout the duration of the research; her contact details are outlined below should you wish to speak with her about this.

If you are happy for the research to be undertaken, I would ask that you please forward this to relevant workers, and they can email me directly for further information. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. Many thanks in advance for your consideration of this project.

Kind regards,
Nia Carr-Jones

Nia Carr-Jones
Trainee Educational Psychologist
Doctorate in Educational Psychology
70 Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3AT
Adams-JonesN@cardiff.ac.uk

Dr Gemma Ellis
Professional Tutor
Doctorate in Educational Psychology
70 Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3AT
EllisG6@cardiff.ac.uk

Appendix H – Interview schedule

Social Workers

1. What is your understanding about domestic abuse and the impact on CYP?
2. How do you support children on your caseload?
    i. How confident do you feel in responding to a CYP's needs? (Poll) Discuss.
    ii. How effective do you think the support given is? (poll) Discuss.
3. What do you find difficult or challenging about your role?
4. What support (if any) do you think you need?
5. What do you think schools and other agencies roles are in meeting the needs of these CYP?
6. What support is available for them?
    i. How effective do you think this support is? (poll) Discuss.
    ii. How effective do you think multiagency working is in response? (Poll) Discuss.
7. What barriers are there to schools effectively supporting CYP?
8. How do you think a psychologist (any type e.g., clinical, educational, counselling etc) could support you/schools in the future with regards CYP's affected by domestic abuse?

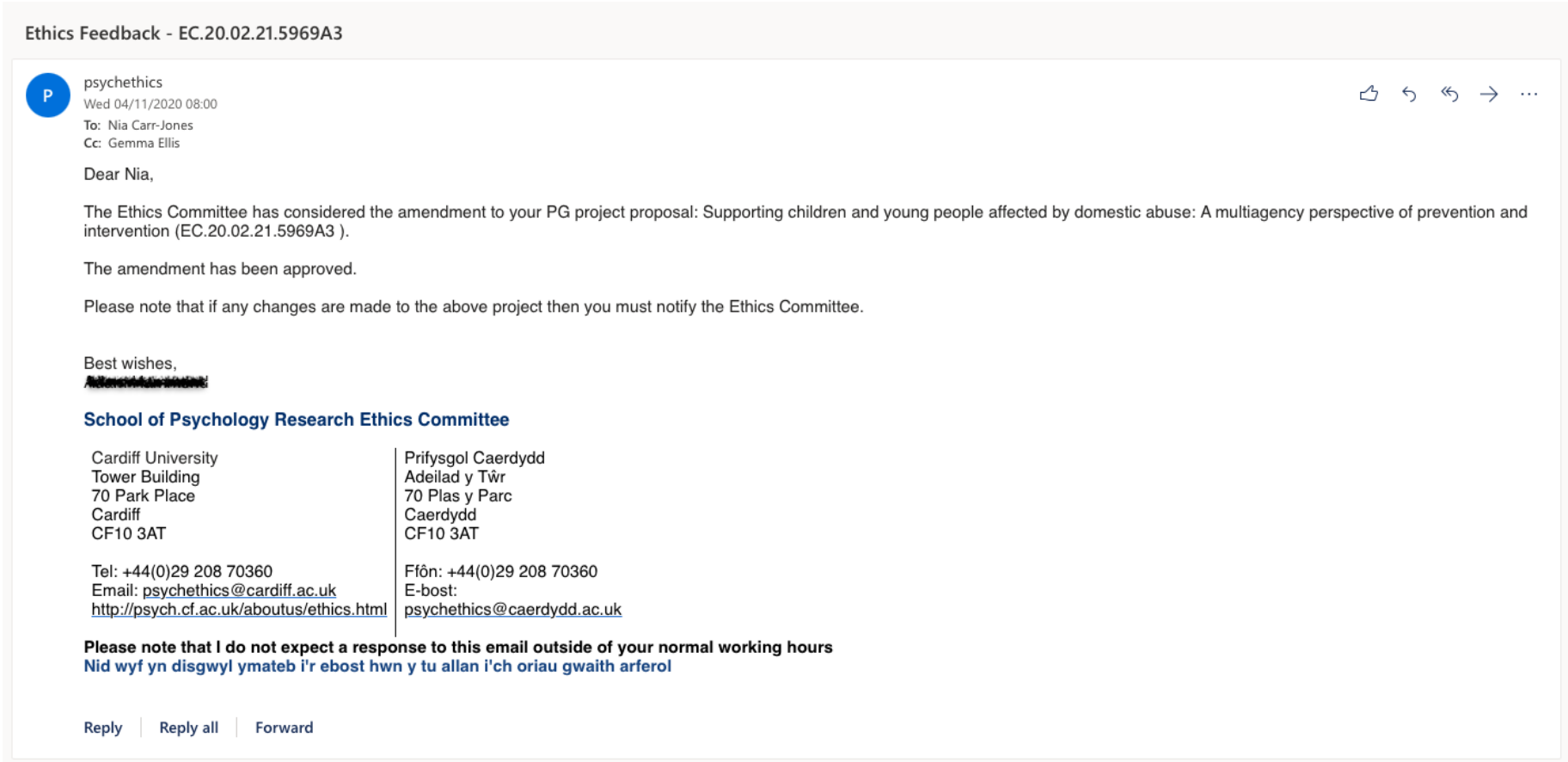
Teachers

1. What is your understanding about domestic abuse and its impact on CYP?
2. How do you support CYP's understanding about (un)healthy relationships?
3. How do you identify children in your setting that may be affected by domestic abuse?
    i. How confident do you feel in responding to the needs of CYP affected by domestic abuse (poll) Discuss.
4. What support is available in school for CYP?
    i. How effective do you think this support is? (poll) Discuss.
5. What support is available from outside agencies?
    i. How effective do you think this support is? (poll) Discuss.
6. How involved are you with any ongoing support (multidisciplinary)?
    i. How effective do you think multiagency working is in response (poll) Discuss.
7. What do you find difficult or challenging about meeting the needs of CYPs affected by domestic abuse? What are the barriers? What more could be done?
8. What support (if any) do you think you need?
9. How do you think a psychologist (any type e.g., clinical, educational, counselling etc) could support you/schools in the future with regards CYP's affected by domestic abuse?

Domestic Abuse workers

1. What is your understanding about domestic abuse and the impact on CYP?
2. How do you support children and/or young people on your caseload?
    i. How effective do you think the support given to identified children is? (poll) Discuss.
    ii. How confident do you feel in responding to a CYP's needs? (Poll) Discuss.
3. What do you find difficult or challenging about your role?
4. What support (if any) do you think you need?
5. What support is available to schools or social services?
    i. How effective do you think this support is? (poll) Discuss.
6. What do you think their role is in meeting the needs of CYP affected by domestic abuse?
    i. How effectively do you think multiagency working is? (Poll) Discuss.
7. What barriers are there to effectively supporting CYP?
8. How do you think a psychologist (any type e.g., clinical, educational, counselling etc) could support you/social services/schools in the future with regards CYP's affected by domestic abuse?

Appendix I - Cardiff University School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee approval



Ethics Feedback - EC.20.02.21.5969A3

P

psychethics
Wed 04/11/2020 08:00
To: Nia Carr-Jones
Cc: Gemma Ellis

Dear Nia,

The Ethics Committee has considered the amendment to your PG project proposal: Supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse: A multiagency perspective of prevention and intervention (EC.20.02.21.5969A3).

The amendment has been approved.

Please note that if any changes are made to the above project then you must notify the Ethics Committee.

Best wishes,
[redacted]

School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

Cardiff University Tower Building 70 Park Place Cardiff CF10 3AT	Prifysgol Caerdydd Adeilad y Tŵr 70 Plas y Parc Caerdydd CF10 3AT
Tel: +44(0)29 208 70360 Email: psychethics@cardiff.ac.uk http://psych.cf.ac.uk/aboutus/ethics.html	Ffôn: +44(0)29 208 70360 E-bost: psychethics@caerdydd.ac.uk

Please note that I do not expect a response to this email outside of your normal working hours
Nid wyf yn disgwyl ymateb i'r ebost hwn y tu allan i'ch oriau gwaith arferol

Reply | Reply all | Forward

Appendix J – Participant information sheet (Phase 2)

Title of the research:
Supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse: A multi-agency perspective of prevention and intervention

Why have you been asked to participate?
You work with children and young people affected by domestic abuse and are able to reflect on the current support mechanisms, challenges and future hopes for this group.

Purpose of the research:
This piece of research aims to explore the current support available to children and young people affected by domestic abuse. It seeks to better understand preventative approaches and interventions being used by frontline staff and hopes to explore their views in relation to the strengths and challenges they face in meeting children and young people's needs.

Do I have to take part?
No. The research is being undertaken as part of the course requirements for the researcher's Doctoral training in Educational Psychology. The research is entirely voluntary and there is no obligation for you to participate.

What you will need to do, if you choose to participate:

You will be asked to participate in a focus group which will be arranged at a later date, once the researcher has obtained between 5-8 participants. If this is not achieved, an individual interview with the researcher may be arranged instead. The aim will be for the focus group to last no longer than 1 hour and will be video recorded for the purposes of transcription and later analysis. You will be asked to reflect on your role when working with children and young people affected by domestic abuse. It may be helpful to think about what helps and hinders this role, what your hopes are in the future and how you think Educational Psychologist's may be able to assist you in this.

What are the possible benefits? (and risks)
I am hoping to obtain information that will provide a clearer picture about the ways in which children and young people affected by domestic abuse are currently being supported. There are no identified risks.

What if I want to withdraw?
You can withdraw your participation at any point up until the focus groups/interviews have been transcribed. At this point, the information will be anonymised and therefore there will be no identifying information to enable me to remove your interview from the data analysis.

Will my information be kept anonymous and confidential?
Yes. The information provided will be held in compliance with GDPR regulations. Cardiff University is the data controller and Matt Cooper is the data protection officer (inforequest@cardiff.ac.uk). The lawful basis for processing this information is consent. This information is being collected by Nia Carr-Jones.

The information on the consent form will be held securely and separately from the research information. Only the researcher will have access to this form, and it will be destroyed after 7 years.

The research information you provide will be used for the purposes of research only and will be stored securely. Only Nia Carr-Jones and Dr Gemma Ellis will have access to this information. After 2 weeks the data will be anonymised (any identifying elements removed) and this anonymous information may be kept indefinitely or published.

What will happen to the results of the research project?
The aim is for the data to be used to form the researcher's thesis. This will be submitted to the University as partial fulfilment of the course requirement. It will also be shared in group presentations at the University during 2021, with students on the DEdPsy programme, their lecturers and Educational Psychologists. The anonymised data obtained from this study may be shared with other researchers, staff and students at Cardiff University. Data may be used for further research projects within Cardiff University. Should the findings be of interest, they may also be shared through publication of the research and discussed in conferences. Participants will not be identifiable in any publication.

Who is supervising this research project?
Dr Gemma Ellis is a professional tutor for the DEdPsy course and will be supervising the research project.

Who can I contact if I want further information?
You can contact either myself or my supervisor. Our contact information is below:

Nia Carr-Jones
Trainee Educational Psychologist
Doctorate in Educational Psychology
70 Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3AT
Adams-JonesN@cardiff.ac.uk

Dr Gemma Ellis
Professional Tutor
Doctorate in Educational Psychology
70 Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3AT
EllisG6@cardiff.ac.uk

You will also be provided with further information at the end of the study.

The project has been reviewed and ethically approved by the School for Research Ethics Committee (SREC). If you have any concerns about the project please contact the Secretary for complaints.

Secretary of the Ethics Committee
School of Psychology, Cardiff University, Tower Building, 70 Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3AT
Tel: 029 2087 0360 psychethics@cardiff.ac.uk

Appendix K – Consent form (Phase 2 staff)

Supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse: A multi-agency perspective of prevention and intervention

Name of participant _____

Job Title/ Position held _____

Local Authority _____

After reading the Participant Information Sheet, please read the following statements carefully. Please delete your response as appropriate and sign your name at the end to confirm your consent to participate. If you have any questions, please ask the researcher who gave you this form. You are under no pressure to give your consent and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

1.	I confirm that I have read and understand the Participant Information Sheet for the study named above. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2.	I understand what will happen during the focus group/interview
3.	I understand the activity will be video-recorded, and all conversation (unless stated) during the interview will be transcribed by the researchers.
4.	I understand that the video-recording will be deleted two weeks after the interview.
5.	I understand that my participation is voluntary.
6.	I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any point (up until the video-recording is deleted), without the need to provide an explanation.
7.	I understand that if I want to withdraw, I can inform any of the researchers in person or via email.
8.	I understand that I will be assigned a pseudonym to ensure anonymity of both myself and the setting of which I am an employee.
9.	I agree to maintain the confidentiality of issues discussed during the focus group and will not discuss these with others outside of the focus group.
10.	I understand that the information I provide will be held confidentially within Cardiff University. Data from all parts of this study will be accessible to the researcher and their supervisor (Dr Gemma Ellis) only. The data will be password protected so that only the researchers can trace the information back to me individually. The data will be retained for no longer than the end of the research project plus 5 years, or at least 2 years post publication, in accordance with the University's Record Retention Policy.
11.	I consent to the anonymised data obtained from this study being shared with other researchers, staff and students at Cardiff University. Data may be used for further research projects within Cardiff University without the need for additional consent procedures.
12.	I consent to the findings from this research being shared with individuals in other organisations outside of Cardiff University for the purpose of potential publication.
13.	I understand that the personal data will be processed in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
14.	I understand that at the end of the study I will be provided with additional information about the study.

I have read the above information and agree/ disagree with the statements. I consent/ do not consent to participate in the study conducted by Nia Carr-Jones and supervised by Dr Gemma Ellis (both School of Psychology, Cardiff University).

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Privacy Notice:

The information provided will be held in compliance with GDPR regulations. Cardiff University is the data controller and Matt Cooper is the data protection officer (inforequest@cardiff.ac.uk). The lawful basis for processing this information is consent. This information is being collected by Nia Carr-Jones.

The information on the consent form will be held securely and separately from the research information. Only the researcher will have access to this form, and it will be destroyed after 7 years.

The research information you provide will be used for the purposes of research only and will be stored securely. Only Nia Carr-Jones and Dr Gemma Ellis will have access to this information. After 2 weeks the data will be anonymised (any identifying elements removed) and this anonymous information may be kept indefinitely or published.

Contact Details

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Secretary of the Ethics Committee
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Tel: 029 2087 0360 Email: psychethics@cardiff.ac.uk

Appendix L – Email invite to Phase 2 participants

Hi [Name],
I hope you are well.
Thank you so much for agreeing to take part in my focus group, it has been arranged for [date and time]. I just wanted to check that you are still available to do this and if so, to provide you with some more details. Please find these below:

Topic: Supporting Children and Young People Affected by Domestic Abuse
Type: Online Focus Group via Zoom (please use the link, meeting ID and password below to join the call)

[----------web link---------]

Meeting ID: [number]
Password: [number]

Duration: 1 hour - although I have scheduled the meeting for slightly longer to allow for any technical issues at the beginning.
Total Number of Participants: 5-7 participants all working in [Domestic Abuse Services/ schools / Children's Services] from across Wales.
Anonymity: I am aware that some of you may not wish to show your name on Zoom - if this is the case, please let me know in advance if you are choosing to use a pseudonym (only for me to cross-reference with the consent forms). You can change your name in the profile settings in Zoom (before the meeting begins), or by tapping in the name box once you have joined the meeting.
The meeting will be recorded but I will not start doing this until we are all present and ready to start.
Your views: I will be using the chat function, raise hands feature and polling tool, so hopefully it will be slightly more interactive for you and give you more opportunities to get your views across. If however, you feel you are not being heard (due to over-talking or feeling too uncomfortable to share) please email me separately with any information. This is an opportunity for your thoughts and experiences to be reflected and I would value these in any way I can.

This will be a strictly confidential discussion - please be mindful that the comments and experiences shared in the group are intended for the focus group only, and participants may not wish for these to be shared outside of this forum, so I ask that you be respectful of this following the completion of the focus group.

I look forward to seeing you there!
Please feel free to email or call me if you have any questions or difficulties accessing the call.

Best wishes,
Nia Carr-Jones

Telephone number: [number]

Appendix M – Debrief form (Phase 2 participants)

Supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse: A multi-agency perspective of prevention and intervention

Thank you for participating in this research project.

The aim of this study was to explore the current support available to children and young people affected by domestic abuse. It sought to better understand preventative approaches and interventions being used by frontline staff and hoped to explore their views in relation to the strengths and challenges they face in meeting children and young people's needs.

In order to explore this information, you were asked to take part in a focus group. Information from this will be analysed using thematic analysis to identify themes and draw comparisons with other professional groups.

Before participating in this research, you were provided with an information sheet and were asked to provide signed informed consent. This included giving consent to being video recorded, primarily for the researcher's personal use as an aid for analysing and interpreting the data. All the responses given by yourself will be anonymised, and no personal or identifiable information will be in the results. All data will be kept securely and confidentially in a lockable file box at the researcher's home, before being submitted to Cardiff University.

Please remember that you can withdraw at any point over the next 2 weeks, after this the data will be anonymised and your contribution will be unidentifiable.

The information you have provided will help to form the researcher's thesis. This will be submitted to the University as partial fulfilment of the course requirement. It will also be shared in group presentations at the University during 2021, with students on the DEdPsy programme, their lecturers and Educational Psychologists. The anonymised data obtained from this study may be shared with other researchers, staff and students at Cardiff University. Data may be used for further research projects within Cardiff University. Should the findings be of interest, they may also be shared through publication of the research and discussed in conferences.

Please contact the researcher if you have any concerns or questions about the research you have been a part of.

Thank you very much for your participation.

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The data controller is Cardiff University and the Data Protection Officer is Matt Cooper. CooperM1@cardiff.ac.uk The lawful basis for processing the data you provide is consent.

Appendix N – Focus group script – pre-recording.

Hi everyone. Thank you so much for agreeing to take part in my research today, I genuinely appreciate you taking the time. The aim of the today is to gain as much information as possible from you all, in relation to your views on the support available for children and young people in the school system, affected by domestic abuse. The information you give me will contribute toward a wider understanding of views, collected from a range of professionals including [name of professionals] and with the hopes of identifying good practice, gaps in support and future possibilities.

As this is being completed over Zoom it may be tricky for everyone to be heard, which I imagine you're all used to now, for example things like overtalking and poor internet connections can cause a problem. I really want you to have the opportunity to gets your views across, so it might help to mute your mic until you want to talk, especially if you are in a busy workspace and maybe physically or virtually raise your hand if you are finding it difficult to interject and want to say something. That way we can be aware and make sure you get some talking time.

Also, as I said in the email, please make use of the chat function. I'll be using it to post the questions up after I've asked them so you can refer back to them if you need to but it's also great for adding in comments when other people are talking that you might want noted. In fact, if you can all get your chat functions up now and keep them up through the session, that way you can see as comments are being made. You can either use it to talk to the collective group or to me privately and you'll see that the default is for a message to go to everyone, but if you click on an individual's name it will send a private message, which I'll be able to access later and use as contribution to the dialogue.

Is that okay?
Okay, so in a moment I will start recording, which will be saved on my personal laptop and will be deleted after two weeks, so if anyone changes their mind about participation they can in that time. None of your names, local authorities or any other identifiable information will be made available to anyone else and please remember and respect this if you are talking about the focus group later with anyone else.

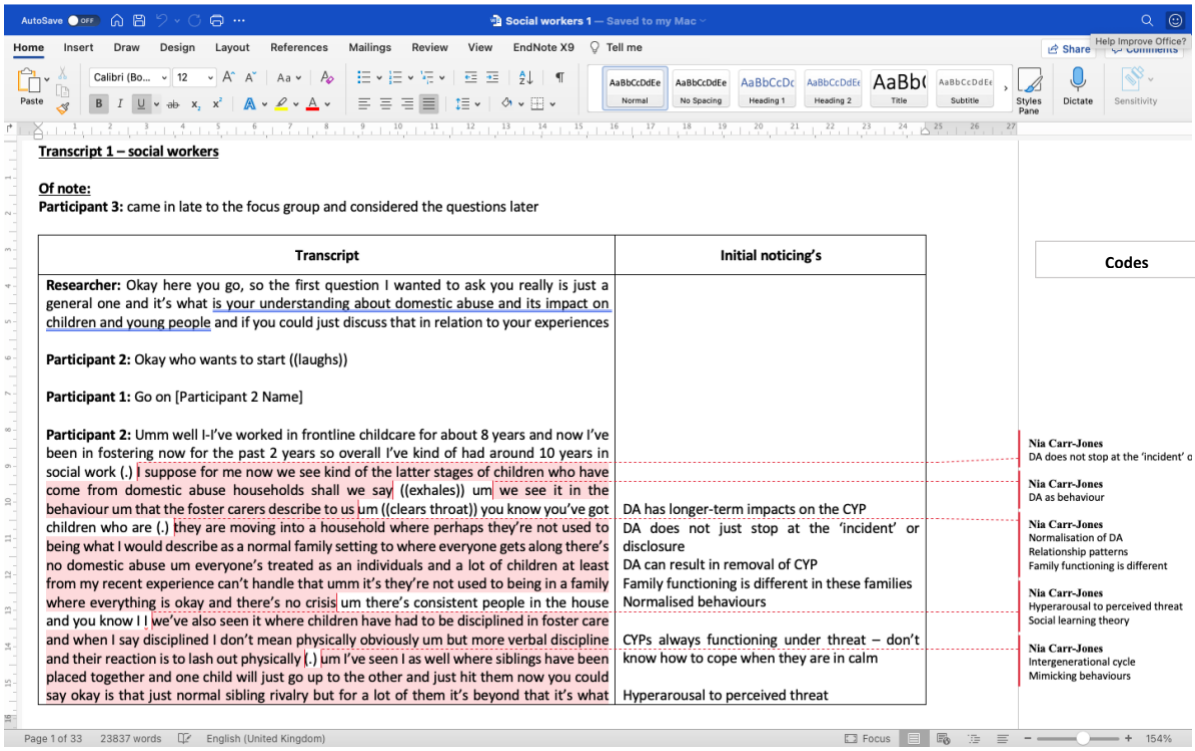
I aim for this to take no longer than an hour, but I also don't want to put restrictions on your discussions. The information I get comes from how openly and honestly you talk with each other. Please bounce off of one another, agree/disagree, and share experiences as that will really help form a clearer understanding for me, but I will be keeping a keen eye on the time, as I understand you all have lots to be getting on with.

A quick reminder that this is entirely voluntary, and you do not have to participate if you don't want to, please just drop out of the meeting if you change your mind. Is that okay with everyone? Does anyone have any questions?

Okay, so I'm going to start recording now, you'll have a prompt and audio that I'm doing so and then we'll begin.

[Focus group begins]

Appendix O – Examples of transcripts, initial noticing's and coding



Transcript 1 – social workers

Of note:
Participant 3: came in late to the focus group and considered the questions later

Transcript	Initial noticing's
Researcher: Okay here you go, so the first question I wanted to ask you really is just a general one and it's what is your understanding about domestic abuse and its impact on children and young people and if you could just discuss that in relation to your experiences	
Participant 2: Okay who wants to start ((laughs))	
Participant 1: Go on [Participant 2 Name]	
Participant 2: Umm well I-I've worked in frontline childcare for about 8 years and now I've been in fostering now for the past 2 years so overall I've kind of had around 10 years in social work (.) I suppose for me now we see kind of the latter stages of children who have come from domestic abuse households shall we say ((exhales)) um we see it in the behaviour um that the foster carers describe to us um ((clears throat)) you know you've got children who are (.) they are moving into a household where perhaps they're not used to being what I would describe as a normal family setting to where everyone gets along there's no domestic abuse um everyone's treated as an individuals and a lot of children at least from my recent experience can't handle that umm it's they're not used to being in a family where everything is okay and there's no crisis um there's consistent people in the house and you know I I we've also seen it where children have had to be disciplined in foster care and when I say disciplined I don't mean physically obviously um but more verbal discipline and their reaction is to lash out physically (.) um I've seen I as well where siblings have been placed together and one child will just go up to the other and just hit them now you could say okay is that just normal sibling rivalry but for a lot of them it's beyond that it's what	DA has longer-term impacts on the CYP DA does not just stop at the 'incident' or disclosure DA can result in removal of CYP Family functioning is different in these families Normalised behaviours CYPs always functioning under threat – don't know how to cope when they are in calm Hyperarousal to perceived threat

Codes

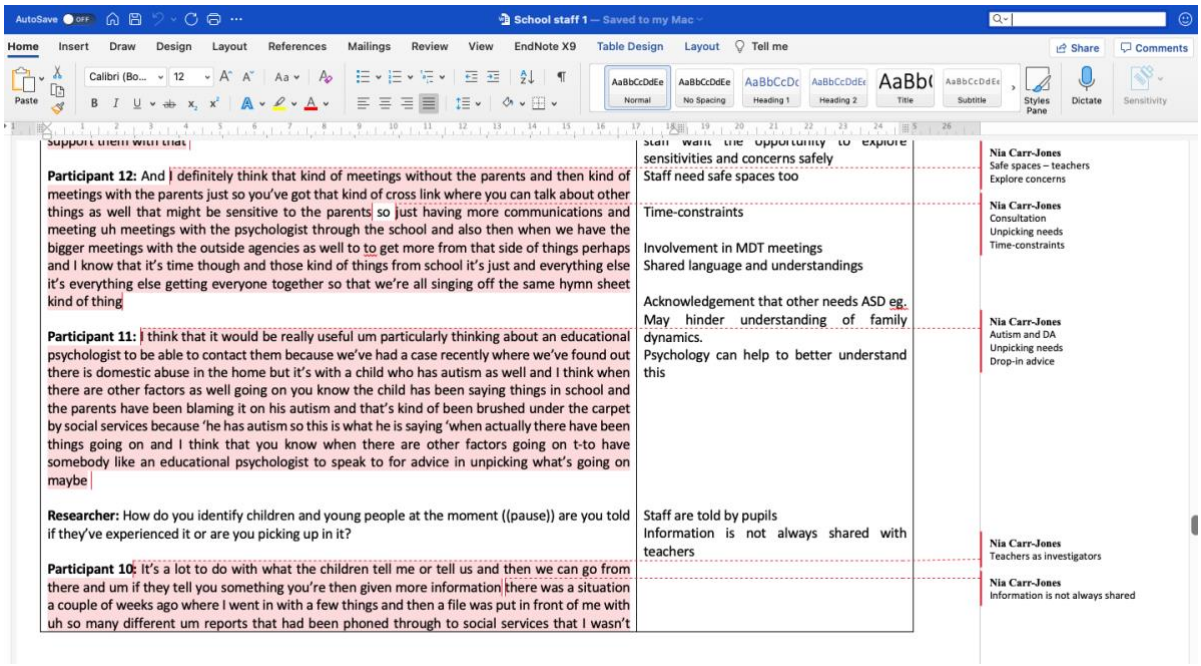
Nia Carr-Jones
DA does not stop at the 'incident' o

Nia Carr-Jones
DA as behaviour

Nia Carr-Jones
Normalisation of DA
Relationship patterns
Family functioning is different

Nia Carr-Jones
Hyperarousal to perceived threat
Social learning theory

Nia Carr-Jones
Intergenerational cycle
Mimicking behaviours



support them with that	staff want the opportunity to explore sensitivities and concerns safely
Participant 12: And I definitely think that kind of meetings without the parents and then kind of meetings with the parents just so you've got that kind of cross link where you can talk about other things as well that might be sensitive to the parents so just having more communications and meeting uh meetings with the psychologist through the school and also then when we have the bigger meetings with the outside agencies as well to to get more from that side of things perhaps and I know that it's time though and those kind of things from school it's just and everything else it's everything else getting everyone together so that we're all singing off the same hymn sheet kind of thing	Staff need safe spaces too Time-constraints Involvement in MDT meetings Shared language and understandings Acknowledgement that other needs ASD eg. May hinder understanding of family dynamics. Psychology can help to better understand this
Participant 11: I think that it would be really useful um particularly thinking about an educational psychologist to be able to contact them because we've had a case recently where we've found out there is domestic abuse in the home but it's with a child who has autism as well and I think when there are other factors as well going on you know the child has been saying things in school and the parents have been blaming it on his autism and that's kind of been brushed under the carpet by social services because 'he has autism so this is what he is saying 'when actually there have been things going on and I think that you know when there are other factors going on t-to have somebody like an educational psychologist to speak to for advice in unpicking what's going on maybe	
Researcher: How do you identify children and young people at the moment ((pause)) are you told if they've experienced it or are you picking up in it?	Staff are told by pupils Information is not always shared with teachers
Participant 10: It's a lot to do with what the children tell me or tell us and then we can go from there and um if they tell you something you're then given more information there was a situation a couple of weeks ago where I went in with a few things and then a file was put in front of me with uh so many different um reports that had been phoned through to social services that I wasn't	

Nia Carr-Jones
Safe spaces – teachers
Explore concerns

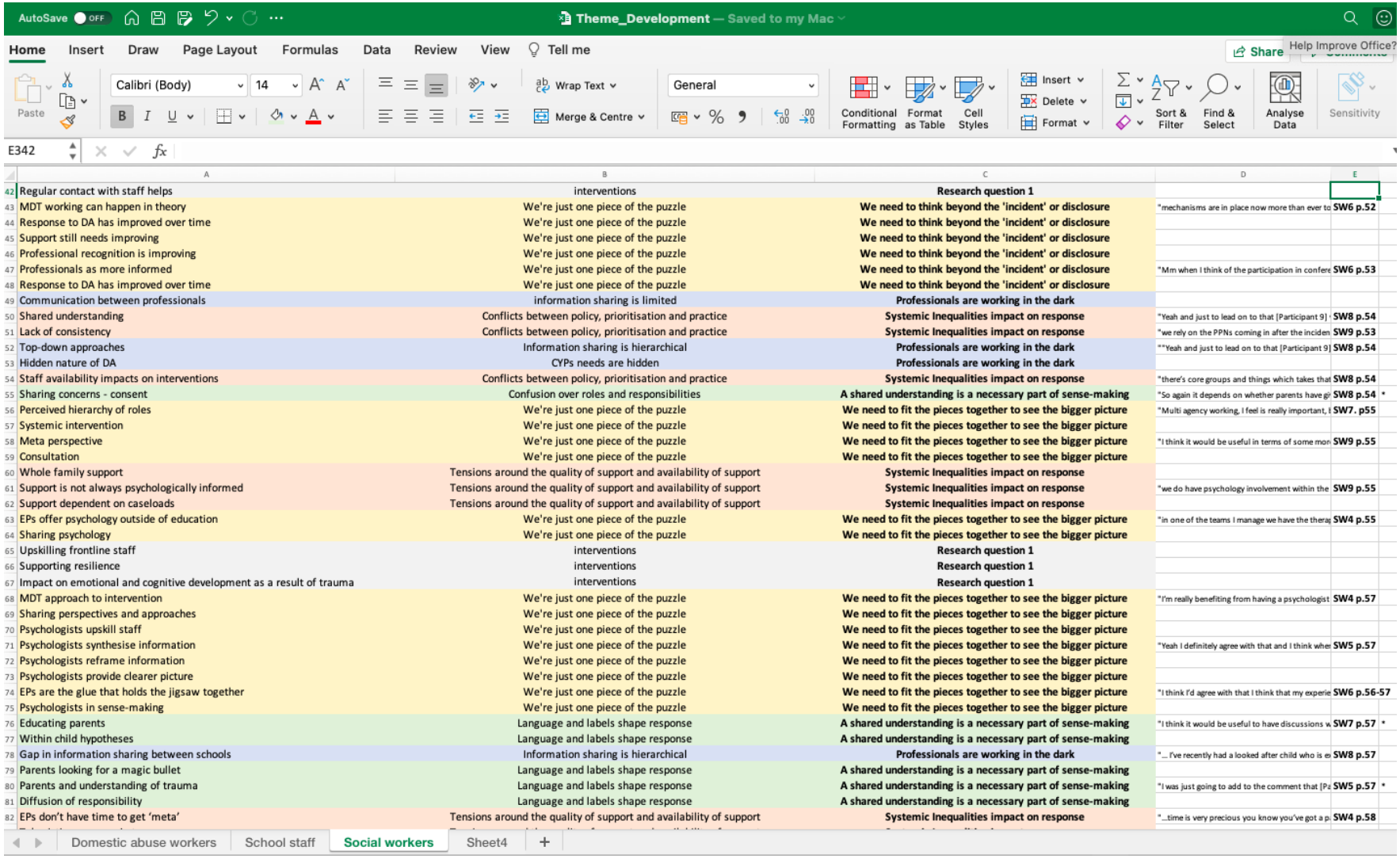
Nia Carr-Jones
Consultation
Unpicking needs
Time-constraints

Nia Carr-Jones
Autism and DA
Unpicking needs
Drop-in advice

Nia Carr-Jones
Teachers as investigators

Nia Carr-Jones
Information is not always shared

Appendix P – Example of theme development



	A	B	C	D	E
42	Regular contact with staff helps	interventions	Research question 1		
43	MDT working can happen in theory	We're just one piece of the puzzle	We need to think beyond the 'incident' or disclosure	"mechanisms are in place now more than ever to	SW6 p.52
44	Response to DA has improved over time	We're just one piece of the puzzle	We need to think beyond the 'incident' or disclosure		
45	Support still needs improving	We're just one piece of the puzzle	We need to think beyond the 'incident' or disclosure		
46	Professional recognition is improving	We're just one piece of the puzzle	We need to think beyond the 'incident' or disclosure		
47	Professionals as more informed	We're just one piece of the puzzle	We need to think beyond the 'incident' or disclosure	"Mm when I think of the participation in confere	SW6 p.53
48	Response to DA has improved over time	We're just one piece of the puzzle	We need to think beyond the 'incident' or disclosure		
49	Communication between professionals	information sharing is limited	Professionals are working in the dark		
50	Shared understanding	Conflicts between policy, prioritisation and practice	Systemic Inequalities impact on response	"Yeah and just to lead on to that [Participant 9]	SW8 p.54
51	Lack of consistency	Conflicts between policy, prioritisation and practice	Systemic Inequalities impact on response	"we rely on the PPNs coming in after the inciden	SW9 p.53
52	Top-down approaches	Information sharing is hierarchical	Professionals are working in the dark	""Yeah and just to lead on to that [Participant 9]	SW8 p.54
53	Hidden nature of DA	CYPs needs are hidden	Professionals are working in the dark		
54	Staff availability impacts on interventions	Conflicts between policy, prioritisation and practice	Systemic Inequalities impact on response	"there's core groups and things which takes that	SW8 p.54
55	Sharing concerns - consent	Confusion over roles and responsibilities	A shared understanding is a necessary part of sense-making	"So again it depends on whether parents have gi	SW8 p.54 *
56	Perceived hierarchy of roles	We're just one piece of the puzzle	We need to fit the pieces together to see the bigger picture	"Multi agency working, I feel is really important, I	SW7. p55
57	Systemic intervention	We're just one piece of the puzzle	We need to fit the pieces together to see the bigger picture		
58	Meta perspective	We're just one piece of the puzzle	We need to fit the pieces together to see the bigger picture	"I think it would be useful in terms of some mon	SW9 p.55
59	Consultation	We're just one piece of the puzzle	We need to fit the pieces together to see the bigger picture		
60	Whole family support	Tensions around the quality of support and availability of support	Systemic Inequalities impact on response		
61	Support is not always psychologically informed	Tensions around the quality of support and availability of support	Systemic Inequalities impact on response	"we do have psychology involvement within the	SW9 p.55
62	Support dependent on caseloads	Tensions around the quality of support and availability of support	Systemic Inequalities impact on response		
63	EPs offer psychology outside of education	We're just one piece of the puzzle	We need to fit the pieces together to see the bigger picture	"in one of the teams I manage we have the thera	SW4 p.55
64	Sharing psychology	We're just one piece of the puzzle	We need to fit the pieces together to see the bigger picture		
65	Upskilling frontline staff	interventions	Research question 1		
66	Supporting resilience	interventions	Research question 1		
67	Impact on emotional and cognitive development as a result of trauma	interventions	Research question 1		
68	MDT approach to intervention	We're just one piece of the puzzle	We need to fit the pieces together to see the bigger picture	"I'm really benefiting from having a psychologist	SW4 p.57
69	Sharing perspectives and approaches	We're just one piece of the puzzle	We need to fit the pieces together to see the bigger picture		
70	Psychologists upskill staff	We're just one piece of the puzzle	We need to fit the pieces together to see the bigger picture		
71	Psychologists synthesise information	We're just one piece of the puzzle	We need to fit the pieces together to see the bigger picture	"Yeah I definitely agree with that and I think whe	SW5 p.57
72	Psychologists reframe information	We're just one piece of the puzzle	We need to fit the pieces together to see the bigger picture		
73	Psychologists provide clearer picture	We're just one piece of the puzzle	We need to fit the pieces together to see the bigger picture		
74	EPs are the glue that holds the jigsaw together	We're just one piece of the puzzle	We need to fit the pieces together to see the bigger picture	"I think I'd agree with that I think that my experie	SW6 p.56-57
75	Psychologists in sense-making	We're just one piece of the puzzle	We need to fit the pieces together to see the bigger picture		
76	Educating parents	Language and labels shape response	A shared understanding is a necessary part of sense-making	"I think it would be useful to have discussions w	SW7 p.57 *
77	Within child hypotheses	Language and labels shape response	A shared understanding is a necessary part of sense-making		
78	Gap in information sharing between schools	Information sharing is hierarchical	Professionals are working in the dark	"... I've recently had a looked after child who is e	SW8 p.57
79	Parents looking for a magic bullet	Language and labels shape response	A shared understanding is a necessary part of sense-making		
80	Parents and understanding of trauma	Language and labels shape response	A shared understanding is a necessary part of sense-making	"I was just going to add to the comment that [Pa	SW5 p.57 *
81	Diffusion of responsibility	Language and labels shape response	A shared understanding is a necessary part of sense-making		
82	EPs don't have time to get 'meta'	Tensions around the quality of support and availability of support	Systemic Inequalities impact on response	"...time is very precious you know you've got a p	SW4 p.58

Thematic analysis: process undertaken

1. Focus group data was documented in three separate Word documents for each professional group. Initial noticing's were made at this time to help build familiarisation with the transcript data (Appendix O), as the preferred method of the researcher was to complete the analysis manually instead of using formal qualitative data analysis software (such as Nvivo).
2. Once all focus groups were completed, the transcripts were read and re-read, and initial codes were developed for each professional group, line by line. Another TEP independently coded the social work staff transcripts to provide an opportunity for critical thinking and alternative views to be considered by the researcher. Additional ideas were then coded in the remaining transcript data.
3. Codes were then transferred into an Excel spreadsheet (three separate pages for each professional group) and themes/ sub-themes were developed as a whole data set.
4. These were colour coded and a thematic map was created on PowerPoint. Seven themes and 36 subthemes were developed at this point, which was considered to be too many, as it did not provide for a coherent, meaningful or easily readable analysis of the data.
5. The researcher reviewed Braun and Clarke's (2019; 2020; 2020b) recent publications on completing a thematic analysis. It was acknowledged that the analysis fit more with a codebook approach than that of the intended reflexive approach.
6. The researcher welcomed the offer for analysis to be more creative and theoretically informed (Braun & Clarke, 2019; 2020; 2020b) and subsequently returned to the transcript data to review the developed codes line by line, making amendments where codes appeared to represent potential sub-themes, or where interpretations had begun to form.
7. The codes were then updated in the Excel spreadsheets and the process of theme development was re-started, with the researcher searching for the stories being told in participant responses.
8. Themes were developed and refined through a recursive process, using colour coding and through mapping codes back to example quotes to ensure 'stories' were representative of participant responses (Appendix P).
9. Where interventions/support were specifically stated these were colour coded in grey and documented in Table 8, rather than being included in the thematic analysis.
10. Themes and sub-themes included in the analysis were then mapped onto a PowerPoint document, this time representing four themes and 11 subthemes (Figure 17).